Moonlight Shadows and Night Thoughts (Symphony No. 1) and an analysis of Qigang Chen's Extase II

Wennan Wang
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations

Part of the Music Commons

Recommended Citation
Wang, Wennan, "Moonlight Shadows and Night Thoughts (Symphony No. 1) and an analysis of Qigang Chen's Extase II" (2012). LSU Doctoral Dissertations. 3156.
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3156

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
MOONLIGHT SHADOWS AND NIGHT THOUGHTS (SYMPHONY NO.1) AND AN ANALYSIS OF QIGANG CHEN’S EXTASE II

A Dissertation

Submitted to Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In
The School of Music

by
Wennan Wang
B.A., Southwest University, China, 2003
M.A., Southwest University, China, 2006
M.M., Louisiana State University, 2008
May, 2012
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Boyd professor Dinos Constantindes, for his help, encouragement, and thoughtful guidance with my dissertation. I am very grateful for his willingness to impart to me his knowledge, talent, and experience. I also gratefully acknowledge my committee members, Dr. Robert Peck, Dr. Stephen Beck and Dr. Alison McFarland, for their invaluable suggestions and support. I especially thank Dr. Robert Peck for his help in editing my paper. I also thank Dr. Jeffrey Perry, Dr. David Smyth, Dr. Samuel Ng, Dr. Jan Herlinger, and Professor Michael Gurt for the outstanding lessons they gave. My most heartfelt gratitude however goes to my family, my mother, father, and my wife, for their never-ending support and encouragement of my studies.
FOREWORD

For a long period before I came to the United States for further study of music composition, I thought that I should avoid being "Chinese" or avoid "Chinese" qualities in my music. However, it was largely through my study with Dr. Dinos Constantinides in the United States that I came to recognize the value of my own tradition and began to incorporate elements drawn from traditional Chinese music into my composition. From then on, I managed to liberate myself from certain academic trends in Western music, retaining in terms of technique and expressiveness whatever benefits me to define my own, unique idiom.

In Moonlight Shadows and Night Thoughts (Symphony No.1), a two movement symphonic piece, my incorporation of Chinese musical traditions (especially folk tunes, musical scales and Beijing Opera) with contemporary Western compositional techniques has become much more integrated. The symphony does not illustrate any action or drama, but was restricted to portray nature and express human feelings. Two Chinese poems have a decisive influence on me as a composer and inspire the composition of my symphony. Clear divisions of the poems directly relate to different themes and musical images in the composition itself and present the listener with a comprehensive look at different natural images and human emotions through music. The thematic working and interweaving of the sections are influenced by Johannes Brahms in his thematic variation and development technique. Also, the structure of the piece is influenced by the symphonic single-movement form of Franz Liszt. The music not only expresses the idea of the poems but, perhaps in a more profound way, reflects the emotions they stir up in me. Even though the organizing principle of the work is clearly programmatic, the title of the piece and movements are generic, leaving the listener to form his or her own opinions.

Qigang Chen, one of the most successful and talented contemporary Chinese composers,
has had an impact on my music. There are some similarities in our works. His *Extase* II and my symphony both represent our efforts to seek out the real roots of the Chinese culture. Like him, in my music, I also try to transcend cultural and musical boundaries through blending traditional Chinese arts and various Chinese philosophies and aesthetics with contemporary Western compositional techniques.

*Extase* II and my symphony both have a literary basis. However, they are not just a musical mirror of poems or a story. I think each of our compositions gains qualities that can satisfy, even if one does not know what they illustrate. In other words, they can be appreciated as pure music. The correlation between the music and its textual inspiration is a superb example of our preference to translate human emotions into music.

Moreover, based on a Western tradition, a strong Eastern influence is evident in *Extase* II and in my symphony, which often use traditional tales or poems, folk songs, as well as gestures borrowed from Chinese Operas. In addition, there is a distinctly audible French flavor in our music, the influences ranging from Claude Debussy to Olivier Messiaen. However, our individual styles are different enough not to be lumped together as a group. Although there are great differences between Qigang Chen’s music and that of mine, we share one belief in common: we pursue our own way, based on originality and individual creativity, which are vital to our unique styles. So this is why I chose Qigang Chen’s *Extase* II to do the analysis in my dissertation. I wish that through comparing my symphony with Qigang Chen’s *Extase* II, it might help readers to gain a greater understanding of how the Chinese culture influences the Chinese composer’s musical creation and how different Chinese composers access different music cultures and bridge the gap between different traditions.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS........................................................................................................... ii

FOREWORD................................................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF FIGURES....................................................................................................................... vi

INSTRUMENTATION................................................................................................................. viii

ABSTRACT................................................................................................................................. ix

PART I: MOONLIGHT SHADOWS AND NIGHT THOUGHTS (SYMPHONY NO.1)............. 1
  I. MOONLIGHT SHADOWS...................................................................................................... 2
  II. NIGHT THOUGHTS............................................................................................................... 33

PART II: AN ANALYSIS OF QIGANG CHEN’S *EXTASE* II........................................... 94

INTRODUCTION......................................................................................................................... 95

CHAPTER ONE: QIGANG CHEN AND HIS COMPOSITION STYLE.............................. 98
  1.1. Brief Biography of Qigang Chen..................................................................................... 98
  1.2. Qigang Chen and the “New Wave”............................................................................. 103
  1.3. Olivier Messiaen, Qigang Chen and his Compositional Style................................. 106

CHAPTER TWO: AN ANALYSIS OF *EXTASE* II........................................................... 109
  2.1. Historical Background.................................................................................................. 109
  2.2. Thematic Materials...................................................................................................... 112
  2.3. Harmonic Materials..................................................................................................... 121
  2.4. Formal Structure.......................................................................................................... 136
  2.5. Centricity and Tonality................................................................................................. 139
  2.6. Influences from Western Composers.......................................................................... 143
  2.7. Influences from Chinese Traditional Music................................................................. 148

CONCLUSION............................................................................................................................ 158

BIBLIOGRAPHY........................................................................................................................ 160

APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHY OF ZHANG JI AND LI PO.................................................. 164

APPENDIX B: TWO POEMS WRITTEN BY ZHANG JI AND LI PO.............................. 165

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION........................................................................ 166

VITA........................................................................................................................................... 167
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1  *San shi li pu* (Village of Thirty Miles)...............................................................112
Figure 2-2  The main theme (Theme V) of *Extase II*..........................................................114
Figure 2-3  Heptatonic *C zhi* mode without *qingjiao*.........................................................115
Figure 2-4  Inversionally symmetrical set class (0257)............................................................117
Figure 2-5  Other themes appear in *Extase II*.......................................................................119
Figure 2-6  Theme II played by piccolo....................................................................................120
Figure 2-7  The fourth statement of the melody *Village of Thirty Miles* in *Extase II*  
(mm. 274-275).........................................................................................................................122
Figure 2-8  Set class (0257) used in the transitional part in *Extase II* (mm. 56-59)..........123
Figure 2-9  Set class (016) used in the theme II of *Extase II* (mm. 11-15).........................123
Figure 2-10 Polytonality in second statement of the melody *Village of Thirty Miles* in *Extase II*  
(mm. 191-197)..........................................................................................................................124
Figure 2-11 The juxtaposition of the motives as the harmonic material in *Extase II* (mm. 140-141,  
and mm. 225-226).....................................................................................................................126
Figure 2-12 Tone cluster used in *Extase II* (m. 96)...............................................................128
Figure 2-13 Common tones between two pentatonic scales that are a perfect fourth or a perfect  
fifth apart.........................................................................................................................................129
Figure 2-14 Common tones between two pentatonic scales that  
are a semitone or a tritone part......................................................................................................130
Figure 2-15 The chord on the dominant that contains all the notes of the major scale............130
Figure 2-16 Maximum-intersecting pentatonic scales (mm. 50-52).........................................131
Figure 2-17 Maximum-intersecting and minimum-intersecting pentatonic pairs (mm. 70-76)..134
Figure 2-18 Formal structure of *Extase II*.............................................................................139
Figure 2-19 Pitches arranged symmetrically around the central note G in Theme IV..........140
Figure 2-20 Pitches arranged symmetrically around the central note G at the end.............141
Figure 2-21 Graphic analysis for a passage of Extase II (mm. 35-41)………………………………………142

Figure 2-22 The main motion in the bass line of a passage (mm. 258-274)……………………………………143

Figure 2-23 Whole-tone scale used in Extase II (mm. 344-345)…………………………………………………144

Figure 2-24 Whole-tone scale used in Extase II (mm. 148-150)…………………………………………………144

Figure 2-25 Added values used in Extase II (mm. 183-190)…………………………………………………145

Figure 2-26 Uncontrolled imitation between different instruments (mm. 42-49)………………………………146

Figure 2-27 Chinese folk instrument suona………………………………………………………………………149

Figure 2-28 Circular breathing used in Extase II……………………………………………………………………150

Figure 2-29 Double tonguing used in Extase II……………………………………………………………………152

Figure 2-30 Microtone used in Extase II………………………………………………………………………………153

Figure 2-31 Jin da man/san chang (beat urgently sing slowly/freely) used in Extase II (mm. 134-141)………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..156
INSTRUMENTATION

1 Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
1 English Horn
2 Clarinets in Bb
1 Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons
1 Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in Bb
3 Trombones
1 Tuba

Timpani
Percussion 1
   Glockenspiel, Marimba, Triangle, Metal Wind Chimes, Bass Drum, Tubular Chimes, Crotales, Big Chinese Cymbals.
Percussion 2
   Vibraphone, Triangle, Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Tubular Chimes, Tam-tam, Tambourine.
Percussion 3
   Bass Drum, 4 Tom-Toms, 2 Temple Blocks, Metal Wind Chimes, Triangle.
Percussion 4
   Tam-tam, Snare Drum, Temple Block, Small Bell, Suspended Cymbal, Big Chinese Cymbals.

Harp

Strings

SCORE IN C
Duration: ca. approximately 24 minutes
ABSTRACT

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part One is an original composition: Moonlight Shadows and Night Thoughts (Symphony No.1). The symphony is composed of two movements. This work employs elements of two diverse cultures: (a) Chinese folk music and (b) contemporary Impressionist music by Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Toru Takemitsu most prominently. The musical imageries of the piece come from two Chinese poems, one written by Zhang Ji and the other written by Li Po. The beautiful sceneries in both Poems are associated with the word “moonlight.” The processing of time and the timbres is the focus of this work. Although vocal music is not used here, the texts of the two poems have an influence on the form, the orchestration, the general direction and the musical imageries of the piece.

