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Piano teaching philosophies and influences on pianism at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China

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**PIANO TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES AND INFLUENCES ON PIANISM
AT THE CENTRAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC IN BEIJING, CHINA**

A Monograph

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

in

The School of Music

by

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Abstract

The Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM) is considered the best music institute in China and represents the highest level of music education in China. Since the founding of the CCOM in 1950, its piano department has been a national center for teaching, performance and research. The CCOM has trained hundreds of pianists; many of them are now key members of music schools, art organizations, and research institutes all over China and some of them have won prizes at major international competitions.

Through fifty years of efforts by Chinese pianists and the influences of foreign pianists, especially Russian pianists, the CCOM has created a unique piano teaching system that embraces both Chinese and Western philosophies. This study discusses the development of the CCOM piano program, Russian influences on pianism at the CCOM, profiles of key piano faculty members at the CCOM, and their piano teaching philosophies. Profiles of Zhou Guangren, Li Qifang and Yang Jun are included as well as detailed descriptions of their teaching methods and philosophies, based on personal interviews by the author.

Introduction

The art of piano performance has a relatively short history in China. Piano performance as a profession was not popular with the Chinese people, and there were no Chinese virtuosos until 1904. Although the piano was brought from England to China in 1850, it was used primarily in the church until the early 1900s. In 1927, the Chinese composer and music educator, Xiao Youmei (1884-1940) founded the first music institute in Shanghai, which was named the National Academy of Music. From 1927-1937, there was rapid development in piano education in China; many universities added music departments and began teaching piano courses. The development of pianism was slow from 1937-1949, during which China was involved in World War II against Japan and their own subsequent Civil War.

The Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM) was founded in 1950 by the government of the People's Republic of China. It was established by combining its forerunners: the Music Department of Yenching University (established 1927), the Music Department of North China University (1939), the National Academy of Music (1940), the Music Department of the National Peking School of Art (1946), the Music Department of the Northeast Lu Hsun Institute of Literature and Art, and the Chung Hwa Academy of Music (Shanghai and Hong Kong). Since 1960, the CCOM has been the only conservatory acknowledged by the Chinese government as a key institute of higher learning in China. In 2000, the supervision of the CCOM was switched from the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Education of the Chinese government.

The earliest piano professors at the CCOM were a group of famous Chinese educators: Yi Kaiji, Hong Shigui, Li Changxun, Zhu Gongyi, and Zhou Guangren. Most of the piano professors at the conservatory received their training abroad or from foreign pianists in China. According to Dr. Bian Meng's book *The Formation and the Development of Chinese Piano*

Culture, many foreign pianists came to China to teach piano from 1930 to 1960.¹ Three Russian pianists, Shienoff (dates unknown; he taught only at the Shanghai Conservatory from 1954 to 1956), Aram Taturian (1915-1974), and Tatyana Kravchenko (1916-), were invited by the Chinese government to teach at the CCOM and the Shanghai Conservatory during the mid-1950s. The arrival of Russian experts brought the direct influence of Russian pianism to China, greatly enhancing piano education and the performance level at the CCOM.

At the CCOM, the Russian pianists helped establish Russian-style piano teaching methods. Specifically, they systemized functions within the piano department, adopted a Russian-style curriculum and chose repertoire for undergraduate piano students.² Also, they gave master classes and private lessons to the teachers and soloists at the CCOM starting in 1955. Within two years, the Chinese pianists at the CCOM trained by Taturian and Kravchenko reached the highest performance level that they ever had.

Playing a composition artistically was emphasized by both Russian teachers. Specifically, they stressed tone production in students' lessons. The transfer of arm weight to the fingers and the involvement of the wrists were the most important techniques advocated by the Russian teaching system. Russian pianists believed that a beautiful singing tone is generated by weight transferring technique and by imagining a specific tone quality before producing it. Weight transferring means that the shoulder and the entire arm should be loose and relaxed, in order to transfer weight from the upper part of the body to the fingertips. To produce a singing tone, the pianist must roll this weight from one fingertip to another while keeping the wrist flexible.

¹Bian Meng, *The Formation and the Development of Piano Culture in China* (China: Yuehua Press, 1996), 41.

²The piano department at the CCOM started its master's degree in piano performance in 1984. There are 66 piano majors at the CCOM today; 6 of them are graduate students and the rest are undergraduate students. The CCOM does not offer a doctoral degree in piano performance.

After the Russian teachers left the CCOM in the mid 1960s, the piano department at the CCOM instituted the four-year undergraduate curriculum originally designed by the Russian pianists. Through the efforts of Chinese pianists/teachers and the influence of foreign pianists, especially Russian pianists, the CCOM has created a unique piano teaching system that embraces both Chinese and Western philosophies. Although the pianism at the CCOM has been enhanced by the Russian teaching philosophies concerning tone production and musicality, it has continued to place greater importance on technical ability.

In the last twenty years, the piano department at the CCOM has grown rapidly, not only maintaining its leadership position in the field of piano education in China but also gaining an international reputation. Western pianists and music educators frequently visit the CCOM to perform or to give lessons. At the same time, an increasing number of Chinese piano teachers have traveled to western countries to study or give lessons. There are more and more Chinese pianists attending music schools in foreign countries including the United States, Russia, Europe and the United Kingdom. It can be expected that piano teaching at the CCOM will continue to maintain its leading role in China and further develop its unique system by absorbing new ideas and methods from other countries, including the United States.

The older generation of piano teachers at the CCOM is represented by Zhou Guangren, Li Qifang and Yang Jun. They have been teaching at the CCOM since the 1950s or 1960s. Their profiles serve as examples of typical piano teachers at the CCOM during the period from the 1950s to the present. Even though their backgrounds vary, they have some aspects in common. First, they were all trained by foreign teachers, either from Russia or Eastern European countries. Their teaching philosophies are inseparable from their earlier training by teachers from these countries. Second, they have all devoted their lives to piano education in China. They

have trained numerous students at the CCOM, and many of their students are now key members of music schools, art organizations and research institutes all over China. Some of their students, or students' students, have won prizes at major international competitions such as the International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition.

This monograph will discuss the development of the CCOM's undergraduate piano program, outlining admissions standards, exams, academic requirements, curriculum and teaching reforms. The influences the Russian teachers brought to China will be explored, and biographical profiles and teaching methods of the Chinese pianists currently teaching at the CCOM are also discussed.

Chapter 1

Piano Programs in the Central Conservatory of Music: Admissions, Curricula, Exams and Other Academic Requirements

Since the mid-1950s, the CCOM has established a complete system of music education embracing courses at all levels: primary school (4 years), pre-college (6 years), and the undergraduate college program (4 years). Graduate programs were instituted in 1983. In addition, the department also offers classes to train piano teachers from other music schools and art institutes throughout China. The following discussion of programs, curricula, admissions standards, exams and other requirements focuses on the undergraduate piano programs.¹

The Piano Programs at the CCOM

Since the 1950s, the piano department at the CCOM has set up teaching and research courses for majors as well as non-majors. The objective of the teaching and research courses for majors is to train pianists at the highest level, while the non-major teaching and research courses are responsible for providing general basic piano training required of students from all departments. The entire piano department lists its annual teaching and research plan. According to this plan, teachers are required to publish papers, give seminars or perform concerts in order to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and research.

In 1953, the Ministry of Culture formulated the guiding principle of the CCOM:

To train, for our country, people with professional musical skills, who must have a theoretical background in Marxism and Leninism, be artistically accomplished and proficient in professional techniques, and willing to serve people wholeheartedly...To give prominence to teaching in running the school...and

¹The CCOM currently has nine departments offering undergraduate programs in composition, conducting, musicology, piano, voice and opera, music education, instrument manufacturing, orchestral instruments, and traditional Chinese instruments. The pre-college provides training in piano, orchestral instruments, traditional Chinese instruments and music theory.

reinforce teaching of fundamental music theory, technical training, music history, and aesthetics, and gradually increase admission standards.²

In its early days, the piano department gave top priority to the development of piano technique and stressed an overall musical education that emphasizes musical form, content and expression. In order to both enhance students' performance ability and also to evaluate the effectiveness of faculty teaching, the piano department not only arranged for students to perform in various commemorative or celebratory concerts organized by the conservatory, but also sponsored concerts at which students and their teachers performed. Every two weeks during the semester, the piano department held a student performance event. Each student had to perform at this event at least once or twice a semester in order to be qualified to take the final exams.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the piano faculty included some of the best Chinese piano teachers including Yi Kaiji, Hong Shigui, Li Changxun, Zhu Gongyi, and Zhou Guangren, as well as two Russian teachers, Aram Taturian, and Tatyana Kravchenko. During this period, the CCOM fostered the development of a number of young pianists. Among the pianists who either graduated from or received training from the visiting Russian teachers at the CCOM were: Zhou Guangren, Guo Zhihong, Li Ruixing, Liu Shikun, Gu Shengying, Li Mingqing, Bao Huiqiao, Li Qi, and Yin Cengzhong. All of these pianists won prizes at major international piano competitions such as the International Tchaikovsky Competition, the International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition, and the International Music Competition Budapest-Ference Liszt Piano Competition.

The Cultural Revolution created a ten-year break in the CCOM's history (1966-76). During these ten years, the CCOM ceased all its functions. No students were enrolled and

²Bian Meng, *The Formation and the Development of Piano Culture in China* (China: Yuehua Press, 1996), 35.

faculty members were forced to leave the school. Western art was considered counter-revolutionary and many professors were severely persecuted.

The CCOM resumed the enrollment of undergraduate students in 1977. Some of the best piano teachers, including Zhou Guangren, Li Qifang, and Yang Jun, returned to the CCOM and became the backbone of the piano department. They standardized the teaching system in the piano department by re-establishing the curriculum, admission criteria and examination standards. The teachers inherited solid teaching traditions both from the older generation of Chinese pianists and from the Russian instructors who had previously taught at the CCOM. According to Professor Zhou and Dr. Bian Meng, the curriculum was largely based on the ones used in Russian conservatories. The current curriculum is not followed as strictly as in the 1980s, because professors prefer to give more freedom and options to the students. Meanwhile, the requirements for technique exams remain rigorous. Both the original and revised curricula will be included as an appendix to this monograph.

Admission Standards

Since visiting Russian teachers helped establish admission standards at the CCOM in the 1950s, those standards have remained essentially the same. Students admitted to the CCOM come from all over the country and admission is highly selective. Each applicant must take not only the entrance exam required by the CCOM but also a standard national college entrance exam. The CCOM entrance exam consists of tests in solfege and music theory as well as two rounds of auditions. The first round of auditions requires that each applicant present three pieces. Every applicant must prepare two fast etudes, including one Chopin etude and another etude chosen by the applicant. The other requirement is a fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*

by J. S. Bach. In the second round of auditions, chosen applicants are required to prepare two pieces: one fast movement of a sonata or a set of variations from the Classical period, and another work of the applicants' choice. Normally applicants must go to the CCOM to take the exam, because recorded auditions are not accepted. In rare cases, recruiters visit applicants living in other cities to hear them play. After the first round of screening, approximately two thirds of the applicants remain on the audition list and enter the second round of auditions held at the CCOM. During the second round, each applicant is asked to play two of the three pieces already performed in the first round. After the second round, 10 students are selected as candidates for the CCOM piano program.

Even if an applicant is selected as a candidate for admission as a result of the CCOM entrance exam, they still need to pass a standard national college entrance exam given by the Department of Culture of the Chinese government. The national college entrance exam tests six subjects including Chinese, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, and Politics. In previous years, the number of students admitted to the CCOM was fewer than ten because some candidates did not pass the college entrance exam.

Since the mid-1990s, the number of students enrolled has increased slightly. The CCOM now selects thirteen students per year based on their performance on the CCOM exam, and students who score lower than the last candidate by less than 10 points are allowed to remain on the waiting list. The increase in the number of successful applicants and the waiting list prevents the final enrollment figure from dropping significantly. If a candidate fails to pass the national college entrance exam, the first person on the waiting list will be admitted, provided that this person passes the exam. The government waives the four-year tuition and living expenses for a maximum of thirteen students admitted each year. In addition to these government-sponsored

students, the CCOM now admits a small number (approximately 5 each year) of self-sponsored students from the waiting list.

Piano Exams and Grading

At the end of each academic year, freshmen, sophomore and junior students must take a final piano exam and each senior student must take a graduation exam. The annual final exam in piano encompasses three parts: a technical evaluation done in the fall worth 30% of the exam grade, a year-end performance jury (60%) and a performance based on independent study (10%).³ For senior students, the graduation exam is comprised of a graduation recital (90% of the grade) and an independent study project similar to the one required at previous annual exams. For their technical evaluation, freshmen, sophomore and junior students must play one polyphonic work and two etudes. One etude is assigned, the other is chosen by the student. Freshmen and sophomore students are required to play one fast movement of a major work such as a sonata or concerto, and two smaller pieces at the year-end jury. Junior and senior students must give a 45 to 50-minute recital. The number of pieces included on the program is not specified but the pieces must represent different styles from different historical periods. The work assigned for independent study is from the Classical period for first-year students, from the Romantic period for second-and third-year students, and contemporary works for seniors.

Grading is based on a hundred-point system instead of the letter grade system (A, B, C, etc.). The piano department specifies the following grade cutoffs:⁴

95-100	Excellent
90-94	Good
85-89	Passing

³One month before the year-end jury, each student is given a composition which they must study and learn on their own. The evaluation of the performance of this memorized work is worth 10% of the exam grade.

⁴Zhou Guangren, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.

Since the CCOM does not use a letter grade system, “excellent”, “good” and “passing” can be understood as the equivalent of A, B and C grades. A student must score at least 85 (equivalent to a C) on the final exam or graduation exam in order to advance or graduate.⁵ Each undergraduate student must complete the required piano exams at a certain performance level before applying for graduation. Finally, students must pass a graduation exam in order to obtain their degree.

Other Requirements for Undergraduate Piano Students

Each student must participate in a “Student Concert” at the CCOM at least once per semester. In addition, students must participate in the annual “Chinese Piano Works” concert or competition organized by the piano department. Students are also encouraged to participate in major national or international piano competitions.

Additional detailed descriptions of the CCOM piano program can be found in **Appendix A** (1959 version), **Appendix B** (1999 version), and **Appendix C** (current version).

Teaching System and Curriculum

The CCOM began reforming its teaching in 1985. The emphasis of this reform was to gradually transform the long-standing academic grade level system into a credit system, in order to increase the quality of teaching at the school. Both academic management systems are used in institutes of higher education around the world. Under the grade level system, students take required courses according to an academic curriculum. They must pass all their courses in each academic year in order to advance to the next grade. The advantage of the grade level system is

⁵The grading in the piano department is so strict that teachers never give a student over 94 points.

that it makes it easy to train students in a planned and systematic way and facilitates teaching arrangements. Its disadvantage lies in that it neglects the differences in students' previous knowledge and background, intellectual qualities, study habits, potential and interests. Hence, the grade level system can curtail students' motivation and creativity rather than teach students in accordance with their aptitude. It also inhibits the broadening of students' knowledge and the early discovery of unique talents.

The credit system provides students with flexibility in selecting courses. It uses credit as the basis of measurement to calculate a student's workload. Under the credit system, students are allowed to enroll in many elective courses, in addition to required courses. Required courses provide a basic training and framework of knowledge for students. Elective courses are intended to train students based on their diverse backgrounds, interests and aptitudes. They broaden the student's knowledge and allow him to realize his potential. The credit system not only gives some freedom to students in choosing courses, but also motivates instructors to update teaching materials and expand their areas of research.

The credit system was introduced to China by foreign countries in the early twentieth century. When Xiao Youmei (1884-1940) founded the Shanghai National Academy of Music in 1927, the credit system was adopted and fully integrated into China's music teaching. In 1952, China replaced the credit system with the grade level system in all institutes of higher learning. The credit system was not used again in China until the early 1980s. At that time, China launched a nationwide teaching reform in institutes of higher education and began to reinstitute the credit system as a complement to the grade level system.

The implementation of the credit system at the CCOM is still in its early stage. The current system at the CCOM is a combination of the two systems known as a "grade-credit"

system. On one hand, there are required courses for each grade, which students must complete before moving up to the next grade. On the other hand, students are offered elective courses. Both required courses and elective courses carry a certain number of credits. A student meeting the credit requirements in each subject category required by the CCOM is eligible to advance to the next level or allowed to graduate, if in the senior year.

