

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Student Research, Creative Activity, and
Performance - School of Music

Music, School of

12-2018

SOLO PIANO WORKS BY KE-CHIA CHEN: “TO AN ISOLATED ISLAND” AND “TREASURE BOX”

Stephanie Yu

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, stephanie.yu@huskers.unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicstudent>



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Yu, Stephanie, "SOLO PIANO WORKS BY KE-CHIA CHEN: “TO AN ISOLATED ISLAND” AND “TREASURE BOX”" (2018).
Student Research, Creative Activity, and Performance - School of Music. 124.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicstudent/124>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Music, School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research, Creative Activity, and Performance - School of Music by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

SOLO PIANO WORKS BY KE-CHIA CHEN:
“TO AN ISOLATED ISLAND” AND “TREASURE BOX”

by

Stephanie Yu

A Doctoral Document

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctoral of Musical Arts

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor Mark Clinton

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2018

SOLO PIANO WORKS BY KE-CHIA CHEN:

“TO AN ISOLATED ISLAND” AND “TREASURE BOX”

Stephanie Yu, D. M. A.

University of Nebraska, 2018

Advisor: Dr. Mark Clinton

Since the twentieth century, it has become increasingly popular for composers to combine traditional folk materials and contemporary compositional techniques.

Taiwanese composer Ke-Chia Chen is among these composers who choose to bridge their historical and cultural past with modern compositional methods. *To An Isolated Island* (2004) and *Treasure Box* (2010) represent, to date, the mature works for solo piano of Ke-Chia Chen, and are the main focus of this document.

This study details Chen’s employment of various compositional approaches in these works, and provides a thorough analysis of each piece. *To An Isolated Island* is the first piano piece Ke-Chia Chen wrote after moving to the United States for graduate school, marking a turning point in her life as a composer. In this piece, Chen combines traditional Taiwanese folk music with a Western compositional approach. *Treasure Box* is the most recent solo piano piece Chen has written. This piece explores several modern compositional approaches. Various movements in this set utilize such unusual

compositional devices as elbow/forearm clusters, chromatic scales that span the range of the keyboard, serialism, extensive use of the sostenuto pedal, and improvisation.

This document is divided into four chapters. The first chapter explains the history of Taiwan and its folk music, as well as the biography and style of the composer. The second chapter provides a detailed musical analysis of *To an Isolated Island*, including a discussion of how Chen combines Taiwanese folk materials and twentieth-century Western compositional techniques in the work. The third chapter focuses on Chen's most recent solo piano piece, *Treasure Box*, in which Ke-Chia Chen experiments with specific compositional techniques and characteristics of the piano in each movement. The final chapter draws conclusions based on the findings of the document.

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this document to my family. Without the support that they have shown me, I would not have been able to complete this document, and would not have had the chance to have the life that I do now.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mark Clinton, for his vast knowledge, advice, and support. I have learned so much from him during my time at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I also want to thank my committee: Dr. Paul Barnes, Dr. Karen Becker, and Dr. Sy-Hwang Liou for their support and patience.

A special thank you as well to Ke-Chia Chen for her wonderful compositions, her time, and her inspiration.

Finally, thank you to my friends and everyone who has helped me through the years, especially to Spencer Perkins for helping and supporting me.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter I: Short History of Taiwan and Taiwanese Folk Music	4
General Information and Brief History of Taiwan.....	4
Traditional Taiwanese Folk Music.....	5
Taiwanese Aboriginal Music.....	5
Traditional Taiwanese Han Music	7
Western Musical style in Taiwan	15
Short History of Taiwanese Composers.....	15
The First Generation: Japanese Music Education.....	15
The Second Generation: Study in the Western Countries.....	18
Important Composers after the Second Generation	20
Female composers in Taiwan After 1970.....	24
Biography and Compositional Style of Ke-Chia Chen.....	25
Chapter II: Musical Background and Analysis of <i>To An Isolated Island</i>	29
Chen and <i>To An Isolated Island</i>	29

Taiwan's place in the world	30
The bustling energy of city-life.....	37
Love of tradition	42
The never ending hope for the future.....	46
Conclusion	51
Chapter III: Musical Background and Analysis of <i>Treasure Box</i>	53
Chen and <i>Treasure Box</i>	53
Movement I.....	54
Movement II.....	57
Movement III	60
Movement IV	62
Movement V	67
Movement VI.....	71
Movement VII.....	71
Conclusion	78
Chapter IV: Conclusion.....	80

Bibliography	84
Musical Score References.....	84
Text References.....	84
Website References.....	86
Appendix	88

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Structure of “Taiwan’s place in the world”.....	32
Figure 2.2	Structure of “The never ending hope for the future”.....	48
Figure 3.1	Structure of the movement I.....	54

List of Examples

Example 1.1	Five modes of pentatonic scales	13
Example 2.1	Intervals of Thirds and Fifths in Motive A, mm. 1-4, Mov. I.....	31
Example 2.2	Motive B, m. 8, Mov. I	32
Example 2.3	New material based on motive A, mm. 9-10, Mov. I	32
Example 2.4	Retrograde and diminution of motive A, mm. 17-22, Mov. I.....	33
Example 2.5	New material based on motive A and a pentatonic scale, mm. 27-34, Mov. I.....	33
Example 2.6	Combination of motive A and B and the ending of the first movement, mm. 39-50, Mov. I	34
Example 2.7	Nontraditional notation, mm. 9-10, Mov. I.....	37
Example 2.8	Nontraditional notation, mm. 15-16, Mov. I.....	37
Example 2.9	Introduction and motive A, mm. 1-11, Movement II.....	38
Example 2.10	Static transition, mm. 49-59, Mov. II.....	39
Example 2.11	First augmented chord, mm. 60-71, Mov. II.....	40
Example 2.12	Double augmented group, mm. 76-80, Mov. II	41
Example 2.13	Ending of the second movement, mm. 96-105, Mov. II	41
Example 2.14	Cluster and modified pentatonic melody, mm. 1-8, Mov. III	43
Example 2.15	Quotation of Taiwanese aboriginal people's song, mm. 13-16, Mov. III.....	43
Example 2.16	B section, mm. 17-24 and mm. 29-32, Mov. III	44
Example 2.17	Climax of the movement and pentatonic melody from motive A, mm. 41-52, Mov. III.....	45

Example 2.18	Beginning of the last movement, mm. 1-9, Mov. IV	47
Example 2.19	Elision of A and B section, mm. 18-22, Mov. IV	47
Example 2.20	Three six-tone scales used in Mov. IV.....	48
Example 2.21	Six-tone scale.....	49
Example 2.22	Melody in the B section, mm. 21-28, Mov. IV	49
Example 2.23	Ornamentation in the B section, mm. 33-36, Mov. IV	50
Example 3.1	The beginning of the first movement, mm. 1-2, Mov. I.....	54
Example 3.2	Measures 3-8, Mov. I.....	55
Example 3.3	Chromatic scale, mm. 12-14, Mov. I.....	56
Example 3.4	Coda, mm. 23-28, Mov. I	56
Example 3.5	Motive A, mm. 1-5, Mov. II	58
Example 3.6	Motive B, mm. 6-12, Mov. II	58
Example 3.7	Interruption, mm. 17-23, Mov. II	59
Example 3.8	Motive C, mm. 37-42, Mov. II	59
Example 3.9	The beginning and end of the chromatic line, Mov. III.....	61
Example 3.10	Rhythmic groups (a) and (b), Mov. III	61
Example 3.11	Modified (a) and (b), mm. 17-18, Mov. III.....	61
Example 3.12	Twelve-tone row, mm. 1-5, Mov. IV	63
Example 3.13	Four chords, mm. 11-15, Mov. IV	63

Example 3.14	End of twelve-tone section, mm. 20-24, Mov. IV	64
Example 3.15	Comparison of m. 13 and m. 34, Mov. IV	64
Example 3.16	Twelve-note groups, mm. 35-41, Mov. IV	65
Example 3.17	Twelve-tone chords and response in the top voice, mm. 48-49, Mov. IV	66
Example 3.18	“Chimes” section, upper voices, last four measures of the movement, mm. 64-67, Mov. IV.....	66
Example 3.19	Dissonant melody (Motive A) and perfect fifths (Motive B), mm. 1-3, Mov. V	68
Example 3.20	Chorale-like melody with Motive B, mm. 6-9, Mov. V	69
Example 3.21	Three-layer melody, mm. 10-13, Mov. V	70
Example 3.22	Measures 1-2, Mov. VI	71
Example 3.23	First four-note group and G. P., mm. 2-3, Mov. VI	72
Example 3.24	Improvisation section, m. 6, Mov. VI.....	73
Example 3.25	Last two measures, mm. 21-22, Mov. VI.....	73
Example 3.26	Motive A, mm. 1-4, Mov. VII.....	75
Example 3.27	Motive B, mm. 5, Mov. VII	75
Example 3.28	Diminution of motive A, mm 11-12, Mov. VII.....	76
Example 3.29	Modified Motive B, mm. 15-17, Mov. VII.....	76
Example 3.30	Comparison of rhythms, m. 24 of Mov. VII, and mm. 60-61 of Mov. IV	77

Introduction

Music and culture are inseparable. For a variety of reasons, different cultures create unique styles of music with their own specific connotations. Music is a powerful force of connection and camaraderie among people who share the same culture and national heritage. For example, national songs present a strong identity of the country while drawing citizens together in a common understanding. Folk music offers a localized version of national music, speaking to the shared memory and history of people who grow up in the same area.

It is not uncommon for composers to employ musical elements from their native land in their compositions. For instance, Chopin combined national musical elements from Poland with Romantic compositional techniques to create some of his most significant compositions (such as his Polonaises and Mazurkas). Later, Bartok collected folk music and adapted them into his works. In the twenty-first century, many Eastern composers continue to recognize the importance of folk music in their countries, and include folk melodies in their compositions. By blending traditional melodies with modern compositional techniques, composers connect the historical past with the ever-expanding collection of compositional methods to create inventive and singular works of music.

Taiwan is a small island and, just like every other country, it has a unique

culture, comprised of the influences of myriad native and international groups that shaped its history. The first inhabitants were the aboriginal people, whose presence dates back to 4000 B. C., followed by Dutch and Spanish colonial imperialists in the seventeenth century, Han immigrants, and Japanese control for fifty years during the middles of the twentieth century. Taiwanese culture contains elements of this disparate set of nationalities and sensibilities.

The first generation of Taiwanese composers did not arise until the twentieth century. After the Japanese colonial period, composers had greater opportunities to study in the Western countries, and returned to Taiwan with novel compositional techniques. Not until the second half of the twentieth century did Taiwanese composers have the chance and perspective to establish an identity through their roots. Some contemporary Taiwanese composers, including Ke-Chia Chen, still utilize folk music as inspiration for their work.

Ke-Chia Chen (b. 1979) is a female Taiwanese composer. Her compositions focus not only on Taiwanese folk music elements, but also include modern compositional techniques. Because Chen belongs to the latest generation of Taiwanese composers, this document provides the first study of her solo piano works. The primary resource for this document are interviews conducted between the composer and myself. The purpose of this study is to promote Taiwanese composers who, like

Chen, have found their voice and contribute to the piano repertoire.

Music is influenced by culture. In order to provide the reader with the necessary historical context to appreciate Taiwanese musical culture, the first chapter of this document offers a brief history of Taiwan, an introduction of Taiwanese folk music, and an enumeration of some important Taiwanese composers. The main body of the document is comprised of a detailed analysis of two mature solo piano works of Ke-Chia Chen, *To An Isolated Island* (2004) and *Treasure Box* (2010). The final chapter discusses potential implications of increasing the repertoire of modern Taiwanese compositions, as well as touching on current setbacks facing Taiwanese composers.

Chapter I

Short History of Taiwan and Taiwanese Folk Music

General Information and Brief History of Taiwan

Music is strongly influenced by history and culture. In order to understand the music of Taiwan, therefore, it is necessary to have some contextual knowledge.

Taiwan is an island located in the Pacific Ocean. It is south of Korea and Japan, and east of China. This island is about 13,900 square miles and has about 23 million people.¹

Roughly 6000 years ago, some Austronesian people immigrated to Taiwan. Their descendants are still on the island, and are known as the Taiwanese aboriginal people.²

The Austronesians spread over the Pacific Ocean, settling to the north in Taiwan and to the south in New Zealand.³ There are sixteen different tribes in Taiwan now, which comprise only 2% of the total population of Taiwan.⁴

Taiwan has been colonized by different countries throughout its history. In the sixteenth century, Taiwan was under the Dutch and Spanish rule for thirty-seven years

¹ Executive Yuan, “土地與人民 (中華民國國情簡介) Land and people,” accessed August 5, 2018, https://www.ey.gov.tw/state/Content_List.aspx?n=9EC698333226EFEA.

² Gary Marvin Davison, *A Short History of Taiwan: The Case for Independence* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 1.

³ Tsang-Houei Hsu, Chui-Kuan Lu, and Rong-Sing Zheng, eds., *台灣傳統音樂之美 The Beauty of Traditional Taiwanese Music* (Taipei: Morning Star, 2003), 12.

⁴ Gary Marvin Davison, *A short history of Taiwan*, 1.

(1624–61). After 1661, the Zheng family occupied Taiwan from 1661-1683. The Qing dynasty defeated the Zheng family and took control of the land for over two hundred years (1683-1895).

In 1895, the Qing dynasty was defeated by Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and Taiwan was given to Japan for fifty years (1895-1945). After Japan was defeated in World War II, Taiwan was returned to Kuomintang, a political party founded by Sun Yet-Sen. Kuomintang was the official government of China at the time, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek. In 1949, however, Kuomintang was defeated by Mao, and retreated to Taiwan.

As a result of these varying cultural influences imparted by Spain, the Netherlands, China, and Japan, Taiwan understandably developed its own unique culture.

