AN INTRODUCTION TO FOUR SELECTED CHINESE CONTEMPORARY SONGS BY XI ZHAO (1973)

by

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A Document Submitted to the Faculty of the

FRED FOX SCHOOL OF MUSIC

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Xi Zhao (1973) is one of the few pioneers of innovation in the Chinese art song. Professor Zhao's music is a fusion of Chinese, international, and personalized music styles that are constantly evolving through his refined writing. He unabashedly pursues the combination of compositional techniques with quintessential Chinese sound and musical stylizations.

The purpose of this essay is to introduce the composer Xi Zhao and four of his unpublished songs to professional, classical singers and educators. Xi Zhao is a professor and the Chair of Music Composition at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. The fusion of multiple music styles in Xi Zhao's vocal works is characteristic of his compositional style. His vocal works include the addition of elements of traditional Chinese music, traditional Chinese instruments, as well as musical quotations. This essay provides a brief biography of Xi Zhao and summarizes his musical philosophies. In addition, it includes poetic and musical analysis for each of the four selected songs. Each song's translation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) are provided to assist non-Chinese singers seeking to perform these songs. Further, this study aims to introduce Xi Zhao's four Chinese contemporary songs, broaden the song catalog of living composers, and promote his body of work.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF CHINESE ART SONG

As a Western music genre, art songs have existed in China for nearly 100 years. Chinese art song can be traced to Chinese *School Song* in the early 20th century, which generally refers to music classes offered by schools or to songs created for singing in school. Some Chinese intellectuals and musicians created Chinese lyrics for Western tunes, teaching and singing these school songs. And so began the era of *School Song* in China. These songs were prototypes of the earliest Chinese art songs.[1] The advocates and promoters of *School Song* included music educators Xingong Shen (1870–1947), Shutong Li (1880–1942), and Zhimin Zeng (1879-1929), among others. Additionally, the rapid rise of school songs in China marked the emergence and development of new forms of music in the country, laying an important foundation for the creation and development of Chinese art songs.

Chinese art songs emerged in the 1920s under the influence of The May Fourth Movement (1919). The May Fourth Movement was a patriotic movement against imperialism and feudalism that happened in Beijing on May 4th, 1919. It was led by young students as the main force, but the general public, citizens, business people, and other sectors also participated. They called for democracy and science, advocated for new culture and opposed old feudal culture. These activities promoted the exchange and integration of traditional Chinese culture, and modern Western culture.[2] Under the influence of the movement, Qing Zhu (1893–1959), Youmei Xiao (1884-1940), Yuanren Zhao (1892-1982), and a group of ambitious composers who returned from overseas, made great efforts to create a new music culture in China. These

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[1] Changyong Liao, *Chinese Art Songs of 100 Years, Vol. 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 2020), 14.

[2] Xiaogang Xiang, "On the May 4th Movement Affect Chinese New Music Creation," *HUANGZHONG (Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music)* 23, no. 2 (2009): 11.

pioneers drew inspiration from the compositional techniques of Western art songs. They created the earliest Chinese art songs fusing ancient Chinese poetry, which influenced later composers.[3] For example, *The Great River Goes East* was written by Qing Zhu when he was studying abroad in Germany in 1920. The text features lyrics by Shi Su (1037–1101), a poet from the Song Dynasty (960–1279), and is regarded as the first Chinese art song.

To promote national culture and music characteristics, most composers create Chinese art songs based on ancient Chinese poems, employing Western compositional techniques to express the unique charm and artistic conception of ancient Chinese poetry. Due to the creation of vast numbers of these works by composers in recent years, the style of Chinese art songs sometimes tends to lack personality and innovation. Only a fraction of composers innovate Chinese contemporary songs using contemporary poems or prose poems, elements of Chinese traditional music, new combinations of accompaniment, and new compositional thoughts. One such composer is Xi Zhao (1973).

[3] Liao, *Chinese Art Songs of 100 Years,* 40.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION OF XI ZHAO

Biography and Philosophy of Composition

Xi Zhao (1973) is a professor and the Chair of Music Composition at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. He was admitted to the high school affiliated with the Wuhan Conservatory of Music to study piano, where he made outstanding achievements. He continued to study at Wuhan Conservatory of Music from 1991 to 1999 and obtained a bachelor's degree in composition and piano in 1996. In 1999, he received a Master of Arts degree in composition, and during his studies, he successfully presented two concerts. During his time as a teacher, he studied composition with composer Kirill e Volkov at the Gnessin State Musical College in Russia from 2003–2004.[4]

His favorite genre, piano writing, has been widely, authoritatively, and unanimously recognized (through a series of professional awards) as displaying expert writing skills and artistic value. These awards include the Gold Award in "the Music of China Golden Bell Awards," the Second Prize in "the Wenhua Music Creation Awards," the Gold Award of "the Hubei Music Golden Chime Bell Awards" and "the Hubei Qu Yuan Literature and Art Awards." Furthermore, multiple works by Xi Zhao have been publicly published and distributed or included in albums, tutorials, and CD albums. They have also been widely used in professional teaching and have become tracks for professional exams and concerts.

With his refined writing style and constantly expanding music genres and themes, Xi Zhao has explored the integration of Chinese, international, and individual music languages,

[4] "Xi Zhao," *Composition Department, Wuhan Conservatory of Music*, last modified January 13, 2022, https://zqx.whcm.edu.cn/info/1027/1293.htm.

pursuing the combination of composition techniques, acoustics, and musicality.[5] Zhao's works are also rich in themes and forms. In his works, he not only incorporated from modern musical composition techniques, such as Western music series and sound level collection but also created new instrument combinations. These colorful new sounds reflect new orchestration innovations in the 20th century.[6]

Vocal Works

Unlike other contemporary composers, Zhao composed art songs with multiple styles, elements, and innovations using the aforementioned techniques. However, most of his art songs have not yet been published publicly, including his adapted song *秋柳* [*Autumn Willow,* 2011], *画眉*[*The Blackbird,* 2013/15], 我想要的爱情 ["The Love I Want"] and 蝴蝶尖叫 ["Butterfly Screaming"], which are from the song cycle *青春的黄昏* [*Twilight of Youth*, 2017].

Zhao's vocal works show the artistic and innovative qualities he employs through the addition of traditional Chinese musical elements, traditional Chinese instruments, and musical quotations. In his songs, he not only uses elements of Chinese traditional music, such as Chinese pentatonic scale, hexatonic scale, and heptatonic scale but also establishes the tone of the song based on the characteristics of 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) in his vocal music. This is to say he writes melodies based on the characteristics of Chinese Mandarin phonology and tones.[7] Through creative ingenuity, he employs traditional Chinese instruments, voice, and piano,

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Xi Zhao, Text message to author, July 29, 2023.

presenting a new musical experience. He further attempts to fuse musical styles by quoting other music material in his songs.

Xi Zhao's contemporary art songs combine Chinese characteristics with Western music styles, possess artistic and innovative qualities, and are worth being studied and performed by singers and vocal learners. However, Xi Zhao's vocal works represent an often neglected or forgotten corner of the contemporary Chinese vocal repertoire, and the body of literature on Xi Zhao is limited. Because much of his oeuvre is not published, his vocal works are rarely known, and they are under-performed and under-researched by performers and scholars.

CHAPTER 3: *AUTUMN WILLOW*

The Poet and the Poem

Shutong Li (1880–1942) was a famous musician, art educator, and calligrapher. His original name was Wentao, and he was known as Guanghou and Chengqi in his time. In 1905, Shutong Li traveled to Japan to study art and music. After returning to his homeland in 1910, he engaged in art education until 1918, when he became a Buddhist monk under the name Hong Yi. He is one of the representative figures of the Chinese *School Song* (学堂乐歌).[8]

The new Chinese musical compositional style, *School Song*, was just budding at the turn of the 20th century. Intellectuals studying abroad wrote Chinese texts for popular Japanese, European, and American tunes, arranging them into new songs. As a new form of modern poetry, these lyrics blended tradition and modernity, embodying both the charm of classical Chinese poetry and the poetic characteristics of new, vernacular poetry. They are regarded as a symbol of the modern transformation of Chinese poetry.

These songs were mostly written in simplified notation. Because Shutong highly admired the modern Western music culture, he not only abandoned traditional notation methods, utilizing Western staff composition but also directly borrowed existing Western musical tunes, arranging them with Chinese texts. One example is his famous *送别* [*Farewell Song*], which was adapted from a nineteenth-century work by John P. Ordway (1824–1880), *Dreaming of Home and Mother*. Furthermore, his song *秋柳* [*Autumn Willow*] was adapted from the hymn *In the Sweet By and By*, written by Joseph P. Webster in 1867.[9]

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[8] Lilan Wang, "Shutong Li and School Song," *Learning Week* 6, no. 5 (2012): 186.

[9] Xi Zhao, Text message to author, July 29, 2023.