Part Two is an analytical paper about Qigang Chen’s Extase II for oboe and instrumental ensemble. The objective of this paper is to discuss the compositional design of Extase II by focusing on two influences that are essential to the understanding of this work: Chinese music culture and Western compositional techniques. This research mainly focuses on the analysis of this piece, which includes the examination of thematic and harmonic material, formal structure, centricity and tonality. The influence of Western composers like Arnold Schoenberg, Claude Debussy, Olivier Messiaen, and Witold Lutosławski is also discussed. Moreover, there is a deeper examination of how Qigang Chen effectively bridges the gap between Chinese and Western musical cultures.
PART I: MOONLIGHT SHADOWS AND NIGHT THOUGHTS
(SYMPHONY NO.1)
MOONLIGHT SHADOWS AND NIGHT THOUGHTS
(SYMPhONY NO.1)

I. MOONLIGHT SHADOWS

SCORc IN C

\[= 48 \text{ Tranquillo} \]

Viola

gli altri (the others)

\[\text{p} \]

1 solo,

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

Violin II

gli altri (the others)

div.

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]

\[\text{mp} \]

\[\text{p} \]
Moonlight Shadows

Music notation page with various instruments and musical notations.
Moonlight Shadows

B
Piu mosso \( \frac{\text{B}}{\text{B}} \) \( \frac{\text{B}}{\text{B}} \)

\( \text{poco accel.} \)

\( \text{Più mosso} \quad \frac{=}{=56} \)

\( \text{B} \)

\( \text{Sup. Cymb.} \)

\( \text{Vib.} \)

\( \text{Fl. 1} \)

\( \text{Fl. 2} \)

\( \text{Ob. 1} \)

\( \text{Ob. 2} \)

\( \text{Bb. Cl. 1} \)

\( \text{Bb. Cl. 2} \)

\( \text{Bb. 1 & 2} \)

\( \text{Bb. Tpt. 1 & 2} \)

\( \text{Perc. 1} \)

\( \text{Perc. 2} \)

\( \text{Vla. 1} \)

\( \text{Vla. 2} \)

\( \text{Vln.} \)

\( \text{Vc.} \)

\( \text{D.B.} \)
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
Moonlight Shadows
II. NIGHT THOUGHTS
Night Thoughts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>page</th>
<th>content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Night Thoughts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
Night Thoughts
PART II: AN ANALYSIS OF QIGANG CHEN’S *EXTASE II*
INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 20th century, and with development of modern technology, there has been an increase in communication and cultural exchange between East and West. But it is only in the last two decades that the works of Chinese composers are finally entering the mainstream of Western classical music. Breaking through the boundaries between these cultures, a group of Chinese composers gained much attention on the contemporary musical scene in the West and won international recognition. These composers have incorporated aspects of China’s musical heritage into their own compositions, seamlessly blending traditional cultural elements, including folk music, traditional instrumental music, Chinese opera and even ancient Chinese philosophies with Western compositional techniques and ideas. Frequently performed worldwide by many symphonic orchestras and world-renowned musicians, their music offers audiences a truly cross-cultural musical experience. Numerous recordings of their music have been released by major record companies. As a result, Chinese music has not only been introduced but gained significant recognition and appreciation throughout the world. Qigang Chen is one of the artists in this elite group of composers.

Qigang Chen, a student of the famous contemporary composer, Olivier Messiaen, studied composition at the Central Conservatory in Beijing and later at the Paris Conservatory. He now lives and works independently as a composer in Paris. After years of training, studying and searching, Qigang Chen established his own distinctive music style. His musical language incorporates a transnational range that effectively blends Chinese and Western traditions.
This portion of the dissertation is a cultural and analytical study of *Extase* II by Qigang Chen. *Extase* II (1997), for oboe and instrumental ensemble, is a reduction of *Extase* (1995) for oboe and orchestra. The latter work has attracted many oboists throughout the world since it was first performed in 1995. The objective of this paper is to discuss the compositional design of *Extase* II by focusing on two influences that are essential to the understanding of this work: Chinese music culture and Western compositional techniques. In chapter I of this paper, a biography of Qigang Chen and an overview of his compositional style will be provided. Chapter II will present an analysis of *Extase* II that will mainly focus on examining thematic and harmonic material, formal structure, centricity and tonality. In addition, the influence of Western composers like Arnold Schoenberg, Claude Debussy, Olivier Messiaen, and Witold Lutosławski will be mentioned and discussed. Moreover, the question of how Qigang Chen fuses aspects of Western music culture with elements of traditional Chinese music culture will be answered. In order to do this, there will be an exploration of his extensive use of Chinese folk tunes and elements from Chinese Beijing Opera (also called “Peking Opera”), especially one metrical type of Chinese Beijing Opera, shaking meter (*yaoban*), sometimes called *jin da man/san chang*

---

1. Beijing Opera is one of the most well known Chinese opera forms. It is a harmonious combination of literature, music, speech, dance, colorful costumes, make-up, acting, acrobatics, martial arts and many other arts available. “It is believed that Peking opera gradually came into being after 1790 when opera troupes from around China poured into the capital to take part in the celebrations for the Qianlong Emperor's 80th birthday in 1790.” For detailed information about Beijing Opera, please see Nancy Guy, “Beijing Opera,” *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/51764?q=beijing+opera&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed Aug 11, 2011).
(beat urgently sing slowly/freely). Along with this will be an exploration of his use of the extended techniques in solo oboe part of which imitates the sound of the traditional Chinese instrument *suona*. Following this, the conclusion synthesizes and summarizes the findings.
CHAPTER ONE: QIGANG CHEN AND HIS COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

1.1. Brief Biography of Qigang Chen

Qigang Chen is a Chinese-French composer born in 1951 in Shanghai, China to an established literary family. He began studying music as a child. His father, who had been the administrator of the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, is a famous Chinese calligrapher and painter. The Cultural Revolution\(^2\) broke out when Qigang Chen was in his early teens. At that time, he was undertaking preliminary studies as a clarinet student at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.\(^3\) During the Cultural Revolution, Qigang Chen’s parents were denounced as "bourgeois" and "antirevolutionary," and sent to a labor camp. Qigang Chen was also sent to a camp located south of Beijing for “ideological re-education”\(^4\) and kept in confinement for three years. However, despite strong political pressure, he did not give up his compositional studies, maintaining his interest and passion for music throughout the political and cultural turmoil.

\(^2\) The Cultural Revolution was a political movement that took place in China from 1966 to 1976. The chairman of Chinese Communist Party, Zedong Mao launched it in an attempt to prevent the development of a bureaucratized Soviet style of Communism and re-impose his authority on the party. The stated goal of this movement was to enforce socialism in the country, removing capitalist and traditional cultural elements from Chinese society. This decade-long movement threw China into turmoil. It ended with the death of Chairman Mao in 1976.

\(^3\) Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture, s.v. “Chen Qigang.”

\(^4\) During the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao launched a new movement in which schooling was slated to accommodate the work schedule of communes and factories. Students and teachers were also sent to countryside, farms and factories to receive re-education, where they accepted the need for their own participation in manual labor. The purpose of this movement was on an effort to remove “bourgeois” influences, restoring ideological purity.
After the Cultural Revolution, many restrictions on art were eased. In 1977, the Chinese government resumed national college entrance examinations and Qigang Chen became one of twenty-six out of 2,000 candidates to pass the composition class entry examination at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Beginning in 1977, Qigang Chen received professional compositional training at the Central Conservatory, studying with Zhongrong Luo, along with fellow students Tan Dun, Qu Xiaosong, Xiaogang Ye, Chen Yi, Zhou Long and others. After five years of study, in 1983, Chen Qigang became the first government-sponsored nominee on the national postgraduate contest list, obtaining an opportunity to pursue postgraduate compositional studies abroad. Unlike his colleagues who mostly went to the United States for further study, Chen chose to study in France.

In 1984, Qigang Chen went to Paris for postgraduate study. A grant from the French government enabled him to study privately with Olivier Messiaen, who accepted Qigang Chen as


his last and only student for four years (1984-1988) and later became “a staunch supporter of Mr. Chen’s music.” Apart from Messiaen, he studied at the Paris Conservatory with Ivo Malec, Claude Ballif, Betsy Jolas,


and Jacques Castérède. In 1987, he received compositional training at IRCAM and the Accademia Musicale CHIGIANA. He obtained his doctorate in musicology at the University of Paris-IV Sorbonne (1989) and remained in Paris to work independently as a composer.

Qigang Chen's musical talent and years of hard study earned him numerous awards: the first prize in the International Composition Contest (Buffet Crampon) in Paris in 1986; the Prize "Stipendienpreis" at the 34th Summer Festival in Darmstadt in Germany; the winner of 27th International Contest of Symphony Composition of Citta di Trieste in Italy in 1988; the winner of the Hervé Dugardin prize of the SACEM (Society of Composers and Publishers) in 1991; the winner of the International Contest of Composition for organ of Saint-Rémy de Provence in 1992;


14. The Accademia Musicale CHIGIANA (Chigiana Musical Academy) is a music institute in Siena, Italy. “It was founded by Count Guido Chigi Saracini in 1932 as an international center for advanced musical studies. It organizes master classes in the major musical instruments as well as singing, conducting and composition.” For detailed information about it, see Maestro Aldo Bennici, “the Accademia Musicale Chigiana of Siena,” http://www.chigiana.it/Pagina.aspx?IDMenu=fondazione&livello=1&IDpagina=storia&topResult= (accessed in April 9, 2011).
the Prize Villa Medicis Hors les Murs (the Rome prize) in 1993; the grand Prize of the City of Paris in 2000; the grand prize of Symphony Music of SACEMs in 2005; Mercedes-AMG: National Spirit Achievers Prize in 2008; Extraordinary Composer Prize of the 7th Chinese Golden Records in 2010, among other honors. His works have also been commissioned by Radio France, Carnegie Hall, IRCAM, the Nieuw Ensemble (Holland), the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Commande du Stuttgart Kammerorchester, the Olivier Messiaen International Piano Competition 2000, the Wind Instruments National Contest (France), the Ministry of Culture and les Grands Travaux du Bicentaire, the Domaines de l’Art, the Montréal Symphonic Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg & Vandoren SAS, and Stuttgart City & Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Qigang Chen’s compositions were published by Gérard Billaudot Editeur in Paris from 1985 to 2007, and Boosey & Hawkes in London since 2008. His music has been widely performed throughout the world by many world-class orchestras and organizations, and recorded on EMI and Virgin Classics labels. He has also been invited often to be part of the jury at various musical events, such as the Irino International Composition Contest (Japan) and the Taiwan Internrome prizeromational Composition Contest in 1994, the 9th International Composition Contest of Besançon in 1998 and the International Composition Contest at Hong Kong in 1999. Qigang Chen was also a guest professor at the leading Chinese Conservatories of music in Beijing and Shanghai. He served as Music Director for the Opening Ceremony of the 2008
Olympics in Beijing. His recent piece, a piano concerto Er Huang, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the pianist Lang Lang, premiered in New York on October 28th, 2009.