Traditional Taiwanese Folk Music

The Taiwanese population can be roughly divided into two ethnic groups: the aboriginal people and the Han group. Each of these groups created distinct folk music, which will be described in the following sections.

Taiwanese Aboriginal Music

Taiwanese aboriginals consist of the plains tribes and mountain tribes. The plains tribes have been assimilated into the Han culture; however, the mountain tribes

maintain their traditional culture and music.⁵ According to the Council of Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan, the sixteen existent tribes are as follows: Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Tsou, Rukai, Pinuyumayan, Saisiyat, Yami, Thao, Kavalan, Truku, Sakizaya, Sediq, Hla'alua, and Kanakanavu.⁶ Each tribe disseminates cultural knowledge, including music, by oral tradition.

Singing Music

Taiwanese aboriginal music is varied, but shares common features with tribal music in other countries. Vocal music is more common than instrumental music, with songs that are often short, simple, strophic, and comprised of isorhythmic patterns. Each tribe has its own singing style that utilizes monophonic, polyphonic, harmonic, and heterophonic textures.⁷ The song lyrics reflect the human experience as related to the natural world, the supernatural, and interpersonal relationships. Songs about nature include hunting songs, fishing songs, and cultivation songs. Prayer and worship songs fall under the category of the supernatural. Wedding songs, love songs, and songs of celebration are considered to be about human relationships.⁸

⁵ Tsang-Houei Hsu, Yu-Hsiu Lu, Chuikuan Lü, Kuo-Huang Han and Joanna C. Lee, "Taiwan," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed June 12, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000049502?rskey=IMFJqW&result=1>.

⁶ Council of Indigenous Peoples, "原住民族委員會全球資訊網 The Tribes in Taiwan," accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.apc.gov.tw/portal/cateInfo.html?CID=5DD9C4959C302B9FD0636733C6861689>.

⁷ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 27.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

Instrumental Music

Instrumental music of the Taiwanese tribes is composed for solo instruments as well as ensembles. Distinctive tribal solo instruments include the *lubu* from the Atayal tribe, the *la-dol* from the Bunun tribe, and the nose flute from the Paiwan tribe. The most famous ensemble instruments are the Amis tribal bells and the *ma-dodol* of the Bunun tribe, which is a percussion instrument constructed from different lengths and textures of wood to make different sounds, 樂杵.⁹ The instrumental music is usually used for communication, to accompany dance, for festivals, or for religious ceremonies.¹⁰

Traditional Taiwanese Han Music

Aside from aboriginal people, most citizens of Taiwan belong to the Han group. Traditional Taiwanese Han music encompasses an array of genres. This section will introduce Nanguan (南管); Beiguan (北管); Taiwanese opera, known as Guahie (歌仔戲); and Taiwanese folk songs.

Nanguan

Nanguan, which translates as “south tune,” is originally from the southern part of China, including the cities of Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, and Chaozhou.¹¹ Nanguan

⁹ Tsang-Houei Hsu, Chui-Kuan Lu, and Rong-Sing Zheng, eds., *台灣傳統音樂之美 The Beauty of Traditional Taiwanese Music* (Taipei: Morning Star, 2003), 41-43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 185.

utilizes an instrumental chamber setting with an elegant and graceful sound. The two groups of instruments used in Nanguan are Shang Sihguan (上四管) and Sia Sihguan (下四管). Shang Sihguan refers to strings (*pipa*, *er shian*, and *san shian*) and woodwinds (*donghsiao*, 洞簫). Sia Sihguan is a percussion ensemble. The most common setting for Nanguan is Shang Siguan with a person seated in the middle holding a clapper.¹²

Beiguan

Beiguan, also known as “north tune,” is louder and more energetic than Nanguan. Beiguan makes use of strings, brass, and a plethora of percussion instruments. Its robust soundscape lends itself well to outdoor events such as religious ceremonies, funerals, and festivals.¹³

Taiwanese Opera (Guahie)

The name “Guahie” translates to “song-drama,” and is also known as Taiwanese opera. Guahie emerged around 1903-1923 in Yilan, a county in northeastern Taiwan.¹⁴

The original Guahie was a person telling stories by singing on the street. Later, the phenomenon evolved into a group of people presenting stories by acting and singing at outdoor events. Guahie is similar to opera in that both of them have plots,

¹² Tsang-Houei Hsu, Chui-Kuan Lu, and Rong-Sing Zheng, eds., *台灣傳統音樂之美 The Beauty of Traditional Taiwanese Music* (Taipei: Morning Star, 2003), 115.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 118-121.

¹⁴ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 198.

costumes, and singing combined with acting. For this reason, Guahie is often referred to as Taiwanese opera. Guahie reached its peak in the late twentieth century, wherein it was not only performed in festivals and theaters, but was also broadcast on the radio and television.¹⁵

There are three main characters in Guahie, known as Sheng (生), Dan (旦), and Chou (丑). Sheng is a male character, Dan is a female character, and Chou is a funny character. These three characters are an essential part of the performance of Guahie, and are present in every show associated with Guahie. The musical staging of Guahie requires strings and woodwinds to be stationed on the right side of the stage, while percussion inhabits stage left. *Wen chang*, a scene comprised of singing and talking with little action, is usually performed with strings and woodwinds. By contrast, fighting or action scenes, known as *wu chang*, only use unpitched percussion instruments.¹⁶ A significant and emotional singing style in Guahie is the “wailing tone” (哭調), which requires singers to imitate crying.

Taiwanese Folk Songs

There are two main Han groups in Taiwan: Hoklo, also called Fulao or Hokkien, and Hakka. According to the Executive Yuan¹⁷, about 97% of the population in

¹⁵ Ibid..

¹⁶ Shang-Ren Jian 簡上仁, *台灣民謠 Taiwanese Folk Songs* (Taipei: 眾文圖書公司, 1987), 93.

¹⁷ The Executive Yuan is the government executive branch in Taiwan.

Taiwan are Han, 2% are Taiwanese aboriginal, and 1% are from other countries.¹⁸

Taiwan's population under the Han group consists of 70% Hoklo, 15% Hakka, with the remaining 12% consisting of immigrants after the Japanese colonial period who are also Han.¹⁹ Taiwanese folk songs can be categorized by ethnic group and language.²⁰ The two primary groups are Han and aboriginal folk songs; within the Han category, the Hoklo and Hakka have distinctive folk music. This section will focus on Hakka and Fulao folk songs.

Hakka Folk Songs

When the Hakka people first immigrated to Taiwan, they worked and lived in the mountain areas; therefore, “mountain songs” are the most renowned songs in Hakka folk music.²¹ The most prolific subject of mountain songs is love; however, many songs detail the activities of daily life. The lyrics in Hakka folk songs are written in Tang poetry style, which is structured by four sentences with seven words in each sentence.²² The first, second, and last sentence rhyme. Hakka folk songs are usually presented in binary form. While the most prevalent scale in Hakka folk music is

¹⁸ Executive Yuan, “族群(中華民國國情簡介-人民) Ethnic group,” accessed August 5, 2018, https://www.ey.gov.tw/state/News_Content3.aspx?n=7C222A52A60660EC&s=FFD5D521BBC119F8.

¹⁹ The Hakka Affairs Council, “National Research for Hakka people in Taiwan 2010-2011”(Executive Yuan: The Hakka Affairs Council, 2011), 172.

²⁰ Shang-Ren Jian 簡上仁, *台灣民謠 Taiwanese Folk Songs* (Taipei: 眾文圖書公司, 1987), 5.

²¹ Tsang-Houei Hsu, Chui-Kuan Lu, and Rong-Sing Zheng, eds., *台灣傳統音樂之美 The Beauty of Traditional Taiwanese Music* (Taipei: Morning Star, 2003), 149.

²² Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 150.

pentatonic, some songs also utilize tetrachords, hexachords, and heptatonic scales.²³

Fulao Folk Songs

Fulao folk songs are composed in Fulao, a language from the Chinese province of Fujian. In the seventeenth century, people from Fujian immigrated to Taiwan in search of a better life, and they have remained there since. More than half of the population of Taiwan was originally from Fujian; consequently, Fulao folk songs are the most popular folk music in Taiwan. Fulao folk music can be divided into traditional folk songs and composed folk songs. Most of the composed folk songs were composed during the Japanese colonial period (ca. 1925-1937).

According to *Taiwanese Folk Songs* by Jian, the definition of traditional Taiwanese folk songs is, “songs existing in Taiwan for a long time, which have no record of the composer. The lyrics may change depending on the area, but the lyrics are still related to the Taiwanese daily life and spirit.”²⁴ Some well-known traditional folk songs in Taiwan include “Tiuh Tiuh Tang a” (丟丟銅仔), “June Jasmine” (六月茉莉), “The Dark Sky” (天黑黑), and “Little Egret” (白鷺鷥).

Composed folk songs share characteristic similarities with traditional folk songs, with the exception of having a known author. The majority of the songs in this category were composed during the Japanese colonial period, and reflect the state of

²³ Ibid., 150-151.

²⁴ Shang-Ren Jian 簡上仁, *台灣民謠 Taiwanese Folk Songs* (Taipei: 眾文圖書公司, 1987), 2.

society and life at the time. These composed folk songs are currently still quite popular. A few famous compositions by Yu-Hsien Teng (1906-1944), who was recognized as the father of Taiwanese folk songs, include: “Rainy Night Flower” (雨夜花, 1934), “Season Red” (四季紅, 1938), and “Longing for the Spring Breeze” (望春風, 1933).²⁵

Regarding tonality, Fulao folk songs make use of five-tone (pentatonic), six-tone (hexatonic), and seven-tone (heptatonic) scales, with pentatonic scales being the most popular.²⁶ In Chinese and Taiwanese music, pentatonic scales are built on major seconds and minor thirds, and the mode is determined by the starting pitch. The most common pentatonic scale is the Gong scale, which is C-D-E-G-A; however, there are five pentatonic modes. (Example 1-1). “Tiuh Tiuh Tang a,” “June Jasmine,” and “Rainy Night Flower” are pentatonic folk songs.

²⁵ Taiwan Yu-Hsien Teng music association, *台灣歌謠的春雨 傳·鄧雨賢* (Taipei: 華品文創, 2016), 2.

²⁶ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 126.

Example 1.1: Five modes of pentatonic scales

Gong mode
Gong Shang Jiao Zhi Yu Gong

Shang mode
Shang Jiao Zhi Yu Gong Shang

Jiao mode
Jiao Zhi Yu Gong Shang Jiao

Zhi mode
Zhi Yu Gong Shang Jiao Zhi

Yu mode
Yu Gong Shang Jiao Zhi Yu

The hexatonic and heptatonic scales are based on the pentatonic scale. Hexatonic scales utilize the pentatonic scale as a foundation, and add a note in between the interval of minor third. For example, the added note can be placed in between E and G or in between A and C. There are two possibilities for each pentatonic mode; therefore, there are 10 hexatonic modes.²⁷ The most common six-tone scale in the Taiwanese Fulao repertoire is C-D-E-F-G-A, employed by such compositions as “The Dark Sky” (天黑黑) and “Little Egret” (白鷺鷥).

The only intervals in the seven-tone scale are minor and major seconds. The

²⁷ Tien-Yi Chiang, “A Study of Piano Works by Formusica: The New Taiwan Music Piano Works, Volumes I-VII” (DMA. diss., The City University of New York, 2006), 35.

most popular seven-tone scale in Taiwanese Fulao folk music is the same construction as the major scale, or Ionian mode, in Western music (C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C). Songs like “Season Red” and “Longing for the Spring Breeze” belong to this group.

The intervals used in Taiwanese Fulao folk songs are narrow, usually within an octave.²⁸ The most common intervals in Taiwanese folk songs are major seconds and minor thirds, perhaps because of the formation of the scales they are based upon.

Another reason for using many seconds and thirds probably relates to the tone of the Fulao language. There are more than six linguistic tones in Fulao,²⁹ and folk melodies are composed according to these linguistic tones. Common intervals other than the major second and minor third include the perfect fourth, major third, and perfect fifth.³⁰

Comparable to a lot of folk music, Taiwanese Fulao folk songs have simple rhythmic patterns and repeated sections. They employ ornamental tones to beautify and enhance melodies, which is common in folk music throughout the world.³¹ A particular type of ornamental tone called the “extending note” (牽尾音) is often utilized to prolong the end of the phrase, should the performer choose to include the

²⁸ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 126.

²⁹ Shang-Ren Jian 簡上仁, *台灣福佬系民謠-老祖先的台灣歌 Taiwanese Fulao Folk Songs: Old Taiwanese Songs* (Taipei: 漢光文化事業股份有限公司眾文圖書公司, 1998), 19.

³⁰ Yung-Yi Li 李永奕, “The Research of the Folk song Melody Comparability Between Fu-lao and Hakka”(Master diss., National Hsinchu University of Education, 2006), 184.

³¹ Bruno Nettl, *Folk music in the United States, an introduction* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), 40.

extension. Because many musicians sing with the ornamental tone, the use of extending tones has become a tradition for several folk songs.

Western Musical style in Taiwan

Short History of Taiwanese Composers

Under the Dutch imperialism of the seventeenth century (1624-1661), Taiwan experienced Western, primarily Catholic, music for the first time. However, after the Zheng family defeated the Dutch, Western music was forced out of the cultural repertory. Two hundred years later, when the government was defeated in the Second Opium War, Taiwan was obliged to open all ports for trade, and missionaries from many Western countries reintroduced their cultural music to Taiwan.

Formal modern music education was unavailable in Taiwan until the Japanese colonial period. In 1896, the second year of Japanese control, schools began to incorporate music classes. During this time, many Taiwanese students traveled to Japan for further training in order to become professional musicians.