秋柳 [*Autumn Willow*] is a lesser-known song in comparison to the *Farewell Song*, which is known throughout China. In *Autumn Willow*, Shutong uses the willow as a metaphor for life, expressing his emotions through the scenery, depicting and comparing the varying appearances of willows in autumn and spring to express lamentation for current life and nostalgia for the past. In the first part of the poem, Shutong describes the willow tree with fallen leaves in autumn and recalls the shady willow tree in spring. The second part expresses the lament that life is now different from the past.

Musical Analysis

秋柳 [*Autumn Willow*] is a school song adapted by the composer for the "Concert to Commemorate the Centennial of the Revolution of 1911," which was presented by the Wuhan Conservatory of Music in 2011.[10] The melody of the song originates from the hymn *In the Sweet By and By*, which was written by Joseph P. Webster in 1867.[11] The structure of the original music by Joseph Webster perfectly matches the structure of Shutong's poem (binary form), and the combination of poetry and the melody presents the characteristics of the *School Song*'s period: one word paired with one note.

The song adapted by Xi Zhao is in 4/4. The tonal movement spans F major to C major, and the vocal range is from C4 to A5. The structure is a modified strophic form with three sections. Each section expresses different emotions. The emotional message of the poem is artistically expressed through the addition of the violin with the piano. This combination makes the sonority richer in color.

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

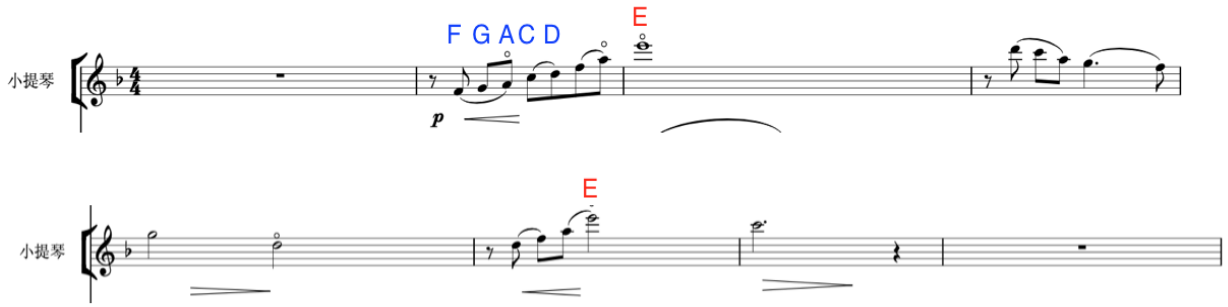
In the short prelude, the piano part keeps the rhythm (two-eighths in the right hand), and the single note in the left hand adds a sense of emotional heaviness to the song. The following thirty-second notes imitate the blowing of the autumn wind. The melody of the violin is a Chinese six-tone mode, which is one of the Chinese folk modes. In China, the ancient pentatonic scale is widely used in ancient Chinese and folk music. The notes of the pentatonic scale are called 宫 (Gōng), 商 (Shāng), 角 (Jué), 徵 (Zhǐ), and 羽 (Yǔ), which are C, D, E, G, and A, respectively, in the C Gong pentatonic scale. Additionally, there are four additional notes named 偏音(Pian Yin, means deviating note in English): Qingjue (a minor second above Jué), Biangong (a minor second below Gōng), Bianzhi (a minor second below Zhǐ), and Run (a major second below Gōng).[12] Various Chinese folk modes are based on the pentatonic scale, each adding one or more additional notes. For example, the six-tone mode (hexatonic scale) is formed by adding a Qingjue or Biangong on the basis of the pentatonic scale. Example 3.1. shows the melody of the violin part of the prelude in *秋柳*[*Autumn Willow*]. The five principal notes are F, G, A, C, and D, which create a F Gong pentatonic scale. The added note E which is an additional note appears twice in this prelude. In the F Gong pentatonic scale, E is Biangong (a half-step below F), creating a six-tone scale: F Gong pentatonic scale with Biangong.

The voice part in the first section is the same as that of the original song. The range is mid to low, and the violin plays when there are no voices, much like a dialogue. In addition, Zhao adds many arpeggios in the piano part to present the wind blowing the willow. In the

[12] Yuting Ji, "A Discussion of Shiguang Cui's Piano Concerto No. 2, Focusing on a Stylistic Analysis and Traditional Chinese Musical Elements" (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, 2016), 24-30, https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/903.

interlude, the violin echoes the melody of the voice part in the first section, and the piano moves with sixteenth notes to show excitement.

Example 3.1. Zhao, *Autumn Willow*, the violin part in the prelude, mm. 1-8.

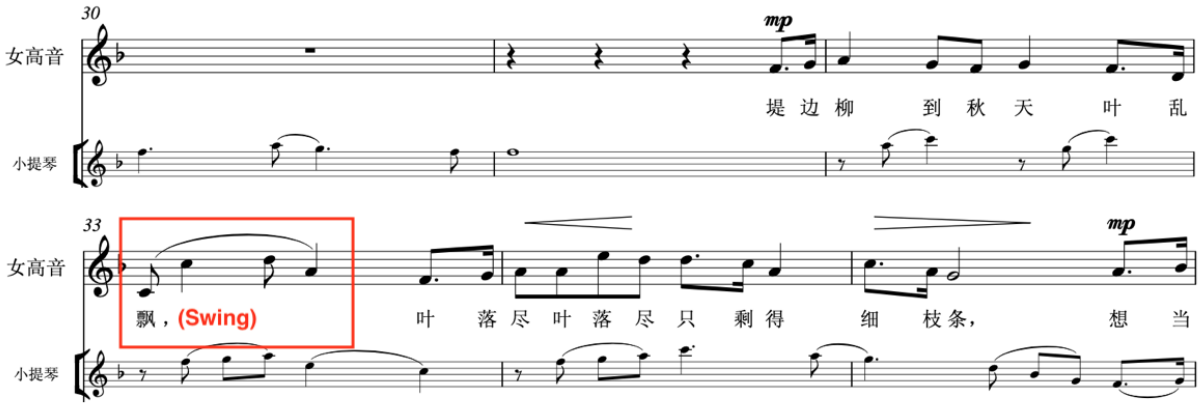


F Gong pentatonic scale: F, G, A, C, D
Four additional notes: Bb, E, B Eb

In the second section, the voice and the violin play together to resonate. The main melody does not change significantly from the first section, Still, Zhao is able to expand the melody to reflect the meaning of the text. For example, in "叶乱飘" [willows swing in the winds], measure 33, Zhao expands the melody with an interval jump up, and then back down on the word "飘"[swing]. This vividly depicts the scene of willow leaves floating in disorder, as shown in Example 3.2. Zhao then adds a phrase that modulates the key to C major, which seems to vent emotions, maintaining this energy until the climax of the song.

In the final section, Zhao adds the interjection "Ah" after each short sentence describing the autumn willow scene, and the sequence gradually goes down, like a sigh. This section expresses the character's helplessness and sadness, rendering the song full of lyricism. Compared to the original, Zhao enriched not only the structure of the song but also the texture of the accompaniment, making a song that originally had a nursery rhyme style into a more lyrical and artistic piece.

Example 3.2. Zhao, *Autumn Willow*, mm. 30-35.



The Translation and IPA

秋柳	Autumn Willow
堤边柳, 到秋天, 也乱飘。	When the fall comes, willows by the river swing in the winds,
叶落尽, 只剩得, 细枝条。	And lost all their leaves, leaving only thin twigs.
想当日, 绿荫荫, 春光好。	Think of those green days, fine spring times.
今日里, 冷清清, 秋色老。	Today is cold and cheerless, With aging fall scenes.
风凄凄, 雨凄凄,	Sad winds, sad rains,
君不见, 眼前景, 已全非。	Don’t you see everything before your eyes is different,
眼前景, 已全非。	Everything before your eyes is different.
一思量, 一回首, 不胜悲!	Once thinking, Once turning, there is only overwhelming sadness!

	堤	边	柳,	到	秋	天,	叶	乱	飘。
Pinyin	dī	biān	liǔ,	dào	qiū	tiān,	yè	luàn	piāo.
IPA	ti	bjan	ljəu,	dɑʊ	tɕʰioʊ	tʰiɛn	iɛ	luan	pʰiɑʊ.

	叶	落	尽,	只	剩	得,	细	枝	条。
Pinyin	yè	luò	jìn,	zhǐ	shèng	dé,	xì	zhī	tiáo.
IPA	iɛ	luɔ	tɕin,	tʂi	ʂəŋ	tə,	ɕi	tʂi	tʰiaʊ.