Under the current rules of the “grade-credit” system, required credits include major courses offered by the piano department as well as basic courses in Chinese literature and political history. Music courses fulfill two thirds of the credits required to graduate; the literature and history courses fulfill the remaining credits. The four-year curriculum, including all courses and credits available to the undergraduate piano students, is listed in **Appendix C**.

Chapter 2

The Influence of Russian Pianism on Piano Teaching at the CCOM

Russian piano teaching methods have had a great impact on the piano teaching at the CCOM. Professor Zhou Guangren explains:

The piano teaching methods at the CCOM were primarily imported from other countries, mainly Russia. Russian teachers had the greatest influence on the Chinese piano teaching system. The teaching methods at the CCOM were almost entirely copied from Russia. Prior to the arrival of Russian teachers, there was no traditional teaching system in China. Chinese piano teachers were very eager to learn from Russian teachers, and since there had been no traditions to fetter their minds, they learned very quickly.¹

Since it was founded in 1950, the CCOM has invited eminent foreign pianists and scholars to teach or give lectures. The CCOM has also sent its own faculty members and students to other countries to pursue further studies. Because of the political situation in the 1950s, exchange activities during that period were limited to those between China and other communist countries. Two Russian piano teachers, Aram Taturian (1915-1974), and Tatyana Kravchenko (1916-), were invited by the Chinese government to teach at the CCOM from 1954-1960. These Russian teachers brought the direct influence of Russian pianism to the CCOM, greatly enhancing education and performance levels.

At the CCOM, the Russians helped to establish their own piano teaching methods. For undergraduates, these two Russian teachers required that students take a two-hour piano lesson weekly and practice at least 18 hours per week. The student had to study the minimum required repertoire every semester in order to take a jury at the end of the semester. Moreover, a student had to achieve a certain score on the year-end exam in order to advance to the next grade.

Beginning in 1955, Taturian and Kravchenko gave master classes and private lessons to the teachers and students at the CCOM. The Russian teachers set an excellent example for the

¹Zhou Guangren, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.

Chinese teachers with their strict and conscientious teaching style and the high quality of their teaching in the master class format. Their illustrative performances and emotional playing were very effective in inspiring students' musical sense and made their classes vivid and interesting.

The Russian teaching philosophy places great emphasis on both technical training and the production of a singing tone. Russian pianists believe in one principle: to communicate human emotions through music with the instrument as a means to an end.² Russian pianists feel that, without solid technical training, it is difficult to express emotions through music. Rachmaninoff said:

It goes without saying, that technical proficiency should be one of the first acquisitions of the student who would become a fine pianist. It is impossible to conceive of fine playing that is not marked by clean, fluent, distinct, elastic technique.³

In a forward to Josef Lhevinne's book, *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*, Rosina Lhevinne wrote that she and her husband were taught at the earliest age to strive for a perfect technique - "a complete command of the instrument."⁴ The importance of basic technical training, according to Bian Meng, is unchanged today in Russia.⁵

In the Russian school, the required technical exercises include major and minor scales, arpeggios, double thirds, sixths, octaves and Czerny studies. In addition, Russian teachers advise their students to play Czerny studies very musically and expressively, rather than playing *forte* throughout the studies. In the process of practicing these etudes, a student should play with firm fingertips and a loose shoulder, arm and wrist. Practicing in a slow tempo is highly recommended for students because it is the best way to check for a relaxed shoulder, arm and

²Robert Wallace, *A Century of Music-Making* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 15.

³Sergei Rachmaninoff, "Essentials of Artistic Playing," in *Great Pianists on Piano Playing*, ed. James Francis Cooke (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser Co., 1913), 209.

⁴Josef Lhevinne, *Basic Principles in Piano Playing*, with a new forward by Rosina Lhevinne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), v.

⁵Bian Meng is a piano professor at the CCOM. She obtained a Ph. D. and D. M. A. in music from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia.

wrist. Also, by practicing slowly, a student can feel weight transferring into each finger.

Russian etudes by composers such as Rachmaninoff and Scriabin are also added to the students' exercise list. It is believed that practicing Rachmaninoff and Scriabin etudes not only enhances one's technical ability but also forces one to practice transferring weight among the fingers. This weight-transference principle was one of the most significant features of early twentieth century Russian teaching.

The Russian teachers visiting the CCOM considered tone production to be one of the most important elements in piano playing. The transfer of arm weight to the fingers with a flexible wrist was the most important technique emphasized by the Russian teaching system. As well, the Russian pianists believed that a beautiful singing tone could be generated by imagining a specific tone quality before producing it. They advocated using arm weight, so that the weight of the whole arm goes into the keys to produce longer vibrations of sound. Students were taught to relax their arms, hands, and wrists while they played. During the 1950s, this idea was brand new and very helpful to Chinese pianists. Before the arrival of Taturian and Kravchenko, Chinese pianism still relied on the old European teaching method that involved playing with the fingers without any motion of the wrists and arms.⁶ The only way that Chinese teachers were trained to practice was with high fingers. Under the circumstances, Chinese pianists could only play small pieces because their shoulders, arms, and wrists were very tight. This led to exhaustion of the hands when they performed. Touch and tone color were not considered to be important aspects of piano performance.

The emphasis on tone in Russian piano playing is well documented. For example, in *The Art of Piano Playing*, Heinrich Neuhaus stated:

⁶Bian Meng, *The Formation and the Development of Piano Culture in China* (China: Yuehua Press, 1996), 38.

Music is a tonal art. It produces no visual image; it does not speak with words or ideas. It speaks only with sounds. ...Since music is a tonal art, the most important task, the primary duty of any performer is to work on tone.⁷

Josef Lhevinne explained that every piano student who aspires to acquire a beautiful tone must first have “a mental concept of what a beautiful tone is.”⁸ Lhevinne also acknowledged that touch is a very individual business, but a beautiful sound can be acquired through hard work.⁹

Like other Russian pianists, Taturian emphasized the importance of a singing tone in piano playing. He taught Chinese pianists to imagine a sound before actually playing and to apply their natural arm weight to obtain a singing tone. Chinese pianists realized that their arms had been too stiff and too tight to produce a good sound. The study of Russian music enhanced their sense of tone and technical ability. Their arms and wrists became fully flexible when they played. The highlight of Taturian’s teaching was that he did not use a sophisticated philosophy to guide the students; instead, he inspired students to make use of their own imaginations to explore beautiful sounds. Kravchenko also emphasized the importance of tone production and transference of weight, but she preferred to demonstrate more than Taturian did in the students’ lessons.

A beautiful singing tone was not the only subject that the Russian teachers emphasized. They stressed voicing, balance, virtuosity and understanding of structure.¹⁰ Classical and Romantic works were also emphasized in their teaching. Chinese students mainly worked on repertoire rather than basic technical exercises because most of them already had a strong facility. Another requirement of the two Russian teachers was that every student must play by memory at their lessons.

⁷Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, trans. K. A. Leibovitch (London: Kahn & Averill, 1993), 54.

⁸Josef Lhevinne, *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*, 17.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Zhou Guangren, interview by author.

Taturian and Kravchenko's lessons were open to all faculty members and students at the CCOM. According to Zhou, almost all the teachers and students attended these master classes in order to benefit from their teaching. Taturian usually demonstrated only a few notes from a piece, because he thought once students understood the principal touch required to create a certain note, they could apply the same principle to other places in the same piece. According to Zhou, both Russian teachers not only taught Chinese pianists how to play with a beautiful singing tone, but also inspired them to create their own concept of touch. The Chinese pianists noted in particular that Taturian and Kravchenko had helped them improve greatly in both touch and general performance skills.

From 1955 to 1960, the Russian piano teachers not only brought new ideas to Chinese conservatories, but they also raised the performance standards. Within two years, the Chinese pianists at the CCOM trained by Taturian and Kravchenko reached the highest performance level that they had ever achieved. Until 1950, no Chinese pianists had participated in international piano competitions. After training with Taturian and Kravchenko, many Chinese pianists began winning prizes in different competitions. See **Table 1** for a list of winners who studied with the two Russian teachers at the CCOM.

All Russian pianists were ordered to return to Russia in 1960 after China and Russia became political enemies. However, Russian teaching philosophies were already rooted and continued to influence the piano teaching at the CCOM. Although the pianism at the CCOM has been significantly influenced by the Russian ideas of tone production and musical artistry, there is still a greater emphasis on technical skill at the CCOM. Today, the CCOM has some of the best piano teachers in China, and their teaching philosophies are inseparable from their earlier training under Russian teachers.

Table 1. List of Prize Winners from 1951 to 1962

Year	Prize Winners	Competitions and Prizes
1951	Zhou Guangren	World's Youth & Friendship Festival Piano Competition; Vienna, Austria; 3 rd prize
1956	Zhou Guangren	Internationaler Robert Schumann Wettbewerb; Zwickau, Germany; 8 th prize
1956	Liu Shikun	International Music Competition Budapest-Ferenc Liszt Piano Competition; Budapest, Hungary; 3 rd prize and special Hungarian Rhapsody prize
1958	Liu Shikun	International Tchaikovsky Competition; Moscow, Russia; 2 nd prize
1959	Yin Chengzong	World's Youth & Friendship Festival Piano Competition; Vienna, Austria; 1 st prize
1960	Li Mingqiang	International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition; Warsaw, Poland; 4 th prize
1962	Yin Chengzong	International Tchaikovsky Competition; Moscow, Russia; 2 nd prize

Chapter 3

Profiles of Professors Zhou, Li and Yang and Other Piano Faculty Members at the CCOM

Professor Zhou Guangren

Professor Zhou Guangren is a well-known pianist, teacher and educator in China. As a former chairperson of the piano department at the CCOM, Zhou has been an influential musician in China and abroad. Zhou has performed frequently in China and other countries including Germany, England and the United States, and she was the first Chinese pianist to win prizes in international piano competitions. To reward her for years of extraordinary teaching at the CCOM, the Chinese government named her a Full Professor, the highest rank of professorship in China. In the 1980s, she was the second Chinese scholar invited by the Edgar Snow Professorship Foundation, based at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, to give lecture-recitals on Chinese piano music at 29 universities. Zhou received an honorary doctorate from UMKC based on her excellent lectures and outstanding performances there. Zhou's distinguished career has made her a legendary figure in the fields of piano performance and music education in China.

Zhou was born in Hanover, Germany in 1928 to Chinese parents. When she was four, her family returned to Shanghai. Her father, who held a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering, enrolled her in a German school in Shanghai. During a recent interview at her home in Beijing, Zhou said that her interest in music originated with her music lessons in elementary school. At the age of eight, she asked her parents for piano lessons but her father did not consider music a suitable career for his daughter. In order to persuade her father to buy her a piano, she promised her parents she would succeed in other school subjects.

Zhou had several talented piano teachers during her youth. Her first teacher was Qian Qi, who taught her basic piano playing concepts. At the age of ten, Zhou entered Ding Shande's private music school in Shanghai and studied there with Ding for several years. Ding Shande (1911-1995) established the first private music school in China and trained many Chinese pianists. While studying with Ding, Zhou also took some lessons from Yang Jieren for half a year. According to Zhou, she learned the most valuable concepts of piano pedagogy and new ideas about piano performance from Yang. During the 1940s, neither an advanced piano teaching system nor appropriate teaching materials were available in China. Because Yang had graduated from Michigan State University with a major in music education, her teaching was more logical and progressive compared to other Chinese teachers of that particular period.¹

When Zhou was sixteen she studied with an Italian piano teacher, Mario Paci, whose own teacher had been a pupil of Liszt. In 1904, Paci was the first pianist to give a public piano recital in China. Paci also helped organize the first Chinese orchestra in Shanghai and served as the conductor of the orchestra for over ten years.² He taught many Chinese pianists including Zhou Guangren, Zhu Gongyi and the famous Fu Tsong.³ In her forty lessons with Paci, Zhou received strict technical training and practiced more finger exercises than she had before. Paci emphasized independence of the fingers and firmness of the fingertips. The hand position taught by Paci was slightly tilted to the inside of the hand with the fifth finger nearly perpendicular to the key. He did not allow students to move their wrists when playing. As Fu Tsong recalled, Paci always put a coin on the back of Fu's hand while Fu was playing. If the coin dropped, Paci

¹Zhou explained that piano pedagogy did not exist in China in the 1930s. Teachers, including Ding Shande, did not adhere to formal methods of piano teaching. The level of teaching was very low, Zhou said, compared to the current international teaching methods used today.

²Bian Meng, *Formation and Development of Piano Culture in China* (China: Yuehua Press, 1996), 10.

³Fu Tsong, born in China, now resides in London, England. He won third prize in the World Youth Peace Festival in Berlin in 1953 and the third prize and special *Mazurka* prize in the fifth International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition in 1955. He was one of the Chinese students sent by the Chinese government in the 1950s to study with Zbigniew Drzewiecki. Fu has been a visiting professor at the CCOM since the 1980s.

would hit Fu's hand and order him to repeat the same procedure.⁴ In order to improve Zhou's technique, Paci assigned her many finger exercises including his own five-finger exercises, as well as scales and arpeggios. In addition, Zhou was assigned preludes and fugues by J. S. Bach, sonatas by D. Scarlatti, studies by Clementi and Cramer, sonatas by Mozart, selected works from Grieg's *Lyric Pieces* and Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* to enhance her performance abilities. Every week Zhou was asked to play two studies by Cramer in a moderate tempo with firm fingertips in a *forte* dynamic. She also played previously learned Cramer studies *presto* with varying dynamics. Although Zhou was required to prepare several pieces for each lesson, she made herself practice 60 exercises by Cramer every day as a routine finger exercise. Within one year, Zhou's skills improved tremendously under Paci's guidance. In fact, the pedagogical concepts introduced by Paci, such as independence of fingers and firmness of the fingertips, have been widely adopted by Chinese pianists in teaching and performing. At every lesson, Paci was extremely strict with Zhou and set very high standards for her in all areas from basic technique to musical understanding.

After Paci's death in 1945, Zhou studied with Alfred Marcus in Shanghai for a short period of time (1946-47). Marcus also emphasized finger exercises and allowed Zhou to continue practicing what Paci had taught her. However, contrary to Paci's teaching philosophy, Marcus did not favor the use of high fingers. Zhou learned from Marcus how to play a piece in an appropriate musical style and she began to understand that different musical styles correspond to the different historical periods. Marcus pushed Zhou to perform frequently in all kinds of concerts. For example, in 1947, Zhou had the opportunity to perform weekly with the Chamber

⁴Bian Meng, *Formation and Development of Piano Culture in China*, 10.

Music Group in Shanghai.⁵ Her performance skills and sight-reading abilities improved significantly after playing a series of concerts. In Zhou's own words: "I did not realize that there was so much to learn and work on in musical style until I played chamber music."⁶ Because of the tight performance schedule, Zhou had to perform with the group without rehearsals.

After Marcus left China, Zhou studied with Bela Belai for two years. According to Zhou, Belai was one of Liszt's students in Hungary.⁷ Belai was a blind musician who had an especially deep understanding of works by Romantic composers such as Chopin and Liszt. In two years, Belai changed Zhou's concept of piano playing. He taught Zhou how to play with relaxed arms, free wrists and loose shoulders. He also emphasized exercises consisting of double-notes (major thirds, major sixths, and octaves), all of which involved the relaxation of the wrists and arms. Zhou was assigned some Classical pieces, many Romantic pieces by Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, and Richard Strauss, and some works by Debussy and Ravel. In order to help Zhou improve her octaves, Belai asked her to practice excerpts featuring octave passages from Liszt's works such as the *Rigoletto*, *Paraphrase de concert*, the Piano Concerto in E-flat Major and some concert etudes. Through her studies with Belai, Zhou expanded her repertoire and greatly developed her technical capabilities.

From 1948 to 1955, Zhou continued to perform frequently as a soloist in Shanghai. In 1948, when she was nineteen years old, she played Mozart's Piano Concerto in D Minor, K.466, with the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. The performance was such a success that she began to attract the attention of critics from both inside and outside of China. At the beginning of 1949,

⁵Alfred Marcus was the member of the Chamber Music Group in Shanghai. All the members came from foreign countries, mostly from Russia. The group's original performances were at small family concerts that gradually gained popularity in Shanghai. Upon Marcus's departure from Shanghai in 1947, he passed his position to Zhou Guangren.