The First Generation: Japanese Music Education

The first generation of professional Taiwanese composers received training in Japan. According to Tsang-Houei Hsu, this group of composers was active from approximately 1945-1960.³² Renowned first-generation Taiwanese composers

³² Tsang-Houei Hsu, *音樂史述稿-台灣音樂史初稿補充篇* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 1996), 96.

include Wen-Yeh Chiang (江文也, 1910-1983), Si-Zhi Chen (陳泗治, 1911-1992), Chuan-Sheng Lu (呂泉生, 1916-2008), and Chug-Yuan Kuo (郭芝苑, 1921-2013).

Wen-Yeh Chiang (江文也, 1910-1983) was the first internationally recognized Taiwanese composer. He was born in Taipei, Taiwan and went to Japan when he was thirteen. He studied composition with famous Japanese composer Kosahu Yamada (1886-1965) for a short period of time. Chiang also studied the music of Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel, and Bartok; therefore, the influence of those composers can be found in Chiang's compositions.³³ Later in his life, he garnered inspiration from Alexander Tcherepnin, who taught Chiang to combine twentieth-century Western compositional techniques with traditional Chinese music.³⁴ Chiang's *Formosa Dance*, Op. 1 for orchestra won honorable mention in the art competition of the Berlin summer Olympics in 1936. His piano work *Bagatelles*, Op. 8 won the prize at the Fourth International Music Festival in Venice, and made Chiang an internationally acclaimed composer.

Si-Zhi Chen (陳泗治, 1911-1992) was a pianist, composer, educator, and priest. After the ports opened in 1860, Western religions founded schools in Taiwan, most of which were Christian institutions. Chen attended a Christian school, and the influence

³³ Wan-Yi Chao, "Study on Analysis and Exploration of Chiang Wen-Yeh's Piano Work "Bagatelle," Op. 8/ Chao Wan-Yi Piano Recital" (Master diss., Soochow University, 2013), 11.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

of his religious studies is apparent in his compositions. Like many composers at that time, Chen furthered his musical study in Japan and also studied composition in Canada in 1957. He served as the principal of a middle school in Taiwan for years. Upon retirement, Chen moved to the United States, and died in California at the age of eighty-one. Chen's compositional output consists of hymns and solo piano works.³⁵ Many of his piano compositions are inspired by Taiwanese culture and scenery. His most significant piano works include *Taiwan Sketches*, *Dragon Dance*, and *Fantasy: Tamsui*.

Chug-Yuan Kuo (郭芝苑, 1921-2013) was born in Miaoli County. He was not well known in Taiwan during the early part of his career.³⁶ Kuo learned harmonica and violin before studying composition. He was strongly influenced by the ideas of Impressionism and nationalism, both of which are represented in his piano works.³⁷ For instance, the use of parallel chords and broken chords in the coda of *Variations and Fugue on the Taiwanese Ancient Melodies* reflects sonorities found in Debussy's music. Kuo employed traditional Western forms in many of his works, such as theme and variation in his *Variations and Fugue on the Taiwanese Ancient Melodies* and sonata form in the first movement of *Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra*. He

³⁵ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *音樂史述稿-台灣音樂史初稿補充篇* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 1996), 96.

³⁶ Yu-Fang Jeng, "The Study on Kuo Chih-Yuan's Piano Solo 'Variations and Fugue on an Ancient Taiwan Music'" (Master diss., Soochow University, 2004), 5-6.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

also drew upon a number of traditional Taiwanese elements, including pentatonic scales, aboriginal songs, *nanguan*, *beiguan*, *guahie*, and traditional Taiwanese folk songs. These Taiwanese elements can be found in works such as *Variations and Fugue on the Taiwanese Ancient Melodies, Seven Taiwanese Gezhi Tunes* (1974)³⁸, *Six Taiwanese Nanguan Tunes* (1973), and more.³⁹

The Second Generation: Study in the Western Countries

After the Japanese colonial period, the society in Taiwan was unstable, and a new artistic movement did not begin until the 1960s. The National Taiwan Normal University and the National Taiwan University of the Arts, founded after the Japanese colonial period, offered the first formal university-level music programs in Taiwan. Most of composers in the second generation graduated from these universities. In contrast to the first generation, composers in this period primarily studied in Europe or the United States. Second-generation Taiwanese composers include Wei-Liang Shi (史惟亮, 1925-1976), Tsang-Houei Hsu (許常惠, 1929-2001), and Yen Lu (盧炎, 1930-2008).

Of the aforementioned composers, Hsu is the singular figure in the music history of Taiwan. He majored in violin, studying in Japan for six years. Hsu then attended

³⁸ Guahie (Taiwanese Opera) is also called *Gezhi* in Taiwan.

³⁹ Yu-Fang Jeng, "The Study on Kuo Chih-Yuan's Piano Solo 'Variations and Fugue on an Ancient Taiwan Music'" (Master diss., Soochow University, 2004), 31.

the National Taiwan Normal University, where he majored in violin and composition.

In 1954, he achieved further education at the Paris-Sorbonne University and National Superior Conservatory in Paris. Tsang-Houei Hsu was the first Taiwanese composer to travel to France after World War II.⁴⁰ During his sojourn in Paris, Hsu studied music history with Jacques Chailley (1910-1999), music analysis with Oliver Messiaen (1908-1992), and composition with André Jolivet (1905-1974).⁴¹ Hsu's compositional style was strongly impacted by Debussy, Bartok, Berg, and Stravinsky.⁴² Like Chiang and Kuo before him, Hsu blended twentieth-century Western compositional techniques with traditional tunes and literature from his homeland.⁴³

Tsang-Houei Hsu returned to Taiwan in 1959, at which point he worked as a professor for a variety of universities. Hsu was a co-founder of many groups for contemporary music, such as the Composer's Forum (1961), Premiere in Taipei (1961), The Wave (1963), the Asian Composers League (1971), and more.⁴⁴ In addition to devising groups that benefited composers, Hsu also did research on the traditional music of Taiwan. He played an important role in the "Folk Song Collecting

⁴⁰ Jen-Wen Dai, "Tsang Houei Hsu's solo piano works" (Master diss., Soochow University, 2004), 14.

⁴¹ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *音樂史述稿-台灣音樂史初稿補充篇* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 1996), 98.

⁴² Ching-Ming Cheng, "An Annotated Bibliography of Taiwanese Piano Music by Selected Composers Born after 1950" (DMA. diss., University of Miami, 2006), 3.

⁴³ Jen-Wen Dai, "Tsang Houei Hsu's solo piano works" (Master diss., Soochow University, 2004), 35.

⁴⁴ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *音樂史述稿-台灣音樂史初稿補充篇* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 1996), 99.

Movement,” along with Wei-Liang Shi, from 1966 until the end of the movement in 1978.⁴⁵ Across the twelve years of the Folk Song Collecting Movement, these composers gathered more than two thousand pieces that included aboriginal music, Fulao folk songs, and Hakka folk music.⁴⁶

Important Composers after the Second Generation

After 1975, more Taiwanese composers had the opportunity to study abroad. Esteemed composers who were active after 1975 include Tyzen Hsiao (蕭泰然, 1938-2015), Shui-Lung Ma (馬水龍, 1939-2015), Hwang-Long Pan (潘皇龍, b. 1945), Fang-Lung Ke (柯芳隆, b. 1947), Shing-Kwei Tzeng (曾興魁, b. 1946), Gordon Shi-Wen Chin (金希文, b. 1957), Fan-Ling Su (蘇凡凌, b. 1955), Ching-Yu Hsiao (蕭慶瑜, b. 1953), and Shi-Ji Pan (潘世姬, b. 1957). After the 1980s, the number of female Taiwanese composers began to increase. Most of these composers taught at the university level, thereby influencing nascent composers.

Tyzen Hsiao (蕭泰然, 1938-2015) was a pianist, conductor, and composer. He is known as “Taiwan’s Rachmaninoff.” Hsiao studied with Tsang-Houei Hsu while earning his bachelor’s degree from the National Taiwan Normal University.

According to the Taipei Times, Hsiao’s style is to “use the spirit of Taiwanese folk

⁴⁵ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 326-329.

⁴⁶ Ibid..

melody as the core and meld it into the classical, romantic, impressionistic and modern styles of music to form the basis for the neo-Taiwanese music style.”⁴⁷ Many of his works reference Taiwan, such as *Do Not Reject Taiwan* (1987); *Memories of Home*, Op. 49 (1987); *The Angel from Formosa*⁴⁸ (1999); and *The Spirits of Taiwan* (1998).

After the 1980s, many Taiwanese composers began writing music that ruminated upon the political events in Taiwanese history. For example, Hwang-long Pan’s *Impression of Formosa* (1987) for orchestra was inspired by the end of martial law in Taiwan in 1987. The symphony *Taiwan* (1996) by Gordon Chin evoked the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, in which China fired missiles intended to threaten Taiwan. Similarly, Shi-ji Pan’s *Mother, Night, Secret* (1998) was written in response to the February 28 Incident of 1947, which involved the massacre of thousands by the Kuomintang-led government as a means to quell the concurrent anti-government movement.⁴⁹

Fang-Lung Ke (柯芳隆, b. 1947) was born in Taichung, Taiwan, to a farming family. Due to his formative context, Ke experienced traditional Taiwanese folk songs

⁴⁷ Yuan-Ting Yang and Jake Chung, “Taiwan composer Tyzen Hsiao loses cancer battle,” Taipei Times (Feb 26, 2015): Accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/02/26/2003612259>.

⁴⁸ Formosa is a historical name for Taiwan, hearkening back to Dutch and Spanish colonial times.

⁴⁹ Kuo-Chen Lin, “Understand the contemporary serious music composition of Taiwan (1980-2005) from the cognitive phenomenon of culture” (DMA diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 2009), 24-25.

firsthand by listening to the elders sing and spending time at local temples. The composer's first formal musical training was through the teacher certification program at the National Hsinchu Normal University. Ke was subsequently accepted into the National Taiwan Normal University music department, where he studied composition with Tsang-Houei Hsu. Ke furthered his compositional studies in Germany under Korean composer Isang Yun (1917-1995) from 1980-1985.

Yun's use of Eastern materials had a serious impact on Ke's compositional style. Ke was inspired by traditional Taiwanese elements, especially drums and temple gongs. The primary intent of Ke's music is to use the techniques of modern Western music to express the traditional Taiwanese sound. He strives to write music that addresses his generation while establishing his own style.⁵⁰ For instance, his *Crying Mermaid* (1993) for orchestra ponders humanity's destruction of the environment and nature. In this piece, Ke employs traditional Taiwanese folk tunes and the sound of tone similar to Penderecki and Ligeti.⁵¹ Ke currently serves as Professor of Composition at the National Taiwan Normal University.

Gordon Shi-Wen Chin (金希文, b. 1957) was born in Yunlin, Taiwan. He attended middle school in Japan, and earned his bachelor's degree at Biola University

⁵⁰ Ming-Chieh Lin 林明杰, "從柯芳隆《哭泣的美人魚》看現代音樂對我創作所產生之影響" Master diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 2008), 5-7.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3.

and D.M.A. at the Eastman School of Music in 1988. His works have been performed in North America, Asia, and Europe by numerous major ensembles. Chin's Taiwanese roots are evident in his compositions; several of his pieces refer to Taiwan in the title, such as his third symphony, named *Taiwan* (1995). On a more profound level, Chin utilizes Taiwanese folk and aboriginal melodies in his creative process, manipulating the elements to create subtle homages.⁵² As a Christian, he also composed many pieces for religious purposes. Chin holds the title of Professor of Composition at the National Taiwan Normal University.

Fan-Ling Su (蘇凡凌, b. 1955) was born in Hsinchu, Taiwan. After she finished her master degree in the National Taiwan Normal University, she attended the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria, for further study. In 2007, Su became the first person to earn a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from a university in Taiwan, graduating from the Taipei National University of the Arts. She writes music for traditional Taiwanese instruments, and many of her vocal works are written in Hakka and Fulao. Many of her composition titles are derived from famous poetry of the Tang dynasty (circa 618-907 B.C.). A number of Su's works are inspired by traditional Taiwanese festivals and events. She currently serves as a professor at the National Tsing Hus University, a member of the Hakka Affair Council, and the

⁵² Li-An Chen, "Study of Taiwanese composer Gordon Chin's piano concerto no. 1" (DMA diss., Indiana University, 2014), 2.

vice president of the Chinese Woman Composers' Association.⁵³

Female composers in Taiwan After 1970

In modern times, increasingly more Taiwanese women are able to achieve careers in composition. Before a short biography of Ke-Chia Chen, this section will briefly address some female composers from the same generation as Chen who are active in the music world now.

Chin-Mei Lin (林京美, b. 1980) is a composer and pianist. She holds degrees in composition from the National Taiwan Normal University (bachelor), the Eastman School of Music (master), and the University of Michigan (DMA). According to the International Society for Contemporary Music, “Lin incorporates innovative and international techniques that combine local dissonances with large-scale consonant structures, and pentatonic modality within a chromatic pitch language.”⁵⁴ She has received several awards, including First Prize in the NACUSA Young Composers Competition and an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. Lin is the Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Taipei National University of the Arts now.

Ming-Hsiu Yen (顏名秀, b. 1980) was born in Taichung, Taiwan. She obtained a

⁵³ National Tsing Hua University, “蘇凡凌 教授 - 國立清華大學音樂學系,” 2018, accessed July 16 2018, <http://music.web.nthu.edu.tw/files/13-1974-22384.php?Lang=zh-tw>.