	想	当	日,	绿	荫	荫,	春	光	好,
Pinyin	xiǎng	dāng	rì,	lǜ	yīn	yīn,	chūn	guāng	hǎo,
IPA	ɕiɑŋ	tɑŋ	ɻi,	ly	in	in,	tʂuən	kuɑŋ	xaʊ,

	今	日	里,	冷	清	清,	秋	色	老。
Pinyin	jīn	rì	lǐ,	lěng	qīng	qīng,	qiū	sè	lǎo.
IPA	tɕ	ɻi	li,	ləŋ	tɕʰiŋ	tɕʰiŋ,	tɕioʊ	sə	lɑʊ
	风	凄	凄,	雨	凄	凄,			
Pinyin	fēng	qī	qī,	yǔ	qī	qī,			
IPA	fəŋ	tɕi	tɕi,	y	tɕi	tɕi,			
	君	不	见,	眼	前	景,	已	全	非。
Pinyin	jūn	bú	jiàn,	yǎn	qián	jǐng,	yǐ	quán	fēi.
IPA	tɕuən	pu	tɕiɛn,	iɛn	tɕʰiɛn	tɕiŋ,	i	tɕuan	feɪ.
	眼	前	景,	已	全	非。			
Pinyin	yǎn	qián	jǐng,	yǐ	quán	fēi.			
IPA	iɛn	tɕʰiɛn	tɕiŋ,	i	tɕuan	feɪ.			
	一	思	量,	一	回	首,	不	胜	悲!
Pinyin	yī	sī	liàng,	yī	huí	shǒu,	bú	shèng	bēi!
IPA	i	si	liɑŋ,	i	xuən	ʂoʊ,	bu	ʂəŋ	peɪ![13]

[13] Ifeanyi Sunny Odinye, "Phonology of Mandarin Chinese: Pinyin vs. IPA," *Quarterly Journal of Chinese Studies* 4, no. 2 (2015): 51-58. The IPA of each song provided in this essay is created by the author Min Liu according to two tables showing one-to-one correspondence between the Mandarin Chinese Pinyin and IPA symbols (see Appendix B).

CHAPTER 4: *THE BLACKBIRD*

The Poet and the Poem

The text of *画眉* [*The Blackbird*] contains two languages: English text from a ninth-century Irish poem, "The Blackbird Calling from the Willow" (poet unknown),[14] and Chinese text from 秋叶画眉 ["Fall Leaves and Thrushes"], a painting poem by the Chinese Qing Dynasty painter Yan Hua (1682–1756). In a Chinese painting poem, the painter or others would write an accompanying poem after finishing a painting that encapsulates their state of mind or emotions, discusses artistic insights, or praises the artistic conception of the picture.[15] Yan Hua, who was a poet, calligrapher, and painter, was one of the most accomplished literati painters in the middle of the Qing Dynasty. His paintings are simple and ethereal, and his brushstroke composition is unique. He wrote poetry in his paintings, and these painting poems are the most concentrated manifestation of his cultural personality. His painting poems can be divided into four categories: flowers and birds, plants and insects, human characters, and landscapes.[16] Under Yan Hua's pen, all living beings are the source of beauty and interest, and he often depicted flowers, birds, and fish in his poetry. *Red Peony*, *Crane*, and *The Blackbird* are a few works where he employs this imagery. Yan Hua's painting *The Blackbird* is shown in Figure 4.1.

The precise words and rhythms of the Chinese poem 秋叶画眉 ["Fall Leaves and Thrushe"] by Yan Hua illuminate the beauty of the Chinese language. The translation of this poem in the vernacular is as follows: "The call of the blackbird when it meets spring is gentle

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[14] "Rooted in the Tradition," *Christian History Institute*, accessed June 20, 2023. https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/rooted-in-the-tradition.

[15] Xianyu Jing, "Yan Hua and His Painting Poem," *Southeast Communication* 4, no. 1 (2007): 116.

[16] Ibid., 117.

and melodious, and the sound of her calls ushers in autumn. The chilly mist and sparse rain of autumn will be gone after the sun comes out." Yan Hua depicted the gentle and melodious voice of the blackbird in the first sentence and an autumn scene in the second scene. Here, he is conveying a fleeting moment from spring to autumn and expresses the hope that sunshine will bring vitality and beauty to all things. The Irish poem mainly depicts a singing blackbird. Similar but slightly contrasting, the Chinese poem conveys hope and a positive attitude toward life through the call of the blackbird.[17] This combination not only enriches the content of poetic language but also elevates its connotation to the spiritual level.

Figure 4.1. The Painting *The Blackbird* by Yan Hua

[17] Christian History Institute, "Rooted in the Tradition."

Musical Analysis

After the first draft of *画眉* [*The Blackbird*] was completed on November 27, 2013, for mezzo-soprano, piano, and Guzheng, a revised draft was completed on May 16, 2014. Zhao completed the second revision on January 18, 2015. The final version has a wider range and can be sung by a soprano as well.[18]

画眉 [*The Blackbird*], which is 137 measures in length, has a vocal range spanning from $B\flat_3$ (just below middle C) to A_5. It has a compound ternary form. Table 1 introduces the formal structure of *画眉* [*The Blackbird*].

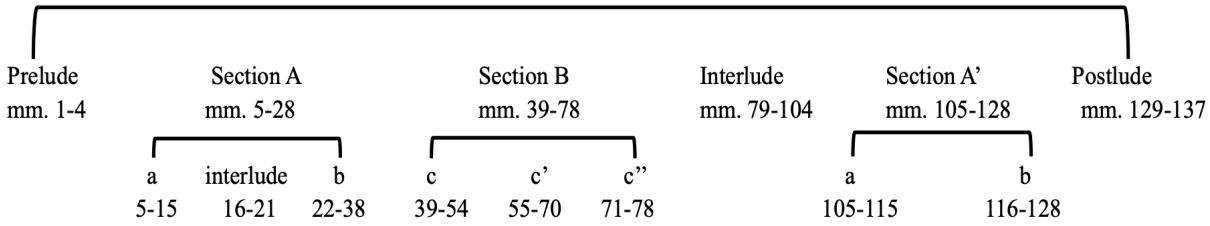


Figure 4.2. The Formal Structure of *The Blackbird*

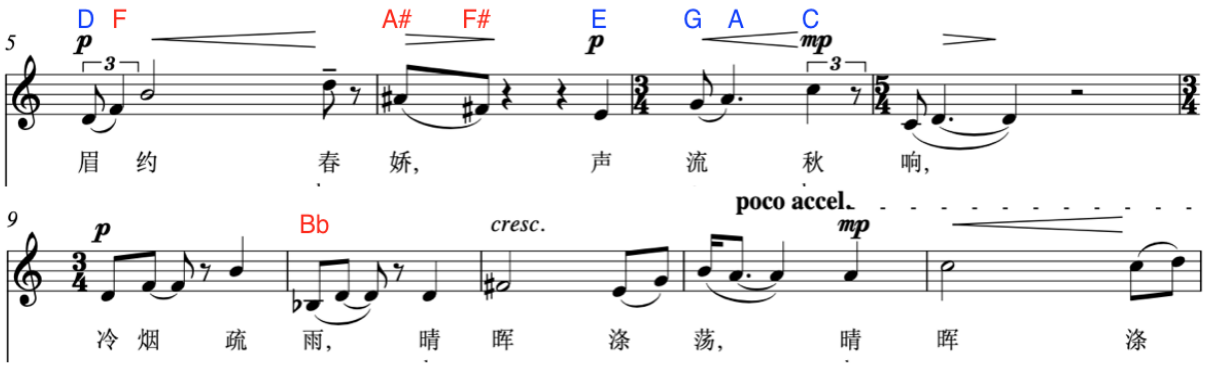
The music of *画眉* [*The Blackbird*] is based on the pentatonic scale. Zhao used different Chinese folk modes in *画眉* [*The Blackbird*] to represent the traditional Chinese music style. As mentioned when introducing *Autumn Willow*, the various Chinese folk modes are based on the pentatonic scale, each adding one or more additional notes. In the nine-tone mode (nonatonic scale), all of the additional notes including Qingjue, Biangong, Binzhi, and Run are added.[19] For example, based on the C Gong pentatonic scale, Zhao adds all four additional notes including Qingjue, Biangong, Binzhi, and Run, which puts the song in a D Shang nonatonic scale in the

[18] Xi Zhao, Text message to author, July 29, 2023.

[19] Chang Gao, "An Overview of the Nine-Tone Scale and My Opinion on the Nonatonic Collection," *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music* 36, no. 4 (2014): 6-7.

prelude and part A of Section A, as shown in Example 4.2. In part B of Section A, the mode changes from the pentatonic scale to the six-tone mode, and finally to a seven-tone mode. Zhao enriches the music by modulating the Chinese folk modes.

Example 4.2. Zhao, *The Blackbird*, mm. 5–13.