⁶Zhou Guangren, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.

⁷Ibid.

Zhou gave a solo recital in Shanghai. She performed the four Chopin *Ballades* and the *Impromptus*, Op. 90 by Schubert. The critics were so complimentary that the public began to notice this young female pianist.

Shortly after Zhou's solo recital, the Communist Party founded the People's Republic of China in October 1949. At this time, Zhou was presented with an opportunity to go to France to further her career as a pianist, and so faced the difficult decision of whether or not to stay in China. Many Chinese pianists who studied abroad in the 1940s did not return to China. China was in need of talented pianists like Zhou to support the Socialist cause, and the dean of the Shanghai Conservatory tried to persuade Zhou to stay in China. Zhou finally decided to stay, and she admitted that: "Without the help from my mother country, I would never have achieved this kind of success as a musician in China."⁸

From 1950 to 1955, Zhou performed as a soloist with the Central Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing which was, and still is, the best orchestra in China. Zhou studied with both of the Russian pianists who were invited to teach at the CCOM (mostly with Taturian), from 1955 to 1957. Through the recommendation of Taturian, Zhou became a member of the piano faculty of the CCOM in 1955.

As previously discussed, the Russians who taught at the CCOM stressed loose and flexible movement in playing. In an effort to eliminate stiffness in her playing, Zhou was assigned *Three Concert Etudes* (*Il lamento*, *La leggerezza*, *Un sospiro*) and *Two Concert Etudes* (*Waldesrauschen*, *Gnomensreigen*) of Liszt and the *Etudes-Tableaux*, Op. 33 of Rachmaninoff. By studying these works, Zhou (and her contemporaries) learned the importance of playing with an emphasis on arm weight and the transfer of weight to the fingertips. Zhou further realized that she was able to play in a more natural and comfortable way than before. The revolutionary

⁸Ibid.

emphasis on tone enhanced Zhou's understanding of beautiful sound and consequently it became a very important element in her own teaching.

Six years later, the Cultural Revolution began. Chinese musicians suffered both mentally and physically during the ten-year period. All the teachers at the CCOM were sent to the countryside and taught Maoist propaganda by local governments. In those chaotic years, one was not allowed to practice on Western instruments or sing Western songs.

During the Cultural Revolution, Zhou was forced to leave Beijing for the countryside where she performed menial labor for ten years (1966-1976). Not only did she cook three meals a day for over fifty people, she also participated in many kinds of fieldwork such as erecting fences, tilling the ground, etc. The second finger of her left hand was permanently damaged due to the excessive use of her hands. Throughout her musical career, Zhou's successes have been accompanied by many personal crises. In 1982, she broke the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers of her right hand when helping move a piano.⁹ Later, in 1993, Zhou suddenly lost hearing in her right ear. She overcame all these difficulties and taught herself to perform with unique fingerings and a sensitive ear.¹⁰

During the last two decades, Zhou has remained active as a pianist, performing in many countries. Zhou gave a concert tour in China in 1980 and was invited to perform with the German Dresden Philharmonic in Berlin in 1989. In the summer of 1995, she performed the Mozart Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488 in London with the Britten-Pears Orchestra. In the

⁹On the afternoon of May 14th, 1982, while preparing to perform for some foreign guests, Professor Zhou volunteered to help move a grand piano. One of the piano legs suddenly broke and the piano collapsed on the floor, crushing her right hand. The 4th finger was broken and the middle and little fingers were crushed. She was rushed to a hospital and received an experimental operation on her hand. Under the normal hospital procedures, all three fingers would have been amputated. But upon learning that Zhou was a pianist, the doctor decided to operate instead. The operation was successful. The tip of the broken 4th finger was used to reconstruct the middle and last fingers.

¹⁰Due to the shortness of the 4th finger, Zhou re-fingers every single piece in order to avoid contact with her 4th finger.

1990s, Zhou gave lectures in Mannheim, Hanover and London and frequently gave master classes in China and Hong Kong. Since 1980, Zhou has been invited several times to serve on the jury of international piano competitions, including the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, the Leeds International Piano Competition, the *Concours International de M. Long-J. Thibaud*, the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition, and the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition. In 1994 and 1999, Zhou served as the Chairman of the Jury in the first and second China International Piano Competitions in Beijing. Zhou is also very active in the fields of music education for children and piano education for adults. She has established two children's piano schools in Beijing, and many of the students have been admitted to the Pre-College of the CCOM after training in Zhou's piano schools. Zhou also serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the Chinese piano magazine, *Piano Artistry*. Her extraordinary contributions to China's piano education earned her the May-First Labor Medal in 1994 and the Baogang Excellent Teacher's Prize in 1998. In 2000, she received the Full Professor Award, the highest award bestowed by the Chinese government to college professors.

In summing up her career thus far, Zhou said:

I was lucky enough to have different teachers at different times when I needed the guidance. In the past 50 years, I've learned a lot from many great teachers, which helped create my own teaching philosophies. I've formed my own methods of teaching by combining what I learned from my teachers with my own experiences. Every teaching method has its own characteristics; so does every teacher. So you have to be smart enough to learn what is right for you. Sometimes I have doubts and different thoughts, but I have overcome many difficulties and survived. For example, the use of high fingers, the tightness of arms, the stiffness of wrists, etc., were the problems I encountered. I did not play with the better methods until the Russian teachers arrived. Their teaching was very inspiring and influential to us. They set examples of good piano teaching.

From my experiences, I have established my own ways to help a student solve a particular problem.¹¹

Professor Li Qifang

Several other piano teachers at the CCOM also studied with foreign teachers. Professor Li Qifang is a “very important teacher at the CCOM”, says professor Yang Jun of the CCOM.¹² Her unique personality is reflected in her teaching and logic. Most of her students at the CCOM are very talented and equipped with good technique and have strict self-discipline. Li is famous for being very critical of her students’ performing abilities. Li’s students are sometimes discouraged by her comments and seem to hate her as much as they love her. She believes that if a student does not possess a strong knowledge of fundamentals by the age of 15 or 17, he/she will never become a great pianist.

In 1956, when Li was 17 years old, she graduated from the Shanghai Music School, where she had studied with the pianist Fan Dalei since the age of 12.¹³ Fan was known to be a very musical pianist and his father Fan Jisen was a well-known pianist in the 1940s in Shanghai. According to Li, Fan’s teaching method was different from other teachers of that period. He liked to discuss music with students rather than merely train their fingers. Fan was so careful about fingerings that he put finger numbers over every single sixteenth note. Li is proud of her good fingering because she believes that fingering shows the worth of logical thought. While Li was a student of Fan, she practiced Czerny’s *Art of Finger Dexterity* Op.740 to improve her

¹¹Zhou Guangren, interview by author.

¹²Yang Jun, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.

¹³Today, it is called the Pre-College of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

technique. Works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin were also added to her practice list. Li said that Fan was a great pianist and that he helped her pursue her career as a pianist.¹⁴

From 1953 to 1960, the Chinese government selected the best Chinese students to study in Russia and Eastern Europe. Li was the only student selected in 1956, and she left China immediately after her graduation from the Shanghai Music School. From 1956 to 1959, she studied with Zbigniew Drzewiecki (1890-1971), a Polish pianist teaching at the Warsaw Conservatory. For some reason, Li was made to study with harpsichordist Emma Altberg before she took lessons with Drzewiecki.¹⁵ According to Li, Altberg was an excellent harpsichordist who specialized in Couperin's music. Li received the necessary technical training and learned to practice very slowly for the first time. Altberg instructed Li to play with a slightly detached touch and to feel the independence of each finger. She also taught Li to play with a more curved hand position, which Li did not retain because she never considered it important to a pianist. In fact, Li instructs her students to play with a comfortable hand position. In her opinion, producing good tone is much more important than hand position at the keyboard.

Drzewiecki had studied in Vienna with an assistant to Theodor Leschetizky, and with Ignaz Paderewski, a pupil of Leschetizky's. Many great pianists in the first quarter of the twentieth century were pupils of Leschetizky, including Artur Schnabel, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Ignaz Friedman, Benno Moiseiwitsch and Mieczyslaw Horszowski.¹⁶ Formerly a student of Czerny, Leschetizky founded the great "relaxation" school of piano playing in the 1900s, which

¹⁴Li did not want to discuss the details of Fan Dalei's teaching method during our interview.

¹⁵In our interview, Li did not explain this situation.

¹⁶Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, revised and updated (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), 291.

formed the basis of almost every pianist's technique during that period.¹⁷ In his book, *Wave As You Pass*, Harry Lee Neal described Leschetizky's teaching philosophy:

...Theodor Leschetizky made his entrance, with an approach to teaching which completely revolutionized piano playing. His idea was as revolutionary as Dr. Read's present-day theory of natural childbirth, and quite similar to it in principle. He believed that most of the harmful effects from physical effort are caused when a necessary working muscle finds itself confronted and frustrated by another muscle pulling in opposition to it. In other words, if you tense your entire arm or body, the muscles you need to use have to overcome the resistance of all the other needlessly tensed muscles before they can accomplish the task at hand, whether it is striking a piano keyboard or giving birth to a child.¹⁸

Although Drzewiecki began his piano lessons in Poland with his father, he adhered to the Russian piano performance and teaching traditions. In 1919, he became a professor of piano at the Warsaw Conservatory. He was also the chairman of the board of the F. Chopin Institute and Society from 1957 to 1965.¹⁹ According to Li, Drzewiecki was the Chairman of the International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, and also a good friend of Arthur Rubinstein. Relaxation of the arm and body and production of tone were very important in Drzewiecki's teaching. Like many other of Leschetizky's students, he concentrated on the Romantic repertoire, especially the works of Chopin. Harold Schonberg stated that, "They (students of Leschetizky) specialized in the literature from Beethoven on, seldom playing Mozart or Schubert. They played Bach transcriptions by Liszt, Tausig or d'Albert instead of the originals. Moreover, they were the models of the big line, the grand effect and the tempo rubato."²⁰ Drzewiecki assigned Li almost the entire Chopin repertoire plus other romantic works by Brahms, Schubert, Schumann and Rachmaninoff.

¹⁷Neal, Harry Lee, *Wave As You Pass* (Paris: Manorhouse Press, 1966), 74.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Oscar Thompson, ed, *The International Cyclopedia of Musicians and Music*, Updated Eleventh Edition, (New York: Dodd, Mead, c1985), 597.

²⁰Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 291.

According to Li, Drzewiecki's teaching style was simple, yet elegant. He believed that tone and musicianship were the most important aspects of pianism. Drzewiecki's teaching was very detailed. For example, he required Li to use a different touch in nearly every measure, sometimes even on every note. He also marked his extensive phrasing and pedaling instructions in the score. Li finds Drzewiecki's teaching methods very useful and uses them with her own students, occasionally being even more demanding than her teacher.²¹ Like other great teachers of the time, Drzewiecki had an assistant to help him with his students while he was performing around the world. He considered working on fundamental technique with his students to be a waste of time. Drzewiecki only accepted the best pianists already possessing a bravura technique and fine musical sensibilities. When students walked into Drzewiecki's studio, they had to imagine themselves to be a pianist ready to perform a concert. A so-called private lesson was treated more as a master class in Drzewiecki's studio. A group of students attended each lesson and Drzewiecki chose one student to play for the rest. Each student was required to give his or her opinion on the performance afterwards. Li was very proud that after she played Chopin's Etude in A Minor Op. 25, No. 11 in a lesson, Drzewiecki's compliment was "what a virtuosic performance!" Drzewiecki selected Li to play at almost every lesson because he knew she was always well prepared.²²

In the three years she studied with him, the most important concept Li learned from Drzewiecki was to transfer her arm weight to the fingers with relaxed arms, and shoulders and flexible wrists. This method was derived from the Russian teaching system previously mentioned. He told Li to listen carefully to herself and think about the proper touch needed for

²¹Some of her students complained that they often got lost at the end of the lesson, wondering what to do and how to play for the next lesson. Li has the power to make her students 'suffer' in and out of their lessons.

²²Li told me during her interview that she practiced 6-8 hours a day when she studied with Drzewiecki in Warsaw.

each note. Moreover, he particularly asked Li to play with flatter fingertips in Chopin's works in order to produce a beautiful sound. He emphasized that one should employ a natural hand position when playing, with flexible joints avoiding mechanical movements, in addition to concentrating on every aspect of physicality. Technical drill was not the main thrust of Drzewiecki's teaching when he worked with Li. She was very impressed by Drzewiecki's artistic approach in his teaching. After thirty years, her teaching, to a large extent, is still influenced by Drzewiecki. She encourages her students to attend other students' piano lessons as often as possible. In her opinion, attending other students' lessons not only reinforces what a student has learned from his or her own lesson, but also enables a student to hear different points of view.

Li has spent most of her time teaching and has not given many public concerts in the last fifteen years. In her earlier career, Li won the 2nd prize at the 8th Annual World Peace Festival in Berlin in 1962, and in 1964 won the 6th prize at the 3rd Annual Georges Enesco International Piano Competition. She was invited to teach in America for one year in 1986. She has also been selected as a juror for several international piano competitions held in Switzerland, Japan, and other countries. Li's students have won prizes in various piano competitions including the *Concours International M. Long-J. Thibaud*, Montreal International Music Competition, Robert Casadesus International Piano Competition, and the Chinese Youth Piano Competition.²³ "I have given all my time to my students; for that I have no regrets," said Li. The teacher-student relationship in her studio is complicated. Her students love her as a good friend but are afraid of

²³Dan-Wen Wei, a well-known Chinese pianist, was a student of Professor Li at the CCOM before he came to the United States in 1984. He won several prizes at the competitions mentioned above. Wei studied with Martin Canin at the Juilliard School and also studied with Vladimir Horowitz. He became one of Horowitz's favorite students. Today, Mr. Wei resides in New York with his wife. When Wei was at the CCOM, he was considered one of the most talented students. When I saw him again in his New York home in 1993, he said he was lucky to study with Li when he was a student at the CCOM. He told me that Li is a very smart teacher who knows how to challenge students as well as guide them.

her as a teacher in their lessons. It is not unusual to hear that Li's students leave her studio in tears or cry during their lessons because of the harsh treatment they receive. But she also treats her students like her own children in real life. Li always invites her students to her home and feeds them the best food. Students have even lived in her home at no cost while preparing for competitions and recitals.

Professor Yang Jun

Yang Jun, the former chairman of the piano department at the CCOM, was a student of Mr. Zhu Gongyi (1922-1985), a legendary Chinese piano teacher and significant figure in Chinese musical education history. Yang was admitted to the Pre-College of the CCOM when he was 13 years old, despite little previous background in music.²⁴ His first piano teacher at the CCOM was Zheng Liqin, who has taught in the Pre-College of the CCOM for almost thirty years. Yang learned about solid finger training and other basic concepts of piano playing from Zheng. "I made so much progress in the first three years under the instruction of Professor Zheng. I played better than some students who had received training before they entered the school. She gave me the encouragement to continue to play the piano."²⁵ Because of Yang's remarkable progress, the dean of the Pre-College of the CCOM transferred him to Zhu Gongyi's studio when he was sixteen. Studying with Zhu was a big honor at that time because it indicated the high level of a student's talent. Zhu only taught advanced pianists at the college level at the CCOM, so Yang had to work extremely hard to reach a higher level while he was still a Pre-

²⁴According to Yang, he knew nothing about piano performance and did not even know how to read music before he was admitted to the CCOM. Every student must take piano lessons after they are admitted to the CCOM, and the faculty decides a student's major after their first year. Yang was instructed to major in piano performance.

²⁵Su Lanshen, "Interview with Yang Jun," *Piano Artistry*, February 1999, 4.

College student. This transition was a milestone in Yang's life and was important to his subsequent achievements.