⁵⁴ International Society for Contemporary Music, “Lin, CHING MEI - F - Chinese Taipei | ISCM,” 2018, accessed July 17 2018, <https://www.iscm.org/catalogue/composers/lin-ching-mei-f-chinese-taipei>.

bachelor's degree in piano and composition at the Eastman School of Music, and later earned her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Michigan. Yen has won several composition awards, including the Heckscher Composition Prize, the 22nd ACL Yoshiro Irino Memorial Prize, and the First Prize in the SCI/ASCAP Composition Commission Competition. She is the Associate Professor of Theory and Composition at the Taipei National University of the Arts.⁵⁵

Biography and Compositional Style of Ke-Chia Chen

Ke-Chia Chen (陳可嘉) was born in Taichung, Taiwan in 1979. Chen received her Bachelor of Music degree from the National Taiwan Normal University. She studied with Fang-Lung Ke (b. 1947) and Gordon Shi-Wen Chin (b. 1957), both of whom are among the aforementioned esteemed composers of Taiwan. Chen came to the United States in 2003 to pursue a Master of Music degree in composition at the Manhattan School of Music. Upon completion in 2006, she earned a diploma in music composition from the Curtis Institute of Music. Chen proceeded to Pennsylvania, achieving a doctorate in composition at the University of Pennsylvania in 2013. Dr. Chen's teachers while in the U.S. included Herbert Willi, Lera Auerbach, Robert Xavier Rodriguez, and Ford Lallerstedt. She currently serves as a faculty member at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she has been since 2013.

⁵⁵ "Curriculum Vitae," Ming-Hsiu Yen official website, accessed July 17, 2018, <http://www.minghsiuyen.com/curriculum-vitae/>

Awards and Fellowships

Chen has received many honors throughout her career so far. In 2004, she earned the Manhattan Prize from the Manhattan School of Music in New York. Chen received the Grand Prize in composition from the IBLA Foundation World Music Competition in 2005. Following her acceptance into the Curtis Institute of Music diploma program, she received the Cyrus H. K. Curtis Fellowship from 2006 to 2007 and the Stefany and Simon Bergson Annual Fellowship in 2008. Chen also merited the Marilyn Costello Award from the Lyra Society in 2009.

While Chen was in the Ph.D. program at the University of Pennsylvania, she received the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship from 2009-2013. In 2009, her orchestral piece entitled *Broken Crystal* received the Marilyn K. Glick Young Composer Award from the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. The Indianapolis Star review of *Broken Crystal* praises its unique achievements, noting that the work is “orchestrated with lavish self-confidence and a resourcefulness leaning toward the percussion section, the work made a coherent whole out of its pattern of abrupt contrasts, crowned by a broad, stunningly accented ‘maestoso’ episode.”⁵⁶

In 2011, Ke-Chia Chen received the David Halstead Music Prize from the University of Pennsylvania. The following year, she received the Subito Grant from

⁵⁶ Jay Harvey, “Violinist brings spark to ISO performance,” *IndyStar*, June 5, 2010, 2.

the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Composers Forum. *The Silent Flame*, her work for horn and piano, took first place at the International Horn Society Composition Contest in 2016.

Style

Chen suggests that her styles can be divided into four periods: before 2003, 2003-2006, 2006-2012, and after 2012. The first period, called the “Taiwan period,” refers to her years of training and writing in Taiwan. The second period spans her first few years in the United States, when she lived in New York City. The third period marks the beginning of Chen’s tenure in Philadelphia. The most recent compositional period is after 2012.

Piano Works

Ke-Chia Chen has written five pieces for the piano, including works for solo piano and for piano four hands. Two of the solos were written in her early life (1997-1998). According to the composer, these works can be classified as student compositions, rather than mature works. During Chen’s second period (2003-2006), she wrote *To An Isolated Island* (2004). In her third period (2006-2012), she produced a piece for solo piano titled *Treasure Box* (2010). During her most recent period, she composed a four-hand piece, *Taiwanese Children’s Games*, which was written in 2014.

List of Ke-Chia Chen's Piano WorksSolo

The Song of Leaves for solo piano (1997), ca. 8 min.

Suite No. 1 for solo piano (1998), ca. 5 min.

To An Isolated Island for solo piano (2004), ca. 13 min.

Treasure Box for solo piano (2010), ca. 12 min.

Four-hands

Taiwanese Children's Games for piano four hands (2014), ca. 6 min.

Chapter II

Musical Background and Analysis of *To An Isolated Island*

Chen and *To An Isolated Island*

Ke-Chia Chen came to the United States in 2003, and she composed the solo piano piece, *To An Isolated Island*, during the following year. The mood of this piece is suffused with homesickness and love for Taiwan. According to Chen, “When you are in a situation of loneliness and homesickness, you will use the instrument you are most familiar with; that is why I chose the piano.”⁵⁷ Chen minored in piano while pursuing a degree in composition in college; thus, she utilized her personal comfort and intimacy with the piano to express her thoughts about her homeland. She continues, “I wrote this piece in a dark, cold practice room, a place which fit my situation at the time. This piece didn’t take me long to write, because I already knew what I wanted to write.”⁵⁸

To An Isolated Island is the first piano piece Chen composed after her move to the United States, and its melancholy reflects that of the composer during this turning point in her life. The piece was given its world premiere by Maria Salabasheva on November 22, 2004, in New York. Min-Kuei Yang presented the Taiwan premiere in Taipei in 2005. The duration of this work is about thirteen minutes.

⁵⁷ Ke-Chia Chen, interview by author, January 18, 2018.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

To An Isolated Island is comprised of four programmatic movements. Rather than inscribing the title at the beginning of each movement, Chen only mentions the titles in the program notes. In the first movement, “Taiwan’s place in the world,” the composer relies heavily on nontraditional notation, and the movement is entirely based on two main motives. The second movement is entitled “The bustling energy of city-life,” which is intended to portray modern city life using moving eighth notes. The following movement, “Love of tradition,” contains material from Taiwanese aboriginal music, and its second section is constructed using isorhythm, a compositional technique that focuses on repeated rhythmic and tonal patterns. The finale is “The never ending hope for the future,” which is powerfully influenced by the Han musical style. There is no clear tonal center for the whole piece, although, the piece ends on a B major chord.

Taiwan’s place in the world

The first movement, “Taiwan’s place in the world,” is comprised of two main motives that are embellished and developed throughout the movement. The title of this movement reinforces the name of the whole piece: within the context of the globe, Taiwan is a physical and political island. The country is isolated from diplomatic relations with other countries, and is not allowed to join international organizations such as the United Nations.

The structure of the first movement is A, B, and a combined A and B. The composer introduces the A motive, followed by the B motive, and then combines materials from each motive for the last section of the movement. The A motive, which only contains half notes and quarter notes, represents the atmosphere of loneliness and isolation described by title of the movement and the piece. The first seven measures of the movement comprise motive A, which is written in 6/4 and 8/4. The chorale-like motive is based on a three-note group that utilizes perfect fifth and major third intervals. Thirds and fifths are foundational intervals throughout this movement, as demonstrated in Example 2.1 below, and much melodic material of later movements also features thirds and fifths.

Example 2.1: Intervals of Thirds and Fifths in Motive A, mm. 1-4, Mov. I

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.1, which is Motive A from measures 1-4 of the first movement. The score is written in 6/4 time and features a three-note group in the right hand, highlighted by a red box. The notes are G4, B4, and D5, forming a perfect fifth and a major third. The score includes dynamics (pp, p, mf, mp) and interval markings (8va, 8va, 8va, 8va). The score is in 6/4 time and features a three-note group in the right hand, highlighted by a red box. The notes are G4, B4, and D5, forming a perfect fifth and a major third. The score includes dynamics (pp, p, mf, mp) and interval markings (8va, 8va, 8va, 8va).

Motive B is a rhythmic motive that contains a short-long figure, depicted in Example 2.2. The motive B section, which extends from mm. 8-17, has no time signature; instead, the composer indicates the length by seconds. The short-long

rhythmic pattern happens fourteen times until it disappears in m. 18.

Example 2.2: Motive B, m. 8, Mov. I

Chen develops motive A into new decorative material in mm. 10-17 of the B section. This new content is based on a diminution of the three-note group from the beginning, as shown in Example 2.3.

Example 2.3: New material based on motive A, mm. 9-10, Mov. I

The transition in mm. 18-20 features the retrograde of motive A, accompanied by diminished fifths in the left hand. Motive A also appears in diminution in mm. 21-26, as highlighted by Example 2.4.

Example 2.4: Retrograde and diminution of motive A, mm. 17-22, Mov. I

The musical score for Example 2.4 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 17-18, and the second system covers measures 19-22. The tempo is marked as 144. Motive A is circled in red in measures 17-18 and 19-20. The left hand plays a pentatonic scale in Zhi mode (CDFGA) in measures 19-22. Dynamics range from *fff* to *mp*.

In mm. 27-31, Chen employs the perfect fifth and major third intervals of motive A, raised by a half-step, to create a new melody. Additionally, the left hand contains a pentatonic scale in Zhi mode (CDFGA) in mm. 29-32.

Example 2.5: New material based on motive A and a pentatonic scale, mm. 27-34, Mov. I

The musical score for Example 2.5 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 27-30, and the second system covers measures 31-34. The tempo is marked as 144. Motive A is highlighted in red boxes in measures 27-30 and 31-32. The left hand plays a pentatonic scale in Zhi mode (CDFGA) in measures 29-32. Dynamics range from *f* to *fff*.

Measures 33-39 are based on the B motive, with short-long figures and tremolos. There is a final presentation of motive B and the original motive A in mm. 41-48, and this restatement of all original material offers some closure. In contrast, the final measures present an ascending figure similar to that of m. 40, the sustained notes fading into a questioning silence, as depicted in Example 2.6.

Example 2.6: Combination of motive A and B and the ending of the first movement, mm. 39-50, Mov. I

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano, illustrating the combination of Motive A and Motive B and the ending of the first movement (measures 39-50).

System 1 (Measures 39-40): Shows the initial presentation of Motive B (circled in red) and Motive A (boxed in blue). The tempo is marked *ff* (fortissimo) and the metronome is set to 72. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4.

System 2 (Measures 43-48): Shows a restatement of Motive A (boxed in red) and Motive B (boxed in blue). The tempo markings are *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *mf*.

System 3 (Measures 49-50): Shows the final measures, featuring an ascending figure (circled in red) and sustained notes fading into a questioning silence. The tempo markings are *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p dim.* (piano, diminuendo), and *ppp* (pianissimo).

The following table denotes the structure of the first movement:


Figure 2.1: Structure of “Taiwan’s place in the world”

Measures	Motive	Description	Meter(s)
1-7	A	Chorale-like three-note group with a repeated B in the bass.	6/4, 8/4
8-9	B	Short-long figure and A in the bass.	No time signature
10-17	B + modified A	Short-long figures and A in the bass with a modified three-note group based on motive A.	
18-20	Retrograde A	Functions as a transition. Uses diminished fifths in the left hand and retrograde of motive A in the right hand.	3/8
21-26	A	Diminution of mm. 1-4 with A and G-sharp in the bass.	
27-32	Modified A + pentatonic scale	Modified A (similar to m. 10) with a perfect fifth in the top, pentatonic scale in the middle, and A-G-sharp in the bass.	
33-40	Modified B	Uses short-long figure and A in the bass.	4/4, 2/4
41-48	A + B	Motive B with a pedal A in the bass, with the note A in the bass, and motive A in the top (mm. 43-48 feature exactly the same notes as mm. 1-4).	4/4
49-50	Coda	The same notes as m. 40, but in different octaves.	

“Taiwan’s place in the world” is written on three staves, allowing Chen to explore the entire vast range of the piano. In other words, she includes the highest and the lowest note in the first movement. The motive B contains the lowest note, which

appears many times. The highest note serves as the last note of the movement.

Chen embraces the compositional freedom of the twenty-first century not only to employ the full range of the piano, but also to utilize a broad dynamic spectrum. The dynamics of the first movement range from *pp* to *fff*, which creates dramatic contrasts for the listener. The effects of contrast are strengthened by frequent meter changes.

As a further example of the piece's contemporary influences, the composer did not limit herself to traditional notation, but embraced some nontraditional notation as well. For example, there is no time signature in m. 8, and the composer uses duration to express note lengths. The symbol at the end of m. 8, as seen in Example 2.2, refers to a "very short pause."⁵⁹ This symbol, which resembles a comma or breath mark, is found throughout the score and usually indicates a short pause.⁶⁰ The pause length of the comma in m. 10 is specified by seconds. In the same measure, the symbol  means "accelerated note group," requiring the performer to play the passage at an increasing tempo, as depicted in Example 2.7 below.⁶¹ The last example of nontraditional notation in this movement is in mm. 15-16, in which the symbol



instructs the performer to play "as fast as possible."⁶²

⁵⁹ Howard Risatti. *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 40.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 24.

⁶² Ibid., 9.

Example 2.7: Nontraditional notation, mm. 9-10, Mov. I

Musical score for Example 2.7, mm. 9-10, Mov. I. The score shows two staves (treble and bass) with various musical notations including accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. A red box highlights a specific notation in the treble staff. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *f*, *mp* (non cresc.), *p*, and *mf*, and includes a *sub* symbol at the bottom.

Example 2.8: Nontraditional notation, mm. 15-16, Mov. I

Musical score for Example 2.8, mm. 15-16, Mov. I. The score shows two staves (treble and bass) with various musical notations including accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and includes a *sub* symbol at the bottom. The right-hand and left-hand parts are labeled R.H. and L.H. respectively.

The bustling energy of city-life

The second movement, “The bustling energy of city-life,” uses motoric eighth notes to portray the sound of life in a busy city. This movement is mostly written in 3/4, but also includes 2/4 and 4/4.

Like the first movement, “The bustling energy of city-life” has just two main motives. The movement can be divided into three sections: A-B-Coda. It begins with a four-measure introduction with accents on the downbeats in the bass, and this figure

continues until m. 25. Motive A appears in m. 5, and contains a short-long figure similar to that of motive B from the previous movement. The figure is portrayed in Example 2.9 below, and can be compared with Example 2.2 from Movement I.