1.2. Qigang Chen and the “New Wave”

After the Cultural Revolution, and with the higher educational system reestablished in China, a group of talented young composers, including Tan dun, Qigang Chen, Xiaogang Ye, Xiaosong Qu, Wenjing Guo, Chen Yi and Zhou Long, were allowed to enter the Central Conservatory of China where they received strict and systematical training in both Western music and traditional Chinese music. Through this “open-door” policy carried out in the late 1970s, there has been an increase in cultural exchanges, offering these young composers more opportunities to study and absorb various Western contemporary compositional techniques. At that time, several foreign composers and musicians, such as Chou Wen-chung, Alexander Goehr, George Crumb, Toru Takemitsu, and Isang Yun, were invited to the conservatory and lectured on contemporary Western Music. Among these visiting musicians, Chou Wen-chung\(^{15}\) was the most influential with regard to offering new directions in musical composition to Chinese music.

composers. He introduced both his own music and contemporary Western music to these composers. Chou Wen-chung described his personal approach to composition as combining philosophical and aesthetic ideas of traditional Chinese arts with contemporary Western compositional techniques.

Upon hearing Chou’s lectures, these young Chinese composers realized “a deeper need for searching the real roots of the Chinese culture,” something that later played an important role in their own musical composition. Most of their works have been composed in a contemporary avant-garde style based on traditional Chinese arts and folk music that had not been explored. Influenced by Chou, they also blended various Chinese philosophies and aesthetics with contemporary Western compositional techniques in their works. Their music emphasizes dissonant sonorities, unusual performance techniques, “nuances of timbres and a musical element different from the ‘beautiful’ folk melodies.” This group of composers has come to be known as the “New Wave.” A representative work is Tan Dun’s string quartet Feng Ya Song (Ballad-Hymn-Ode), which won second prize in the Dresden International Weber Chamber


17. Ibid.


19. Ibid.
Music Composition Competition in 1983.\textsuperscript{20} The “New Wave” represents for Chinese composers “the first significant shift of interest in Western music from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classicism and romanticism to the twentieth-century avant-garde.”\textsuperscript{21}

The music and compositional style of the “New Wave” caused a heated debate in China. During the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party stressed that “art and music must serve the needs of the revolution and the masses.”\textsuperscript{22} All activities associated with Western art were prohibited, except for eight model revolutionary works consisting of six Peking Operas and two Chinese ballets. All of these works contained strong political content because during the ten-year revolution, “music for the masses was the composer’s primary concern.”\textsuperscript{23} However, New Wave composers disagreed with Mao’s view of art. Their view was that art should not be confined to a relatively monotonous range catering to the taste of the masses.\textsuperscript{24} They advocated for originality and individual creativity. These ideas were well reflected in their works. However, even though New Wave ideas gained support from several composers and musicians, conservative composers considered their experimental works to be merely imitations of the newly-learned techniques and ideas without in-depth thought given to their social responsibilities and the needs of the masses.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Chang, “Tan Dun’s String Quartet,” 132-135.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 135.
The New Wave composers nevertheless influenced Chinese arts. In the mid-1980s, most of these composers went to the United States and Europe to study, which enabled them to continue development of their own distinctive styles of integrating elements of traditional Chinese music with those of contemporary Western compositional techniques. Through their compositions, Chinese music gained significant recognition throughout the world. Qigang Chen, one of the most successful composers from this generation, now lives and works in Paris. He has established himself as one of the leading composers in the world.

1.3. Olivier Messiaen, Qigang Chen and his Compositional Style

Olivier Messiaen, had a significant influence on Qigang Chen, who studied with him from 1984 to 1988. Before this, even though Chen was a “New Wave” composer, his personal musical style was still rather raw. It was ultimately Messiaen, as his mentor, that strongly encouraged and led the young composer to find his own voice. Qigang Chen recalled:

In China, you learn to be sociable, subservient to everyone. If necessary, you must be entirely at the disposal of society. Messiaen was the first person to tell me that you have to be true to yourself. Messiaen woke me up. For four years I was his only student. I was also his last student. I have had the opportunity to speak to him, to live with him… and in so doing to experience how musically gifted he was. This is fundamental for an artist, but few of us are brave enough to face the truth. It took me many years to discover who I really am.  

This attitude was highly influential on Qigang Chen’s musical creation. From then on, he

pursued his own personal music language style in earnest. During this period, Qigang Chen’s musical material evolved considerably, allowing his unique inner voice to shine through. Deeply rooted in Chinese folk music and traditional musical culture, he fused music material from both East and West, something that mirrored his own cross-cultural experience. Thus, each musical piece Chen composed in France after 1985 reflected the exploration of his own distinctive voice, and represented a clear step forward. Messiaen once remarked:

Endowed with exceptional intelligence, and an excellent internal "ear," he has very quickly assimilated European music and all contemporary music. I have carefully read all his musical works, and I can state that his compositions display real inventiveness, very great talent and a total assimilation of Chinese thinking to European musical concepts. All his works written since 1985 are remarkable by their thought, their poetry and their instrumentation. I wish Chen Qigang the greatest success, for he deserves it. 

Qigang Chen’s output now amounts to almost thirty works, each testifying to his continuous evolvement. It includes music for piano or organ, Chinese instruments (alone or with orchestra), a four-act ballet based on the film Raise the Red Lantern, as well as numerous chamber and orchestral pieces. His musical language incorporates a transnational range, effectively blending Chinese and Western traditions. Messiaen has praised Mr. Chen’s works for “their harmonious stylistic union of Western and Asian musical ideas.”

Qigang Chen’s music transcends cultural and musical boundaries with “sensitive instrumental timbres reminiscent of


French impressionists.\textsuperscript{28} In addition, traditional Chinese folk music and Opera, especially Beijing Opera markedly influence his work. These characteristics are best represented in his celebrated works: \textit{Yuan} (origin) for symphonic orchestra, \textit{Poème Lyrique II} for baritone and instrumental ensemble, \textit{Extase} for oboe and orchestra, \textit{San Xiao} for four traditional Chinese instruments (bamboo flute, san xian, zheng, pipa), \textit{Reflet d’un Temps Disparu}, \textit{Wu Xing} (The Five Elements) for instrumental ensemble, the ballet \textit{Raise the Red Lantern}, \textit{Iris Devoilee} (\textit{Iris Unveiled}) for grand orchestra, three female voices and three traditional Chinese instruments, and \textit{L’Eloignement} (Departure) for string orchestra.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture}, s.v. “Chen Qigang.”
CHAPTER TWO: AN ANALYSIS OF EXTASE II

2.1. Historical Background

*Extase* for oboe and orchestra was composed by Qigang Chen in 1995 as a commission by the Deutscher Kammerphilharmonie and the French Ministry of Culture. It premiered on October 11th, 1995 in Bremen, Germany by Rodrigo Blumenstock and the Deutscher Kammerphilharmonie under Thomas Hengelbrock. This work blended the virtuosic solo with idiomatic orchestral writing in an entirely organic way. Frank Kouwenhoven once remarked that “there is a more extrovert style of Romanticism that dominates this piece.”29 Chen’s new works were recorded by the recording company EMI/Virgin under the album title “*Extase.*” It was awarded the “5 Stars Disc” designation by BBC Music Magazine and was judged among “the best modern music albums of 2006” by the Académie Charles Cros in French.30 *Extase* clearly demonstrates the composer’s expertise in synthesizing both Chinese and Western musical elements. This work later became one of his most frequently performed works. He also arranged and transcribed the piece into a smaller ensemble version, *Extase* II in 1997. However, there are


little changes to the music.\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Extase} II for oboe and instrumental ensemble premiered on July 11th, 1997 in Avignon (Festival Acanthes) by Ernest Rombout and the Nieuw Ensemble (Amsterdam) under Ed Spanjaard. After the premiere, critics held different views of the piece. Some thought it was a fantastic composition while others could not understand it and thought it was quite difficult to classify.\textsuperscript{32} However, audience response was quite positive and enthusiastic. It received six curtain calls\textsuperscript{33} and won extensive acclaim from the performers, who thought of it as a virtuosic and challenging piece.\textsuperscript{34} Moreover, it has attracted many oboists throughout the world since its first performance.

\textit{Extase} was composed when Qigang Chen learned of the death of his friend and fellow composer, Wuping Mo.\textsuperscript{35} Qigang Chen was deeply shocked by his friend’s death. At the same

\begin{itemize}
\item[	extsuperscript{31}.] The major difference between the two pieces is on the instrumentation. The instrumentation of \textit{Extase} is: 2.1.2.2 - 2.2.0.0 - 2 perc et cordes (7.6.5.4.3); the instrumentation of \textit{Extase} II is: 1.1.1.1 - 1.1.0.0 - perc, pno, hp, 2 vl, vla, vlc et cb. There is no change on the solo part.


\item[	extsuperscript{33}.] Ibid., 91.

\item[	extsuperscript{34}.] Ibid., 92

\end{itemize}
time, Chen’s emotional life was increasingly turbulent. All these events gave the composer the inspiration to write *Extase*. He once remarked:

When I composed *Extase*, I had a strong feeling to express…. Different from the other pieces, *Extase* depicts another aspect of my life…. At that time, I was shocked by my friend’s death and meanwhile my emotional life also had some ups and downs…. I wrote down my feelings about my life without paying much attention to the compositional techniques that I’ve learned before. There might be some roughness in this piece, but I think it is beautiful roughness…. To our contemporary composers, it is not easy to compose such a piece because it betrayed the Western avant-garde music style. So when I composed it, I was under a lot of pressure. However, …I mustered the courage to write what I wanted to express, trying to do something that other people didn’t like to do. That’s how this piece came into being. In it, I try to extricate myself from the contemporary music to pursue my own way. 

In an interview by Shuqin Li, Qigang Chen explains:

In *Extase*, I tried to extricate myself from…contemporary music with a comprehensive idea wherein Western contemporary compositional concepts, or even the traditional concepts of harmonies, melodies, formal structure and performing techniques, are no longer uppermost in…priorities. The Chinese traditional culture will bring to bear the most influential elements.