C Gong pentatonic scale: C, D, E, G, A
Four additional notes: F, F#, B, Bb/A#

Zhao also utilized the characteristic of 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) to compose this work. 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) refers to the melody of various traditional Chinese operas that match the tone of the text. In Chinese Mandarin, there are four tones: Yin Ping, Yang Ping, Shang Sheng, and Qu Sheng. Yin Ping is the high and level tone (ā), Yang Ping is the rising tone (á), Shang Sheng is the falling and rising tone (ǎ), and Qu Sheng is the falling tone (à).[20] Zhao used 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) for the Chinese poem in this song. The Chinese text in this song is located in part A of Section A. The text with Pinyin is as follows:

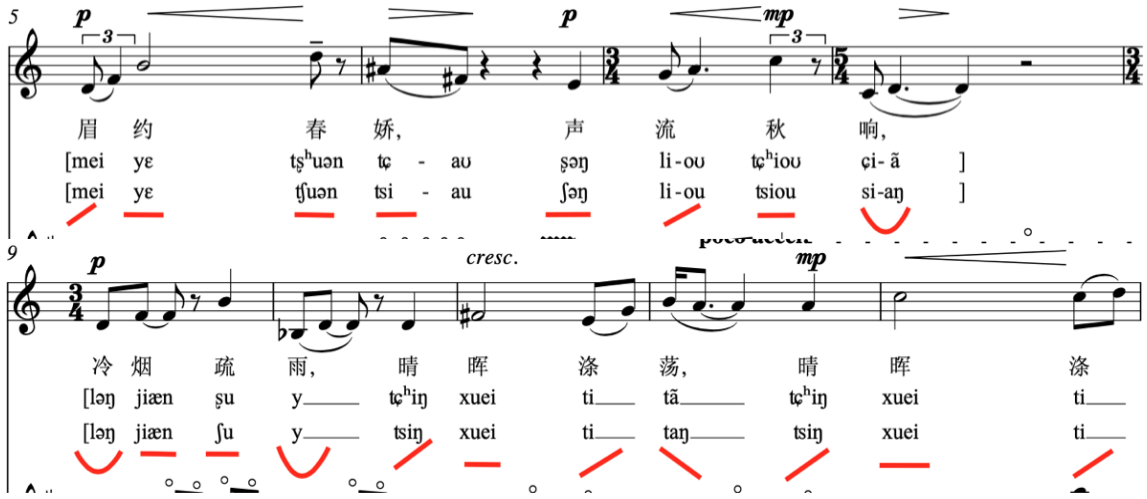
眉	约	春	娇，	声	流	秋	响，
méi	yūe	chūn	jiāo,	shēng	líu	qīu	xiǎng,

冷	烟	疏	雨，	晴	晖	涤	荡。
lěng	yān	shū	yǔ,	qíng	huī	dí	dàng.

[20] Yi Kuang, “Research on ‘依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang)’ in Singing,” *Literature Life* 60, no. 9 (2015): 89.

Zhao composed a musical tone that matched the tone of the Chinese words for this text, highlighting the elements of traditional Chinese music and opera. For the first tone (the high and level tone) of the Chinese word, Zhao uses a single note, and he uses ascending notes for the second tone (the rising tone) and the third tone (the falling and rising tone). For the fourth tone (the falling tone), he uses descending intervals, as shown in Example 4.3.[21]

Example 4.3. Zhao, *The Blackbird*, the tone matching between the music and Chinese Mandarin, mm. 5-13.



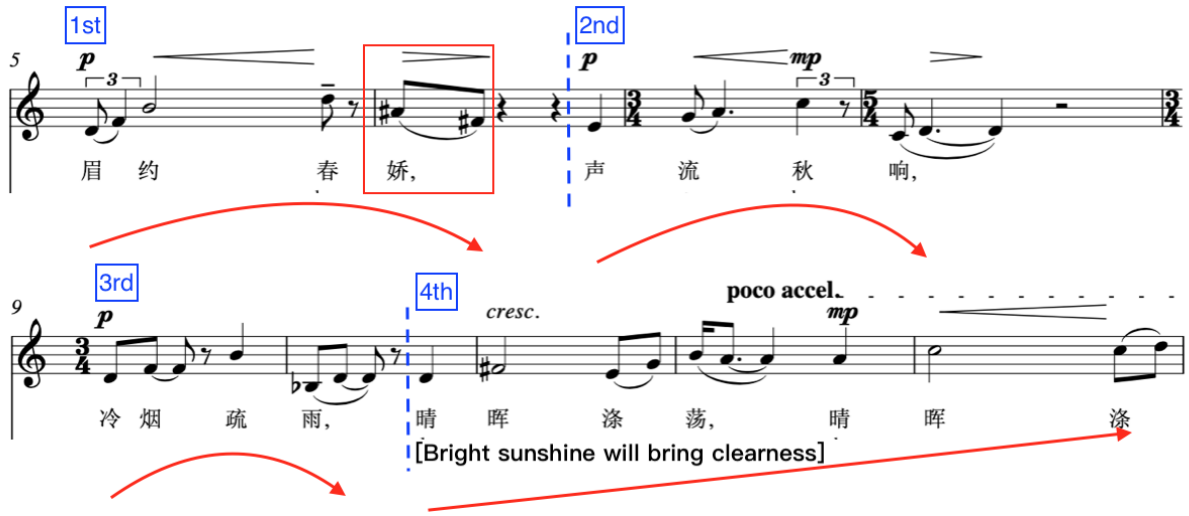
Measure six is an exception. The word "矫 (jiāo)" in measure six is the first tone, but Zhao uses a descending interval on the word "矫 (jiāo)" which forms the phenomenon of 倒字 (Dao Zi). 倒字 (Dao Zi) means Inverted Characters, referring to the conflict between the tones of the melody and the tone of the lyrics.[22] In Tingjiang Hu's article *Tone and Tone: Exploring the Phenomenon of '倒字 (Dao Zi)' in Vocal Music Creation,* he states: "In addition to the 'tone

[21] Rulan Chao Pian, "Tone and Tone: Applying Musical Elements to Chinese Words," *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 28, no. 2 (2000): 182.

[22]Tingjiang Hu, "Tone and Tone: Exploring the Phenomenon of '倒字 (Dao Zi)' in Vocal Music Creation," *Musical Works* 62, no. 8 (2017): 108.

lines' derived from the lyrics, there are more important 'melody lines' and 'emotional lines' in the song. Singing is not recitation…"[23] In the first three lines of the poem *画眉* [*The Blackbird*], the melody rises from low to middle register, and then returns to low at the last word, forming arched melodic lines. In the last line, the melody shows a gradually ascending melody line to emphasize the expressive meaning of the text: Bright sunshine will bring clearness, as shown in Example 4.4. Thus, the phenomenon of 倒字 (Dao Zi) in the word "矫 (jiāo)" is conformed to the overall melodic lines, expressing the emotion of the song.

Example 4.4. Zhao, *The Blackbird* , the phenomenon of 倒字 (Dao Zi), mm. 5-13.



Zhao composes *画眉* [*The Blackbird*] using two elements of traditional Chinese music: Chinese folk modes, and the characteristics of 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang). This combination not only effectively reflects the tone and phonology of Chinese Mandarin but also interprets the style of traditional Chinese music.

Besides the use of these two characteristics of traditional Chinese music, Zhao further adds a traditional Chinese instrument, Gu Zheng, to this song. The Gu Zheng, a Chinese plucked

[23] Ibid, 109.

zither, also known as Han Zheng and Qin Zheng, is an ancient musical instrument of Han nationality that is popular throughout China.[24] The most common Gu Zheng has 21 strings and is arranged in a pentatonic scale with each string playing one note. There are no strings that can be played in the notes of F or B, but these pitches can be played by pressing E or A.[25] The sound of the Gu Zheng is crisp and pleasant, delicate, full of charm, and has a sense of ancient beauty. The addition of this instrument brings a strong, ancient Chinese element to *The Blackbird*. It helps to sonically display a scene of high mountains and flowing water, while the piano accompaniment serves as a foil to the atmosphere. By combining the Gu Zheng, piano and voice, the song gains a vivid and immersive quality, evoking the imagery of a grand Chinese landscape painting. The fusing of sonorities creates a sensation of being surrounded by mountains and rivers.

The Translation and IPA

画眉	The Blackbird
眉约春娇， 声流秋响， 冷烟疏雨， 晴晖涤荡。	Thrushes are as lovely as spring, Singing brightly in autumn time. There may be light smoke and rain. Bright sunshine will bring clearness.

The bird which calls from the willow,
Beautiful beaklet of a clear note,
Musical bill of firm black lad,
Lively the tune that is played.

[24] Ruimei Guo and Zhuoran Zhou, "The Innovation of the Cooperation Between Chinese National Musical Instruments and the Western Instruments," *Journal of Hubei University of Education* 33, no. 3 (Mar. 2016): 49.

[25] Ibid., 50.

	眉	约	春	娇，	声	流	秋	响，
Pinyin	méi	yūe	chūn	jiāo,	shēng	líu	qīu	xiǎng,
IPA	mei	yœ	tʂʰuən	tɕiɑʊ,	ʂəŋ	lioʊ	tɕʰioʊ	ɕiɑŋ,
	冷	烟	疏	雨，	晴	晖	涤	荡。
Pinyin	lěng	yān	shū	yǔ,	qíng	huī	dí	dàng.
IPA	ləŋ	ian	ʂu	y,	tɕʰiŋ	xuei	ti	tɑŋ.