Example 2.9: Introduction and motive A, mm. 1-11, Movement II

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.9. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows measures 1 through 11. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 168. The key signature has two flats. The bass clef part has a forte (f) dynamic marking. A red box highlights measures 5-7, which contain Motive A. The second system shows measures 7 through 11, with another red box highlighting measures 10-11. The composer's name, Ke-Chia Chen, is written in the upper right corner.

The A section spans mm. 1-57. The meter briefly changes from 3/4 to 4/4 in m. 27, returning to the principal meter in m. 28. During m. 38-40, the non-stop eighth notes in the upper voice form a hemiola due to accent placement by the composer. Measures 50-57 serve as a static transition that connects the A and B sections. The hemiola in the top voice returns during this transition, as depicted in Example 2.10. The transition gradually becomes softer, so that the B section starts at a *pianissimo* dynamic.

Example 2.10: Static transition, mm. 49-59, Mov. II

The musical score for Example 2.10 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 49 to 57, and the second system covers measures 54 to 59. The right hand plays a constant eighth-note accompaniment of augmented triads, while the left hand plays broken chords. A red box highlights measures 50-57 in the first system and measures 54-58 in the second system. Dynamics include *sfz*, *dim.*, *p*, and *pp*. Performance markings include accents (>) and slurs. The score is marked with (8va) and (8vb) for octave transpositions.

The B section begins at m. 58. Augmented triads and hemiola play important roles in this section, which develops from a long sequence of augmented triads. The first augmented triad (G-flat, B-flat, and D) is introduced in broken chords in the left hand at m. 60. After five measures of broken chords with different inversions in the left hand, the augmented triad is presented in a descending arpeggio with hemiola, as shown in Example 2.11.

Example 2.11: First augmented chord, mm. 60-71, Mov. II

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 60-63) shows a sequence of augmented triads in the right hand, with the left hand playing a bass line. The second system (measures 64-67) features a hemiola pattern in the right hand, with the left hand playing a bass line. The third system (measures 68-71) shows a sequence of augmented triads in the right hand, with the left hand playing a bass line.

From mm. 69-77, there are two augmented triads: group A-flat-C-E and group B-flat-D-F-sharp. Both groups appear in descending arpeggio formation. The last group of augmented triads in the sequence is a double augmented triad group with hemiola, featuring G-B-D-sharp on the top and A-flat-C-E on the bottom, as Example 2.12 demonstrates.

Example 2.12: Double augmented group, mm. 76-80, Mov. II

The musical score for Example 2.12 shows measures 76 through 80. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of chords, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a descending line. A red box highlights a section from measure 78 to 80, where the left hand plays a double augmented triad (B-flat, D-flat, F) in broken chords. Dynamics include *sfz*, *sf*, and *sfz*.

After the augmented triads in the B section, the coda starts from mm. 86. Instead of continuing to go to the arpeggiated descending melody as mm. 65-68, it stays in the G-flat, B-flat, and D triad in broken chords format. The triad changes to different inversions when it descends and finally arrives in C-G chord in m. 101. Measure 101 uses the same chords as m. 69, but locates them in different octaves. After three measures of C-G and D-sharp-F-sharp chords in hemiola, the motion descends and ends strongly on the C. (Example 2.13: mm. 96-105, Mov. II)

Example 2.13: Ending of the second movement, mm. 96-105, Mov. II

The musical score for Example 2.13 shows measures 96 through 105. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of chords, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a descending line. A red box highlights a section from measure 96 to 100, where the left hand plays a double augmented triad (B-flat, D-flat, F) in broken chords. Dynamics include *sfz*, *sf*, and *sfz*.

The ceaseless eighth notes create a restless atmosphere in this movement. The unexpected accents and change of meter makes the movement unpredictable and exciting, reflecting the fast-paced and energetic setting of a bustling city.

Love of tradition

In the third movement of *To An Isolated Island*, Chen quotes a traditional Taiwanese aboriginal folk song in the first section. The structure of this movement is the same as the first movement: A, B, and the combination of A and B.

The A section spans mm. 1-17, and features a modified pentatonic scale and the quotation of Taiwanese aboriginal music. The movement opens with a quiet tone cluster in the low register, followed by a lyrical, modified pentatonic melody, highlighted in Example 2.14. The normal pentatonic scale is constructed from major seconds and minor thirds; therefore, the notes in this pentatonic scale should be G-sharp, B, C-sharp, E, and F-sharp. However, Chen uses F-natural in this section as well. Therefore, it becomes a modified pentatonic scale: G[#], B, C[#], E, F, F[#].

Example 2.14: Cluster and modified pentatonic melody, mm. 1-8, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 2.14 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 1-8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The right hand plays a cluster of notes, while the left hand plays a modified pentatonic melody. Dynamics are marked as *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. The second system covers measures 9-12. The right hand continues the cluster, and the left hand plays a similar melody in a lower register. Dynamics are marked as *p* and *mp*. There are markings for "15^{mb-1} ped." with asterisks throughout the score.

Measures 8-10 are comparable to the beginning of the movement, except the tone clusters extend over three measures. Measures 11-12 derive melodic material from mm. 2-4, but in a lower register. According to the composer, the quotation of the aboriginal song appears in m. 13, depicted in Example 2.15.⁶³

Example 2.15: Quotation of Taiwanese aboriginal people's song, mm. 13-16, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 2.15 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 13-16. The time signature is 3/4. The right hand plays a quotation of a Taiwanese aboriginal people's song, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics are marked as *p* and *mp*. There are markings for "ped." with asterisks throughout the score.

In contrast to the calm, singing style of section A, section B is rhythmic.

Beginning in m. 18, the B section is based on a single rhythmic pattern: one eighth

⁶³ Ke-Chia Chen, interview by author, January 18, 2018.

note and two sixteenth notes, a common figure in folk songs that use isorhythm.⁶⁴

The repeated rhythm in this movement, extending from mm. 18-42, is built on an ascending minor second, a descending diminished third, and another ascending minor second.

The B section starts from a single line in the bass, evolving into two lines in m. 20. The texture gradually thickens until m. 30, culminating in seven layers.

Simultaneously, the tempo steadily escalates, increasing from quarter note equals fifty beats per minute in m. 18 to one hundred twelve beats per minute in m. 30.

Example 2.16: B section, mm. 17-24 and mm. 29-32, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 2.16 is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 17-24) features a bass line starting with a single line in m. 17, which then splits into two lines in m. 20. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50. The second system (mm. 21-24) shows the texture thickening, with a tempo of quarter note = 96 and the instruction 'Accel. poco a poco'. The third system (mm. 29-32) shows the texture reaching its peak with seven layers, and the tempo is marked as quarter note = 112. The score includes dynamic markings (mf, pp, p, cresc.), articulation (accents), and performance instructions like '15mb' and '15mb Leo.'

⁶⁴ Bruno Nettl, *Folk music in the United States, an introduction* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), 33.

The thick texture, wide-range chords, and melodic leaps in mm. 30-38 make this section the first high point of the movement. After the first *ff* in mm. 37-38, the texture suddenly thins as the volume drops to *mf* in m. 39. Another cycle of growth begins immediately, with a similar material and texture as m. 20. There is a one measure crescendo to *mf* followed by a *subito pp* in m. 43. Throughout the next five measures, the dynamic swells from *pp* to *fff*, and the texture blossoms from three to eight layers, providing the biggest climax of the movement. Upon reaching the climax in m. 47, the pentatonic melody from motive A appears in the middle voice. The wide register chords in the outer voices create an atmosphere of victory, and the melody in the middle is heroic.

Example 2.17: Climax of the movement and pentatonic melody from motive A, mm. 41-52, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 2.17 is presented in three systems, measures 41-52. The first system (measures 41-44) shows a crescendo from *mf* to *pp*. The second system (measures 45-48) shows a crescendo from *pp* to *fff*, with motive A highlighted in red. The third system (measures 49-52) shows the continuation of the climax, with motive A also highlighted in red. The score includes dynamic markings (*cresc.*, *mf*, *pp*, *fff*), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (*sosp.ped.*, ***).

A coda-like section follows the climax, combining lyrical motive A and rhythmic motive B. The singing pentatonic melody is presented in a powerful style in mm. 47-50, gradually tapering off until it disappears in m. 58. At the end of the movement, the B section rhythm appears again, like an echo that fades as the movement ends.

“Love of tradition” is a movement of high contrast, from the disparate material of the A and B motives to the frequent dynamic changes. At the end of the B section, the sudden dynamic shift creates a wave-like effect in mm. 38-44, instilling excitement in the listener. After the climax, the tempo, dynamics, and texture suddenly decay.

The never ending hope for the future

The final movement of *To An Isolated Island* is short, elegant, and suffused with influence from the Han musical style. The structure of this movement is A-B-A'. The A section contains five notes, which are in a B minor five-finger pattern (B, C-sharp, D, E, F-sharp). The Han music influence in this section is demonstrated by the close intervals, which primarily fall within the range of an octave, and feature many seconds and thirds. The intervals in Han music are usually within an octave, and the most common intervals are seconds and thirds.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Shang-Ren Jian 簡上仁, *台灣福佬系民謠-老祖先的台灣歌 Taiwanese Fulao Folk Songs: Old Taiwanese Songs* (Taipei: 漢光文化事業股份有限公司眾文圖書公司, 1998), 19.

The melody appears twice in the A section, with the second time (mm. 10-11) being a diminution of the first (mm. 1-4). The movement starts at the tempo of quarter note equals 104 and a *pp* dynamic, but is slightly slower and louder in its second iteration, as shown in Example 2.18.

Example 2.18: Beginning of the last movement, mm. 1-9, Mov. IV

♩ = 104 Ke-Chia Chen

The musical score for Example 2.18 is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows a melody in the right hand starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a 'pedal lib.' instruction in the left hand. The second system (measures 5-9) shows a melody in the right hand starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, and includes a 'poco' marking above the staff.

The A section ends at m. 19, eliding with the B section. This is followed by a two-measure introduction to the B section in *p*.

Example 2.19: Elision of A and B section, mm. 18-22, Mov. IV

The musical score for Example 2.19 is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 18-19) features a melody in the right hand starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system (measures 20-22) features a melody in the right hand starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A red oval highlights the elision between measures 19 and 20.

The melody of the B section is based on the six-tone scale, a common structure in folk-style pieces.⁶⁶ Chen utilizes three distinct six-tone scales in this section, which are: E-flat, F, G, A-flat, B-flat, and C; F-flat, G-flat, A-flat, B-double-flat, C-flat, and D-flat; and G, A, B, C, D, and E. These scales are depicted in Example 2.20 for reference.

Example 2.20: Three six-tone scales used in Mov. IV



The six-tone scales listed above are derived from the pentatonic scale. Adding a note between Jiao and Zhi transforms the pentatonic scale into a six-tone scale. All of the six-tone scales in this section are in Zhi mode, and the added note is called Chingjiao.⁶⁷ Example 2.21 demonstrates the transformation of the pentatonic into the six-tone scale.

⁶⁶ Tsang-Houei Hsu, *台灣音樂史初稿 Music History of Taiwan* (Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社, 2010), 126.

⁶⁷ Tien-Yi Chiang, "A Study of Piano Works by Formusica: The New Taiwan Music Piano Works, Volumes I-VII" (DMA. diss., The City University of New York, 2006), 35.

Example 2.21: Six-tone scale



The main melody in the B section is composed using two of the aforementioned scales, with E-flat, F, G, A-flat, B-flat, and C (beginning on the 5th scale degree, Zhi mode) on the top and F-flat, G-flat, A-flat, B-double-flat, C-flat, D-flat (also beginning on the 5th scale degree, Zhi mode) on the bottom. These two six-tone scales are a major seventh apart because, according to Chen, “The life is not always beautiful, and there is always something not so perfect when people think about the sweet memories. I wanted to create bitterness by contrasting a sweet and warm melody with dissonance underneath, which is created by the major seventh.”⁶⁸

Example 2.22: Melody in the B section, mm. 21-28, Mov. IV

After a two-measure transition the melody appears a second time, in the low register of the middle voice. This Han-based melody appears three times in all, and

⁶⁸ Ke-Chia Chen, interview by author, January 18, 2018.

ends the section.

Another element that is reminiscent of Taiwanese folk songs in this section is the ornamentation (extending note). The bass line in the B section has many ornamentations, such as the grace notes highlighted in Example 2.23 below. The simple bass line is sustained throughout the entire section, creating a steady foundation for the lyrical melody above.

Example 2.23: Ornamentation in the B section, mm. 33-36, Mov. IV

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with several measures of music, including a fermata over a note. The bass staff contains a simple descending line of notes: D, C, B, A, G, F-sharp. Two grace notes are circled in red: one in the first measure (D) and one in the third measure (F-sharp). The dynamic marking 'f' is present in the first measure.

A' begins at m. 53. This is the only section of the movement in which the composer changes the meter. The meter, which has been 4/4 before A', changes to 3/4 in m. 53. The melody in A' uses the same pitch material from A, with rhythmic variation, and the new meter. The accompaniment is a simple descending line from D to F-sharp. In m. 58, the meter returns to 4/4 for one measure only, before switching back to 3/4 for the duration of the movement. The piece ends on B major chord with a quiet, peaceful mood.