Like Zhou Guangren, Zhu had also been a student of Paci, although he graduated from Shanghai University with a major in English Literature. Yang said of Zhu Gongyi: "It was always so much fun to have a lesson with Mr. Zhu. He was very knowledgeable about art and literature and often shared his knowledge with his students. I learned not only how to perform but also how to understand other arts."²⁶ This was a feature of Zhu's teaching. According to Zhu, artistry is as important as technical display; these two elements should never be separated in teaching. According to Bian, Zhu rarely demonstrated while teaching; instead, he gave facts about the ideas of the composer, the period, the genre, the content of the music, and artistic concepts in the lesson. Zhu believed it was important to develop students' thought and imagination. A pianist's hand position, movement, and performance method would be specific to the individual because each one is different in every aspect. Moreover, Zhu encouraged his students to take courses in subjects such as art, literature, the humanities and the natural sciences in order to expand their knowledge beyond piano performance. As to technical training, Zhu believed that a student must start at a young age to receive a solid training in basic technique. He was against any kind of pure technical training and discouraged students from practicing too long. Zhu was especially against practicing without musical expression. As Leschetizky said, "No one can practice for seven, eight hours a day without being mechanical, and that's just what I'm not interested in."²⁷ Zhu also stressed the importance of sound to a student's performance. He would show a painter's palette to his students to illustrate the variety of tone color.²⁸

²⁶Yang Jun, interview by author.

²⁷Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 297.

²⁸Bian Meng, *The Formation and Development of Piano Culture in China*, 111.

Yang also mentions that the structure of a piece and the balance of sound were also important subjects covered in Zhu's lessons. In Zhu's opinion, the piano produces not only a unified sound but also a fully varied sound, like an orchestra. Yang remembered that when he recorded Beethoven's Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57 (*"Appassionata"*), Zhu was present in the recording booth listening to his performance. Because Zhu had strong opinions about this work, he coached Yang, during the recording session, on an artistic approach employing the right fingering, proper pedaling, different touches and variety of expression. Yang mentioned this experience in his interview with Su: "Mr. Zhu was very detailed with this piece because he knew it very well. Zhu was a great pianist who emphasized artistic style over technical display in performance."²⁹

Zhu always emphasized the production of a singing tone at the piano. In order to help students play long phrases and smooth lines, he suggested that all his students listen to operas as often as they could and pay attention to the breathing of the singers. As Yang recalled, Zhu told him that it took great effort for a vocalist to sing a high pitch but it took almost no effort for a pianist to play the highest note on the piano. If a pianist can play the climax of a phrase with the same amount of effort used by a vocalist in singing a high pitch, the quality of sound will be completely different.

In 1984, Yang went to the Sydney Conservatory in Australia as a visiting scholar, to study with the Russian pianist Igor Hemanisky. In his two years there, Yang presented over 10 solo recitals in several major cities, including live performances at the Sydney Opera House and on ABC Radio. Yang also studied chamber music and performed with some of Australia's best string players.

²⁹Su Lanshen, *Piano Artistry*, 7.

According to Yang, Hemanisky was born to a musical family. His father was a famous conductor and pianist in Russia and the family moved to Australia during World War II. Yang describes his personal observations about Igor Hemanisky's teaching style:

Igor Hemanisky believed that the balance and the structure of a piece was the most important issue. Good balance in performance includes sound, phrasing, and voicing. It was interesting that Hemanisky was once a pilot in his country so he used the concept of balance in operating an aircraft as an example to emphasize the importance of balance in piano performance.³⁰

Hemanisky's teaching was typical Russian piano teaching method. Yang was grateful that he had the chance to study Russian piano works by Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Tchaikovsky. Yang learned several of the *Preludes* Op. 32, the Piano Concerto in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1 and the Piano Concerto in C Minor, Op. 18 by Rachmaninoff; piano sonatas by Scriabin; and the Piano Concerto in B-flat Minor, Op. 23 by Tchaikovsky. Yang acknowledges that Hemanisky helped him become more knowledgeable about Russian pianism and repertoire.

Yang remains an active pianist in China, giving solo and chamber music recitals at the CCOM and around the country. He has also been invited to be a juror at several international piano competitions in China and throughout the world. Some of Yang's students, as well, have won prizes in both international and Chinese piano competitions.

Other Faculty Members

The piano department of the CCOM has several other faculty members. In the most recent decade, the piano department has attracted a few pianists of the younger generation to join its faculty. Most of these faculty members obtained doctoral and master's degrees from foreign countries such as the United States and Russia. Their arrival has invigorated piano teaching at the CCOM with new ideas and knowledge from other countries. This has not only helped

³⁰Yang Jun, interview by author.

CCOM to maintain its leadership status in piano education in China, but also shortened the distance in the field of piano education between the CCOM and other leading countries. The following are brief profiles of other faculty members at the CCOM.³¹

Xie Huazhen, a professor at the CCOM, graduated with a bachelor's degree from the piano department of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1963. After her graduation, Xie worked as a soloist and accompanist for the Central Opera House, Central Ballet Troupe, and Chinese Opera House in Beijing. She has performed on both national and international stages and her performances have been well received by critics and audiences. In 1981, Xie came to the United States to pursue further education. In 1984 she was awarded the Music Artist title and a master's degree from Eastern Illinois University. Xie returned to China and began teaching at the CCOM in 1984. Since then, she has trained many students, several of whom are working as teachers in different music schools, institutes or conservatories throughout China. Some of her students have represented China in international piano competitions. Xie also serves as a juror at national and international piano competitions, and she is now a member of the Chinese Piano (Amateur) Performance Grading Examination Committee.

Yang Ming is a professor at the CCOM and chair of the piano department. Yang obtained a bachelor's degree from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a master's degree from the CCOM. He also studied as a scholarship student at the Cleveland Institute of Music for six months. Yang was born into a musical family and showed talent at a very young age. He won his first piano competition prize at age 6. In 1980, he won the second prize in the "The Spring of Shanghai" National Piano Competition and received the first prize in four selective trials for international competitions. Yang has performed with the Central Philharmonic Orchestra, China Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra and Beijing Symphony Orchestra, and has played chamber

³¹The information about other faculty members is provided by the piano department of the CCOM.

music with musicians from western countries. He has been invited to perform and give lectures at many music schools in the United States, including the University of Southern California. Yang was a judge at the second China International Piano Competition, as well as the vice-chairman of the second Piano Competition of Chinese Composition in Hong Kong.

Pan Chun is an associate professor at the CCOM. Pan started his piano lessons at age 4, entered the CCOM's primary school at age 8, and graduated from the CCOM's middle school at age 16. He studied with Zhu Gongyi and Yang Jun and received guidance from foreign pianists such as Paul Badura-Skoda and Fu Tsong during their visits to China. When he was 17 years old, Pan was selected by the Chinese government to study at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. He studied with L.S. Dorensky and O.I. Ivanov and eight years later obtained a doctoral degree in piano performance. After Pan returned to China in 1996, he gave a series of concerts in Beijing, Shanghai and Xining and received favorable reviews; in the same year he became a faculty member at the CCOM. In recent years, Pan has performed at the Beijing Music Hall, the Twentieth Century Theater and in concert halls at several universities.

Bian Meng is a professor at the CCOM. Bian started studying piano with her father at a young age. From 1978 - 1989, she studied at the middle school of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and later in its undergraduate and graduate programs. During this period, Bian won prizes in several national and international piano competitions. In 1990, she was sent by the Chinese government to study at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia. She obtained her Ph.D. in art in 1994 and her D. M. A. in 1995 from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia. Bian joined the CCOM in 1995. Since then, she has performed frequently in and out of China with repertoire that includes music of various styles from the Baroque period to the contemporary. Bian has also published several books and journal articles.

Du Taihang was born into a musical family and started studying piano at age 6. He entered the CCOM's primary school in 1978 and its middle school in 1980. In 1984, he won the third prize in the Chinese national piano trials and represented China in the Tokyo International Competition in Japan. In 1985, Du entered the CCOM's undergraduate program and studied with Li Qifang. In 1991 he went to the Zurich Conservatory of Music and studied with pianist Homero Francesch. One year later, he won the first prize in two Swiss national piano competitions. From 1993 – 1997, Du studied in Germany and Switzerland, where his teachers included Victor Merzhanov, Karl-Heinz Kaemmerling and Anatol Ugorski. Du won the second prize and new composition award at the 1994 International Piano Competition in Scheveningen, Netherlands, and a special prize at the 1997 Geza Anda International Piano Competition in Zurich, Switzerland. In Europe, Du performed over 300 concerts, including concerti, solos and duets. He appeared in several famous music halls such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Holland, and the Tonhalle in Zurich, Switzerland, and performed with famous symphony orchestras in Europe such as the Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich.

Zhang Shigu graduated from the piano department of the CCOM; he came to the United States and was awarded a master's degree in music from the University of Massachusetts in 1988, and a master's degree in music education from Western Kentucky University in 1989. Zhang was granted his D. M. A. degree from the University of Arizona in 1993. During his studies in the United States, Zhang was the recipient of a P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship for four consecutive years, and he also won the first prize in the University of Arizona Concerto Competition. Zhang returned to the CCOM in 1997 and has taught piano there ever since.

Chapter 4

Teaching Philosophies of Three Professors: Technical and Interpretative Aspects

Professors Zhou, Li and Yang have different pedagogical approaches due to their different teachers, schools and backgrounds. In this chapter, their teaching principles in the areas of technical training and musical interpretation will be discussed. Among the three teachers, Zhou places more emphasis on fundamental technical training, while the other two professors focus more on musical interpretation. This discussion of their teaching methods is based on the period from 1980 to the present.

Professor Zhou's Teaching Methods¹

For each undergraduate student during the first year at the CCOM, Zhou designs a plan to build up the student's fundamental technical skills. In each two-hour lesson, she asks students to perform technique drills for thirty minutes to an hour. Technical training usually starts with five-finger exercises written by Zhou, followed by exercises including scales, double notes, arpeggios, octaves, and chords. Zhou believes that technical problems must be fixed through this basic training and additional studies. She says that one can never expect to fix technical problems by just practicing pieces from the repertoire. Because a single piece usually includes many technical elements, a student should master those elements before playing the piece. Zhou is aware that some students have small hands so she suggests that these students stretch their hands first before practicing. This stretching exercise requires students to use a diminished seventh chord and play one note at a time, lifting each finger as high as possible and feeling the

¹The discussion of Zhou's teaching methods is based on my studies with her at the CCOM as well as my interview with her in 2001.

stretch between each finger. This exercise takes only ten minutes but helps small hands to gain flexibility. According to Zhou, a solid technical foundation is very important to every freshmen student. Therefore, she gives priority to improving students' technique in their first year.

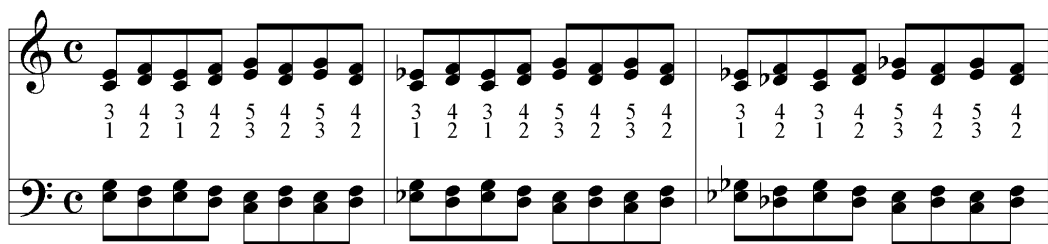
Regarding hand position, Zhou instructs her students to hold the knuckles high and curve the fingers before playing. The hand should be shaped just like a dome with every finger curved. She explains that a hand without strong knuckles and firm finger support is like a house without a roof and foundation. Zhou taps her students' fingers and knuckle joints to test their firmness. However, she suggests using flat fingers in playing melodies in Chopin's music. Zhou does not allow a high wrist because it increases tension in the hand. The wrist should be slightly lower than the knuckles and it should be flexible at all times. In Zhou's opinion, the ideal hand position includes high knuckles, firm fingertips, and a loose wrist. Even though Zhou is strict about these hand positions, she allows flexibility in making changes according to different students' hands. Moreover, for students who have small hands, Zhou instructs them to play successive extended arpeggios with high wrists to allow their wrists to rotate more easily.

Zhou also emphasizes the independence of each finger when students practice scales, double notes, and arpeggios. She assigns many mechanical studies to freshmen students as part of their daily practice. As five-finger exercises (Example 1), students play pentascales in contrary motion in C major and C minor and then modulate to the V7 of C sharp (D-flat) major. The exercise is then continued in different keys ascending chromatically.



Example 1: Five-finger exercise

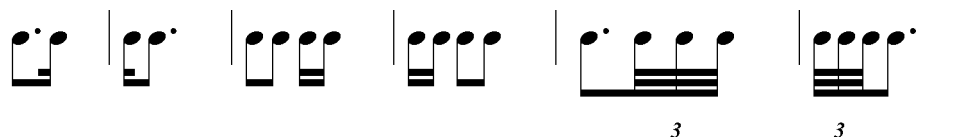
The five-finger exercises also include a double thirds exercise (Example 2) in the same pattern as in the pentascale exercise.



Example 2: Five-finger double-note exercise, attributed to Oscar Beringer.

The double thirds exercise also serves as a preparatory exercise for double-note scales. Students are taught to play five-finger exercises with curved high fingers, firm fingertips, and with weight transferring from the shoulders into the fingertips. Zhou instructs students to practice exercises at an *andante* tempo and to raise and relax each finger immediately after playing. Sometimes, Zhou asks students to play the exercise with low fingers in a faster tempo.

After practicing the five-finger exercises, students are instructed to practice scales in four octaves. Zhou asks her students to play scales with high fingers and loose arms in a slow tempo for the first ten to fifteen minutes, and then gradually increase the tempo and play with lower fingers. In Zhou's words, "Imagine that your fingers are made of steel that can 'penetrate' the keys."² To strengthen the fingers, Zhou asks students to practice scales in the following different rhythmic patterns (Example 3):



Example 3: Rhythmic patterns used in scale practice

²When I studied with Zhou at the CCOM in 1984, she repeated this sentence many times when I played the technical drills in my lessons.

Moreover, first-year students are taught to play all scales, including harmonic and melodic minors, in parallel motion. They also practice major scales in contrary motion a third and sixth apart. The wrist should move horizontally when playing scales in a fast tempo. Zhou advises first-year students to play all the major key scales using C major fingering, instead of other standard fingerings, in order to help them master all the different positions. To Zhou, scale practice to a piano student should be like daily vitamins for the average person. Zhou also advocates the practice of double-note scales for her students, including thirds and sixths. Students are required to practice double-third scales in two octaves with two different fingerings. The first fingering requires a student to use the second and fourth fingers of the right hand, and the third and thumb of the left hand to play the beginning two notes. Then, the first and third fingers of the right hand, and fourth and second fingers of the left hand play the next two notes (Example 4). Students then continue the scale for two octaves with this fingering.



Example 4: First fingering used in the double-third scale

Both hands should tilt to the right while playing the ascending scale and tilt to the left while playing the descending scale. The wrist should rotate and rise slightly when one turns to play the first and third fingers from the second and fourth fingers. Zhou's second fingering uses all five fingers to play both the ascending and descending scales (Example 5).

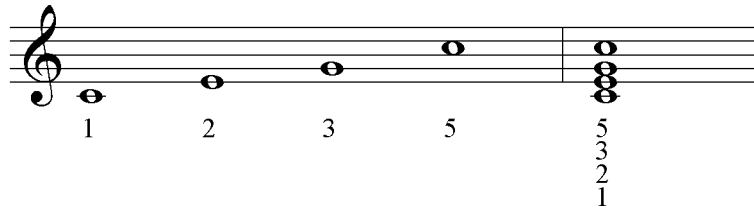


Example 5: Second fingering used in the double-third scale

When practicing double-note scales, students should place their fingers as close to the keys as possible. Zhou indicates that double-note scales should be played *legato* with firm fingertips and a curved hand position, but without high fingers. She also emphasizes evenness, smoothness and clearness in playing thirds. The main point of practicing sixths is to stretch the fingers and loosen the muscles between the fingers. Unlike the curved-finger hand position and firm fingertips used in scale practice, a flatter hand position is used in playing sixths.

