THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIALIST REALISM
ON THE YELLOW RIVER
PIANO CONCERTO

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A DOCUMENT

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ABSTRACT

Commissioned by Madam Mao, also known as Jiang Qing (1914-1991), the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* (1968) is scored for Western orchestra and piano. The piano concerto is based on a previous composition – the *Yellow River Cantata* (1938) by Xian Xinghai (1909-1945). Like its namesake, the Yellow River, the piano concerto has a tumultuous history and background. The piano concerto was arranged by a group of four composers: Yin Chengzong (b. 1941), Chu Wanghua (b. 1941), Sheng Lihong (b. 1926), and Liu Zhuang (b. 1932) during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Prior to the concerto, all forms of Western music were banned and classical musicians suffered great persecution. The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* displays aspects of Chinese nationalism and Socialist Realism fused together in virtuosic pianistic display.

The People’s Republic of China often sought to emulate the Soviet Union, which was considered the elder brother and a suitable model. Ideologies, political practices, cultural reform and the revolutions of the Soviet Union were adapted and sinified by the Communist Party in China by Mao Zedong (1893-1976). This document examines the influences of Mao’s Socialist Realism and revolutionary Romanticism on the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* as contained in his *Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art* (1942) and Jiang Qing’s speeches of 1964.

The use of the piano and the form of the concerto raises many questions, as these contradicted the revolutionary elements of nationalism and Communism. The piano is not an instrument native to China, and the concerto form elevates a soloist above an orchestra. The
document aims to discover the justification for the use of the piano, a Western instrument, one which was considered bourgeois during the Cultural Revolution. Virtuosity and folk-like simplicity are both exploited with a political agenda in the concerto. The concerto would have to embody the revolutionary slogans, “Make the old serve the new” and “foreign things to serve China,” to legitimize the piece. The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* displays the practice of the cultural and artistic policies of the Cultural Revolution and their contradictions.
NOTE ON ROMANIZATION AND TRANSLATION

The romanization of Chinese names and terms are based on the *hanyu pinyin* system currently used in the People’s Republic of China, replacing the Wade-Giles system. Some names and places are kept in their familiar form or older spellings; for example, names of cities (Peking) and personal names spelled or pronounced according to different Chinese dialects (Chiang Kai-Shek). The translations given in this document are my own unless otherwise noted.
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INTRODUCTION

Piano works were first composed in China in early 20th century as a result of a growing interest in Western music. The adoption of Western techniques fused with traditional Chinese aspects informs many of these compositions. The best musicians were often sent abroad to study. Pianists often chose to study in Russia because of its long standing tradition of excellence in piano teaching, performance and composition. The Russian influence on piano pedagogy and piano technique in China remains today. Politically, China and Russia maintained close ties, with China adopting Soviet ideologies and philosophies including “Socialist Realism” and “revolutionary Romanticism.”

Commissioned by Madam Mao (1914-1991), the Yellow River Piano Concerto (1968) is scored for Western orchestra and piano. The piano concerto was arranged by a group of four composers: Yin Chengzong (b. 1941), Chu Wanghua (b. 1941), Sheng Lihong (b. 1926), and Liu Zhuang (b. 1932) during the Cultural Revolution. The piano concerto is based on a previous composition – the Yellow River Cantata (1938) by Xian Xinghai (1905-1945). Like its namesake, the piano concerto has a tumultuous history and background.

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The current research on the Yellow River Piano Concerto usually focuses only on the events of the Cultural Revolution leading to its inception and composition. My document examines the influence of Socialist Realism and the policies of the Communist Party on this piano concerto. The Yellow River Piano Concerto displays aspects of Chinese nationalism and Socialist Realism fused together in virtuosic pianistic display. Prior to the concerto, all forms of Western music were banned, and classical musicians suffered great persecution. The reworking of the cantata as a piano concerto still embodied elements of Socialist Realism and revolutionary Romanticism, despite the use of an instrument considered *bourgeois*. The relationship of the Socialist ideology to both these pieces is intricate. Both the cantata and the concerto reflect differences in the ideology’s interpretation and applications by the ruling party at different times in its history.