The following table describes the structure of the last movement:

Figure 2.2: Structure of “The never ending hope for the future”

Measures	Motive	Description	Meter(s)
1-9	A	B minor five-finger pattern, ♩ = 104, <i>pp</i>	4/4
10-19	A in diminution	B minor pattern, ♩ = 96, <i>mf</i>	
19-28	B	Starts with two-measure introduction. Two different six-tone scales in the top voices, and ornamentation in the bass.	
29-42	B	Six-tone scale melody in the middle voice after a two-measure link. Ornamentation in the bass.	
43-52	B	Last group of six-tone scalar melodies. Broken chords and ornamentation in the bass.	
53-61	A'	Melody from motive A with a descending scale in the bass. Ends on B major.	3/4, 4/4

Conclusion

To An Isolated Island expresses a mixture of nostalgia and longing for one’s homeland with an exuberant celebration of its traditions and context. Ke-Chia Chen wrote her first piano piece after moving to the United States, and it captures her feelings as she closed a door on one chapter of her life and embarked upon a new adventure. In the program notes for the piece, Chen explains, “It is a love letter to my homeland, Taiwan. As I traveled and from Taiwan studying music abroad over the past several years, I often times found myself reflecting upon the uniqueness of our

island.”⁶⁹ By synthesizing aboriginal folk music, Han musical traditions, and contemporary compositional techniques, Ke-Chia Chen’s *To An Isolated Island* conveys the fascinating diversity of Taiwan’s unique musical history.

⁶⁹ Ke-Chia Chen, *To An Isolated Island*, Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2004, i.

Chapter III

Musical Background and Analysis of *Treasure Box*

Chen and *Treasure Box*

Treasure Box is a set of seven movements for solo piano written in 2010.

According to the program notes, this set is “a collection of works designed to explore the technical facility and musical characteristics of the piano.”⁷⁰ Many prestigious composers have written sets for piano, including J. S. Bach, Chopin, and Debussy.

Chen was inspired by the concept and decided to write a piano set with several pieces.

In the program notes, Chen explains her interest in creating *Treasure Box*: “The piano is an exclusive instrument, which can be presented not only as a solo instrument of subtle poetic beauty but also an instrument of great orchestral or symphonic effect.”

Chen created this set of works to explore the variety of sounds the piano can produce.

Each of this set’s seven small pieces utilizes specific compositional techniques and characteristics of the piano. The performer determines the order of movements, so the piece will sound different each time it is played. This interpretive flexibility is an apt explanation for the title: when someone reaches into a treasure box, they receive a surprise.⁷¹ The world premiere of *Treasure Box* was given by Michelle Cann in

⁷⁰ Ke-Chia Chen, *Treasure Box* (Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2010), i.

⁷¹ Ke-Chia Chen, interview by author, January 18, 2018.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2011. The piece is approximately twelve minutes in length.

Movement I

The first movement is *presto*, wherein the half note equals eighty-eight beats per minute. The primary rhythmic elements in this movement are sixteenth notes and accented eighth notes, and it features the minor second interval. This movement can be roughly divided into four groups: a dissonant descending group (A), a chromatic scale group (B), another dissonant descending group (A'), followed by a coda.

The movement begins with sequentially descending sixteenth note groups on top, and descending accented eighth notes with intervening rests on the bottom.

Measures 1-3 are identical, containing only sixteenth notes, accented eighth notes, and eighth rests. Further simplifying matters, all of the intervals between the two voices are minor seconds, as shown in Example 3.1.

Example 3.1: The beginning of the first movement, mm. 1-2, Mov. I

Presto $\text{♩} = 88$ Ke-Chia Chen (2010)

After three measures of D-C-B-A sixteenth note patterns, the sequence continues downward to G-F-E-D, followed by alteration and repetition of the E-D

groups across the next three measures.

Example 3.2: Measures 3-8, Mov. I

In m. 8, the sixteenth notes start to ascend, arriving at C as the section ends in m. 9. This group (mm. 1-9) is constructed entirely from sixteenth notes, accented eighth notes, eighth rests, and minor second intervals between the voices.

The second group (mm. 10-14) is mainly comprised of chromatic scales. After a sixteenth rest in m. 10, the ascending chromatic scales start on C-sharp in the right hand and A-sharp in the left hand. In m. 11, the left hand performs a descending chromatic scale while the right hand has descending accented eighth notes, recalling the left hand material of the first group. The left hand begins a new descending chromatic scale from B4 in m. 12, which proceeds all the way down to F1 and ends the section.

Example 3.3: Chromatic scale, mm. 12-14, Mov. I

The following dissonant section (mm. 15-21) is similar to the first section (mm. 1-9). Measures 14-16 incorporate the same notes as mm. 1-3 in the top voice, but is written an octave lower. The left hand contains octaves of B-flat and A-flat from mm. 15-21. The coda starts at m. 22, and includes both sixteenth note patterns from group A and the chromatic scale from group B, highlighted in Example 3.4.

Example 3.4: Coda, mm. 23-28, Mov. I

The texture of this movement is thin, constructed from just two musical lines. Most of the movement is in parallel motion, with the exception of the last beat of m. 10. The intervals between the two voices are primarily minor seconds. The movement is mainly in 2/2; however, 2/4 appears twice, in m. 13 and m. 24 to the end. The composer does not offer many directions for the dynamics; the only two dynamic markings in the movement are *ff* at the beginning and *ppp* in the final measure.

The following table provides the structure of the first movement:

Figure 3.1: Structure of Movement I

Measures	Group	Materials	Description
1-3	A	Sixteenth notes in the upper voice, and accented eighth notes and rests in the lower voice. Minor second intervals between eighth and sixteenth notes.	Structurally similar measures in 2/2, <i>ff</i> . Descending melody.
4-7			Different notes in the same pattern; Descending sequence.
8-9			Ascending.
10-14	B	Chromatic scale	Time signature changes to 2/4 in m. 14.
15-22	A'	Sixteenth notes on the top, and accented eighth notes (B ^b and A ^b) in octaves and eighth rests in the lower voice.	Back to 2/2.
22-28	Coda	Dissonant pattern from the A group, followed by a chromatic scale from the B group.	Time signature changes to 2/4 (mm. 24-28), <i>ppp</i> .

Movement II

The primary key of the second movement is E major, with the key signature containing four sharps. The composer indicates a “playful” spirit at the top of the movement, which begins with a “childlike” melody in 4/4 time (Motive A). This tune lasts for four measures with an introduction. However, the mood changes with a final dissonant chord at the end of the phrase: an A major chord with an added C natural (A-C-C[#]-E).

Example 3.5: Motive A, mm. 1-5, Mov. II

Playful ♩ = 104

After the happy opening phrase, a section of dissonant chords takes over for seven measures (Motive B). The chords from each hand combine to create minor and major seconds. For example, the chord in the right hand in m. 6 is A-E^b-G^b, while the left hand plays A^b-D^b-F, creating acute dissonance.

Example 3.6: Motive B, mm. 6-12, Mov. II

The playful motive A returns in m. 13, this time in *ppp* and interrupted before the end of the phrase by a five-measure interlude. This interruption is referred to in the score as being “like a skipping CD.” It is constructed from quarter and eighth-note triplets, as shown in Example 3.7 below.

Example 3.7: Interruption, mm. 17-23, Mov. II

The time signature changes to 2/4 in m. 17, and returns to 4/4 in m. 24 as Motive B begins. Chen develops this motive for twenty measures. From mm. 35-37, the composer instructs the performer to use elbows to play the clusters. Chen's use of a minor third beginning in m. 40 recalls the melodic material from Motive A. This is combined with the rhythm of the interruption to form Motive C, which continues until the end of the movement.

Example 3.8: Motive C, mm. 37-42, Mov. II

The second part of Motive A appears in *ppp* in mm. 50-51, interrupting Motive C for two measures. In the last three measures, the chord from Motive B reappears amidst Motive C, and the movement ends.

The principal key of this movement is E major, although some material falls outside the key or obscures the tonality entirely, such as the tone clusters in the aforementioned Example 3.8. The meter remains in 4/4 time aside from mm. 17-23, in which it changes to 2/4. Ke-Chia Chen explores unorthodox techniques, such as the use of the pianist's elbows to perform the movement. She also employs nontraditional notation, such as square note heads to indicate value, as seen above in Example 3.8, and the marking "l. v.," which means "let vibrate until tone fades away."⁷² The composer wrote the two main motives in different staves, with Motive B remaining in the bottom two staves when there are more than two staves.

Movement III

The third movement is written exclusively in 4/4, and lasts a brief twenty-four measures. With the exception of the last two measures, the movement is comprised of an ascending chromatic line of quarter notes, beginning with the lowest note of the piano and culminating with the highest note at the end of m. 22. The penultimate measure repeats the four notes of m. 22, and the final measure reiterates B8 and C8 again in half notes, as highlighted in Example 3.9.

⁷² Howard Risatti. *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 27.

Example 3.9: The beginning and end of the chromatic line, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 3.9 shows three staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature and a piano (*p*) dynamic. It contains a chromatic line of eighth notes. The two staves below are treble clefs. The first treble staff starts at measure 20 and the second at measure 22. Both contain rhythmic accompaniment. A red box highlights the final measures of the chromatic line in the bass staff and the corresponding rhythmic accompaniment in the treble staves.

In contrast to the steady chromatic line, the other musical line offers rhythmic variety. This line is comprised of two main rhythms: a sixteenth-note triplet on G-A^b-D (a), and a group of three sixteenth notes on G[#] and A with an accented first note (b).

Example 3.10: Rhythmic groups (a) and (b), Mov. III

The musical score for Example 3.10 shows a piano reduction with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef contains a triplet of sixteenth notes (G-A-B) labeled 'a' and a group of three sixteenth notes (G[#]-A) labeled 'b'. The bass clef contains a steady chromatic line of eighth notes.

The two rhythmic groups appear opposite the chromatic line in a variety of octaves and combinations. After m. 15, both groups are modified and appear more frequently, as shown in Example 3.11.

Example 3.11: Modified (a) and (b), mm. 17-18, Mov. III

The musical score for Example 3.11 shows a piano reduction with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef contains modified versions of groups 'a' and 'b'. The bass clef contains a steady chromatic line of eighth notes.

The dynamic trajectory of the movement aligns with the ascending chromatic line, beginning at *p* and eventually swelling to *fff* in m. 21. This movement uses the hand crossing technique to achieve its unbroken chromatic line, exemplified in m. 8 and mm. 11-12. While the chromatic quarter notes begin in the left hand, the register change necessitates a switch to the right hand in m. 14.

The musical elements in this movement are simple and straightforward. Chen employs only three main elements: an ascending chromatic scale and two brief rhythmic groups. Altering the register, dynamics, and placement of rhythmic groups (a) and (b) adds some color to the steady and predictable chromatic scale, making the movement more interesting.

Movement IV

Movement IV can be divided into two parts, each of which is comprised of different combinations of twelve-note groups and chords. The movement begins with a twelve-tone row, which appears four times in differing registers and rhythms, and in dynamics ranging from *mf* to *ff*. Example 3.12 highlights the twelve-tone row at the beginning of the movement.

Example 3.12: Twelve-tone row, mm. 1-5, Mov. IV

Lively ♩ = 132

There is a rest in m. 10 following the four consecutive presentations of the tone row. For five measures, the texture becomes sparse, full of silences punctuated intermittently by chords. The sudden emphasis on vertical harmony and silence provides a profound contrast from the rhythmically constant, horizontally presented tone row. These chords, depicted in Example 3.13 below, will return and develop throughout this movement, as well as later in the piece.

Example 3.13: Four chords, mm. 11-15, Mov. IV

The twelve-tone row from the beginning appears again in mm. 16-18 in a slightly altered rhythm. There is a link in mm. 18-19 that uses all but the last three notes from the original twelve-tone row. In mm. 20-21, the full tone row is performed again, and the second half is developed into a sequence that ends the section.

Example 3.14: End of twelve-tone section, mm. 20-24, Mov. IV

After the twelve-tone section, the chordal section reappears, with the original chords presented in different octaves and combinations from mm.26-33. One such transformation is demonstrated in Example 3.15, wherein the chord from m. 13 is reconstructed in m. 34 with a different voicing, and contains a D-sharp in place of the D-natural.

Example 3.15: Comparison of m. 13 and m. 34, Mov. IV

Measures 35-43 are occupied by twelve-note units presented in a variety of groups. These nine measures can be divided into five groups. The first two measures (mm. 35-36) contain a twelve-note unit written as a single line in the bass, and mm. 37-38 repeat the same twelve-note group from the previous measures using both hands. Measure 38 serves as a bridge between the first twelve-note unit and the next by acting as the second half of the first unit (mm. 37-38) and the first half of the

second unit (mm. 38-39). Example 3.16 details the different twelve-note groups.

Measures 40-41 imitate the two previous measures, and mm. 42-43 form a sequence from the pattern of the first beat of m. 40.

Example 3.16: Twelve-note groups, mm. 35-41, Mov. IV

After a short rest in m. 43, the chordal section returns. Chen utilizes two chords from mm. 11-15, repeated twice, to form the material of mm. 44-47. The meter changes from 6/8 to 9/8 in m. 47, which is the end of the first part of the movement.

The first section of this movement is written in compound meter, primarily 6/8 time with moments of 5/8 and 9/8. The entire second part is in 3/4. This section is built within three to four staves, which Chen uses to distinguish voices and elements. The four chords from the lower two staves in the first two measures of the second part (mm. 48-49) are constructed from a twelve-tone row. These four chords repeat three times in mm. 48-56. Measures 57-59 repeat the first three chords twice. The top voice in mm. 48-57 contains twelve notes, which act as responses to the chordal calls in the left hand.

Example 3.17: Twelve-tone chords and response in the top voice, mm. 48-49, Mov. IV

Measures 60-67 comprise a coda-like section. After five chords of A-flat, F-sharp, G, and F, the bass line sustains on E-flat and G while the top voices perform an E-flat major melody with minor seconds in the middle. The composer indicates that the last four measures should sound “like chimes,” and the sustained rhythms herein increase the dissonance of the minor seconds. The end of the movement is shown in Example 3.18.