Students are also required to practice arpeggios in different rhythmic patterns (refer to example 3). Zhou asks students to practice arpeggios using C major fingerings as well as the original fingerings for all keys. Zhou specifies that in order to play arpeggios evenly and smoothly, the thumb should go under the second finger immediately after the second finger plays E in the C major arpeggio, and then pass under the third finger and be placed on C as soon as the third finger plays G. In playing the arpeggio, the wrist should tilt to the right and there should be no “bumps” while turning the thumb under. High fingers are prohibited in playing arpeggios.

Because students’ hand sizes vary, Zhou adds several different chords to their technique drill, such as the extended positions of major and minor triads and diminished seventh chords (Example 6). This chord exercise serves to stretch and strengthen fingers:

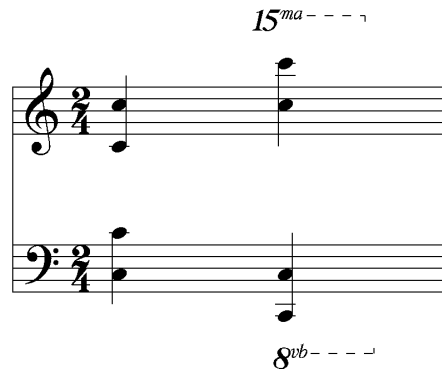


Example 6: Stretching exercise (major only)

In the chord exercise, students should first play one note at a time, and then all four notes together. When playing the four notes together, Zhou instructs students not to open the hand before touching the keys. Moreover, the shoulders, arms and wrists should remain loose while one is holding a chord. Zhou instructs students to play chords with firm fingertips and to transfer weight from the back of the body to the fingers. To illustrate this idea of playing, Zhou asks her students to play while standing up. She explains: “When you play chords while standing, you can easily transfer the power from your back to your fingers to make a full and strong sound.”³ The finger-stretching exercises should always be done slowly in order to help students stretch the ligaments of the hands.

Zhou also believes that octave exercises are important. In her opinion, octaves are difficult to play perfectly, especially with a small hand. Students with small hands must practice octaves in a variety of ways in order to handle them skillfully. The most impressive exercise is to play an octave with both hands starting from the middle C position, leaping to the highest and lowest C in the two opposite directions, then returning to the starting position as fast as possible (Example 7).

³Zhou Guangren, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.



Example 7: Octave exercise

In order to teach her students to play octaves accurately, Zhou asks them to visualize the distance between the leaps, as if there were an eye in each fingertip. Moreover, Zhou requires her students to practice without looking at the keys of the piano. Other octave exercises include repeated octaves, octave scales, and chromatic octaves.⁴

Zhou believes that the study of etudes is essential to the improvement of her students' technique. For the first two years, her students work on several etudes from different books including Czerny's Op. 740, Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Moszkowski's *Etudes*, Op. 72, various etudes by Chopin, Liszt's *Concert Etudes* (*Un Sospiro*, *Waldesrauschen*, *Gnomenreigen*), his F Minor etude from *12 Etudes d'exécution transcendante*, and nos. 2, 3, and 5 from his *Six Paganini Etudes*. Zhou prefers to assign etudes with fast scale passages and perpetual motion by Czerny, Clementi and Moszkowski. For these types of etudes, Zhou wants students to practice with firm fingertips, high fingers and a solid *forte* sound. She instructs students to ignore the dynamics or musical expressions in the score for the first few read-throughs, and then practice with exaggerated dynamics in an *andante* tempo once or twice. Sometimes, one needs to practice in different rhythmic patterns or practice some sections hands

⁴This technical drill was required only in my first two years at the CCOM. In the last two years of my studies with her, Zhou no longer asked me to do the technical drills in lessons. Because of the length of the repertoire that was prepared for each lesson, she asked me to do technique by myself outside of our lessons.

separately for a few days. Then, students need to increase the tempo while practicing these etudes, also using the dynamics specified in the score. When students play in a faster tempo, Zhou stresses smoothness and evenness, and instructs them to lower their wrists slightly and keep their fingers low. Other concert etudes such as Chopin's and Liszt's are more complex; in such cases, Zhou pays more attention to musical expression, structure, phrasing and tone production than to technical training. Some individual sections of these etudes can be practiced in the same way as mentioned above, except dynamics must be observed from the beginning. Zhou stresses a singing tone, musical expression and dynamics, as well as a clean technique in playing Chopin's etudes. However, there is no convenient way to practice Liszt's etudes. Zhou asks students to practice problem sections slowly many times with hands together or separately. Unlike Chopin's etudes, each one of which focuses on a specific technique, Liszt's etudes involve a variety of technical aspects within each work, such as fast scales, chromatic scales, double thirds, chromatic thirds, octave scales and fast octave passages. In order to help students play Liszt's etudes brilliantly, Zhou not only trains them to play accurately, but also underscores the importance of musical effects and the wonderful sonorities that are characteristic of Liszt's music. Zhou's purpose in assigning these etudes to her students is to build up the endurance and speed needed to perform extended virtuoso works of Liszt. These etudes help students deal with many technical problems both physically and mentally. Furthermore, Zhou feels that many of the octave passages from Liszt's etudes can be used as octave exercises for students who cannot play octaves brilliantly and accurately.

After all the technique drills, Zhou works on the repertoire that her students have prepared. When students play a piece for the first time, she listens to their playing very carefully without interruption and makes some notes in the students' scores. Then Zhou asks the student

to play the piece again in a slower tempo with phrasing, dynamics, and suitable touch, but no pedal. This time, she stops the student if she needs to make some comments. In her opinion, a student should not practice with the pedal until he or she has done the finger work, for it is difficult to master finger work and pedaling at the same time when a piece is relatively new. Moreover, Zhou instructs her students to practice hands separately until each hand can play its part smoothly. In this way, students not only learn the piece effectively, but also memorize the music quickly. Zhou normally requires students to play the piece by memory at their next lesson.

Musical interpretation is always an important part of Zhou's teaching. Zhou aspires to interpret the composer's original ideas and to explore the composer's character. Students must learn to play music by different composers using varied approaches. For instance, the *staccato* touch in Bach's works should be executed differently from that in Schumann's works. Zhou teaches several distinct *staccato* touches. The first one is called *portato*, which is played with the whole forearm and a less flexible wrist. In this touch, the wrist must be held stiffly in order to avoid a crisp sound. This *portato* is often used in Baroque works, especially in Bach's music, to create an authentic sound and style. To Zhou, an authentic sound should imitate the sound of the original instrument (the harpsichord or clavichord). According to Zhou, the quarter notes or the longer notes in preludes and fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* should be played with a *portato* touch. But, there are some exceptions in Bach's works, such as the *correntes* and the *gigues* from the French Suites and *Partitas*; these need a different *staccato* touch to create a lighter sound. In these cases, Zhou teaches her students to use an up-down motion of the wrist and keep the forearm motionless to produce a light but not crisp sound. The third touch is a finger *staccato*, which is produced by "wiping" the keys and is similar to the pizzicato technique

in string playing. Robert Schick explained that in order to accomplish this touch, Isabella Vengerova taught him to pull his fingertips sharply inward toward the palm of the hand at the very moment the key is being depressed.⁵ Zhou teaches the same technique. This allows the fingertip to touch the key very briefly and produces a crisp sound. This touch is also used for chords and intervals, and is typically used in fast passages in works by Romantic and contemporary composers. For example, in the piece titled *Hasche-Mann* from Schumann's *Kinderszenen* Op.15, finger *staccato* is used for the fast passages to produce a crisp and lean sound. There are thousands of examples from music by Chopin, Liszt, Prokofiev, Debussy and Ravel that also employ finger *staccato*. In some pieces, Zhou occasionally asks her students to lower their wrists in order to speed up a series of fast *staccato* passages.

The most impressive aspects of Zhou's playing are her warm singing tone and her beautiful *legato*, which have had a major influence on her students.⁶ Listening carefully to sound and focusing on tone color are crucial elements in creating a beautiful *legato*. It is very important that students learn to play with arm weight transferred to the fingertips, smooth finger motion and relaxed shoulders and arms. One finger should not release the key before another finger touches the next key. To Zhou, pressing and releasing a key are the most basic steps in playing the piano. Furthermore, one should try to avoid *non-legato*, or a break between two sounds.⁷ To play *legato*, one must have a sensitive touch and a keen ear. Zhou's teaching is consistent with what Josef Lhevinne describes in his book:

Accuracy, beautiful *legato* and refined *staccato* are so important, however, that every student who gives these matters extra attention will surely be immensely rewarded. In fact it would be a very good plan to take a book of standard studies

⁵Robert Schick, *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 65.

⁶The piano students and the faculty at the CCOM usually can recognize one of Zhou's students by the sound they produce from the piano, even without knowing the identity of the performer.

⁷Zhou Guangren, *Basic Training of Piano Performance* (Beijing: Higher Educational Press, 1990), 9.

or pieces very much below your grade of accomplishment and by means of careful, thoughtful, devout study, in which your “ears” play an equal role with your fingers, take phrase after phrase and play them over and over again.⁸

Zhou tells her students that their fingertips must “sink” into the keys in order to make a full, round, and beautiful sound. This idea of playing *legato* is similar to the technique described by Heinrich Neuhaus: “We speak of the fingers fusing with the keyboard, as if the keyboard were resilient and one could sink into it at will.”⁹ The *cantabile* and *legato* melodies from Chopin’s *Nocturnes*, such as the beginnings of Op. 9 No.1 in B-flat Minor, and Op. 9 No. 2 in E-flat Major are good exercises for a *legato* touch. In some lessons, Zhou asks her students to just play the melody of one nocturne by Chopin and carefully apply a *legato* touch to every note. She explains to them: “Imagine your fingers can ‘sing’ beautifully, like a wonderful opera vocalist’s voice that touches the audience’s heart.”¹⁰

Similar to Vengerova’s teaching system, Zhou instructs her students to relax each finger immediately after it plays. Schick described this technique as follows:

One must feel the arm weight going into the fingertip and the key when playing (an accent). Mme. Vengerova once told me to imagine that a ton was suddenly placed on my wrist forcing it down, with the pressure going into the fingertip and then into the key. One relaxes immediately afterward--this cannot be overemphasized--with the fingertip maintaining just the small amount of pressure that is needed to hold the key down.¹¹

“Listen to the tone!”; “Tone, tone, and tone!”; “Too harsh! Too dry!” are the words frequently heard in Zhou’s lessons. She becomes frustrated when her students do not practice with their ears honed to hear niceties of tone. She tells her students that a beautiful tone is based on the mental concentration that controls the fingers’ production of a tone. Zhou suggests that

⁸Josef Lhevinne, *Basic Principles in Piano Playing*, with a new foreword by Rosina Lhevinne, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 39.

⁹Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, trans. K. A. Leibovitch (London: Kahn & Averill, 1993), 62.

¹⁰Zhou Guangren, *Basic Training of Piano Performance*, 11.

¹¹Robert Schick, *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing*, 23.

all her students listen to good recordings, and especially to the way in which sound is produced. Once a month at her home, Zhou plays video recordings of performances of world famous pianists for all the piano students at the CCOM. While students are watching, she asks them to pay attention to pianists' hand movements, touch, musical expression and, especially, tone.

Zhou believes that the production of beautiful tone is influenced by an individual's understanding of music style. She notes that different pianists express music differently, even in the same piece.¹² In order to help her students understand that different styles should be properly applied to different periods, she often demonstrates to freshmen students at the second piano in her studio and asks them to imitate her way of playing music of different periods. Once students grasp ideas and begin to think independently, Zhou then gives them the freedom to express their musical thoughts. For example, as a junior in her studio, I used *rubato* much too loosely in Chopin's works and I often played with my right hand slightly ahead of the left hand. I thought the way I was playing was very musical and in the Romantic style. Zhou carefully explained to me what *rubato* is and how to use it properly, not only in Chopin's works but also in all other Romantic pieces. Timing is the most important factor in the use of *rubato*, according to Zhou. Using Chopin's piano works as an example, she explained that the right hand usually plays a beautiful melody and the left hand plays a precise arpeggio-figuration accompaniment, and that the performer is allowed to use *rubato* in the melody but must play very rhythmically in the accompaniment. Zhou also said: "The way of playing *rubato* varies from person to person, but there is a fine line between being proper and improper. When you know the rhythmic structure very well, you can make *rubato* sound reasonable and effective. On the other hand, it can make music sound bored rather than expressive, and can give the impression of an amateur performance." In order to help her students to play with more artistic *rubato*, Zhou demonstrates

¹²Zhou Guangren, interview by author.

by playing a few measures and allowing the students to compare her playing with their own *rubato*.

Zhou believes that students can significantly enhance their performance ability by learning as much repertoire as possible. In the first year of her four-year program, students are required to learn three or four preludes and fugues from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, two or three etudes by Chopin and Liszt, one complete piano sonata by Beethoven, one complete sonata by Mozart, two impromptus by Chopin or Schubert, and one concerto. These requirements exceed the requirements of the piano department of the CCOM. In the second year, the quantity of pieces is more or less the same, but the level of repertoire is upgraded. Students are required to learn one or two preludes and fugues from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, one *Partita*, one *Toccata* or the *Italian Concerto*; two or three etudes by Chopin, Liszt, or Rachmaninoff; one sonata by Beethoven or Haydn; one sonata by Schubert or the *Sonatine* by Ravel. Other pieces that might be added to one's program included the Ballade in A-flat Major, Op. 47, Scherzo in B-flat Minor, Op. 31, Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 53, or three *Waltzes* by Chopin; the *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12, or *Kinderszenen* Op. 15 by Schumann; the Hungarian Rhapsody No. 7 by Liszt; the Rhapsody in B Minor Op. 79, No. 1 by Brahms and /or works by Debussy, Ravel and Prokofiev. During their third and fourth years, students must prepare a one-hour recital; Zhou chooses pieces for her students based on their individuality and technical ability. Under her rigorous requirements, students not only learn many piano works but also increase their sight-reading skills and performance ability. Zhou tells her students: "After you study a couple of pieces by different composers, you should learn how to apply the same musical expressions and phrases to other pieces."¹³ Moreover, Zhou explains, "Developing your

¹³Zhou often encouraged her students to find similar phrases in different works by different composers in order to practice more efficiently.

listening ability in practice and performance is very crucial. If you listen carefully, you will always catch something with which you are not satisfied.”¹⁴ In order to improve her students’ listening ability, Zhou sometimes invites them to play with one hand, accompanied by her with the other hand on the same piano, and asks them to pay more attention to their part while listening carefully to the harmony. In this way, students learn to play with correct voicing and balance.

In devising fingering, physical comfort is the first aspect considered by Zhou. In most cases, Zhou adheres to the fingerings provided in the score and asks students to follow these fingerings faithfully unless they become problematic. In Zhou’s words:

Sometimes fingering can be personal, too. Some students are comfortable with the fingerings indicated in the score, while some are uncomfortable with them because of the inconvenience to their hand size. So I change the fingering for them or ask them to study the fingering in another edition or several editions to figure out an ultimate fingering. One must make up one’s mind to set a fingering and practice with it to guarantee the accuracy of performance.¹⁵

Because she herself has a small hand, Zhou usually has very good fingering suggestions for students with small hands. In the initial solo entrance of Chopin’s Piano Concerto in F Minor, Op. 21, for example, the fingering in most editions is 5-3-2-1 in the right hand, and 1-2-3-5 in the left hand (Example 8).



Example 8: Chopin: Piano Concerto in F Minor Op. 21, mm.71-73

¹⁴Zhou Guangren, interview by author.

¹⁵Ibid.

For big hands, this fingering is comfortable and playable, but for small hands it demands too much stretch and can cause inaccuracy. Zhou designs a fingering that suits small hands with increased accuracy. The fingerings are 3-1-5-2 for the right hand, and 3-1-2-5 for the left hand (Example 9). Zhou explains,

Although this fingering involves turning the thumb four times, it really helps pianists who have small hands to play all the notes clearly and confidently. If one should choose to use this fingering, the most important thing is to avoid making accents with both thumbs. It is difficult enough to play the opening of this concerto musically, so you don't want to worry about the notes.¹⁶



Example 9: Chopin: Piano Concerto in F Minor Op. 21, mm.71-73

There are some pieces in which Zhou would revise fingerings for her students to release the tension caused by stretching. Zhou is very experienced at redistribution, especially in big chords. For instance, *Pavane Pour une Infante Défunte* by Ravel has a few widely spread chords overlapping from mm. 28 to 31 (Example 10), and mm. 60 to 65 (Example 11). Zhou marks the changes in the score to indicate the exchange between the two hands.