According to Qigang Chen, Wuping Mo used a Chinese folk tune “*san shi li pu*” (Village of Thirty Miles) in his composition *Fan I* for male voice and ensemble (1991). This work was given an award at the Asian Festival of the Arts that same year and was later widely performed


37. Ibid., 5-6.

38. Li, “Interview with Qigang Chen,” 92.

in Europe and Asia. In memory of Wuping Mo, Qigang Chen also adopts this folk tune in its entirety in *Extase*.40

2.2. Thematic Materials

*Extase II* includes five themes. The main theme (or Theme V) of *Extase II* quotes “*san shi li pu*” (Village of Thirty Miles), a well-known mountain song41 from northern Shanxi province, and is shown in the following figure (see Figure 2-1):

![Music notation](image)

Figure 2-1: *San shi li pu* (Village of Thirty Miles)42

40. Ibid.

41. According to Kuo-huang Han, “*shange* (mountain song) means songs sung in an open area, which may be near a mountain or in an open field. In general, *shange* is free in rhythm and high in pitch. Texts are improvised to a great extent. Vocables and falsetto are used frequently. *Shange* may begin and end with a high and long fermata, developed from shouting to get attention in the outdoor environment. Love is the subject of most *shange*. The alternating style of singing between a masculine voice (man) and a feminine voice (woman) is another important feature of *shange*.” For detailed information about the singing style of the mountain song, please see Kuo-huang Han, “Folk Songs of the Han Chinese: Characteristics and Classsifications,” *Asian Music* 20, No. 2, Chinese Music Theory (Spring – Summer, 1989): 116.

The Chinese lyrics to *Village of Thirty Miles* tell a love story between a pair of youths. The melody is divided into four phrases and it is written in a pentatonic C zhi mode in the F gong system,\(^{43}\) which lacks both a semitone and a tritone.

In *Extase II*, this melodic figure first appears in its entirety on the solo oboe in mm. 169-84 (see Figure 2-2). Although most Chinese folk music was “based on five fundamental (pentatonic) tones, in practice, each fundamental tone is often modified and embellished by its adjacent semitones.”\(^{44}\) Qigang Chen once remarked:

When a Chinese Beijing Opera singer sings a melody, for example the three notes DO-RE-MI, he will sing with tones of Beijing Opera, which adds many grace notes to the melody. This type of singing reflects a great influence from his living environment. That is

\(^{43}\) Here, the C zhi mode in the F gong system is a pentatonic scale that is composed of pitch classes C, D, F, G, A. It begins and ends on C (zhi), a perfect fifth away from F (gong). In Chinese music, a special name is assigned to each fundamental note of the pentatonic scale—*gong* (earth), *shang* (metal), *jiao* (wood), *zhi* (fire), *yu* (water)—corresponding similarly to *do*, *re*, *mi*, *sol*, and *la* of Western solfège. “The pitch names are used for identification purposes.” Through starting from a different fundamental note, a scale with a different interval sequence is created, which is similar to the construction of modes in Western music. There are five pentatonic modes derived from rotating these fundamental notes without changing pitches: *gong* mode, *shang* mode, *jiao* mode, *zhi* mode and *yu* mode. One *gong* system consists of these five pitches and five pentatonic modes. Since any chromatic pitch class can be identified as the *gong*, there are twelve *gong* systems. In addition, Chinese music also uses the heptatonic scale. Normally, there are three heptatonic scales that can be viewed as pentatonic scales with two added tones assigned with special names: *Yayue* scale, a pentatonic scale with an augmented fourth (*bianzhi*) and a major seventh degree (*biangong*) added; *Qingyue* scale, a pentatonic scale with a perfect fourth (*qingjiao*) and a major seventh degree (*biangong*) added; and *Yanyue* scale, a pentatonic scale with a perfect fourth (*qingjiao*) and a minor seventh degree (*run*) added. For detailed information about Chinese Scales and modes, please see Ho and Han, “On Chinese Scales,” 132-154.

unimaginable to Western performers. Influenced by this type of singing, I deliberately add many grace notes to the melody in *Extase*.45

Based on these characteristics of Chinese folk music and Beijing Opera, a Chinese variation technique called *jiahua*, meaning “adding neighbor tones and grace notes to embellish the melodic tones,”46 has been used here. Therefore, in *Extase* II, the fundamental tones of the melody *Village ofThirty Miles* are often modified and embellished by their adjacent semitones (see Figure 2-2).

![Figure 2-2: The main theme (Theme V) of *Extase* II](image)

---


46. Xiaole Li, “Chen Yi’s Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models” (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 2003), 204.
However, the pitch class E that has been added to the original melody in m. 181 cannot be interpreted as an ornamental tone. According to Ho Lu-Ting, in Shanxi folk songs and the local theatre genre (especially qin giang\textsuperscript{47}), there is a unique and colorful local heptatonic scale whose structure is similar to the Mixolydian mode.\textsuperscript{48} Here, the added pitch class E makes the structure equivalent to the heptatonic zhi (perfect fifth degree of one gong system, see foot note 44) mode of Shanxi but without qingjiao (perfect fourth degree of one gong system) (see Figure 2-3).

![Figure 2-3: Heptatonic C zhi mode without qingjiao](image)

Moreover, the E can be viewed as ku yin\textsuperscript{49} that comes from qin giang (an old theatre genre in northwest China, see footnote 48). The pitch class E, and those embellishments, give the original tune color with the addition of the semitone (or major seventh) and the augmented fourth (or diminished fifth).

\textsuperscript{47} “There is an old theatre genre in northwest China called the qin giang of Shanxi whose music is very colorful and dramatic. The mode of the qin giang is a heptatonic zhi mode. In this mode, there are two types of colorful notes called huan yin (happy pitch) and ku yin (sad pitch). Huan yin suggests feelings of happiness. Ku yin, on the other hand, expresses feelings of sadness.” Ho and Han, “On Chinese Scales,” 140-141.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 139.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 141. According to Ho Lu-Ting, the major third (biangong) and minor seventh (qingjiao) above zhi (perfect fifth degree in one gong system) in the heptatonic zhi mode are ku yin (happy pitch).
Influenced by the folk style, the high cry at the beginning, notated as a high-pitched fermata in m. 170 and m. 174, is a typical feature of the mountain song (see footnote 42) that is used throughout the piece. The melody is lyrical in nature, with a rhythm that is freer than the notation indicates. Qigang Chen once stated:

The most extreme feature of Chinese traditional music is the freedom of the rhythm due to the lack of systematic notation for it…. When I composed this oboe concerto, I was also influenced by this concept, which gave more freedom to the performer. A long fermata is often assigned to the notes of the solo part. However, how long the fermata is should be decided by the performer. It does not matter that other performers play the long notes in order to wait for him.\(^50\)

The transformation of the thematic materials gives Extase II unity and variety. The opening four-note C-D-G-A (pcset \([7, 9, 0, 2]\)\(^51\)) is the typical melodic cell of Village of Thirty Miles (see Figure 2-2). All other four themes that appear in this piece derive from this melodic material of Theme V. Introduced at the beginning, it has been expanded and enriched in the various pentatonic regions. Qigang Chen utilized this motive as fundamental melodic material to develop throughout the piece, creating a highly unified piece in terms of motivic development. Set

\(^{50}\) Li, “Interview with Qigang Chen,” 92.

\(^{51}\) In this paper, each pitch class in the twelve-tone chromatic scale is represented by a number from 0 through 11. Thus C=0, C#=1 ... A#=10, B=11. To avoid confusing 10 with 1 and 0, the letter 't' (for ten) is used instead of the number 10, and 'e' (for eleven) instead of the number 11. In addition, the pitch-class set, which is abbreviated to pcset, is an unordered collection of pitch classes. In this paper, all pitch-class sets are written in normal form, the most compressed way of writing a pitch-class set.
class\textsuperscript{52} (0257), of inversionally symmetrical pentatonic subsets,\textsuperscript{53} contains this motive.

This leading four-note motive contains two three-note sub-motives: C-D-G (pcset [0, 2, 7], a member of set class (027)) and G-A-C (pcset [7, 9, 0], a member of set class (025)), which also occur prominently throughout \textit{Extase} II. Figure 2-5 lists other four themes that have a close connection with the motives of Theme V.

Theme I from the introduction, the first example in Figure 2-5, appears at the beginning of the piece. The motive F\#-G\#-C\# (pcset [6, 8, 1]) in Theme I is a tritone away from the original tune C-D-G of \textit{Village of Thirty Miles}.

The second example in Figure 2-5 is Theme II that appears at m. 12. The melodic fragments from Theme II are transpositionally related to the motives of Theme V: the melodic fragment E-F\#-B (pcset [4, 6, e]) is four semitones away from the original tune C-D-G; the motive F\#-G\#-B (pcset [6, 8, e]) is eleven semitones away from the corresponding motive 

\textsuperscript{52}Any pitch-class set could be transposed and/or inverted. For example, C-E-G (pcset [0, 4, 7]) transposes to D-F\#-A (pcset [2, 6, 9]) and C-E-G (pcset [0, 4, 7]) inverts to F-A\textsuperscript{b}-C (pcset [5, 8, 0]). Thus, in a set class, there are normally twenty-four pitch-class sets, which are related to each other by either transposition or inversion. These pitch-class sets form a single, closely related family of sets, which is called the set class.

\textsuperscript{53}Pitch-class set [0, 2, 5, 7] can map onto itself at T\textsubscript{7}I. In this paper, T\textsubscript{n}, means to transpose a pitch-class set by n semitones from the original. T\textsubscript{n}I means to invert the original set first, and then perform the transposition by some interval n.
G-A-C; and the motive B-C#-E (pcset [e, 1, 4]) is four semitones away from the original tune G-A-C.

The third example in Figure 2-5 is Theme III, which begins in m. 40. The principal three pitch classes of Theme III, E♭-F-A♭ (pcset [3, 5, 8]), are eight semitones away from those of the corresponding motive G-A-C of *Village of Thirty Miles*.

Theme IV (or the transition theme) is found in the final example of Figure 2-5. To some extent, it is also developed from the melodic cell of *Village of Thirty Miles*. The first half of Theme IV, F-G-B♭ (pcset [5, 7, 1]), is two semitones away from the original tune G-A-C.⁵⁴ However, a marked change of melodic figure in the other half of this theme, composed of four pitch classes, B♭-A♭-G♭-E (pcset [4, 6, 8, t]), is new musical material. In fact, it comes from the heptatonic *zhi* (perfect fifth degree in one *gong* system, see footnote 44) mode of Shanxi (see Figure 2-3) in which the tritone relationship between two notes, *qingjiao* (perfect fourth degree in one *gong* system) and *biangong* (major seventh degree in one *gong* system), is prominent.