Example 3.18: “Chimes” section, upper voices, last four measures of the movement, mm. 64-67, Mov. IV

The melodic and harmonic material of Movement IV is based on twelve-tone rows and twelve-note groups. Chen marks the tempo of the movement as “lively,” so

it is fast, energetic, and outgoing. The contrast of moving notes and chords in the different registers of the first part make the movement sound more complicated than it is. The second part is comprised mainly of chords with a single, sparse melodic line on top, which creates a different atmosphere than the first part. As the second part transitions into the coda, the music accelerates and crescendos, ending with sustained chime-like intervals in a resounding *fff*.

Movement V

This movement is the calmest and most peaceful in the set. The composer sets the tone by inscribing “Like a prayer” at the top of the movement. The dynamic range is narrower than previous movements, contained within *pp* to *mf*. This movement has many meter changes, all of which are duple meters. Over the course of the twenty-four measure movement, the meter changes eight times. The texture of Movement V has two layers: a dissonant melody and echoing perfect fifths written as octaves. Ke-Chia Chen utilizes different staves to indicate the different musical elements, as she does throughout this set; much of the movement is written in four staves.

The movement begins in 3/2, then immediately changes to 4/2 in m. 2. The chorale-like melody (Motive A) is repeated, with slight variations in the second iteration. After the first appearance of Motive A, Motive B enters with the hands performing octaves, split at a wide-register. The A-flat in the left hand and the E-flat

in the right hand represent a perfect fifth. These consonant perfect fifths (Motive B) offer a significant contrast to the dissonant melody. The disparate material of these two motives serves as an important element in this movement, and is highlighted in Example 3.19.

Example 3.19: Dissonant melody (Motive A) and perfect fifths (Motive B), mm. 1-3, Mov. V

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Like a prayer" with a tempo of quarter note = 54. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-3) is enclosed in a blue box and labeled "Motive A". It features a dissonant melody in the right hand and a bass line with a "pedal" effect. The second system (measures 4-5) is enclosed in a red box and labeled "Motive B". It features a melody in the right hand consisting of perfect fifths (P5) and a bass line with a "pedal" effect. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *poco*, and *p*, and performance instructions like "pedal each chord" and "Sost. ped".

The first five measures are structurally similar to a musical sentence, which offers a basic idea that is immediately repeated. The presentation portion of the sentence concludes on a half-diminished seventh chord in second inversion in m. 5. As is expected with a musical sentence, the continuation is a fragment of the basic idea from the presentation. In a musical sentence, the continuation would generally end on a cadence, however, because there is no clear tonal center in this movement, the continuation ends on an augmented major seventh chord in second inversion (mm.

8-9). After the completion of the melody, Motive B appears again, again in parallel fifths in E-flat major this time, as shown in Example 3.20.

Example 3.20: Chorale-like melody with Motive B, mm. 6-9, Mov. V

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.20, consisting of two systems of staves. The top system has a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody in the treble clef is marked *mf* and features a series of chords with intervals of a minor second (m2) between adjacent notes, as indicated by blue brackets and the label 'm2'. The bass line in the bottom staff of the top system features a series of diminished fifths, also marked with blue brackets and 'm2'. The dynamics change from *mf* to *sf* (sforzando) in measure 8, and there is a 'Sost.' (sostenuto) marking in measure 9. The bottom system shows the vocal parts (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) in a four-part setting. The soprano part is marked 'sra' and features a melodic line. The bass line in the bottom system is marked 'pedal each chord' and features a series of chords. A red box highlights the bass line in measures 6-9, and a blue box highlights the upper voice in measures 6-9.

The Motive A melody in the soprano and alto voices is essentially written in E-flat major with an added D-flat in mm. 6 and 8. The key of E-flat major evokes warmth, reinforcing the instruction, “like a prayer,” written at the beginning of the movement. The middle voices undermine this pleasant, holy melody with constant minor seconds, blurring and distorting the consonance with tense intervals, shown in Example 3.20 above.

After the warm melody, the tenor and bass lines in the top two staves create a series of diminished fifths beginning in m. 10, and are joined by an upper voice at m. 11, forming a minor second with the lowest voice. This four-measure melody ends on a minor triad in first inversion, as shown in Example 3.21 below. After this chordal

culmination of the three-layer melody, the consonant Motive B reappear in mm. 14-16.

Example 3.21: Three-layer melody, mm. 10-13, Mov. V

The musical score for Example 3.21 shows three layers of melody in measures 10-13. The first layer (bottom) is marked *p* *d5* and includes the instruction "pedal each chord". The second layer (middle) is marked *f* and includes "Sost. ped.". The third layer (top) is marked *sf* and includes "ped.". Red circles highlight specific notes in the first layer, and blue brackets connect notes across layers. The score ends with a "Sost. ped." marking.

The material of mm. 17-20 is modified from mm. 6-8 by using different octaves and culminating with an augmented chord in second inversion. The top voice of the following three measures (mm. 21-23) presents Motive A from mm. 1-2, with the rhythm augmented. This melody is performed twice, with the second iteration in different octaves, as if echoing the first one. This movement does not have a clear tonal center; however, much of its melodic and harmonic content falls within the key of E-flat major. The movement ends on a C major chord.

At a brief twenty-four measures, this movement is identical in length to Movement III. Movement V emphasizes the contrast of consonance and dissonance, and the frequent yet unexpected changes of meter confound the listener's expectations. This movement can be considered a bridge between the longer, more passionate, and higher-energy movements.

Movement VI

The sixth movement features the sostenuto pedal, which must be pressed for the entire movement. The composer divides this movement into three parts: an introduction, an improvisation, and a final section. The movement begins with a silent C major chord with sostenuto pedal. The composer instructs, “press this chord quietly with sostenuto pedal before start” in the first measure. The introduction is written in four staves, displayed in Example 3.22, with the top two staves containing audible notes and the bottom two staves set aside for the silent notes and the pedal.

Example 3.22: Measures 1-2, Mov. VI

♩ Sost. Ped. (hold for entire piece)
* Press this chord quietly with sostenuto pedal before start

The top voice in the second measure contains a line of descending eighth notes: C, B-flat, G, and F, which are the same four notes as the top voice from mm. 11-14 of the fourth movement. The bass has descending B, A, F-sharp, and E, which create minor seconds with the notes in the top voice. The following measure contains

the indication “G. P.,” which is an abbreviation for “general pause.”⁷³ Example 3.23 shows the two four-note lines and the G. P. Chen counsels, “make sure the resonance rings for a while before proceeding to the next bar” under the G. P. In m. 4, the four-note group from m. 2 reappears in part, performing only the first three notes (descending C, B-flat, and G). There is another G. P. in the next measure (m. 5), signifying the end of the introduction.

Example 3.23: First four-note group and G. P., mm. 2-3, Mov. VI

G.P. : make sure the resonance rings
for a while before proceeding to the next bar

The improvisation section starts at m. 6, with detailed instruction from the composer. According to Chen:

This passage should be started from 1-chord cell and gradually moved to 5 chords cell. Each cell can be repeated or returned to the previous cell with pause or without pause. The length of the pause can be varied. At the end of the passage, repeat the 5-chord cell gradually including more white notes. In general, the cells should be played slowly and then gradually accelerando to a rapid tempo by the final Cell in order to create the climax and transition to the next section.⁷⁴

By following these instructions, the performer can experiment with different ways to play the improvisation section for forty to sixty seconds.

⁷³ Theodore Baker, ed., *Pocket Manual of Musical Terms*, 4th ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), 103.

⁷⁴ Ke-Chia Chen, *Treasure Box* (Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2010), 14.

Example 3.24: Improvisation section, m. 6, Mov. VI

Improvisation:
40 seconds - 60 seconds

3-chords cell: the combination of 3 chords and 1 rest (The eighth-rest can be placed in any order as long as this four eighth-note rhythm maintained)

5-chords cell (apply these white notes randomly into chords to replace those identical notes. Ex. G-G^b, C-C^b)

This passage should be started from 1-chord cell and gradually moved to 5 chords cell. Each cell can be repeated or returned to the previous cells with pause or without pause. The length of the pause can be varied. At end of passage, repeat the 5-chord cell gradually including more white notes. In general, the cells should be played slowly and then gradually accelerando to a rapid tempo by the final cell in order to create the climax and transition to the next section.

The final segment begins with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 76$ beats per minute in m. 7, and over the course of a gradual accelerando, reaches $\text{♩} = 200+$ in m. 18. This section has a *fff* dynamic, and each note is accented. The melody is based upon the first two notes from the four-note group of the introduction (C and B-flat). The texture is thin at first, with only three notes per chord, and thickens to five notes played simultaneously. The minor seconds and accelerando create tension and intensity. In the final two measures, the tempo slows to Tempo I ($\text{♩} = 50$), and the entire four-note group from m. 2 of the introduction is recalled, in thicker voicing that creates minor seconds. The movement ends with this deliberate intensity.

Example 3.25: Last two measures, mm. 21-22, Mov. VI

Tempo I $\text{♩} = 50$

1.v.

D ^b	B	A	G ^b
C	B ^b	G	F
B	A	F [#]	E

Each section of Movement VI embodies unique characteristics. While this movement, at twenty-two measures, is the briefest in the set, it is brimming with a variety of contrasting colors and surprising techniques. The sostenuto pedal provides unexpected sounds, the improvisation permits the performer the freedom of individual expression, and the final segment showcases the energy and power of the piano. The composer contributes thorough instructions in each section of the movement, such as the G. P. in the introduction, the description of the improvisation, and the dictation “l. v.” (let vibrate until tone fades away)⁷⁵ at the end of the movement.

Movement VII

The final movement of *Treasure Box* contains only two motives, in a similar fashion to Movement V. Motive A is a two-measure motive, constructed from B-flat and G in the upper voice, and B, G, and A in the lower voice. Each voice contains a sixteenth-note triplet, an eighth note, and a dotted half note, as illustrated in Example 3.26.

⁷⁵ Howard Risatti. *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 27.

Example 3.26: Motive A, mm. 1-4, Mov. VII

Freely ♩ = 88 *ad. lib. (freely)* **Motive A** *ff* **in tempo**

Motive B is presented for the first time in m. 5. The motive is a six-note group in three voices: the top voice contains a melody of descending major seconds while the bottom voice ascends by half steps, all of which is repeated. Meanwhile, the middle voice alternates between F and F-sharp.

Example 3.27: Motive B, mm. 5, Mov. VII

Motive B *pp*

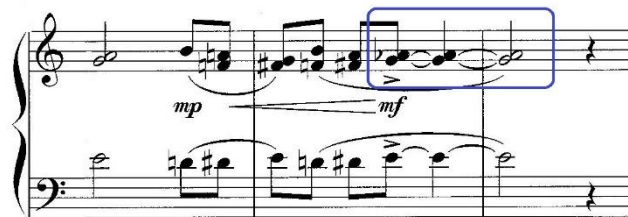
After introducing both motives, the composer intersperses and develops them throughout the movement. Motive A recurs in a modified form and different octaves in mm. 6-8, adding an extra G at the end. In the following measure (m. 9), the first five notes of Motive B reappear. In m. 11, the meter changes from 4/4 to 3/4, and a diminution of Motive A appears in *fff*.

Example 3.28: Diminution of motive A, mm 11-12, Mov. VII



Motive B returns in its entirety in the following measures (mm. 13-14). It is then altered by repeating the notes in the group and adding the minor second interval of G-A-flat to the end of the group.

Example 3.29: Modified Motive B, mm. 15-17, Mov. VII



The second half of the movement begins in m. 18, with a completely different meter, tempo, and atmosphere from the first half. The meter changes to 5/8, and the tempo is altered from ♩ = 88 to ♩ = 138. Compared to the rhythmically free and mysterious first half, the second half is more aggressive and energetic. It begins with a modified Motive B and a swift accelerando from ♩ = 138 to ♩ = 200+ in two measures. The meter changes to 5/4 in m. 21, then to 4/4 in m. 22. These two measures (mm. 21-22) form a transition, wherein the tempo changes from ♩ = 100 to ♩ = 126, and the dynamics swell from *p* to *f*. The A motive appears in part in m. 23, and

this fragment of Motive A repeats seven times in slightly different rhythms. The rhythm in m. 24 is the same rhythm as mm. 60-61 of Movement IV. As the motivic fragment repeats, the intensity grows with the instruction to increase tempo and dynamics. Example 3.30 compares the rhythms of m. 24 of Movement VII and mm. 60-61 of Movement IV.

Example 3.30: Comparison of rhythms, m. 24 of Mov. VII, and mm. 60-61 of Mov. IV

The tempo increases further in m. 25, from $\text{♩} = 126$ to $\text{♩} = 164$. Measures 25-28 utilize exactly the same notes as mm. 6-8 with an altered dynamic. The last four measures of the movement are written an octave lower than the previous measures (mm. 25-28), and the movement ends with a forceful *sforzando* that decays into silence.

The two motives that comprise this movement are separated into different staves. Most of the movement is written in four staves, with Motive A in the top two lines, and Motive B in the bottom two lines. When only one motive is present, such as mm. 18-21 and mm. 24-32, the score is economically reduced to two staves.

Motives A and B each contain numerous seconds. Motive A features major seconds and minor sevenths, while Motive B emphasizes half-step motions. The link in mm. 21-22 encapsulates many seconds as well. The composer gives prominence to uses seconds to create dissonance and tension.

The motives are comprised of distinct rhythms: Motive A is built upon a sixteenth triplet and a tie to an eighth note, while Motive B is composed mostly of straight eighth notes. In the first half of the movement, Motive A is always presented in *ff*, while the dynamic of Motive B is always *pp*. Thus, the motives differ in rhythm, dynamics, and registers.

Conclusion

Treasure Box is a set of seven short pieces, uniquely ordered as the performer desires. The set is built upon the concept of contrast between simple and complex rhythms, consonance and dissonance, and vast ranges of tempi and dynamics.