¹⁶Ibid.



Example 10: Ravel: *Pavane Pour une Infante Défunte*, mm. 28-31

Zhou applies the same rules to a similar passage, except that the left hand plays more of the right hand's notes so that the right hand can bring out the melody.

1re Mouvement
marquez le chant

Example 11: Ravel: *Pavane Pour une Infante Défunte*, mm. 60-65

Although Zhou is concerned with physical comfort and accuracy in performance, she adheres to standard fingering rules in certain situations. She emphasizes that one should avoid using the thumb on the black keys unless the music demands a strong accent on a black key. This rule is entirely Zhou's and not from the Russian teachers. The fifth finger is the weakest one of the five fingers, and Zhou instructs students to substitute it with the fourth finger on the top notes of chords for better voicing. In a series of repeated notes, Zhou requires students to use different fingers to relieve tension from the constant repeating motion of the same finger. Fingerings for trills and turns are based on the indications in the score, but there are also some exceptions. For instance, some students cannot play a long trill evenly and smoothly by only using the second and third fingers or first and third fingers. In this case, Zhou first advises students to totally relax their wrists and arms and place the wrists slightly lower than the knuckles. Then she asks the students to switch fingerings between 2-3 and 1-3 to finish a long trill easily and gracefully.

Zhou considers pedaling to be a very important technique in piano performance and insists that students practice pedaling carefully. She teaches syncopated pedaling and *non-legato* pedaling. Syncopated pedaling is used to create *legato*, while *non-legato* pedaling is used to retain part of the existing sound. Syncopated pedaling is employed most frequently in Zhou's teaching. For all works from the Romantic period, Zhou recommends the use of syncopated pedaling to connect chords and notes that the fingers are unable to connect. However, the clarity of sound needs to be preserved, so the pedal must be used clearly and carefully. One must release the damper pedal completely before pressing it again. Basically, in Romantic pieces one should change pedal when the harmony changes and hold the pedal down when the harmony

remains the same. Of course, there are exceptions and one needs to apply this rule accordingly. The coordination between the hands and the right foot is important. Zhou also underlines the importance of using the *una corda* pedal in Romantic and Impressionistic works. She tells her students that one should apply the *una corda* to produce an effective *piano* sound and not just depend on the fingers. For polyphonic works such as Bach's piano music, Zhou emphasizes authenticity of sound and clarity of finger work and instructs students to use *non-legato* pedaling sparingly. *Non-legato* pedaling involves a quick up-and-down motion of the pedal used for color, not to connect or sustain notes. The pedal is prohibited in the two-note slur, even if the notes and harmonies remain the same. Moreover, one should never use pedaling in scale-like passages in Bach's works. To Zhou, matching the pedaling to the style of the composition is very important, and consistent with what Vengerova described: "a degree of pedaling that would be appropriate for Chopin would be out of place in Mozart."¹⁷ In Impressionistic works, Zhou recommends using both syncopated and *non-legato* pedals as dictated by the music. For some Baroque and Classical pieces, Zhou also recommends applying half pedal to certain notes.

At the end of our interview, Zhou concluded that:

Every teaching method needs to improve constantly, so does mine. In fact, the way I teach today is more flexible than in the 80s. In the 80s, I emphasized a hand position with high fingers and high knuckles. Now I pay more attention to the support of the fingertips and natural arm weight when I teach students. Moreover, I highlight the possibility that a single piece may have many different kinds of interpretation and allow students to develop their own thinking. Before, students played a piece without much flexibility, pretty much following what I taught. Now, students have the freedom to make their own decisions about how to play a piece as long as they are heading in the right direction. In the last two decades, I have attended and given many master classes and concerts, and served as a juror for many international piano competitions, from which I have learned a lot. I have heard performances by many excellent young pianists from different countries, each of them having different characters and artistic styles. For instance, many contestants played the same piece in the same piano competition, but their performance styles were very different. Although each musical style has

¹⁷Robert Schick, *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing*, 89.

its own characterization, a pianist can still have the freedom and flexibility to express the music through performance. This is how a pianist demonstrates his artistic style and character in performance. I learn a lot from my teaching and judging experiences. I believe that the more open minded you are, the better a teacher you will be.¹⁸

Professor Li's Teaching Methods

Aided by twenty years of teaching experience, Li has developed a set of teaching methods entirely her own. Compared to Zhou, Li focuses more on musical interpretation in her teaching. She is very critical about the way her students play, especially regarding details such as physical position at the piano, touch, taste, style and tone. Li prefers a comfortable hand position to a curved hand position. She explains that the size and the shape of hands vary among pianists; therefore, she encourages her students to adopt a comfortable hand position instead of a fixed hand position. Li requires that all her students sit far away from the piano, because she believes that doing so enables them to hear themselves better.¹⁹ However, some of her students have difficulty producing a powerful sound because they cannot use the strength from the back of the body while sitting so far away from the instrument.²⁰

Li's unique teaching style, however, is effective. Although technical drills are rarely included in her students' lessons, they seem to have the skills to handle difficult pieces.

According to Li, technique practice serves merely as a warm-up routine. Li states:

These exercises (scales, arpeggios, double notes, chords and octaves) are the fundamental technical training for the pre-college student. I generally consider them to be a waste of time in an undergraduate student's lesson. I believe great skill is derived from one's own physical ability and professional training. I have been teaching and observing students for many years. Some of my students have great technical ability and can play a difficult piece (such as a Prokofiev sonata)

¹⁸Zhou Guangren, interview by author.

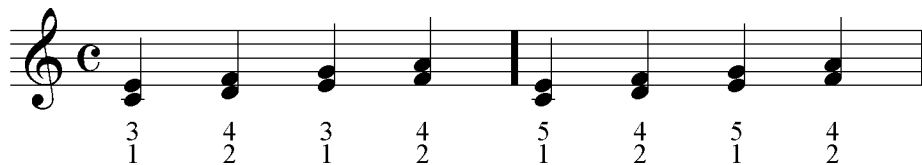
¹⁹Li Qifang, interview by author, February 8, 2001, Beijing, China.

²⁰One of Li's former students, Li Hang, pointed out this problem. (Interview by author, June 8, 2001, West Lafayette, Indiana).

just as easily as they play a Clementi sonatina. I've never asked these students to practice scales, double notes, etc. On the other hand, some of my students are less technically capable, so I ask them to practice all the finger exercises including scales, double notes, arpeggios, etc.²¹

Sometimes, students practice scales in their lessons because Li tries to help them find a particular touch for a certain part of a piece. Li also encourages some of her students to practice arpeggios with a *staccato* touch. The special instruction given by Li to her students is to play scales *staccato* by pulling up the wrist as soon as the finger touches the key. Li explains that practicing *staccato* is the most effective way to prevent high fingers, tense arms and stiff wrists in practice and performance. She believes that the way to play *staccato* is to strike repeatedly on the keyboard with relaxed arms and wrists, producing a clear and distinct, but not harsh, tone.

To Li, practicing double-note scales is more important than practicing unison scales. Li teaches some of her students to practice double-note scales with a *staccato* touch and unorthodox fingerings (Example 12). Still, Li does not suggest that her students play double-note scales with high fingers. She recommends that her students adopt two different fingerings: one alternates between 1/3 and 2/4 and the other alternates between 1/5 and 2/4.



Example 12: Two different fingerings used in double-note scale practice

Li asks her students to practice double-note scales with the second fingering more often than the first fingering. Furthermore, Li requires students to practice double-note scales with firm fingertips and relaxed wrists and arms. Li stresses the practice of *staccato* and believes it is the best way to assist students in resolving technical difficulties and achieving a beautiful *legato*.

²¹Li Qifang, interview by author.

Although Li does not stress technical training, she sometimes assigns etudes such as Czerny's Op. 740 to certain students. Li asks her students to practice Czerny's etudes with high fingers and firm fingertips in a very slow tempo. The purpose of this exercise, according to Li, is to stretch the finger muscles before getting ready to play. She said, "This is analogous to the exercise performed by professional dancers, who lift up their legs very high in order to stretch the leg muscles."²² After students finish this stretching exercise, Li asks them to focus on the articulation and dynamics in the etude and to play it with low fingers. Another technical exercise assigned by Li is practicing excerpts from pieces using a *staccato* touch and different rhythmic patterns. Her most important practice method is to employ *staccato* in a slow tempo to resolve technical difficulties. When students practice in a slow tempo, Li pays more attention to firm fingertips and the movement of the knuckles than to the tone and interpretation. Practicing hands separately and memorizing each part of the music are also important skills recommended by Li. In Li's opinion, a good pianist must have not only quick fingers, but also excellent digital control and unique interpretation.

At the CCOM, it is well known that Li is very meticulous with her students' performance and demanding about every detail. Almost all of her students have experienced frustration at the end of their lessons. For instance, Li might spend the entire lesson counting the eighth-note rhythm to ensure the students play precisely and evenly. She cannot bear to hear a student play successive eighth notes unevenly. She says, "Rhythm is the core of the music. If an undergraduate piano student doesn't know how to play eighth-notes precisely, it is a mistake for him or her to have chosen piano performance as a major."²³ To Li, perfect rhythmic display in performance is crucial. She compares it to a human pulse, saying:

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

The pulse of a healthy person can accelerate or decelerate depending on the intensity of physical exercise or mental stress. Likely, musical rhythm can be flexible depending on the needs of the music. Although rhythm cannot be measured by a meter which is absolutely equally divided, there is a basic rhythmic frame that everyone should be aware of. Within the frame, one can accelerate and decelerate the rhythm naturally.²⁴

Interpretation is the most important emphasis of Li's teaching, and Li poses many philosophical questions to inspire her students. It is common to hear Li ask her students numerous questions after they perform for her in the lessons. For example, she asks: "Why did you play so loud here?"; "Why didn't you play softer and smoother?"; "Why didn't you listen to yourself?"; "Do you know the meaning of every note and phrase?"; "Do you know you scared me by the sudden bump in the phrase?"; "Do you know anything about the composer and his life?"; "Do you know this note is related to the previous and following notes?"; and "What do you think about your performance?". Li uses this strategy to force her students to think independently and perform with personal conviction.²⁵ In this way, Li forces her students to develop individual performance styles. Li says, "Everyone looks different in shape, size and appearance, etc. You are recognized by your own character; so is your performance."²⁶ Therefore, her students become very independent in their thinking and learning, needing only minimal help from Li. They know how to master the techniques and interpretation of a new piece.

Li usually does not discuss the background of a composer in the lesson but rather spends more time explaining phrasing, breathing, articulation, and the touch needed in every measure, even every note, in a piece. Sometimes, Li spends a whole lesson just talking about a few measures of a piece. During our interview, Li played the opening measure of the first movement

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵One of Li's students recalled that Li was very mean to her and made some caustic remarks in her lesson. When she was too intimidated to play, Li never encouraged her but instead challenged her ability to play and think.

²⁶Li Qifang, interview by author.

of Beethoven's Sonata in E-flat Major, Op.31, No. 3 to illustrate her view of interpretation. She comments:

Many students play the second beat (F) of the first measure, a quarter note, either too short by releasing the note abruptly or too long. You should release the F gently from the wrist. In this way, you automatically make a smooth *decrescendo* at the end of the phrase. If a student cannot play this measure correctly, I refuse to listen to the rest of the sonata no matter how well he/she has prepared.²⁷

She never times lessons and does not care if a student is waiting for the next lesson, because she wants to make sure the student understands how to play every measure correctly before they are dismissed. Like her Polish teacher Drzewiecki, Li always has her students attend other students' lessons.

Tone is also important to Li, especially when it comes to Chopin's works. She says:

The way to produce a beautiful tone depends on an individual's appreciation of the music; therefore it varies from person to person. But no matter how you interpret the music, every tone you produce should touch people's hearts. I always teach students to play Chopin's piano works with flat fingers to avoid a bony and harsh sound. The melody in Chopin's music is so beautiful that every note deserves a fine touch. I heard the most beautiful Chopin playing by Artur Rubinstein in Warsaw in 1956. Although I sat far back from the stage, the beautiful melody and heavenly sound made by Rubinstein transmitted into my ear and completely touched my heart. Many years have passed, that beautiful tone is still lingering in my ears. That's from Rubinstein, nobody else.²⁸

Li also pays attention to the texture of Chopin's works including voicing, harmony and balance between the hands. Moreover, Li always tells her students to imagine the quality of sound while listening to themselves play. Li emphasizes melodic line as undoubtedly the most important element in Chopin's piano works; therefore, she works to help students play a melody with a beautiful tone. One of her students mentioned that a penetrating and heavenly sound makes Li's performances of Chopin's music stand out from all others.²⁹

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Li Hang, interview by author.

Regarding tone, Li remarks:

When you are playing the piano, you are the one who is in control of everything. You should listen to and feel the music to lead the audience to the desired artistic conception. Touch is a very abstract matter; while some students have the sense to use the right touch to produce a beautiful tone, the others are lacking in their ability to do so. I always teach my students to use arm weight and a comfortable hand position to produce a beautiful tone. Of course, sensitivity is most important in this matter. One should know how much weight you want to use to produce a tone before you play it, not after. At the end, a beautiful sound pours out from your heart.³⁰

Li also has specific ideas regarding musical style:

If you play Beethoven, it should sound like Beethoven, not Schumann. The character of every composer, their compositional style and emotional display are reflected in their works. When you work on a new piece, you should read the notes as you read a book and digest each word the composer says. Think intelligently and prepare a plan to perform the piece with great voicing, beautiful phrasing, and detailed nuance. For example, every pianist knows that the melodic line of Chopin's music is more romantic and spontaneous than that in Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven's music. The modified use of harmonic vocabulary, dramatic gesture, and emphasis on dissonance and chromaticism are the tools which the Romantic composers use to express their inner emotions. The dynamic range is much greater in Romantic piano music in order to display emotional states passionately and wildly. I suggest that all my students go to good concerts and listen to good recordings. Some of my students have great fingers and good rhythm but they don't really know about musical style. They don't know what Bach's music or Mozart's music really is. For Bach's music, I highlight clean touch, clarity of tone, less pedal, and smooth and distinct ornamentations. Ornamentation is such an important element in Bach's music that I ask students to study the music carefully and to read relevant articles to help them understand it. In the Classical period, composers played a different kind of instrument, the *fortepiano*, and wrote a different type of music. For instance, beautiful melody and delicate style are two important ingredients in Mozart's piano sonatas. You need to make clear the direction of the phrase and use pedal wisely in order not to blur the clarity of the melody. Ornamentation is also an important element in Mozart's piano works. Ornaments should be played lightly, clearly and musically. I also pay attention to the balance of the sound between the hands and beautiful singing tone in Mozart's music.³¹

³⁰Li Qifang, interview by author.

³¹Ibid.

Li believes that musical taste is very important. In her own words, “ If you play without taste, nobody will listen to you just like nobody will pick food without any taste.”³² She spends a lot of time listening to many great pianists’ recordings and carefully examines the score while listening to them. She then asks all her students to attend a “taste” class once a month in her home. In this class, Li and her students listen to different recordings of the same pieces played by different pianists and she discusses her opinions about the good and bad aspects of each performance with the students. The classes have proven to be very effective. All her students develop keen ears, and they know how to use them when they practice.

Li adapts different teaching approaches to different students, except for fingerings. She insists that her fingerings are among the best, so she requires her students to follow hers without exception. Only occasionally will she allow them to use their own fingerings. From her first teacher, Fan Dalei, she inherited the habit of writing fingering on every note, especially sixteenth notes. Based on her teaching and performance experiences, Li believes that good fingerings are crucial to a successful performance. Some of her students are very uncomfortable with the fingerings she provides in their score, but they somehow manage to use them in their lessons.

Li always tells her students that they must first understand the music before they play a piece. The most important point, she emphasizes, is that performers must understand the music themselves before they try to convince an audience. In our interview, Li reiterated that talent is very important to a pianist. She strongly believes that an intelligent student should know how to play well without a lot of guidance from the teacher. Li attributes the formation of a wonderful pianist to intelligence, sensitivity and devotion to music.

³²Ibid.