CHAPTER 5: "THE LOVE I WANT" FROM *TWILIGHT OF YOUTH*

The Poet and the Poem

Xiuhua Yu (1976) is a contemporary female poet and writer. She was born with hypoxia, which caused cerebral palsy, which left her unable to move and her speech unclear. Xiuhua dropped out of school at the age of nineteen and was placed into an arranged marriage by her mother.[26] Her husband, Shiping Yin, was twelve years her senior. Unfortunately, this marriage did not bring Xiuhua happiness, and it came to an end in 2015. In 1998, Xiuhua Yu wrote her first poem, "Impressions." In 2009, Xiuhua officially began writing poetry on themes focused on romantic love, family love, life insights, disability, and the closed village from which she could not escape.[27] Xiuhua Yu's poetry includes many love poems. As a woman facing adversity, she felt a deep sense of lovelessness. Her love poems are filled with themes of an unhappy marriage and a longing for love.[28] Her experiences and imagination are vivid, allowing her voice to reach her readers and further allowing them to feel her poems deeply.

"The Love I Want" describes the three stages of love: looking forward to love, daring not to love, and becoming brave enough to love. In the first part of the poem, Xiuhua describes a scene in which two people meet. The second part of the poem reflects the contradiction within the poet's heart; she is unwilling to accept compassionate love and is afraid of being hurt, so she deceives herself, convincing herself she loves herself more than she loves the other. In the final section, Xiuhua compares her life to the sky. She is oppressed by life, but even so, she still has a

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[26] Chutong Xu, "The Taste of Mixing Bitterness and Joy – On the Love Description in Xiuhua Yu's Poems," *The Youth Writers* 67, no. 10 (2022): 117.

[27] Ibid., 117.

[28] Yougang Qu, "On the Value of Xiuhua Yu's Love Poems," *Literature Education* 15, no. 3 (2019): 171.

selfless and tolerant heart, and is willing to pass her love to another. The poet expresses her strong desire for love by describing the three stages of love, from desiring love to fearing love's pain and ultimately choosing to love courageously.

Musical Analysis

The vocal range of this song is from C♯4 to B5. 我想要的爱情 ["The Love I Want"] is selected from the unfinished song cycle *青春的黄昏* [*Twilight of Youth,* 2017]. Zhao selected four poems from *汉诗* [*Han Poetry*], a quarterly poetry magazine in Wuhan,[29] to create the song cycle *青春的黄昏* [*Twilight of Youth*]. These four selected poems are written by Hubei poets Zhuo Zeng, Zhihao Zhang, Xiao Yin, and Xiuhua Yu respectively, and this group of songs with narrative meaning to express the feelings and insights of youth and love.[30]

我想要的爱情 ["The Love I Want"] utilizes musical quotations. Musical quotations are often seen in traditional Western music. The French-British artist Doug Thomas explains: "Musical quotation is the art of integrating one's musical words and sentences into another one's work… Composers as much as improvisers often quote each other, past and present peers. It is also frequent for musicians to quote themselves and their own works; perhaps retrospectively in

[29] "汉诗 [Han Poetry]," *Wuhan Federation of Literary and Art Circles*, accessed 2023, http://www.whswl.com/index.php/index/index/newslist?pcateid=22&cateid=23.

[30] Juanjuan Liu, "Citation, Synthesis, and Fusion music — The Pitch Organization and Style Characteristics of Xi Zhao's Art Song 'Speak to Her'," *HUANGZHONG (Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music)* 33, no. 4 (2019):18.

order to extend a musical thought."[31] Zhao interprets the emotion and the characterization in the poem by quoting musical materials.

For example, Zhao quotes "May" from Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons* (1985–1986), and the theme song of the 1970s American film *Love Story*, which shares the same name.[32] As shown in Example 5.1, Zhao's 我想要的爱情 ["The Love I Want"] opens with the beginning of Tchaikovsky's "May." Zhao changes it slightly, moving from nine-eight to four-four, changing the rhythm, and modulating a few notes. Tchaikovsky's "May" depicts a beautiful May night. In Russia, a phenomenon called "White Nights" occurs from May to July during which the sky can still appear bright even after midnight.[33] When this day arrives, people celebrate the blessings of nature. At the beginning of "May," the arpeggios and chords are as clear and bright as the harp, which seems to depict that people welcome the arrival of this day. Zhao quotes the beginning of "May" in "The Love I Want" to describe the poet's expectations for love, laying an optimistic tone of longing for love for the entire song.

As shown in Example 5.2, Zhao quotes the theme of the music in the American movie *Love Story* in the interlude (mm. 71–78). The piano music of *Love Story* was written by French composer Frances Lai (1932–2018). Zhao modulates the key of *Love Story* and adds trills in "The Love I Want." Zhao quotes the musical material in *Love Story* to interpret the final section of Xiuhua's poem, expressing what the poet wants in love: bravery to love, and reckless love. Zhao was particularly inspired by the tragic ending of the movie. After expressing emotions and

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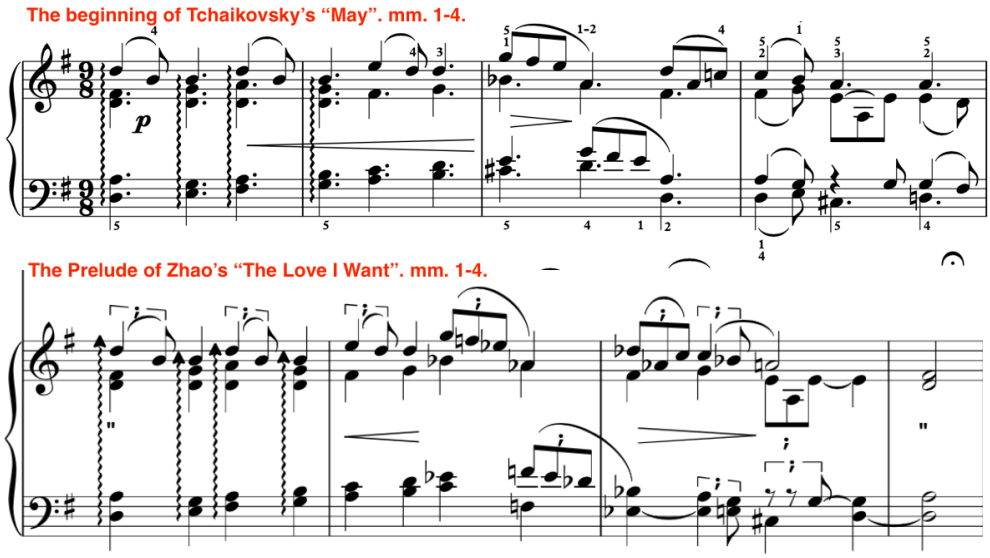
[31] Doug Thomas, "Musical Quotation," *Interlude*, last modified April 26th, 2021, https://interlude.hk/musical-quotation/.

[32] Juanjuan Liu, 20.

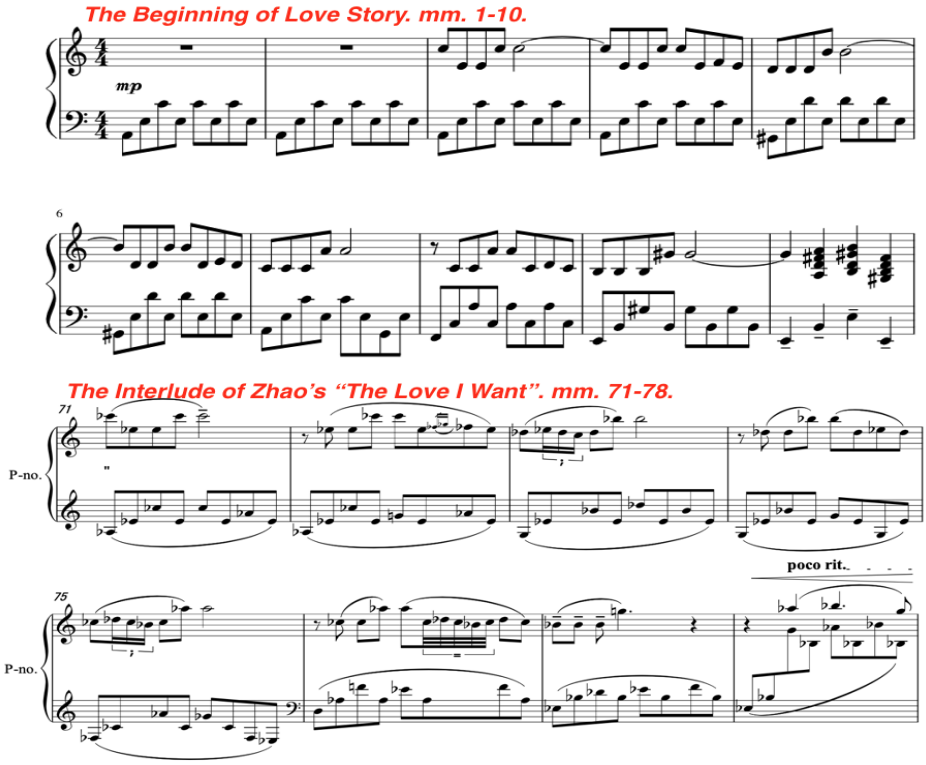
[33] Joshua Hammer, "White Nights of St. Petersburg," *New York Times*, June 5, 2011, New York edition.

exclaiming “Loving you is really an incredible thing,” the interlude repeats the music from *Love Story*.