Even though there is no tritone in the main theme (Theme V), the composer compensates for this deficiency by applying that intervallic relationship into Theme IV. However, at the very beginning of *Extase II*, the composer has already stressed the importance of this interval. Theme I of Figure 2-5 exemplifies this point. In the second half of Theme I, there is another important motive of the piece, G♯-C♯-G (pcset [7, 8, 1], a member of set class (016)), which includes a tritone. In addition, the melodic material of Theme IV (the transition theme) is also suggested in

⁵⁴ Based on these characteristics of Chinese folk music and Beijing Opera, the pitch class A can be explained as a grace note to B♭. Thus, the pitch class B♭ is embellished by its adjacent semitone A.
m. 42 when the piccolo plays Theme III with a slight intervallic change (see Figure 2-6). The pitch classes A-G-F-E\textsuperscript{b} (pcset [3, 5, 7, 9]) in Figure 2-6 are eleven semitones away from those of the corresponding pitch classes B\textsuperscript{b}-A\textsuperscript{b}-G\textsuperscript{b}-E (pcset [4, 6, 8, t]) in the second half of Theme IV. They are all members of set class (0246). Since pitch-class set [0, 2, 4, 6] is an inversionally symmetrical subset of the whole-tone scale collection, use of it in Theme IV also paves the way for use of the whole-tone scale in this piece.
Figure 2-6: Theme II played by piccolo

All melodic fragments from the five themes are often related to one another through either transposition or inversion, and they often juxtapose or overlap each other, serving as transitional materials linking one section with another. The common unifying factor among these melodic fragments is the recurring interval of a major second and a perfect fourth (or perfect fifth). In conclusion, Qigang Chen's aesthetic style influences his organization and arrangement of the thematic materials. It is perhaps best described as relating “more specifically to his other work, *Le Souvenir* (1985), yet much of it also applies to *Extase II*.55

The organizing principle of a composition, in terms of aural perception and temporal sequence, is one of augmentation. The work begins with a brief motive, which is then gradually expanded and augmented in its figurations, intervals, duration, and rhythm as the piece moves along, until its shape is richly enhanced and built up, and until the audience's impression of it is gradually strengthened and made ever so poignant to the extent of a total grasp. Yet in terms of compositional practice, it is just the opposite. I start with the most complete and expansive presentation of the materials, namely the climax…. Then I eliminate from it till the essence of the material [emerges]. This essential material then constitutes the main motive of the piece and its intervals and harmony, framing the piece as

2.3. Harmonic Materials

As Qigang Chen notes, the harmonic material of *Extase* II is determined by the central motivic material of the piece, giving it a strong sense of cohesion. In other words, a profound influence on the harmonic design of *Extase* II can be found in the melodic contour of the themes. Set class (0257), revealed in the melodic cell of *Village of Thirty Miles*, is a source of important harmonic material. Figure 2-7, which shows the fourth complete statement of the melody *Village of Thirty Miles* in *Extase* II, is representative of this connection. In Figure 2-7, the melody is stated in A zhi (perfect fifth degree in one gong system, see footnote 44) mode. The collection of pitch classes \{D, E, A, B\} (pcset [9, e, 2, 4]) in the harmonic accompaniment is transpositionally related to the corresponding pitch classes \{E, F#, A, B\} (pcset [4, 6, 9, e]) in the melodic line. Pitch-class sets [4, 6, 9, e] and [9, e, 2, 4] are both members of set class (0257). Furthermore, the amalgamation of the two pitch-class sets forms a pentatonic collection \{D, E, F#, A, B\}, set class (02479).

56. Ibid., 213-214.
Figure 2-7: The fourth statement of the melody *Village of Thirty Miles* in *Extase II* (mm. 274-275)

Set class (0257) is also extensively used in the transitional part of the piece as an important harmonic material. The two collection of pitch classes, \{F, G, B^b, C\} (pcset [5, 7, t, 0]) and \{D^b, E^b, G^b, A^b\} (pcset [1, 3, 6, 8]), circled in Figure 2-8 are each transpositionally equivalent and both are members of set class (0257).

Another motive, deriving from set class (016), which appears in Theme I at the beginning of the piece (see Theme I in Figure 2-5), also reoccurs frequently as harmonic material throughout the composition. Figure 2-9 shows a passage from the beginning of Theme II. The collection of pitch classes \{C, D^b, G\} (pcset [7, 0, 1], a member of set class (016)), played by the bass clarinet, contrabassoon and cello, provides the harmonic basis for this passage, though with
Figure 2-8: Set class (0257) used in the transitional part in *Extase II* (mm. 56-59)

Figure 2-9: Set class (016) used in the theme II of *Extase II* (mm. 11-15)
the intense rhythmic activity throughout the section. The polyrhythms\textsuperscript{57} 3:2 (also called “hemiola”) and 4:3 pervade this passage.\textsuperscript{58}

Figure 2-10: Polytonality in second statement of the melody \textit{Village of Thirty Miles} in \textit{Extase} II (mm. 191-197)

Polytonality\textsuperscript{59} is used in the second complete statement of the melody \textit{Village of Thirty Miles} in \textit{Extase} II (see Figure 2-10) in which the same theme is played by different instruments in different pentatonic regions: flute and clarinet play the melody in F \textit{gong} system \{F, G, A, C, 

\textsuperscript{57} Polyrhythm is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more independent rhythms.

\textsuperscript{58} There is a parallel between polyrhythm and musical intervals: in an audible frequency range, the 2:3 ratio produces the musical interval of a perfect fifth and the 3:4 ratio produces a perfect fourth. In fact, both intervals are very important intervals in \textit{Extase} II.

\textsuperscript{59} Polytonality is a combination of two or more aurally distinguishable tonalities in a polyphonic texture. Here, it may be also appropriate to view it as polymodality, the superposition of more than two aurally distinguishable modes in a polyphonic texture. Since each voice is written in the same mode (\textit{zhi} mode), but in different tonalities, the term polytonality is chosen.
D, E}; oboe plays the melody in B gong system \{B, C#, D#, F#, G#, A#\}; and bassoon plays the melody in E gong system \{E, F#, G#, B, C#, D#\}. Through use of these three gong systems, all twelve chromatic pitch classes have been acquired. This combination of different gong systems, \{E, F, B\}, not only reflects set class (016), but also reflects the direct influence of the heterophonic style in Chinese folk music.\(^6^0\)

Some of the harmonic sonorities in Extase II are also derived from the juxtaposition of the motives from the principal themes listed in Figures 2-2 and 2-5. Figure 2-11 contains two transitional passages from Extase II that exemplify this point, with the motives (here represented by pcsets) marked on a separate staff. The chordal material circled in the first example of Figure 2-11 is composed of two motives. One motive, the collection of pitch classes \{G#, A#, C#, D#\}, is tranpositionally related to the head motive of the piece (the opening four-note C-D-G-A of Village of Thirty Miles, a member of set class (0257)). The other motive, the collection of pitch-classes \{A#, G#, F#, E\}, is also tranpositionally related to the melodic figure in the second half of Theme IV, B\(^b\)-A\(^b\)-G\(^b\)-E (a member of set class (0246)). In addition, the collection of pitch classes \{D#, E, A#\}, which is also included in this chord material, is reminiscent of another important motive of the piece, the melodic figure in the second half of Theme I, G#-C#-G (a member of set class (016)).

---

Figure 2-11: The juxtaposition of the motives as the harmonic material in *Extase* II (mm. 140-141, and mm. 225-226)
The second example in Figure 2-11 demonstrates the use of a similar harmonic sonority. It is composed of two motives: the first is the collection of pitch classes \{A^b, B^b, D^b, E^b\}, tranpositionally related to the head motive of the piece (the opening four-note C-D-G-A of *Village of Thirty Miles*), the second is the collection of pitch classes \{A, B, E\}, tranpositionally related to the first three notes of the head motive (its submotive) C-D-G. In addition, the collections of pitch classes \{A, B, D^b, E^b\} and \{B^b, B, E\}, which are also included in this chordal material, are tranpositionally related to the melodic figure in the second half of Theme IV, B^b-A^b-G^b-E and the melodic figure in the second half of Theme I, G#-C#-G respectively.

The tone cluster\(^6\) used in *Extase* II, to some extent, is also derived from the juxtaposition of the motives from the principal themes. The chord in m. 96 of Figure 2-12 is voiced as a cluster. It comes from the juxtaposition of all pitch classes \{F, G, A, F#, G#, B^b\} in the melodic fragment played by the oboe solo, which is derived from Theme IV (the transition theme). In addition, it can even be interpreted as a juxtaposition of the minimum-intersecting pentatonic pair F gong system and G^b gong system (see later discussions in next few pages), even though these two pentatonic collections are incomplete here.

---

61. Tone cluster is a harmonic sonority that is built from major or minor 2nds or from a combination of the two. In addition, the notes of the chord are placed adjacent to each other.
Apart from the harmonic sonorities derived from the motivic material, the harmonic material of *Extase* II is also derived from the traditional pentatonic modes. In fact, pentatonism pervades *Extase* II. Besides set class (0257), the pentatonic collection set class (02479) and two other set classes of its subsets, set class (0247) and set class (0358), are occasionally used in this piece, also functioning as harmonic material. However, there is no more concrete discussion about them herein. The harmonic sonorities derived from the employment of “the principle of maximum-intersecting and minimum-intersecting pentatonic pairs”\(^ {62}\) described by Nancy Yunwha Rao is the main focus of the analysis here.

---

According to Rao, the maximum-intersecting pentatonic scales are obtained from the juxtaposition of two pentatonic scales that are a perfect fourth or a perfect fifth apart. The pentatonic scale contains four instances of interval class 5 (perfect fourth or fifth), so there will be four common tones when the scale is transposed up or down by five semitones (T₅ or T₇) (see Figure 2-13). Since there is maximum invariance - four common tones between two closely related pentatonic scales and a minimal change that only one pitch-class changes at one time - they constitute a pair of maximum-intersecting pentatonic scales.

The minimum-intersecting pentatonic scales are achieved by juxtaposing two pentatonic scales that are a semitone or a tritone part. The pentatonic scale contains no instances of interval class 1 and 6 (minor second and augmented fourth), so there will be no common tones when the scale is transposed up or down by a semitone or a tritone (T₁ or T₆) (see Figure 2-14). Due to the minimum invariance - no common tones between two pentatonic scales, and a maximal change that five pitch-classes change at one time - they constitute a pair of minimum-intersecting scales.

63. According to Joseph N. Straus, “when a pitch-class set is transposed by interval n, the number of common tones will be equal to the number of times the interval n occurs in the set. There is only one exception, which is tritone (interval class 6). Because the tritone maps onto itself under transposition at T₆, each occurrence of interval class 6 in a set will create two common tones when the set is transposed at T₆.” Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3nd ed. (New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005), 79.
pentatonic scales.