In conclusion, Li says, “I just want to help my students to direct their minds and eyes to the music. They all have strong techniques but lack musical thought and individuality. I think helping students to get interested in music is what a teacher should do.”³³ Li believes that life experiences, environment and knowledge of religion are also important to a pianist’s understanding of music. She encourages her students to study abroad, not only to pursue advanced education in piano performance, but also to enrich their life experiences and cultural knowledge.

Professor Yang’s Teaching Methods

Professor Yang Jun, former chairman of the piano department at the CCOM, is a younger music educator than Zhou and Li and his teaching method is similar to Li’s. Yang does not train undergraduate students in technical skills in their lessons because he thinks it is really not important for this level of student. He feels that students admitted to the CCOM should already have basic technical skills. Sometimes Yang asks students to play scales to warm up their fingers before playing their pieces, but some of Yang’s students, during their four years of study, have never played scales in their lessons. During an interview with Yang Jun, he explained that practicing scale-like passages in a piece is the same as practicing diatonic scales.³⁴ Yang does not teach students to practice double-note scales, chords or octaves. He is not concerned about students’ hand positions. If a student encounters technical problems in playing a certain piece, Yang usually gives specific suggestions to help solve the particular problem. For example, if a student cannot play scale-like passages fast and evenly, Yang instructs the student to practice the

³³Ibid.

³⁴Yang Jun, interview by author, February 7, 2001, Beijing, China.

passages in a slow tempo using different rhythmic patterns and paying close attention to the fingerings.

Yang believes the piano can produce a variety of sounds that are capable of imitating other instruments. Like his teacher Zhu Gongyi, Yang views the piano as an orchestra instead of a single-timbre instrument. Yang wants his students to develop a rich tonal imagination that will stimulate the production of a broad range of sounds. He also says, “It is hard to judge the correctness of a single sound. The evaluation of a sound should be based on the position of the note and its relation to the previous and subsequent notes. For example, a very soft sound can be completely wrong because it is not suggested by the note.”³⁵

The interpretation of music, perfect voicing, and artistic demeanor are the main points emphasized in his teaching. He encourages students to develop individuality and a habit of independent thinking. Since every student has different problems requiring different types of help, Yang gives his instructions accordingly. Yang emphasizes that to understand music, one must know the social, cultural, and religious background behind the musical work, and be familiar with the composer’s biography. Yang never considers listening to recordings as a primary method of studying a piano work because a performance can be either extremely close to or very far removed from the original work. He believes that students should first study the score; recordings and live performances are only used as references.

Yang gives priority to musical interpretation in his teaching. Before a student plays a new piece, he helps the student understand the basic structure of the work before focusing on phrasing, dynamics and touch. Yang has some interesting ideas concerning phrasing. In an interview, he gave a vivid description of a phrase:

³⁵Su Lanshen, “Interview With Jun Yang,” *Piano Artistry*, February 1999, 5.

The musical phrase is somewhat like the kernel of the Chinese date, which has two narrow cone-shaped ends and a thick middle. The phrase starts with *p* (entrance), followed by a *crescendo* (expansion) in the middle and *decrescendo* (diminish) at the end. But some phrases that contain only a *crescendo* or *decrescendo* are just like half of the date kernel. No matter if it is Rachamaninoff's long phrase or Mozart's regular four-measure phrase, the phrase shape is like that of a date kernel without exception. I often tell my students that making a *crescendo* isn't just strictly increasing sound from *p* to *f*, because the *crescendo* consists of numerous tiny dynamics. Therefore, students should understand that musical phrases are more sophisticated than straight-line phrases - there are many variations within a phrase.³⁶

Yang advocates a *cantabile* style in performance. He believes that students must listen to opera in order to play with a singing tone at the piano. Listening to opera will help students understand issues such as breathing and timing. According to Yang, "A vocalist must work very hard to produce a high note, but it is easy for a pianist to play a note in the high register of the instrument. If a student can use the same amount of effort used by a vocalist in singing a high note to play the climax of the music, the quality of sound will be completely different."³⁷ In Yang's opinion, *cantabile* style is obtained by combining the natural breathing of each phrase and the inflections of language.

Yang says that a beautiful sound cannot be produced unless the player knows how to use and control their touch. When it comes to touch, Yang believes that the contact point between the finger and the key is critical and control of the finger is very important. Yang makes the following point regarding this subject.

When you play pieces by Debussy, for example, *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, a prelude from Debussy's *Preludes* Book I, and you want to produce a very soft sound in several places in the piece, you immediately think of employing the *una corda* pedal and controlling your fingers as well as you can. But one important thing is to place your fingers on the keyboard farther away from the edge to facilitate the control of the soft sound. This method can also be applied in playing some of Chopin's works.³⁸

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Yang Jun, interview by author.

³⁸Su Lanshen, "Interview With Jun Yang," 5.

Yang believes that the art of piano performance can take many forms. He often says that one should have a “cold heart and warm appearance” or “warm heart and cold appearance” in performance, which means that a pianist must have a cool mind to stay calm while revealing to the audience warmth, passionate emotion, or a focused mind to control the playing of every note while delivering peace and comfort to the audience.

Finally, Yang believes that:

Piano teachers must practice routinely and give piano concerts in order to maintain their quality of teaching. A teacher must know the teaching materials very well first before teaching them to students. If a teacher does not know the materials, it will be hard to teach well. Asking students to listen to recordings all the time is not a good idea. Furthermore, it is not enough for a piano teacher to just play the piano; the piano teacher must also study music, broaden their knowledge and achieve artistic mastery. Chinese pianists are behind foreign experts in terms of knowing the teaching materials and the extent to which they are familiar with literature and musical styles. Therefore, a piano teacher must spend their whole life studying and improving themselves.³⁹

³⁹Yang Jun, interview by author.

Conclusion

In the past fifty years, the CCOM has established its own teaching system that has been influenced by Russian pianism/teaching methods. Its piano department was one of the first departments established at the CCOM. From 1950 to 1966, the reputation of the piano department at the CCOM grew rapidly and the department achieved great success. The early success of piano teaching at the CCOM can be attributed to several factors. First, the Chinese government gave top priority and great support to the CCOM. The Chinese government invited foreign pianists, namely from Russia, to teach at the CCOM. They also sent their top students to study in Russia and other Eastern European countries. The CCOM gathered some of the best Chinese pianists including Yi Kaiji, Zhu Gongyi, Zhou Guangren, Guo Zhihong, Liu Shikun, and Yang Jun to teach. These teachers helped establish the reputation of the CCOM and attracted the best students to study at the CCOM. The Russian teachers, Aram Taturian (1915-1974), and Tatyana Kravchenko (1916-), were invited by the Chinese government to teach at the CCOM from 1954-1960. They brought the direct influence of Russian pianism to the CCOM and greatly enhanced the piano education and performance levels at the CCOM. The CCOM also adopted Russian curricula and teaching methods.

To a large extent, the piano department at the CCOM inherited traditions from the 1950s and 60s, including the Russian style of technical training. The department continued to improve by increasing the scale of international activities, recruiting young teachers with advanced degrees from foreign countries, increasing student enrollment, creating a graduate program, and reforming the teaching systems.

More and more foreign pianists have been invited to the CCOM to give master classes, including Alicia De Larrocha, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Radu Lupu, and Paul Badura-Skoda. The

CCOM piano faculty members have been invited to judge international piano competitions and many teachers and students have received opportunities to teach or to study abroad. These international activities have not only helped to introduce teaching methods from other countries to the CCOM, but have also opened the door for Chinese pianists to go out into the world. Most of the younger piano faculty members at the CCOM hold advanced degrees from foreign countries such as the United States and Russia. Their presence undoubtedly enriches teaching philosophies and enhances the overall teaching level at the CCOM.

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Appendix A

Teaching Program of the Piano Department Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, P. R. China August 1959

I. Duties of Courses and Rules of Teaching

1. Through teaching, to help students develop fundamental techniques of piano performance and the ability to express music.
2. In accordance with the principle of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism, teach students to have correct artistic methods; regarding teaching materials, must correctly consider the relationships between China and other countries and between modern and historical ideas; actively adopt modern Chinese teaching materials and accumulate experience through scientific research to gradually establish a national teaching system and performance school of thought.
3. Carry out firmly the policy of “let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend”, every school of thought with great achievements should be recognized; regarding teaching methods, strive to integrate technical training and artistic interpretation and teach students in accordance with their aptitude and with the principle of “proceeding in an orderly way step by step”; regarding teaching style, follow the rule that the major professor and course instructor are responsible for teaching but the department must periodically study and improve teaching in various ways; in order to enhance artistic practice and real experience, require students to give studio and public concerts.

4. In connection with their class teaching, teachers must pay attention to students' overall development and conduct ideological education.
5. Each year, evaluate students' work at the end of first semester and give examinations at the end of second semester. First/third/fifth year students must take grade advancement or graduation examinations.¹ Exam results, combined with coursework scores as reference, will determine whether a student is terminated (for first year students), advanced to the next grade (for third year students), or allowed to graduate (for fifth year students).

II. The Length of the Program and Credits

1. Piano majors who succeed at their first year of probation and the grade advancement and graduation examinations must spend five years in this program.
2. Piano majors must take two credit hours of piano lessons and practice no less than 18 hours each week

III The Requirements of Study for Each Year

First and Second Year

1. 2 fast movements from a sonata
2. 3 polyphonic works
3. 4 etudes
4. 8 pieces in different styles

Third Year

1. 2 major works (including one complete sonata)
2. 2 polyphonic works
3. 8 pieces in different styles

Fourth Year

1. 2 major works (including one complete sonata)

¹The Russian teachers suggested that the undergraduate degree should take five years, but this idea was never adopted by the CCOM.

2. 2 polyphonic works
3. 6 pieces in different styles

Fifth Year

1. 1 major work (complete)
2. 1 polyphonic work
3. 10 pieces in different styles

Attention: a student must learn at least 4 Chinese piano works in addition to the required repertoire.

Suggested Repertoire for Each Year-End Jury

Choose one group of compositions for study

First Year:

1.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in F-sharp Major, WTC I
Beethoven	Sonata in C Minor, Op. 13, or any Variations
Schubert	<i>Impromptus</i> , Op. 90
Moszkowski	Etude in E Major, Op. 72, No. 1
2.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in A-flat Major, WTC I
Mozart	Concerto in A Major, K. 488, First movement
Chopin	Nocturne in B Major, Op. 9, No. 3
3.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in D Minor, WTC II
Beethoven	Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 22, first movement
C. M. Weber	<i>Rondo Brillante</i> in E-flat Major, Op. 62 (“ <i>La Gaïeté</i> ”)
4.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in F Minor, WTC II
Mozart	Sonata in A Minor, K. 310, first movement

Second Year:

1.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in E Major, WTC I
Beethoven	Concerto in B-flat Major, Op. 19, first movement
A. Liadoff	Etude in F Major

2.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in C-sharp Major, WTC I
Schubert	Sonata in A Major, Op. 120, first movement
Rimsky-Korsakov/Rachmaninoff	“Flight of the Bumblebee”
3.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in C Major, WTC I
Mozart	Concerto in D Minor, K. 466, first movement
Chopin	Waltz in E-flat Major, Op. 18
4.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, WTC I
Beethoven	Sonata in D Major, Op. 28, first movement
Fauré	Nocturne in E-flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1

Third Year:

1.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major, WTC I
Beethoven	Sonata in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2, first two movements
Prokofiev	Two pieces from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , Op. 75
2.

D. Shostakovich	Prelude and Fugue in D Major, Op. 87
Beethoven	Concerto in C Minor, Op. 37, two movements
Chopin	<i>Berceuse</i> in D-flat Major, Op. 57
3.

Bach-Siloti	Organ Fugue in G Minor
Tchaikovsky	Theme and Variations in F Major, Op. 19
Liszt	<i>Sonetto 104 del Petrarca</i>
4.

Bach-Kabalevsky	Organ Prelude and Fugue in C Minor
Saint-Saëns	Concerto in G Minor, Op. 22, two movements
Rachmaninoff	Prelude in G Major, Op. 32, No. 5

Fourth Year:

1.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Minor, WTC I
Grieg	Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16

2.

Bach-Liszt	Prelude and Fugue for Organ in A Minor
Beethoven	Thirty-two Variations on an Original Theme in C Minor, WoO 80
3.

Bach	Fantasy and Fugue in A Minor
Scriabin	Sonatas (any)
4.

D. Shostakovitch	Prelude and Fugue No. 24
Beethoven	Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2

Fifth Year:

1.

A. Glazunov	Prelude and Fugue in D Minor
Beethoven	Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57
Chopin	Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23
Brahms	Intermezzos (from Op. 116, 117, 118 and 119)
2.

Bach	Prelude and Fugue in C-sharp Minor, WTC I
Rachmaninoff	Concerto in C Minor, Op. 18
Chopin	Scherzo (any)
Debussy	<i>Reflet dans l'eau</i> , from <i>Images</i> Bk. I
3.

Bach-Tausig	Toccata and Fugue in D Minor
Chopin	Concerto in E Minor, Op. 11
Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12
Prokofieff	<i>Divertissement</i> Op. 43B (several pieces)
4.

Bach	Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor
Schumann	Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54
Liszt	<i>Six Etudes d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini</i>
Chopin	<i>Mazurka</i> (any)

The list below is for the entrance exam

1. 1 Polyphonic work: from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* Bk. I & II
2. 1 fast movement either from Beethoven's Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 7, or Mozart's Sonata in A Major, K. 331
3. 1 etude either from Czerny Op. 740 or Cramer etude
4. 1 Chopin Nocturne or Rachmaninoff Melody in E major, or 1 Chinese composition

Appendix B

Teaching Program for Four-year Undergraduate Piano Performance Major Piano Department Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, P. R. China Revised in May 1999

I. Duties of Courses and Rules of Teaching

The purpose of this program is to help students develop piano performance techniques and to enhance their artistic accomplishments so that they will be able to perform solo and chamber music, accompany and teach. Therefore, one should follow these duties and rules in all teaching activities.

- a) Study must have a goal and be selective. Students should study not only the major Western piano repertoire of different periods, but also the old and modern Chinese piano repertoire.
- b) Adhere to the rules of step-by-step teaching and guide students in accordance with their aptitude. Basic technical training is very important to freshmen; they should be taught how to master basic techniques and interpret pieces artistically at the same time. This guideline should apply to sophomores as well. While it is important for juniors and seniors to improve technique, encouraging individuality and developing their ability to express music while helping them achieve certain artistic accomplishments are emphasized. Teachers should understand the strengths and weaknesses of each student in order to choose the right repertoire for each student each school year.
- c) Try to create the opportunity for students to perform in various concerts and participate in both domestic and international piano competitions.

II. Method of Teaching and Course Arrangement

The students will have a two-hour private piano lesson (one to one) each week.

Students are encouraged to observe others' lessons or attend a master class.

Furthermore, students are required to attend chamber music class, piano literature and piano pedagogy class in their third and fourth year.

III. Requirements of Examinations

1.) Formality of Examination

Freshmen, sophomores and juniors must take the technique test, year-end jury and independent study test. The grade will be given on the basis of the results from these three examinations. The grades for seniors depend on the graduate recital and the independent study test. Juniors and seniors must pass chamber music courses and pedagogy exams.

2.) Content of Examination:

The technique test for freshmen and sophomores must include one polyphonic work and two etudes (one of them is an assigned etude). In addition, one fast movement from either a major sonata or concerto and two medium-size works should be performed in the year-end jury. The jury for juniors and seniors is in the form of a recital that lasts 45 to 50 minutes. The repertoire must include several different styles. The repertoire for the independent study test will consist of pieces from the Classical era, Romantic period and contemporary works.

3.) Students are required to take a jury each year after they finish the following required pieces:

Freshmen and sophomores: 3 polyphonic works
5 etudes

	2 major works (a complete sonata or concerto is required)
	6 medium-size works
Juniors:	2 polyphonic works 4 etudes 2 major works 6 medium-size works
Seniors:	1 polyphonic work 2 etudes 1 major work 4 medium-size works

4.) Performance Practice

Students must perform at the bi-weekly group recital at least twice per semester.

Students must participate in the Chinese composition recital or competition organized by the piano department every year. Teachers have the responsibility to encourage talented pianists to participate in all kinds of local and international piano competitions.