Example 5.1. Tchaikovsky, “May,” mm. 1-4 followed by Zhao, “The Love I Want,” mm. 1-4.



Example 5.2. Lai, *Love Story,* mm.1-10 followed by Zhao, “The Love I Want,” mm. 71-78.



The Translation and IPA

在五月之末，万物葱茏也不能覆盖
At the end of May, all lush things can’t cover it.
山水退让，而你若来，依旧被一个幻景溺灭
Mountains and waters will step back. If you come, you will also be drowned in an illusion.
但无法阻挡它被月光狠狠地照耀，越照越白。
But nothing can stop being shone brightly by the moonlight, becoming whiter and whiter.

你看，我不打算以容貌取悦你了
You see. I don’t want to please you with my look,
也没有需要被你怜悯的部分
and no part needs to be pitied by you.
我爱我身体里块块锈斑，胜过爱你。
I love each rusty spot of my body, more than I love you.

许多时候，我背对着你，看布谷鸟低悬
Many times, I put my back to you and watch the lowly flying cuckoos.
天空把所有鸟的叫声都当成礼物，才惊心动魄地蓝。
When the sky treats all birds’ singing as gifts, it will be a real soul-stirring blue.

我被天空裹住，越来越紧
I am wrapped by the sky, tighter and tighter.
而我依旧腾出心
But I still make a room in my heart.
心靠左边的位置爱你
The position loving you is on the left.
爱你，真是一件不可思议的事情
Loving you is really an incredible thing.

	在	五	月	之	末，
Pinyin	zài	wǔ	yùe	zhī	mò
IPA	tsai	u	yœ	tʂi	mo,

	万	物	葱	茏	也	不	能	覆	盖。
Pinyin	wàn	wù	cōng	lóng	yě	bù	néng	fù	gài
IPA	uɑn	u	$ts^hʊŋ$	lʊŋ	iɛ	bu	nəŋ	fu	kai.

	山	水	退	让，	而	你	若	来，
Pinyin	shān	shuǐ	tuì	ràng,	ér	nǐ	ruò	lái,
IPA	ʂɑn	ʂuei	t^huei	ɻɑŋ,	əɹ	ni	ɻuɔ	lai,

	依	旧	被	一	个	幻	景	溺	灭。
Pinyin	yī	jìu	bèi	yí	gè	huàn	jǐng	nì	miè.
IPA	i	tɕioʊ	pei	i	kə	xuan	tɕiŋ	ni	miɛ.

	但	无	法	阻	挡	它	被	月	光
Pinyin	dàn	wú	fǎ	zǔ	dǎng	tā	bèi	yuè	guāng
IPA	tan	u	fa	tsu	tɑŋ	tʰa	peɪ	yœ	kuɑŋ

	狠	狠	地	照	耀，	越	照	越	白。
Pinyin	hěn	hěn	de	zhào	yào,	yùe	zhào	yùe	bái.
IPA	xən	xən	tə	tʂɑʊ	iɑʊ,	yœ	tʂɑʊ	yœ	pai.

	你	看，	我	不	打	算	以	容	貌
Pinyin	nǐ	kàn,	wǒ	bù	dǎ	suàn	yǐ	róng	mào
IPA	ni	kʰan,	uɔ	pu	ta	suan	i	ɻoŋ	mɑʊ

	取	悦	你	了，	
Pinyin	qǔ	yuè	nǐ	le,	
IPA	tɕy	yœ	ni	lə,	

	也	没	有	需	要	被	你
Pinyin	yě	méi	yǒu	xū	yào	bèi	nǐ
IPA	iɛ	meɪ	yoʊ	ɕy	iɑʊ	peɪ	ni

	怜	悯	的	部	分
Pinyin	lián	mǐn	de	bù	fèn
IPA	liɛn	min	tə	bu	fən

	我	爱	我	身	体	里	块	块	锈	斑
Pinyin	wǒ	ài	wǒ	shēn	tǐ	lǐ	kuài	kuài	xìu	bān
IPA	uɔ	ai	uɔ	ʂən	tʰi	li	kʰuaɪ	kʰuaɪ	ɕioʊ	pan

	胜	过	爱	你。
Pinyin	shèng	guò	ài	nǐ.
IPA	ʂəŋ	kuɔ	ai	ni.

	许	多	时	候，	我	背	对	着	你，
Pinyin	xǔ	duō	shí	hòu,	wǒ	bèi	duì	zhē	nǐ,
IPA	ɕy	tuɔ	ʂi	xoʊ,	uɔ	peɪ	tuei	tʂə	ni,

	看	布	谷	鸟	低	悬，
Pinyin	kàn	bù	gū	niǎo	dī	xuán,
IPA	kʰan	bu	ku	niɑʊ	ti	ɕuan,

	天	空	把	所	有	鸟	的	叫	声		
Pinyin	tiān	kōng	bǎ	suó	yǒu	niǎo	dē	jiào	shēng		
IPA	tʰiɛn	kʰoŋ	pa	suɔ	ioʊ	niɑʊ	tə	tɕiɑʊ	ʂəŋ		
	都	当	成	礼	物，						
Pinyin	dōu	dāng	chéng	lǐ	wù,						
IPA	toʊ	tɑŋ	tʂʰəŋ	li	u,						
	才	惊	心	动	魄	地	蓝				
Pinyin	cái	jīng	xīn	dòng	pò	de	lán				
IPA	tsʰai	tɕiŋ	ɕin	toŋ	pʰo	tə	lan				
	我	被	天	空	裹	住，	越	来	越	紧	
Pinyin	wǒ	bèi	tiān	kōng	guǒ	zhù,	yuè	lái	yuè	jǐn	
IPA	uɔ	peɪ	tʰian	kʰoŋ	kuɔ	tʂu,	yœ	lai	yœ	tɕin	
	而	我	依	旧	腾	出	心，				
Pinyin	ér	wǒ	yī	jìu	téng	chū	xīn,				
IPA	əɪ	uɔ	i	tɕioʊ	tʰəŋ	tʂu	ɕin,				
	心	靠	左	边	的	位	置	爱	你,		
Pinyin	xīn	kào	zuǒ	biān	dē	wèi	zhì	ài	nǐ,		
IPA	ɕin	kʰaʊ	tsuɔ	piɛn	də	uei	tʂi	ai	ni,		
	真	是	一	件	不	可	思	议	的	事	情。
Pinyin	zhēn	shì	yí	jiàn	bù	kě	sī	yì	dē	shì	qíng.
IPA	tʂən	ʂi	i	tɕiɛn	bu	kʰə	si	i	də	ʂi	tɕiŋ.

CHAPTER 6: "BUTTERFLY SCREAMING" FROM *TWILIGHT OF YOUTH*

The Poet and the Poem

The poet Xiao Yin (1969), whose birth name was Zhaohui Wang, is one of the representative figures of Net Literature. He is currently a professor at Wuhan University. Network Literature is a new literary style in China, published through the internet for online users to appreciate or take part. Xiao Yin began online literary creation in 1998 and frequently appeared on major literary websites.[34] His poetry always expresses emotions and narrates personal affairs. His work "Northwest by North," which won the Poetry Gold Award at the "First Banyan Tree Global Network Literature Competition" in 2000, was set to music composed and sung by musician Dongming Liu. Xi Zhao composed a song for Xiao Yin's poem "Butterfly Screaming." Sadly, this song has not yet been publicly published.[35]

Centered around butterflies, the entire poem describes the pain of separation between the male protagonist and his beloved. The butterfly's scream, on a cool night is an expression of his inner pain. The first section of the poem describes him missing his beloved in the dark night. He lies in bed at night, unable to sleep, and puts on his clothes and strolls outside the door, looking north—the direction of his beloved. Having lost his lover, he is like a butterfly with broken wings, not flying as easily as he did when he had his beloved.

In the second section of the poem, he wishes that she could write a letter to him, as a last effort. He wants to have a lover with him to fly into the "blueprint of the plan." Finally, the male protagonist imagines that, during the rainy season, two butterflies fly together, one in front and

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[34] Guangqi Rong, "Hubei Poetry in the Context of Contemporary Literature," *Modern Chinese Literature Criticism* 2, no. 3 (2013): 121.