Treasure Box features contemporary compositional materials and techniques, such as tone rows and clusters, atonality, improvisation, and unusual pedaling. Rather than

employing the inside of the piano to create an original sound, Chen asks the artist to play the instrument traditionally, and to achieve new sounds through the structure and instruction of the music. As Chen explains in the program notes, “I find the piano to be an extraordinary and inexhaustible medium for composers to express their ideas. With this in mind, I decided to write a set of piano works to experiment with this appealing sound world. The more works I write, the more treasure I find.”⁷⁶ Chen’s compositional triumph in *Treasure Box* is evident to the performer and audience, who have the pleasure of experiencing the well-established instrument in new and inventive ways.

⁷⁶ Ke-Chia Chen, *Treasure Box* (Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2010), i.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Music is influenced strongly by culture, politics, landscape, and people. Due to the colonization by Western countries, Formosa was introduced to the music and religions of the West. Immigrants from China brought the culture of the Han people, which enriched the culture in Taiwan. Under Japan's colonization, the first music schools were built in Taiwan, and the Japanese-style music education system is still the mainstream on the island. A few years after Kuomintang's arrival, the local artists finally began to value their own cultural roots. Musicians had more chances than before to study in Western countries, and brought new concepts back to the island. Taiwan began to increase its connections to the world, and cultivate the musicians of the next generation.

Ke-Chia Chen is part of a generation for which Western music is the mainstream in Taiwan. Chen attained a spot in the musically gifted class, studying Western theory and history at school. The music education system in Taiwan does not emphasize Taiwanese composers and music, and many students do not play any Taiwanese compositions unless required by the jury. It is difficult to promote local composers in Taiwan because the environment is not currently friendly towards Taiwanese compositions.

Both of Ke-Chia Chen's primary teachers in Taiwan are internationally recognized composers, and are known for transforming traditional materials into a contemporary soundscape. Chen has been influenced by her teachers, and also uses traditional Taiwanese elements in her pieces. *To An Isolated Island* is the first piece Ke-Chia Chen composed after she came to the United States, and it harbors strong Taiwanese influence. The title refers to the island of Taiwan, and each movement has a title that represents a particular situation in Taiwan. Chen utilizes many traditional folk elements in the piece, including pentatonic scales, Han musical style, and Taiwanese aboriginal music. These elements are combined with Western contemporary techniques, such as frequent change of meters, tension created by dissonance, clusters, the use of pedals, and nontraditional notation. *To An Isolated Island* was written during a turning point in Chen's life, marked by her arrival in the United States, and the myriad changes that accompanied this move. In the work, Chen connects her roots in Taiwan with the world outside the island.

Treasure Box is different from *To An Isolated Island* in many ways. This piece includes many short movements, each of which has a unique structure and set of characteristics. This set does not contain many obvious Taiwanese folk elements; instead, the set is more focused on exploring twentieth and twenty-first century compositional techniques. The structure of this set does not follow traditional form,

and the sections of movements are most easily demarcated based on motivic material.

Though Ke-Chia Chen's music is diverse in techniques and content, there are still some distinct characteristics of her style. Chen tends to introduce all motives individually before developing and combining them throughout the rest of the piece. An example of this structural technique can be found in the first and third movements of *To An Isolated Island*, and the last movement of *Treasure Box*. Significant contrast in musical elements is another prevalent aspect of Chen's works; she often varies the dynamics, registers, meters, and rhythms. For example, the third movement of *To An Isolated Island* and Movements II, IV, and VII from *Treasure Box* have highly contrasting motives, separated by consonance versus dissonance, severe dynamic changes, and differing rhythmic components. Furthermore, both the second movement of *To An Isolated Island* and the third movement of *Treasure Box* have the same material from the beginning to the end, non-stop eighth notes from *To An Isolated Island* and a nonstop ascending chromatic line in *Treasure Box*.

Pieces for small ensembles and solo instruments are not the primary focus for many Taiwanese composers. Large ensemble pieces have more opportunities for funding in Taiwan, which is why many Taiwanese composers write for orchestra. Additionally, the lack of access to promotion and publication make the situation worse. Both *To An Isolated Island* and *Treasure Box* are self-published, and not well-

known in Taiwan.

Culture plays a large part in the composition of music, as it leaves a unique impact on each individual artist. In addition, the musical perspective of each artist is highly influenced by his or her own distinctive personal story. Although Ke-Chia Chen's compositional output does not exclusively focus on Taiwanese folk materials, her music awakens the spirit of Taiwanese musicians and shares the storied culture and spirit of this island nation with the rest of the world.

Bibliography

Musical Score References

Chen, Ke-Chia. *To An Isolated Island*. Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2004.

—. *Treasure Box*. Ke-Chia Chen Music, 2010.

Text References

Baker, Theodore, ed. *Pocket Manual of Musical Terms*. 4th ed. New York: Schirmer Books, 1978.

Chao, Wan-Yi. "Study on Analysis and Exploration of Chiang Wen-Yeh's Piano Work "Bagatelle," Op. 8/Chao Wan-Yi Piano Recital." Master diss., Soochow University, 2013.

Chen, Ke-Chia. Interview by Stephanie Yu. Phone interview. January 18, 2018.

Chen, Jui-Wen. "Selected Contemporary Taiwanese Composers and their Piano Works." PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1995.

Chen, Li-An. "Study of Taiwanese composer Gordon Chin's piano concerto no. 1." DMA diss., Indiana University, 2014.

Cheng, Ching-Ming. "An Annotated Bibliography of Taiwanese Piano Music by Selected Composers Born After 1950." DMA diss., University of Miami, 2006.

Chiang, Tien-Yi. "A Study of Piano Works by *Formusica: The New Taiwan Music Piano Works, Volumes I-VII*." DMA. diss., City University of New York, 2006.

Dai, Jen-Wen. "Tsang Houei Hsu's solo piano works." Master diss., Soochow University, 2004.

Davison, Gary Marvin. *A Short History of Taiwan: The Case for Independence*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003.

Du, Min-Fang 杜旻芳. "台灣當代女性作曲家-蘇凡凌、蕭慶瑜、趙菁文創作背景 (The composing background of Taiwan contemporary women composers: Fan-Ling Su, Ching-Yu Hsiao and Ching-Wen Chao)." Master diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 2010.

- Harvey, Jay. "Violinists bring spark to ISO performance." *The Indianapolis Star · Indystar.com*, June 5, 2010.
- Ho, Lu-Ting, and Han, Kuo-huang. "On Chinese Scales and National Modes." *Asian Music*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1982): pp. 132-154. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/834047>.
- Hsu, Tsang-Houei 許常惠. 音樂史論述稿(二)－台灣音樂史初稿補充篇 (*Music History of Taiwan-Supplementary edition*). Taipei:全音出版社 (Chuang-Ying Publisher), 1996.
- . *台灣音樂史初稿 (Music History of Taiwan)*. Taipei: 全音樂譜出版社 (Chuang-Ying Publisher), 2010.
- Hsu, Tsang-Houei, Chui-Kuan Lu, and Rong-Sing Zheng. *台灣傳統音樂之美 (The Beauty of Traditional Taiwanese Music)*. Taipei: Morning Star, 2003.
- Jeng, Yu-Fang. "The Study on Kuo Chih-Yuan's Piano Solo 'Variations and Fugue on an Ancient Taiwan Music.'" Master diss., Soochow University, 2004.
- Jian, Shang-Ren 簡上仁. *台灣民謠 (Taiwanese Folk Songs)*. Taipei: 眾文圖書公司, 1987.
- . *台灣福佬系民謠-老祖先的台灣歌 (Taiwanese Fulao Folk Songs: Old Taiwanese Songs)*. Taipei: 漢光文化事業股份有限公司眾文圖書公司, 1998.
- Li, Yung-Yi 李永奕. "台灣福佬系與客家系民歌曲調之比較研究(The Research of the Folk song Melody Comparability Between Fu-lao and Hakka)." Master diss., National Hsinchu University of Education, 2006.
- Lin, Kuo-Chen. "Understand the contemporary serious music composition of Taiwan (1980-2005) from the cognitive phenomenon of culture." DMA diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 2009.
- Lin, Ming-Chieh 林明杰. "從柯芳隆《哭泣的美人魚》看現代音樂對我創作所產生之影響." Master diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 2008.
- Manthorpe, Jonathan. *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Nettl, Bruno. *Folk music in the United States: an introduction*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976.
- Risatti, Howard. *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976.

Taiwan Yu-Hsien Teng music association. *台灣歌謠的春雨 傳·鄧雨賢 (Life of Yu-Hsien Teng)*. Taipei: 華品文創, 2016.

The Hakka Affairs Council. "National Research for Hakka people in Taiwan 2010-2011." Executive Yuan: The Hakka Affairs Council, 2011.

Website References

Chen, Ke-Chia. "Bio." Ke-Chia Chen Music Official Website. Accessed January 24, 2018. <https://www.kechiachen.com/bio/>.

Chen, Ke-Chia. "News." Ke-Chia Chen Music Official Website. Accessed January 24, 2018. <https://www.kechiachen.com/news/>.

Chen, Ke-Chia. "Works." Ke-Chia Chen Music Official Website. Accessed January 24, 2018. <https://www.kechiachen.com/works/>.

Council of Indigenous Peoples. "原住民族委員會全球資訊網 The Tribes in Taiwan." Accessed June 12, 2018. <https://www.apc.gov.tw/portal/cateInfo.html?CID=5DD9C4959C302B9FD0636733C6861689>.

Executive Yuan. "土地與人民 (中華民國國情簡介) Land and people." Accessed August 5, 2018. https://www.ey.gov.tw/state/Content_List.aspx?n=9EC698333226EFEA.

Executive Yuan. "族群(中華民國國情簡介-人民) Ethnic group." Accessed August 5, 2018. https://www.ey.gov.tw/state/News_Content3.aspx?n=7C222A52A60660EC&s=FD5D521BBC119F8.

Fugue for Thought. "NSO's Concerto for Orchestra." 2016. Accessed March 20, 2018. <https://fugueforthought.de/2016/10/12/nsos-concerto-for-orchestra/>.

International Society for Contemporary Music. 2018. "Lin, CHING MEI - F - Chinese Taipei | ISCM." Accessed July 17 2018. <https://www.iscm.org/catalogue/composers/lin-ching-mei-f-chinese-taipei>.

National Tsing Hua University. 2018. "蘇凡凌 教授 - 國立清華大學音樂學系." Accessed July 16 2018. <http://music.web.nthu.edu.tw/files/13-1974-22384.php?Lang=zh-tw>.

Yang, Yuan-Ting and Jake Chung. "Taiwan composer Tyzen Hsiao loses cancer battle," *Taipei Times*, Feb 26, 2015. Accessed June 6, 2018. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/02/26/2003612259>.

Yen, Ming-Hsiu. "Curriculum Vitae," Ming-Hsiu Yen official website. Accessed July 17, 2018. <http://www.minghsiuyen.com/curriculum-vitae/>.

Appendix

Entire composition output of Ke-Chia Chen

Orchestra

- A Lasting Bond*, for orchestra (2016) ca. 7 min.
Untold Memories, for orchestra (2014) ca. 7 min.
Chasing the Sun, for chamber orchestra (2010) ca. 5 min.
Broken Crystal, for orchestra (2009) ca. 8 min.
Afterlight, for orchestra (2007) ca. 11 min.
Inside the Vessel of Time, for orchestra (2006) ca. 6 min.

Concerto

- Song of The Wanderer*, for clarinet and orchestra (2008) ca. 12 min.
The Desires, for viola and string orchestra (2006) ca. 19 min.
Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra, for violin and orchestra (2003) ca. 10 min.

Chamber Music

- Formosa Phoenix*, for English horn, cello, tuba, percussion and piano (2017) ca. 10 min.
Remembrance, for cello and piano (2017) ca. 5 min.
The Looming Sky, for piano quartet (2016) ca. 7 min.
Postcard, for cello and piano (rev. 2016) ca. 6 min.
Rain Dance, for brass quintet (2015) ca. 7 min.
Taiwanese Children's Games, for piano four-hand (2014) ca. 6 min.
The Silent Flame, for horn and piano (2012) ca. 10 min.
Three Lamentations, for violin, cello and piano (rev. 2011) ca. 10 min.
Book of Images, for violin and harp (2009) ca. 7 min.
Song of The Wanderer, for clarinet and piano (2008) ca. 12 min.
A Path To Light, for six French horns (2008) ca. 8 min.
Percussion Quartet, for four percussion (2008) ca. 12 min.
Sentiments, for soprano, violoncello and harp (2007) ca. 11 min.
The Desires, for viola and string nonet (2006) ca. 19 min.
Rhapsody of Seasons, for string quartet (2006 rev.) ca. 13 min.
September 21, 1999 (Memorial Album of an Earthquake)
Woodwind Quintet (2003) ca. 7 min.
Duet, for viola and cello (2003) ca. 8 min.
Album of Songs, for soprano, cello, percussion, and harp (2002) ca. 5 min.

Butterfly Underwater-clockDeath, for violin, violoncello, clarinet, trumpet, trombone and percussion (2000) ca. 7 min.

Vocal Music

Three Frost Songs, for voice and piano (rev. 2011) ca. 7 min.

Three Frost Songs, for tenor, flute/piccolo and harp (2009) ca. 7 min.

Madame White Snake (Bai She Zhuan), Opera in one act: Scene I (2006) ca. 12 min.

Behind the Veil, for Soprano and Piano (2005) ca. 5 min.

Choral Music

My Days are Like a Shadow, for SATB a cappella choir (2015) ca. 3 min.

Solo Work

Treasure Box, for solo piano (2010) ca. 12 min.

To An Isolated Island, for solo piano (2004) ca. 13 min.

Suite 1, for solo piano (1998) ca. 5 min.

The song of Leaves, for solo piano (1997) ca. 8 min.

Electro-acoustic:

Listening to the Moment (Soundtrack for the photography & sound album *Memory*)