- 5.) In order to receive a bachelor's degree in music from the CCOM, piano performance students must finish the required assignments, pass every jury and maintain grades in good standing. In addition, performance ability must be at a graduate level and reach a high standard.

Assigned Etudes To Choose From For Technique Exam For Each Year:

First Year: (Choose one from this group)

Clementi:	<i>Gradus ad Parnassum</i> No. 6
Czerny:	Op. 740, No. 3
Moszkowski:	Etude in D-flat Major, Op. 72, No. 12
Mendelssohn:	Etude in F Major, Op. 104, No. 2

(Choose one)

Chopin: Etudes in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5; and F Major, Op. 10, No. 8

Second Year: (Choose one from this group)

Chopin: Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4

Liszt: Concert Etude “*La Leggerezza*”

Rachmaninoff: *Etude-Tableau* in C Minor, Op. 33, No. 3

Plus one etude of your own choice.

Third Year: (Choose one from this group)

Chopin: Etude in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 11

Liszt: Transcendental Etude No. 10 in F Minor

Scriabin: Etude in D-sharp Minor, Op. 8, No. 12

Plus one etude of your own choice.

Repertoire

Compositions grouped by genre or style

First Year

Czerny	Studies Op. 740, Nos. 3, 28, 50
Clementi	<i>Gradus ad Parnassum</i> Nos. 6, 7, 12, 13
Chopin	Etudes in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5; in F Minor, Op. 10, No. 9; and in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12
Liszt	Concert Etude in D-flat Major, “ <i>Un Sospiro</i> ”
Liszt	Paganini Etude, No. 5, “ <i>La Chasse</i> ”
Scriabin	Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 2, No. 1
J. S. Bach	Italian Concerto
J. S. Bach	Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major
J. S. Bach	The Well-Tempered Clavier (any preludes and fugues from Bk. I or Bk. II)
Haydn	Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI/20; in D Major, Hob. XVI/37; and in E Minor, Hob. XVI/34
Mozart	Sonata in D Major, K. 284; in A Minor, K. 310; in B-flat Major, K. 333; in C Major, K. 545; in B-flat Major, K. 570
Beethoven	Sonata in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2 Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3 Sonata in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2 Sonata in C Major, Op. 2, No. 3 Sonata in C Minor, Op. 13 Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 22
Schubert	Sonata in A Major, Op. 120; and E-flat Major, Op. 122
Grieg	Sonata in E Minor
Kabalevsky	Sonata No. 3, Op. 46
Mozart	Concerto in A Major, K. 488; and B-flat Major, K. 595
Beethoven	Concerto in C Major, Op. 15; and B-flat Major, Op. 19
Chopin	Impromptu No. 1 in A-flat Major, Op. 29 Waltz (any) Scherzo in B Minor, Op. 20 Rondo in C Minor, Op. 1 Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2 Nocturne in C-sharp Minor Op. 27, No. 1; and in D-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 2
Schumann	<i>Kinderscenen</i> , Op. 15 <i>Waldescenen</i> , Op. 82 Abegg Variations, Op. 1

	Intermezzi, Op. 4
	Three Romances, Op. 28
	<i>Nachtstucke</i> , Op. 23
	<i>Drei Fantasiestücke</i> , Op. 111
Liszt	Nocturnes
	Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 10, 11
Brahms	Rhapsody in G Minor, Op. 79, No. 2
Smetana	<i>Furiant</i>
Balakirev	<i>Berceuse</i>
Debussy	Children's Corner
	Preludes, <i>La Fille aux cheveux de lin</i> , and <i>Minstrels</i> , Bk. I
Ravel	<i>Pavane Pour une Infante Défunte</i>
	Minuet (From <i>Tombeau de Couperin</i>)
	<i>A la Maniere de Borodine</i> , <i>A la Maniere de Chabrier</i>
	Prelude (From <i>Tombeau de Couperin</i>)
Prokofiev	Prelude in C Major, Op. 12, No. 7
A. Tchernepnin	Songs without Words, Op. 82
	10 <i>Bagatellen</i> , Op. 5
Poulenc	Toccata
Aaron Copland	The Cat and the Mouse

Second Year

Clementi	<i>Gravitas ad Parnassum</i> Nos. 18, 21, 23
Chopin	Etudes in E Major, Op. 10, No. 3; and in C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4; and in C Major, Op. 10, No. 7
	Etudes in F Major, Op. 25, No. 3; in G-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 9; and in C Minor, Op. 25, No. 12
Liszt	Concert Etude " <i>La Leggierezza</i> "
	Two Concert Etudes " <i>Gnomesreigen</i> ", " <i>Waldestrauchen</i> "
	Paganini Etude No. 2 in E-flat Major; No. 5 (" <i>La Chasse</i> ")
Debussy	Etude No. 1, <i>pour les "cinq doigts"</i> , Bk. I, and No. 6, <i>pour les huit doigts</i> , Bk. I
Rachmaninoff	<i>Etudes-Tableaux</i> in G Minor, Op. 33, No. 7; and in C-sharp Minor, No. 8
Scriabin	Etude in E Major, Op 8, No. 5
Bach	Partita No. 2 in C Minor
	Toccata in F-sharp Minor, BWV 910
	Fantasia in C Minor
	The Well-Tempered Clavier (any preludes and fugues from Bk. I, or Bk. II)
Haydn	Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI/23
Mozart	Sonatas in A Major, K. 331; in F Major, K. 332; in D Major, K. 576; and in F Major, K. 533

Beethoven	Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1 Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 Sonata in G Major Op. 31, No. 1 Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2 Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3 Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90 32 Variations on an Original Theme, in C Minor, WoO 80
Schubert	Sonatas in A Minor, Op. 143; in A Minor, Op. 42; and in A Minor, Op. 164
C. Weber	Sonata in C Major, Op. 24
Ravel	<i>Sonatine</i>
Prokofiev	Sonata No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 28
Mozart	Concerto in D Minor, K. 466; in C Minor, K.491; and in D Major, K. 537
Beethoven	Concerto in C Minor, Op. 37
Grieg	Concerto in A Minor
Saint-Saens	Concerto in G Minor, Op. 22; and in C Minor, Op. 14
Chopin	Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57 Ballade in A-flat Major, Op. 47 Impromptu in F-sharp Major, Op. 36; and in G-flat Major, Op. 51 Waltz in F Major, Op. 34, No. 3 Scherzo in B-flat Minor, Op. 31 Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 53; and in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44
Schumann	<i>Fantasiestücke</i> Op. 12 <i>Faschingsschwank aus Wien</i> Op. 26 Variations on a Theme by Clara
Brahms	Rhapsody in B Minor, Op. 79, No. 1
Grieg	Ballade in G Minor, Op. 24
Mendelssohn	<i>Variations Serieuses</i> , Op. 54
Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody Nos. 4, 7 <i>Au bord d'une source</i> (from <i>Années de Pèlerinage</i>) <i>Vallée d' Obermann</i> (from <i>Années de Pèlerinage</i>)
Balakirev	Scherzo in B Major
Debussy	Suite “ <i>Pour le piano</i> ” Preludes, “ <i>Voiles</i> ”, “ <i>La Cathedrale Engloutie</i> ”, “ <i>La Danse de Puck</i> ”, Bk. I
Ravel	<i>Minuet antique</i> <i>La Vallee des Cloches</i> <i>Valses nobles et Sentimentales</i>
Prokofiev	Ten pieces from “ <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> ”
Gershwin	3 Preludes
A. Tchernin	5 Concerto Etudes
	4 Arabesques
Ginastera	<i>Danzas Argentinas</i> , Op. 2

Third year

Chopin	Etudes in C Major, Op. 10, No. 1; and in A-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 10 Etudes in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 4; in E Minor, Op. 25, No. 5; in D-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 8; in B Minor, Op. 25, No. 10; and in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 11
Liszt	Paganini Etudes No. 3, 4, 6 Transcendental Etudes No. 8, “ <i>Wilde Jagd</i> ”; and No. 10 in F Minor
Debussy	Etudes No. 7, <i>pour les Degrés chromatiques</i> , Bk. II, and No. 11, <i>pour les Arpèges composés</i> , Bk. II
Rachmaninoff	<i>Etudes-Tableaux</i> in C Minor, Op. 39, No. 1; and in E-flat Minor, Op. 39, No. 5; in C Minor, Op. 39, No. 7; and in D Minor, Op. 39, No. 8
Scriabin	Etude in D-sharp Minor, Op. 8, No. 12
Bach	Tocatta in C Minor, BWV 911 Partita No. 6 in E Minor The Well-Tempered Clavier (any preludes and fugues from BK. I, or BK. II) Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor Fantasy and Fugue in A Minor
Haydn	Sonatas (same as second year)
Mozart	Sonatas (same as second year)
Beethoven	Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 81a Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110
Schumann	Sonata in G Minor, Op. 22
Brahms	Sonata in C Major, Op. 1
Prokofiev	Sonata No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 14; and No. 4 in C Minor, Op. 29
Chopin	Concerto in F Minor, Op. 21
Schumann	Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54
Liszt	Concerto No. 2 in A Major
Franck	Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra
Ravel	Concerto in G Major
Mozart	Rondo in A Minor, K. 511
Schubert	Wanderer Fantasia in C Major, Op. 15
Chopin	Tarantella in A-flat Major, Op. 43 Bolero in A Minor, Op. 19 Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49

	Ballade in F Major, Op. 38
	Scherzo in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39; and in E Major, Op. 54
	Preludes Op. 28 (any)
	Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 17, No. 4
	Mazurka in C Major, Op. 24, No. 2; and in B-flat Minor, No. 4
	Mazurka in A-flat Major Op. 59, No. 2; and in F-sharp Minor, No. 3
	Polonaise in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44
	Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, No. 1
	Nocturne in E Major, Op. 62, No. 2
Schumann	<i>Davidsbündlertänze</i> Op. 6
	<i>Novelleten</i> Op. 21, No. 8
Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody Nos. 6, 8, 9, 12
	Polonaise in C Minor, No. 1
Mendelssohn	<i>Scherzo à Capriccio</i> in F-sharp Minor
Tchaikovsky	Variations Op. 19
Brahms	Pieces from Op. 116, 117, 118
Debussy	<i>Estampes</i>
Ravel	<i>Jeux d'eau</i>
	<i>Le Tombeau de Couperin</i>
Fauré	Impromptu No. 2, Op. 31
	Barcarolle in F-sharp Minor, Op. 66, No. 5
	Nocturne in D-flat Major, Op. 63, No. 6; and in C-sharp Minor, Op. 74, No. 7
Scriabin	Two Poems Op. 69
Barber	Excursions
Stravinsky	Suite
Frank Martin	8 Preludes

Fourth Year

Chopin	Etude in A Minor, Op. 10, No. 2
Liszt	Transcendental Etudes No. 4, “ <i>Mazeppa</i> ”; and No. 5, “ <i>Feux follets</i> ”
Rachmaninoff	<i>Etudes-Tableaux</i> in A Minor, Op. 39, No. 6; and in D Major, No. 9
Scriabin	Etude in D-flat Major, Op. 8, No. 10
	Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 42, No. 5
Debussy	Etude No. 9, <i>pour les Notes répétées</i> , Bk. II; and No. 12, <i>pour les</i> <i>Accords</i>
Stravinsky	Four Etudes, Op. 7
Bach	The Well-Tempered Clavier (any preludes and fugues from Bk. I, or Bk. II)
Shostakovitch	24 Preludes & Fugues, Op. 87
Franck	<i>Prélude, Chorale et Fugue</i>
Beethoven	Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57

Schubert	Sonata in A Major, Op. 101
Chopin	Sonata in E Major, Op. 109
Liszt	Sonata in G Major, Op. 78
	Sonata in B-flat Minor, Op. 35
	<i>Après une lecture du Dante</i> (from <i>Années de Pèlerinage</i>)
Franck	Sonata
Tchaikovsky	Sonata in G Major, Op. 37
Scriabin	Sonata No. 4, Op. 32; and No. 5, Op. 53
Bartok	Sonata for Piano
Alban Berg	Sonata, Op. 1
Beethoven	Concerto in G Major, Op. 58; and in E-flat Major, Op. 73
Chopin	Concerto in E Minor, Op. 11
Liszt	Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major
Tchaikovsky	Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23
Brahms	Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15
Rachmaninoff	Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1; and No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18
Ravel	Concerto for the left hand in D Minor
Prokofiev	Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26
Chopin	Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60
	Ballade in F Minor, Op. 52
	<i>Polonaise-Fantaisie</i> in A-flat Major, Op. 61
	Preludes from Op. 28 (any)
Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
Brahms	Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24
	Variations on a Theme by Paganini, Bk. I and Bk. II, Op. 35
	Pieces from Op. 119
	Four Ballades Op. 10
Franck	Suite Op. 10
Debussy	<i>Images</i> I & II
	<i>L'Isle Joyeuse</i>
Ravel	<i>Miroirs</i>
Mussorgsky	Spanish Capriccio
	Scherzo Valses
Bartók	Elegies Op. 8b
	Suite Op. 14
	Out of Doors
	<i>Allegro Barbaro</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Trois Mouvements de Petrouchka</i>

Appendix C

Curriculum for Undergraduate Piano Program Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, P. R. China (Current Version)

Course Descriptions			First Year		Second Year		Thrid Year		Fourth Year		Total Credits
	Crs	Max. Sem.	1st sem.	2nd sem.	1st sem.	2nd sem.	1st sem.	2nd sem.	1st sem.	2nd sem.	
General Basic Courses											
Mao Zedong Thought	2	1	2								2
Marxist Philosophy	2	1		2							2
Political Economics	2	1			2						2
Deng Xiaoping Theory	2	1				2					2
Social Psychology	2	1	2								2
Moral Education	2	1		2							2
Basic Law	2	1			2						2
Social Practice							2				2
English	4	6	4	4	4	4					16
Physical Education	2	4	2	2	2	2	2				8
Art Literature	2	1							2		2
Chinese	2	2	2	2							4
Elective Courses											8
<i>Category Total Credits</i>											54
Major Basic Courses											
Art Practice											
Introduction to Chinese Music	2	2	2	2							4
Chinese Music Theory	2	2			2	2					4
Western Music Theory	2	2					2	2			4
Solfege	3	4	3	3	3	3					12
Harmony	2	2	2	2							4
Music Analysis	2	2			2	2					4
Counterpoint	2	2					2	2			4
Elective Courses											12
<i>Category Total Credits</i>											36
Major Courses											
Piano	2	8	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	24
Chamber Music	2	2					2	2			4
Piano Pedagogy	2	2			2				1	1	4
Piano Literature	2	2			2	2					4
Accompanying and Practice	2	8	2	2	2	2	2	2			16
<i>Category Total Credits</i>											52
<i>All Courses Total Credits</i>											154

Vita

Chi Lin was born in Xiamen, China, in 1967. She began to study piano at the age of eight with her father, Lin Yi Jie. In 1978, she was admitted to the Art Institute in Fuzhou, China, and spent the next five years studying piano with the pianist Xu Rongqin. In 1981, she won the 1st prize in the Fujian Youth Piano Competition (12-18 age group). In 1984, she was admitted to the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China. She majored in piano performance and studied with Professor Zhou Guangren. In 1989, upon the completion of her undergraduate degree at the Central Conservatory of Music, she received the Bachelor of Music degree. From 1989 to 1992, she taught piano in the pre-college of the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1992, she started her graduate studies in piano performance with Dr. Jack Guerri at Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge. She earned her Master of Music degree in piano performance in 1995. In the same year, Ms. Lin was accepted as a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Art degree in piano performance, and continued her work with Dr. Guerri. She also studied organ with Dr. Herndon Spillman at LSU and piano with Professor Michael Gurt. After Dr. Guerri retired in 1999, she continued her studies with Dr. Jennifer Hayghe.

In September 1993, Ms. Lin won the 1st prize in the LSU concerto competition and performed with LSU Symphony. In 1998, she received the Kurzweg Scholarship and the Richinse Scholarship from the LSU Music School. In July 1999, she received a full scholarship from the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, and studied with Madame Gaby Casadesus, Philippe Entremont, and Philippe Bianconi. Ms. Lin held a graduate assistantship at LSU from 1992-1998. She also taught piano at the LSU Music Academy from 1992 – 2000.