Figure 2-14: Common tones between two pentatonic scales that are a semitone or a tritone part

In Messiaen’s *The Technique of My Musical Language*, he discusses a chord on the dominant, which contains all the notes of the major scale (see Figure 2-15).  

![Figure 2-15: The chord on the dominant that contains all the notes of the major scale](image)

Qigang Chen might have been inspired by Messiaen’s idea. The harmonic sonorities extensively used in *Extase II* derive from the maximum-intersecting pentatonic scales. In fact, these sonorities can be obtained by the superposition of all notes in the hexatonic *zhi* (perfect fifth degree of one *gong* system, see foot note 44) mode mentioned before. In other words, the juxtaposition of two pentatonic scales that are a perfect fourth or a perfect fifth apart reaches a diatonic hexachord, also known as Guidonian hexachord, set class (024579). This chord can also be interpreted as an 11th chord, or an incomplete 13th chord.

---

Figure 2-16: Maximum-intersecting pentatonic scales (mm. 50-52)
The passage in Figure 2-16 is a case in point. In this passage, three pairs of pentatonic scales: Eᵇ gong system / Bᵇ gong system {Eᵇ, F, G, Bᵇ, C/ Bᵇ, C, D, F, G}, C gong system / G gong system {C, D, E, G, A/ G, A, B, D, E} and Aᵇ gong system / Eᵇ gong system {Aᵇ, Bᵇ, C, Eᵇ, F/ Eᵇ, F, G, Bᵇ, C} play an important harmonic role. All three pairs of pentatonic scales are maximum-intersecting pentatonic pairs. The final chordal material comes from the juxtaposition of the motives discussed before. In addition, the figure can reveal deeper relations. Each note played by the oboe solo comes from one of each pentatonic pair. The combination of these pitch classes {F, G, Bᵇ, C} forms a pitch-class set, [5, 7, t, 0], which is transpositionally related to the opening four-note C-D-G-A of the Village of Thirty Miles melody.

Figure 2-17 is another good example of Qigang Chen’s employment of maximum-intersecting and minimum-intersecting pentatonic pairs in Extase II. Rao also analyzes this passage in Hearing Pentatonicism Through Serialism.⁶⁵ Beginning with a maximum-intersecting pentatonic pair, C gong system (P₀)⁶⁶ and G gong system (P₇), on the violin and viola in bar 71, the F# gong system (P₆), another pentatonic region on piano, harp and percussion parts is superposed on the former pair. The F# gong system (P₆) is non-overlapping with the C gong system (P₀) and the G gong system (P₇). Through superposition of these three

---


⁶⁶. Here, P represents pentatonic scale. The subscripted number represents each pitch class in the twelve-tone chromatic scale. For example, P₀ means a pentatonic scale begins on C, which is the C gong system.
pentatonic regions, an aggregate\textsuperscript{67} nearly creates. Here, “the contrast of maximum-intersecting
and minimum intersecting pentatonic pairs reveals the composer's unique way of moving around
the chromatic space pentatonically.”\textsuperscript{68} After this, a succession of diatonic hexachords occurs,
which starts with a maximum-intersecting pentatonic pair D gong system/ A gong system (P\textsubscript{2} / P\textsubscript{0}),
through A gong system/ E gong system (P\textsubscript{6} / P\textsubscript{4}) and E gong system/ B gong system (P\textsubscript{4} / P\textsubscript{e}),
and finally ends with B gong system/F\# gong system (P\textsubscript{e} / P\textsubscript{6}). In this progression, the four
diatonic hexachords move through the circle-of-fifths and are each related to the next by sharing
five common tones - a pentatonic scale. Meanwhile, the invariant pitch class F\# of the four pairs
of pentatonic scales, played by the oboe solo, is accompanied by a succession of diatonic
hexachords.

\textsuperscript{67} An aggregate is a collection consisting of all twelve pitch-classes without regard to
order or duplication.

\textsuperscript{68} Rao, “Hearing Pentatonicism,” 207-208.
Figure 2-17 Maximum-intersecting and minimum-intersecting pentatonic pairs (mm. 70-76)\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{69} Rao, “Hearing Pentatonicism,” 210-211.
Qigang Chen ©1999 by Gérard Billaudot Editeur SA, Paris, France.

Figure 2-17 (Continued)
2.4. Formal Structure

In the previous section, the thematic processes of *Extase* II have been discussed. The principle of Qigang Chen's organization and arrangement of the thematic material in this piece, to a considerable extent, is similar to “developing variation,”\(^{70}\) a concept created by Arnold Schoenberg who considered it as “one of the most important compositional principles of Western music from the common-practice era to his own day.”\(^{71}\) The principle of developing variation also lies in the continuous alteration of musical materials progressively yielding new and contrasting ideas. Schoenberg once explained:

Whatever happens in a piece of music is nothing but the endless reshaping of a basic shape…Or, in other words, there is nothing in a piece of music but what comes from the theme, springs from it and can be traced back to it; put still more severely, nothing but the theme itself. Or, all the shapes appearing in a piece of music are foreseen in the "theme." I say a piece of music is a picture-book consisting of a series of shapes, which for all their variety still (a) cohere with one another, [and] (b) are presented as variations (in keeping with the idea) of a basic shape, the various characters and forms arising from the fact that variation is carried out in a number of different ways.\(^{72}\)

The concept of developing variation appears in a number of Schoenberg’s writings. They

---

70. According to Ethan Haimo, “the first known use of the term 'developing variation' appears in Schoenberg's never-completed theoretical treatise, *Coherence, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, Instruction in Form* and since then (1917), the term appears frequently in his writings.” Ethan Haimo, “Developing Variation and Schoenberg’s Serial Music,” *Music Analysis* 16, no.3 (Oct. 1997), 350.


are valuable resources that offer “a wealth of information pertaining to the formal analyses of
music involving transformation of motivic ideas in a non-tonal harmonic context.” Schoenberg
scholar Walter Frisch, who makes skillful use of Schoenberg’s concept of developing variation to
do an analytical study of eighteen important works by Brahms, also remarked on Schoenberg’s
compositional device:

By “developing variation,” Schoenberg means the construction of a theme by the
continuous modification of the intervallic and/or rhythmic components of an initial idea.
The intervals are “developed” by such recognized procedures as inversion and combination,
the rhythms by such devices as augmentation and displacement.74

The large formal structure of Extase II is developed from a specifically thematic evolution.
The music unfolds through a unique and characteristic process of continuous motivic/thematic
development. The form is based on motivic-thematic relationships. Central to this work is the
presentation of the main theme Village of Thirty Miles in the middle, which forms the basis for
all the musical action. This material is then manipulated and transformed. All the while, the
theme retains its essential features, especially the intervallic structure, but takes on a different
mood. Those changes effectively and progressively create new musical material, which is then
subjected to further development by restatement combined with variation. “The momentum
gradually increases as the figuration is built up, the pentatonic regions piled up, and the overall

by Chinese Composers (Chen Yi, Bright Sheng, Chen Qigang)” (PhD diss., University of
Michigan, 2006), 62.

74. Walter Frisch, Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation (Berkeley and Los
shape of the melody becomes ever more transparent. When the melody finally appears in full, the fragmented sound is finally bundled up into a whole, and the suspense is at last resolved.”

Apart from the influence of Schoenberg’s ideas of developing variation, some aspects or elements of sonata form are also implied in this piece. Schonberg’s string Quantet No.4, which also uses sonata form and developing variation simultaneously, may function as a model, giving inspiration to Qigang Chen. The composition is comprised of a sonata-form-like exposition, development, and varied recapitulation (see Figure 2-18). After a short introduction, the exposition begins with the first theme group, which consists of two themes (Theme II and Theme III) that are derived from the melodic cell of Village of Thirty Miles. Development of the leading motive leads directly into the transition, which begins with no break in the flow of the music. The transition can be divided into two parts, which includes both dependent and independent transition. However, the theme of the independent transition (Theme IV) is to some extent also motivically related to the melodic cell of Village of Thirty Miles. The second theme group begins with the melodic figure Village of Thirty Miles appearing in its entirety. The development, which only develops the transition theme (Theme IV), leads directly into an abbreviated recapitulation in which the first theme group is omitted. The centricity (F gong system) of the second theme group in the exposition nicely finds its reflection in the recapitulation (B$^b$ gong system),

something reminiscent of the tonal scheme that favored by Mozart and Schubert. The coda, which includes two cadenzas, functions as a conclusion to the whole piece. In addition, the formal structure of the piece also reveals its relationship to the binary form models (see Figure 2-18).

2.5. Centricity and Tonality

In Extase II, the pitch class G receives special treatment. It is established as an important pitch center through various kinds of direct emphasis and reinforcement. It is stated frequently,

76. The characteristic progression in the exposition of most major-mode sonata forms is from tonic (I) to dominant (V). “Occasionally, particularly favored by Mozart and Schubert, this progression up a fifth normally finds its reflection in the recapitulation in which the first theme of the recapitulation appears in the subdominant key rather than tonic. Some examples of its use are the first movement of Mozart’s Sonata in C Major, K.545, and Schubert’s Symphony No.5.” For detailed information about the recapitulation beginning in a non-tonic key, please see Douglass M. Green, Form in Tonal Music: An Introduction to Analysis, 2nd ed. ([Belmont, CA]: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 1993), 217; James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 260-280.
sustained at length, metrically stressed, placed in a registral extreme, and played loudly.

Moreover, the sense of this centricity is also based on inversive symmetry. The centric pitch class G is usually an axis of inversive symmetry around which all of the notes in a passage of Extase II balance. In the transition theme shown in Figure 2-5, all the notes are arranged symmetrically around the central note G (see Figure 2-19). It is the axis of symmetry and the central tone in that passage. It is the focus of the melody and metrically stressed by repetition on every downbeat.

![Figure 2-19 Pitches arranged symmetrically around the central note G in Theme IV](image)

A similar passage shown in Figure 2-20 appears at the end of the piece, where the pitch class G also functioned as the central tone and all other notes are arranged symmetrically around it, regardless of whether it is in the pentatonic collection or in the whole-tone collection.
Figure 2-20 Pitches arranged symmetrically around the central note G at the end

The piece ends with the centric pitch class G as well, played in octaves with fortissimo. Before the coda, there is a prolonged preparation for the return of the centric G through deploying a dominant-like pedal note D, which requires a functional resolution to the tonic-like G at the end. This kind of cadential pattern at the end of the piece is strongly suggestive of a V-I progression, which implies a connection with the traditional common-practice tonality. In fact, there are many passages in this piece written with the preservation of tonal factors.
Figure 2-21 illustrates a transitional passage from bar 35 to bar 41 with a comprehensive graphic analysis in the Schenkerian approach underneath it. The structural harmonic framework T-Int-D-T\(^{77}\) is indicated through the functional harmonic progression of i – iv\(^6\) – V\(^7\) – i in f minor, which is elaborated on through use of a secondary dominant along with abundant linear progressions within the harmonic progression. However, it is still possible to find traces of a root progression preserving traditional functions.