[35] Ibid., 121.

the other behind. This is the ideal ending he is anticipating, alongside his longing for a fabulous love with his lover.

Musical Analysis

蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”] is written for a soprano, piano, and the Chinese Pengling (a kind of handbell). It is the third song of the unfinished song cycle *青春的黄昏* [*Twilight of Youth,* 2017]. The vocal range is from C4 to B5. Figure 6.1 outlines the formal structure of 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”].

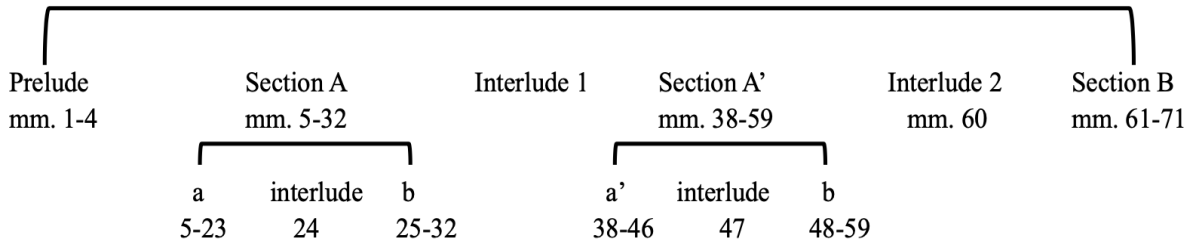
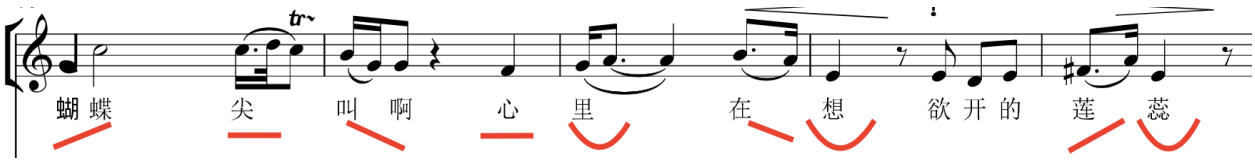


Figure 6.1. The formal structure of 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”]

Similar to *画眉* [*The Blackbird*], Zhao employs the Chinese folk modes and the characteristics of 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) in 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”]. Based on the E-flat Gong pentatonic scale, the melody begins with the seven-tone mode (heptatonic scale) in part A of Section A. Then, it modulates to the C Gong pentatonic scale in part B of Section A. Additionally, like *画眉* [*The Blackbird*], Zhao uses 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang) in 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”], as shown in Example 6.1.

Example 6.1. Zhao, “Butterfly Screaming,” mm. 16-20.

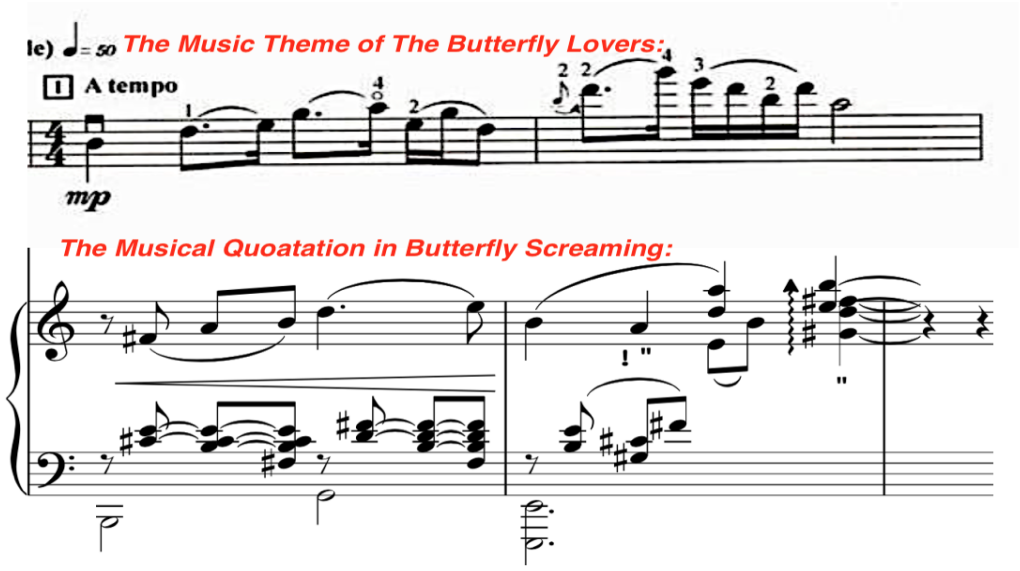


In 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”], the composer quotes the theme of the famous Chinese violin concerto 梁祝 [*The Butterfly Lovers*], composed by Zhanghao He (1933), and Gang Chen (1935) in 1958. *梁祝* [*The Butterfly Lovers*] is one of China’s Four Great Folktales. This legend has been adapted into multiple local varieties of traditional Chinese opera, TV dramas, movies, and music works.[36] The story of *The Butterfly Lovers* is about Shanbo Liang and Yingtai Zhu falling in love with each other, but due to Zhu’s parents’ disagreement, they cannot be together. In the end, they die, and their spirits emerge as a pair of butterflies and fly away together. This story expresses a personal desire for love. The composer quotes the theme of *The Butterfly Lover* in the song “Butterfly Screaming” to echo the butterfly image of the poem and the overall emotional narrative.[37] Zhao quotes the music theme from measures 21–22 and 43–44. Example 6.2 shows the musical theme in *梁祝* [*The Butterfly Lovers]* and the musical quotation in Zhao’s 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”]. In addition, in measures 48–49, Zhao quotes a segment of the Chinese pop song *听海* [*Listen to the Sea*,1997] to answer the previous text (“Write a letter to whom”): “Write a letter to me, as a final promise. . . .”

[36] Lanjun Xu, “The Lure of Sadness: The Fever of ‘Yueju’ and ‘The Butterfly Lovers’ in the Early PRC,” *Asian Theatre Journal* 33, no. 1 (2016): 113-116.

[37] Xi Zhao, Text message to author, July 29, 2023.

Example 6.2. He and Chen, *The Butterfly Lovers*, mm. 1-2 and followed by Zhao, "Butterfly Screaming", mm. 21–22.



In the song, Zhao adds the Chinese traditional instrument Pengling, which is a percussion instrument of Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, Naxi, Han and other minorities. It is also called Tingsha in Tibetan. The Pengling is widely used as a percussion instrument in the accompaniment of traditional Chinese opera and folk instrumental ensemble music.[38] A chain or a leather strap is used to connect two cymbals together, producing a high-pitched tone when struck. Typical sizes range from 2.5-4 inches in diameter.[39] Although there is no fixed pitch for the Pengling, the sound is pure and often accompanied by elegant and lyrical melodies. The addition of Pengling's ethereal sound in this song further reflects the chilly night. In the piano accompaniment, Zhao uses trills to imitate the butterfly flapping its wings, but also to describe

[38] Jianjun Pang, "On Percussion Music in the Chinese Traditional Opera," *Song of the Yellow River* 51, no. 13 (2008), 43.

[39] "Tingsha," *Wikipedia*, last modified May 6, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tingsha&oldid=1153499567.

the trembling scream of the butterfly. Additionally, the dissonant chords in the piano accompaniment renders the quiet and gloomy atmosphere of the village at night.

Zhao employs many musical elements in 蝴蝶尖叫 [“Butterfly Screaming”], fusing multiple musical styles including the traditional Chinese folk modes, the characteristic of 依字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang), the use of a traditional Chinese instrument, and musical quotations.

The Translation and IPA

蝴蝶尖叫	Butterfly Screaming
蝴蝶尖叫，夜凉如水。	Screaming butterflies, water-like cold night.
七个村庄，夜难寐。	Seven villages, sleepless night.
披衣望北。	Put on the clothes and look north.
蝴蝶尖叫，心里在想欲开的莲蕊。	Screaming butterflies, lotus blooming in the heart.
坐着的人儿怕不怕黑?	Will the sitting people fear the dark?
蝴蝶飞呀，翅膀沉重	Flying butterflies carry heavy wings.
是有露水还是眼泪?	Are there dews or tears?
蝴蝶尖叫，心就醉啊。	Screaming butterflies, broken hearts.
伤了月儿，伤了芦苇。	Hurt the moon, hurt the reeds.
写封信给谁?	Write a letter to whom?
写封信给我，就当最后约定。	Write a letter to me, as a final promise.
蝴蝶想飞，想让你陪。	Butterflies want to fly, want you to be side.
梅子黄时，飞来一只蝴蝶，	When plums turn yellow, a butterfly comes.
又飞来一只，那才是完完整整的结尾。	Then another one comes, and that is the complete end.