Figure 2-21: Graphic analysis for a passage of Extase II (mm. 35-41)

Figure 2-22 sketches the main motion of the bass line in a passage from m. 258 to m. 274, which is another example illustrating how the composer preserves the traditional tonal elements in Extase II. The harmony in this section is nonfunctional and non-triadic, but the motion in the bass line unmistakably references the traditional tonal definition. It characteristically plays an important role in the harmonic motion, forming the basis and support for the succession of chords and larger harmonic framework they create. The tonal focus of B\(^b\) in this passage is

77. T stands for tonic class, Int for intermediate class (Chords that connect the initial tonic with the structural dominant are called intermediate harmonies. Among the many chords that can function in this manner are II, IV, VI, and III.), and D for dominant class.
suggested in the circle-of-fifths progression (F- B♭–E♭) in the bass. With the conclusion comes a shift of tonal focus to D, approached via a stepwise bass from F to D. A pentachord based on A in m. 273, functioning as the dominant-type chord, receives a traditional resolution to the tonic-like D in m. 274.

Figure 2-22: The main motion in the bass line of a passage (mm. 258-274)

2.6. Influences from Western Composers

In previous discussions, some influences from Schoenberg, Debussy, and Messiaen’s music, or their compositional ideas, have been mentioned or discussed. In this section, other influences from these and other Western composers will be examined.

Qigang Chen once admitted that “the detail and nuance in French music was very similar to my own. I had already discovered Debussy and Ravel on my own.”78 In Extase II, some of the harmonic sonorities and musical textures are reminiscent of music by Debussy. For instance, the use of eleventh and thirteenth chords, the use of quartal and quintal chords, and parallel movement of the chords. Apart from these, the whole-tone scale is also used in Extase II. The whole-tone scale is often associated with Debussy. As mentioned before, the set class (0246), an

inversionally symmetrical subset of the whole-tone scale collection (set class (02468t)), is used in the transition theme, paving the way for use of the whole-tone scale. It makes the switch between the pentatonic scale and the whole-tone scale smoother and more natural. In *Extase II*, one transposition of whole-tone scale, WT₁ {C#, D#, F, G, A, B}, has been used. Figure 2-23 is a passage from the end of the piece that is based on a whole-tone collection, WT₁. However, the centric pitch class G of this excerpt is reached through the ascending whole-tone scale and a chromatic scale at the very end.

![Whole-tone scale used in *Extase II* (mm. 344-345)](image)

**Figure 2-23: Whole-tone scale used in *Extase II* (mm. 344-345)**

A similar passage based on the whole-tone collection WT₁ from the transitional part is shown in Figure 2-24.

![Whole-tone scale used in *Extase II* (mm. 148-150)](image)

**Figure 2-24: Whole-tone scale used in *Extase II* (mm. 148-150)**
In *Extase* II, the occasional use of added values\textsuperscript{79} is reminiscent of music by Messiaen. The passage in Figure 2-25 is an example of this. Bar 184 and bar 188 of Figure 2-25 would clearly be in quadruple meter without added values.

![Figure 2-25: Added values used in *Extase* II (mm. 183-190)](image)

The passage in Figure 2-26 is written in a type of graph notation and involves a kind of uncontrolled imitation that frees performers from having to maintain strict meter, yet allows some control over attack times and durations. Woodwinds and piano players freely play their repeated pattern in an uncoordinated fashion until the next section begins. The parts of the ensemble are not to be synchronized exactly. Each instrument (piccolo, oboe, clarinet, piano, violin and viola) has its own pitch material played in different tonalities, but the patterns and

---

\textsuperscript{79} Added Values means to complicate a simple rhythmic pattern by the addition of a short duration in the form of a dot, a note, or a rest. It is often associated with Olivier Messiaen.
Figure 2-26 Uncontrolled imitation between different instruments (mm. 42-49)
Figure 2-26 (Continued)
melodic contour are somewhat similar, resulting in uncontrolled imitation within each instrument. Bar lines have little meaning except to aid performers in generally maintaining their place in the music. They do not indicate stresses and should not be noticeable in performance. This controlled freedom given to the individual musicians in Extase II reveals the influence of the preeminent Polish musician Witold Lutosławski and his concept of “controlled aleatory.”

2.7. Influences from Chinese Traditional Music

In previous discussions, the marked influences of traditional Chinese musical culture in Extase II have already been examined in several aspects, especially its extensive use of the folk tune san shi li pu (Village of Thirty Miles) and harmonic sonorities based on pentatonic modes. In addition, with regard to orchestration, the extensive use of Chinese percussion instruments,}

80. Lutosławski own personal aleatoric technique (which he called “controlled aleatory”) whereby the performers have freedom within certain controlled parameters was first demonstrated in his orchestral work Jeux Vénitiens (1961) and is employed in almost all his subsequent compositions. This aleatoric technique “frees both the rhythmic and textual dimensions of his music. The composer has attributed this change of style and compositional method to his encounter in 1960 with John Cage’s Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Lutosławski devised a music that he termed ‘aleatoric counterpoint,’ in which pitches in all instrumental and vocal parts are precisely notated and rhythms are improvised by the player within certain guidelines.” In Jeux Vénitiens, Lutosławski also wrote long passages in which the parts of the ensemble are not to be synchronized exactly. At cues from the conductor, each instrumentalist may be instructed to finish their current section and move straight on to the next section or to stop. This controlled freedom given to the individual musicians is contrasted with passages where the orchestra is asked to synchronize their parts. “Passages of aleatoric counterpoint normally alternate with conventionally notated passages, and each block-like section projects a distinct texture that is linked to its neighbors in subtle ways.” Bryan R. Simms, Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure, 2nd ed. (California: Thomson Learning, 1996): 361-363.
like Chinese cymbals, temple blocks, Chinese tam-tam and so on, also strengthens the oriental flavor of this piece. In this section, the influence of other elements from traditional Chinese music will be explored, including the rhythmic organization of Beijing Opera, and instrumental techniques used by a Chinese folk instrument called suona (see Figure 2-27).

The oboe in Extase II is played in a way that draws on the instrumental techniques used by suona. Suona is a shawm\textsuperscript{81} of the Han Chinese.\textsuperscript{82} This instrument is commonly employed in traditional music ensembles. It has “a distinctively loud, bright and high-pitched sound and is


\textsuperscript{82} Suona is “believed to have been developed from Central Asian instruments such as the zürnä or surnäy, from which its Chinese name probably derives. It has a conical wooden body, with seven frontal finger-holes and one thumb-hole. A very small double reed made from a species of river reed, luwei is bound with thin copper wire to a hollow metal staple, below which is a lip plate which guides playing position. This reed assembly is inserted into the upper end of the instrument. Loosely fitted over the lower end is a large flaring metal bell.” For detailed information about suona, please see Alan R. Thrasher, “Suona,” Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/45373 (accessed September 25, 2011).
used in village wedding and funeral processions in China. It is also an important instrument in the folk music of northern China.

The piercing shrill, or what Qigang Chen called “crying sound effect” of the high register in the oboe is very attractive to the composer due to its similarity in tone color to suona. Therefore, the oboist is often asked to play in the altissimo register of the oboe in Extase II. Figure 2-2 and the first example of Figure 2-5 exemplify this.

Figure 2-28 Circular breathing used in Extase II

83. Ibid.


85. Altissimo refers to the very high register of the woodwind instruments.
A technique associated with suona, called circular breathing,\(^8^6\) is also extensively used in Extase II (see Figure 2-28). In traditional Chinese instrumental performance, an experienced suona player will continuously use circular breathing to produce the characteristic tone uninterrupted until the audience responds with loud applause. Qigang Chen once expressed his interest in this technique, referring to it as “one of the most characteristic expression in traditional Chinese music.”\(^8^7\)

The passage in Figure 2-29 shows the application of another suona technique, a very rapidly articulated double-tonguing that creates a strong, harsh reed-instrument sound. It is extensively used in Extase II. Two famous Chinese oboists, Liang Wang and Zheng Huang, both mention this technique and the technique of circular breathing in an interview they gave on Qigang Chen’s Extase II.\(^8^8\)

\(^{86}\) Circular breathing refers to breathe in through the nose while air which has been trapped in the mouth, is push out through the reed thus maintaining a continuous sound without interruption.

\(^{87}\) Chen, “Zouchu Xiandai,” 5.

Apart from these techniques, other techniques or effects have also been frequently used in the piece — glissando and bending pitches (see Figure 2-2 and 2-5), the microtone (see Figure 2-30), and the wide vibrato (see Figure 2-5). The application of these extended techniques is related to either the sound effect or instrumental techniques of suona. In the end, introducing suona techniques in Extase II results in a modification of the way the oboe is made to sound. Through them, the composer gives the instrument, in addition to its well-known expressivity, a more extravagant, almost savage, character, which well-expresses the painful emotions he experienced at that time in his life.  

In the previous discussion (2.2 Thematic Materials), the influences from some rhythmic features of Chinese folk music or Beijing Opera have been examined. In addition to these, according to Qigang Chen, there is a metrical type of Beijing Opera, the shaking meter (yaoban) — sometimes called jin da man/san chang (beat urgently sing slowly/freely) — which also has a great impact on the rhythmic organization of Extase II:

A further study and investigation of Chinese traditional music is necessary to me. I think I should put more energy on that. To me, everything about Chinese traditional music is perceived in an intuitive manner…. I know only a little bit about jin da man/san chang in Beijing Opera. In fact, I used it in Extase, by the feel of it. However, most of what I used is just off the top if a professional of Beijing Opera hears it, because it is full of variety. It is quite different every time it is applied in the music of Beijing Opera.\(^{90}\)

\(^{90}\) Li, “Interview with Qigang Chen,” 93.
Shaking-meter (yaoban) is a free metrical type used in the musical system of Beijing Opera known as pihuang (the general name for xipi and erhuang drama in traditional Chinese operas). This is why yaoban is often referred to as jin da man/san chang (beat urgently sing slowly/freely). Elizabeth Wichmann describes the characteristics of shaking-meter (yaoban) as follows:

Shaking-meter (yaoban) is somewhat faster than dispersed-meter. Its tempos are those of

91. “Metrical types in the pihuang musical system can be classified into two categories: metered metrical types and free metrical types. The pihuang musical system includes six principal metered metrical types: primary-meter (yuanban), slow meter (manban), fast-meter (kuaiban), fast-three-eyes-meter (kuaisanyan), two-six-meter (erliuban), and flowing-water-meter (liushuiban). Every metered metrical type provides a pattern of accented beat (ban) and unaccented beat (yan) by which melodic-lines and melodic-passage are organized. The pihuang musical system includes three principal free metrical types: dispersed-meter (sanban), lead-in-meter (daoban), and shaking-meter (yao-ban). Another metrical type, undulating-dragon (huilong)-meter, is associated with the free metrical types although it is actually metered. The free metrical types have no rhythmic regulation.” Elizabeth Wichmann, Listening to Theatre: the Aural Dimension of Beijing Opera (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 59-71.