	蝴	蝶	尖	叫，	夜	凉	如	水
Pinyin	hú	díe	jiān	jiào,	yè	liáng	rú	shuǐ
IPA	xu	tiɛ	tɕiɛn	tɕiɑʊ,	iɛ	liɑŋ	ɻu	ʂuei

	七	个	村	庄，	夜	难	寐
Pinyin	qī	gè	cūn	zhuāng,	yè	nán	mèi
IPA	tɕʰi	kə	tsʰuən	tʂuɑŋ,	iɛ	nan	mei

	披	衣	望	北							
Pinyin	pī	yī	wàng	běi							
IPA	pʰi	i	uɑŋ	peɪ							
	蝴	蝶	尖	叫，							
Pinyin	hú	dié	jiān	jiào,							
IPA	xu	tiɛ	tɕiɛn	tɕiɑʊ							
	心	里	在	想	欲	开	的	莲	蕊		
Pinyin	xīn	lǐ	zài	xiǎng	yù	kāi	dē	lián	ruǐ		
IPA	ɕin	li	tsai	ɕiɑŋ	y	kʰai	də	lian	ɻuei		
	坐	着	的	人	儿	怕	不	怕	黑。		
Pinyin	zuò	zhē	dē	rén	er	pà	bú	pà	hēi.		
IPA	tsuɔ	tʂə	də	ɻən	əɪ	pʰa	pu	pʰa	xeɪ.		
	蝴	蝶	飞	呀，	翅	膀	沉	重			
Pinyin	hú	dié	fēi	ya,	chì	bǎng	chén	zhòng			
IPA	hu	tiɛ	feɪ	ia,	tʂʰi	pɑŋ	tʂʰən	tʂoŋ			
	是	有	露	水	还	是	眼	泪			
Pinyin	shì	yǒu	lù	shuǐ	hái	shì	yǎn	lèi			
IPA	ʂi	ioʊ	lu	ʂuei	xai	ʂi	ian	leɪ			
	蝴	蝶	尖	叫，	心	就	醉	啊			
Pinyin	hú	dié	jiān	jiào,	xīn	jìu	zuì	a			
IPA	xu	tiɛ	tɕiɛn	tɕiɑʊ,	ɕin	tɕioʊ	tsuei	a			
	伤	了	月	儿，	伤	了	芦	苇			
Pinyin	shāng	le	yùe	er,	shāng	le	lú	wěi			
IPA	ʂɑŋ	lə	yœ	əɪ,	ʂɑŋ	lə	lu	uei			
	写	封	信	给	谁？						
Pinyin	xiě	fēng	xìn	gěi	shúi?						
IPA	ɕiɛ	fəŋ	ɕin	keɪ	ʂuei?						
	写	封	信	给	我，	就	当	最	后	约	定。
Pinyin	xiě	fēng	xìn	gěi	wǒ,	jìu	dāng	zuì	hòu	yūe	dìng.
IPA	ɕiɛ	fəŋ	ɕin	keɪ	uɔ,	tɕioʊ	tɑŋ	tsuei	xoʊ	yœ	tiŋ.
	蝴	蝶	想	飞，	想	让	你	陪。			
Pinyin	hú	díe	xiǎng	fēi,	xiǎng	ràng	nǐ	péi.			
IPA	xu	tiɛ	ɕiɑŋ	feɪ,	ɕiɑŋ	ɻɑŋ	ni	pʰeɪ.			

	梅	子	黄	时，	飞	来	一	只	蝴	蝶，
Pinyin	méi	zi	huáng	shí,	fēi	lái	yì	zhī	hú	díe,
IPA	mei	tsi	xuɑŋ	ʂi,	feɪ	lai	i	tʂi	xu	tiɛ,

	又	飞	来	一	只，
Pinyin	yòu	fēi	lái	yì	zhī,
IPA	ioʊ	feɪ	lai	i	tʂi,

	那	才	是	完	完	整	整	的	结	尾。
Pinyin	nà	cái	shì	wán	wán	zhěng	zhěng	de	jíe	wěi.
IPA	na	tsʰai	ʂi	uan	uan	tʂəŋ	tʂəŋ	də	tɕiɛ	uei.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

During a century of development, Chinese art songs have gone through a transitional process from imitation, borrowing, and exploration toward independent innovation. Most composers created Chinese art songs based on ancient Chinese poems to promote national culture and music characteristics, employing Western composition techniques to express the unique charm and artistic conception of ancient Chinese poetry. However, due to the creation of vast numbers of these works by composers in recent years, the style of Chinese art songs can lack personality and innovation. Only a fraction of composers innovates Chinese contemporary art songs using contemporary poems or prose poems, elements of traditional Chinese music, new combinations of accompaniment, and new compositional thoughts. Xi Zhao is one of the few pioneers of innovation.

Xi Zhao's Chinese contemporary songs *秋柳* [*Autumn Willow*], *画眉* [*The Blackbird*], 我想要的爱情 ["The Love I Want"], and 蝴蝶尖叫 ["Butterfly Screaming"] demonstrate the artistic and innovative qualities formed by the fusion of elements of traditional Chinese music, traditional Chinese instruments, and musical quotations. Zhao's songs within the art song genre are full of artistry, lyricism, and innovation and serve as valuable studies for performance and scholarship. They provide singers with a unique cultural experience in music and widen the canon of vocal repertoire. With the introduction of his songs, singers and scholars will gain a deep understanding of Zhao's songs and learn the different styles of Chinese art music.

Overall, being exposed to and learning culturally diverse music facilitates us to broaden our understanding of different cultures and their unique art forms. Through an innovative amalgamation of traditional Chinese musical elements, traditional Chinese

instruments, and musical quotations, Xi Zhao's songs can provide us with a new perspective and musical experiences.

APPENDIX A: THE RECORDING PROJECT

The author recorded an album for four selected Xi Zhao's songs discussed in this essay, as a portion of the author's DMA capstone project. The recording, the IPA transcription, and song information of these four songs are uploaded to a website.

The link of the website is: https://liumin827.wixsite.com/minliu

APPENDIX B: CHINESE PINYIN & IPA

Pinyin, referred to as the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, is composed of initials (consonants), finals (vowels), and tones. The IPA of each song provided in this essay is created by the author according to two tables showing one-to-one correspondence between the Mandarin Chinese Pinyin and IPA symbols in Ifeanyi Sunny Odinye's article "Phonology of Mandarin Chinese: Pinyin vs. IPA."

Table 4 Mandarin Chinese consonant sounds in both Pinyin and IPA

Pinyin	b	p	m	f	d	t	n	l	g	k	h	j	q	x	z	C	S	zh	ch	sh	R
IPA	[p]	[pʰ]	[m]	[f]	[t]	[tʰ]	[n]	[l]	[k]	[kʰ]	[x]	[tɕ]	[tɕʰ]	[ɕ]	[ts]	[tsʰ]	[s]	[tʂ]	[tʂʰ]	[ʂ]	[ɻ]

Table 5 Mandarin Chinese vowel sounds in both Pinyin and IPA

Pinyin	a	o	e	i	u	ü	ai	ao	ei	ia	iao	ie	iu	ou	ua	uai	üe	ui	uo
IPA	[a]	[ɔ]	[ə]	[i]	[u]	[y]	[ia]	[ɑʊ̯]	[eɪ̯]	[ia]	[i ɑʊ̯]	[iɛ]	[i oʊ̯]	[oʊ̯]	[u̯a]	[u̯aɪ̯]	[y̯œ]	[u̯ən]	[u̯ɔ]
Pinyin	an	en	ian	in	uan	üan	un	ün	ang	eng	iang	ing	long	ong	uang	ueng	-i	-i	er
IPA	[an]	[ən]	[iɛn]	[in]	[u̯an]	[y̯ɛn]	[u̯ən]	[yn]	[ɑŋ]	[əŋ]	[iɑŋ]	[iŋ]	[iʊŋ]	[ʊŋ]	[u̯ɑŋ]	[uəŋ]	[ɿ]	[ʅ]	[əɹ]

Tips for pronouncing Chinese Pinyin:

1. The tips for pronouncing difficult initials:

   zh: like "j" in "jerkin."

   ch: like "ch" in "child."

   sh: like "sh" in "shop."

   c: like "ts" in "congrats."

   q: like "ch" in "cheers."

   x: like "sh" in "she," but the tip of the tongue makes contact with the lower front teeth.

   r: like "r" in "radio."

2. The most difficult initial sound is the back nasal sound, including ang, eng, ing, ong. The pronunciation of ing in Chinese is close to “ing” in “sing” in English. The sound of ang, eng and ong is [aŋ], [əŋ] and [oŋ]. But both in speaking and singing, it is necessary to ensure that the sound ends to the [ŋ].

3. In the Chinese language, there are four tones, but no stress in the syllable. Generally, in singing, it’s not necessary to accentuate the tone of the word. If the composer wants to highlight the rhythm and tone of the Chinese language in their song, they will do so through the melody.

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