92. “There are two modal systems in the pihuang musical system, xipi and erhuang. The term pihuang is an abbreviated statement of their names ([xi] pi [er] huang). Even though the two modal systems share the same basic modal scale and large structural features, they are different in terms of cadential pitches, metrical structure, tempo, melodic detail and specific dramatic or emotional association. Erhuang is typically used in serious or melancholy situations, while xipi is heard in livelier, more positive circumstances.” Ibid.,53-54; Nancy Guy, “Beijing Opera,” Oxford Music Online, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/51764?q=b eijing+opera&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed September 26, 2011)

93. “Dispersed-meter (sanban, lit. “dispersed/loosen/scattered accented beat [type]”) is the basic free metrical type. It is generally sung at moderate tempos. Lyrics with either ten or seven written-characters per line may be sung in dispersed-meter.” Wichmann, Listening to Theatre, 67.
primary-meter\textsuperscript{94} and two-six-meter.\textsuperscript{95} Shaking-meter is distinct from the other two free metrical types in that it uses the single-beat-meter percussive accompaniment of flowing-water-meter.\textsuperscript{96} However, the singing itself is free from this rhythmic accompaniment; shaking meter is frequently referred to as “beat urgently sing slowly/freely” (jin da man/san chang) for this reason. Like the other free metrical types, shaking-meter may be sung with lyrics of either seven-or ten written-character lines…\textsuperscript{97}

The rhythmic organization of many passages in Extase II refers to this metrical type of Beijing Opera. The rhythmic patterns of the passage in Figure 2-31 suggest this idiom. It is written in regular duple meter. However, an ostinato composed of eight thirty-second notes to some extent suggests the single-beat-meter percussive accompaniment and acts as the fast playing. Above the ostinato, a prolonged melody-like chordal note action is the slow singing, which is free from that rhythmic accompaniment. It well-reflects the concept of jin da man/san chang (beat urgently sing slowly/freely).

\textsuperscript{94} “Primary-meter, the most fundamental metrical type, is characterized as yi ban yi yan (one accented beat and one unaccented beat in each measure) which corresponds similarly to duple meter 2/4 in Western music. Its tempo is moderate. Lyrics with either ten or seven written-characters per line may be sung in primary-meter.” Ibid., 59-61.

\textsuperscript{95} “Two-six-meter often uses the metrical organization of primary meter (2/4 meter). However, sometimes, especially in the male melodic-passage, it also uses the metrical organization of fast-meter – four accented beats and no unaccented beats (1/4 meter). It is faster and more syllabic than primary-meter. Like flowing-water-meter, lyrics of both ten and seven written-characters per line may be sung in two-six-meter.” Ibid., 64.

\textsuperscript{96} “Flowing-water-meter uses the metrical organization of fast-meter (1/4 meter). Like two-six-meter, lyrics of both ten and seven written-characters per line may be sung in flowing-water-meter. It is faster and more syllabic than two-six-meter.” Ibid., 64.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 69-70.
Figure 2-31 *Jin da man/san chang* (beat urgently sing slowly/freely) used in *Extase II* (mm. 134-141)
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through the creation of *Extase II*, Qigang Chen successfully explores the possibility of combining traditional Chinese musical elements with contemporary Western compositional techniques. He consistently and logically fused these two elements together in several instances. For instance, he uses the original folk tune to represent the primitive local style, occasionally complicating it through the use of polytonality to represent the heterophonic style of Chinese folk music. He also carefully applies set theory to manipulate the motives (or set classes) extracted from the folk tune and pentatonic modes to get the thematic and harmonic material for the piece. Moreover, he applies Schoenberg’s developing variation technique, and reminiscent of sonata theory, to the formal structure of the piece. He creates the sense of centricity through focusing on specific pitch classes and occasionally creating a sense of traditional common-practice tonality through functional harmonic progression and voice-leading. Other elements from traditional Chinese musical culture, such as rhythmic features of Chinese folk music (especially mountain songs), the rhythmic organization of Beijing Opera (especially *jin da man/san chang*), and instrumental techniques used by the Chinese folk instrument *suona*, have significant impacts on the creation of *Extase II*. In addition, uses of a whole-tone scale, added values and controlled aleatory are reminiscent of music by Debussy, Messiaen, and Lutosławski. However, the way Qigang Chen accesses them is different from that of these composers, ultimately reflecting Qigang Chen’s open awareness of contemporary Western music culture and his own aesthetic inclinations.
All in all, all these factors taken together contribute to the successful and effective piece of music. To create it, Qigang Chen absorbs various influences from both Western and traditional Chinese musical culture. Through his ideal combination of these styles, Qigang Chen successfully established his own distinctive style, which is fully represented in his oboe concerto, *Extase II*. 
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


JOURNALS


**DISSERTATIONS & THESES**


**INTERNET**


Bennici, Maestro A. “the Accademia Musicale Chigiana of Siena.”


Chen, Qigang. “Biography of Music Composer: Qigang Chen.”


http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/05130?q=Jacques+Cast%C3%A9r%C3%A8de&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed in April 9, 2011).


Flipse, Eline. “Broken Silence.”


Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. “Interview with Oboist Huang Zheng.” Youtube.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZzwFAdj_6s (accessed September 26, 2011).


SCORE
APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHY OF ZHANG JI AND LI PO

Zhang Ji (715-779), is a Chinese poet and scholar of the Tang Dynasty. He is credited with one poem *Maple Bridge Night*, which references the famous Maple Bridge in Suzhou, China. The poem is included in the classic anthology *Three Hundred Tang Poems*.

Li Po (701 – 762), also known as Li Bai or Li T’ai Po, is one of the greatest Chinese poets of the Tang dynasty. Li Po is both a prolific and a profound poet. Around a thousand yet existing poems are attributed to him. Thirty-four of his poems are included in the classic anthology *Three Hundred Tang Poems*. His lyrics are celebrated for their exquisite imagery, rich language, allusions, and cadence. Li Po is best known for his poems describing the relief found in wine, friendship, solitude, women, nature, and the passage of time.
APPENDIX B: TWO POEMS WRITTEN BY ZHANG JI AND LI PO

**Maple Bridge Night** -- Zhang Ji (715-779)
The moon is down and the crows cry as autumn is coming with the frost in the air.
By maples and boat lights, I can’t get sleep at night in sorrow.
Outside of Gusu city, an ancient temple is in sight, sitting still and lonely.
Its ringing bells reach my boat at midnight.

**Thoughts in A Tranquil Night** – Li Po (701-762)
There is a splash of white around my bed.
The hoar frost fallen from the night? I wondered.
When I raised my head,
I found that it’s the bright moonlight!
Then I bowed my head again,
And suddenly I am sighing for my homeland.

-----------------
Translated by Wennan Wang
APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Wennan Wang,

We are happy to grant you the requested permission, for free, only for paper reprint (no download is authorized, whether free or not).

Only the original parts of the score can be reprinted, *ie*:

1. m.1, mm.12-15, mm.40-42, mm.111-117, mm.143-150, mm.168-183, mm.286-290, mm.344-345, mm.183-190: only oboe solo part.
2. mm.43-44: only piccolo part.
3. mm.11-15: only oboe solo, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and contrabass parts.
4. mm.191-197: only flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon parts.
5. mm.274-275: only oboe solo and strings parts.
6. mm.56-59: only oboe solo, vibraphone and strings parts.
7. m.96: oboe solo, piano, harp and percussion.
8. mm.343-345: oboe solo and strings parts.
9. mm.134-135: percussion, flute and clarinet.
10. mm.136-138: flute, clarinet, harp, percussion and string's part.
11. mm.225-226: only flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, harp and strings.
12. mm.42-49, mm. 50-52, mm.70-76, mm.139-141: full score.

The measures made to piano score cannot be reproduced.

The following lines must appear under each excerpts, as well as the name of the composer:

- (c) 1999 by Gérard Billaudot Editeur SA, Paris, France.

Please provide us with one copy of your dissertation.

Yours sincerely,

Didier MASSIAT
Copyright Department
Gérard Billaudot Editeur SA
14 rue de l'Echiquier F-75010 PARIS
Tél. : 01 47 70 12 64
Fax : 01 45 23 22 54
www.billaudot.com
VITA

Wennan Wang (b. 1981), began studying the accordion at six and the clarinet at seven and earned the highest level of amateur performance diploma of clarinet in China in 1997. In 1999, he was enrolled in the bachelor’s program at the Music School of Southwest China University, majoring in music theory. After that, he continued his study of music theory to pursue a master degree. During these seven years, he has been granted the outstanding musician scholarship and fellowship of music school and Southwest University year by year, because of his academic excellence. At the meantime, he performed as a clarinetist, pianist and accordionist in the music and dance theater of the University and the City. In 2003, Wennan was elected as outstanding graduate in Chongqing. Moreover, two theses of Wennan had been published by Chongqing University and Southwest University Xuebao in 2005. Wennan obtained his master degree in music theory with the highest GPA in music school in June 2006.

At the same year, he received scholarship and assistantship from LSU, and left China for studying composition at Louisiana State University as an assistant of Boyd Professor Dinos Constantinides. Wang successfully had his master recital at LSU and earned his MM in composition in 2008. Right now, he is currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy degree majoring in composition with a minor in music theory there. He got several commissions and wrote many solo, chamber and orchestra pieces. His pieces have been broadly performed in the United States and in China. During his years in the US, several works of his have also been performed by the Louisiana Sinfonietta. Recently, the piece Grasses-Farewell to a Friend was
commissioned and performed by Trio Angelico. One of his orchestral works “Shui Diao Ge Tou” from Poems of the Sung Dynasty was published by LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing in Germany in 2011. Based on a Western tradition, a strong Eastern influence is evident in his music, which often uses traditional tales, folk songs, as well as gestures borrowed from Chinese Operas; however, it is incorporated into a highly original and assured framework based on a Western tradition.