**The Yellow River**

The significance of the Yellow River geographically and culturally must be first examined. The Yellow River is the second longest river in China, second to the Yangtze River. It starts from the icy plateaus of the Qinghai Province and flows through nine provinces of China, finally reaching the sea at Shandong Province. The river’s location is also a demarcation of two provinces Hebei and Henan, literally “North of the River” and “South of the River.” Modern satellite images have provided us with an accurate map of the river, forming a dragon-like shape as it snakes its way through China. The Yellow River is also referred to as a “dragon” because of this shape. Rivers usually are the cradle of civilizations. In China, the Yellow River holds the key to the rich history, heritage and culture of the Chinese. This river has certainly seen the rise and fall of the many ruling powers in China. Despite being a source of life, the Yellow River is a
tumultuous river, with a turbulent past. As it brings fertile loess soil to the plains, the raging river feeds thousands of smaller rivers, streams and brooks, in turn irrigating millions of acres of farmland. Tragically, this loess also causes silt buildup in sections of the river, eventually breaking its banks. The resulting floods have claimed many lives. Thus, it is also known as “China’s Sorrow.”

Through the centuries of Chinese civilizations, many have tried to control the waters of the Yellow River to prevent flooding by building dams, bombing the riverbed and attempting to alter the course of the river. In June, 1938, Nationalist forces purposely breached the dams to flood invading Japanese forces, killing thousands of civilians as well. More recently, the controversial Three Gorges Dam was built in the 1950s, displacing thousands of people and flooding hundreds of villages. Planners did not factor in the amount of silt in the waters of the river. Instead of functioning as a hydroelectric dam, it now only serves as a safety precaution to prevent flooding. This partially tamed dragon thus flows its way through China to the sea.

In the late 19th century, Chinese scholars had to grapple with their sense of national identity. The Qing dynasty was quickly losing its grip over China. The Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Uprising had disastrous consequences. China was fractured by internal and external forces, desperately needing a uniting element to regain a sense of self. The creation of a national identity based on the dragon, the mythical Yellow Emperor and the Yellow River, was then designed and widely disseminated. The dragon and the Yellow River become closely identified to each other because of the river’s dragon-like shape. These ideas were not new but previously there was no need for this identity. The new identity is formed from a blending of mythology and

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3 Ibid., 138-140.
reality. The Yellow Emperor, Qin Shi Huang, was purportedly born in 2704 BC and is now venerated as the “first ancestor” and “father of the yellow race.” Now, Chinese often refer to themselves as the people of the Yellow River or people of the dragon and descendants of the Yellow Emperor. This thread is very common in Chinese nationalistic literature, poetry and art.

### Socialist Realism

The definition of Socialist Realism is broad, ambiguous, and contradictory, incorporating aspects from proletariat Realism and Russian Realism to nineteenth-century Realism. Christopher Norris defines it as “a realist theory of representation and a belief that art can promote human emancipation.” For this document, Socialist Realism in music is defined as a concept in which the composer attempts to mirror and reflect the reality of everyday life, to arouse party spirit and nationalism in the masses. Aesthetic principles of this ideology dictate that music be beautiful and accessible to the masses, contain a hero or character who overcomes all odds, and must be programmatic instead of “absolute.” Certain genres or forms of compositions were preferred, such as the symphony, symphonic poem, cantatas, operas, plays and mass songs. Mass songs are also referred to as “revolutionary songs.” Mass songs are political songs resulting from the combination of folk and revolutionary song elements, meant to

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be sung by the masses. Revolutionary Romanticism of the nineteenth century mirrors these aesthetics. This concept of Romanticism deals with the disenchantment of the modern capitalist world and the longing for a utopian society to be stilled by “investing in a hope for a new society.” Furthermore, the music must also convey political and ideological messages of the ruling party officials. The music must not be elitist and must bridge the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats, creating a universal musical language suitable to all classes. Elements from bourgeoisie culture were deemed appropriate to be used to elevate the standards of the proletariats. Mass songs therefore were simple and had a narrow melodic range for accessibility. Texts usually consisted of party slogans and other party directives, usually set in the common everyday language of the people. These songs were meant to be sung at political rallies, public assemblies and by individuals at leisure. The functions of these songs were to arouse the revolutionary spirit, nationalism and patriotism; express partisan sentiments; to promote unity and solidarity with a certain goal and to familiarize the people with party policies.

To legitimately trace the Soviet influence and export of the ideology and aesthetics of Socialist Realism, a contextual understanding is first needed. The following pages discuss the development and the aesthetic ideals of Socialist Realism in the Soviet model. These include the definitions specifically applied to Realism in music proposed by Carl Dahlhaus, whose work remains influential in this area of study.

The term “Socialist Realism” arose during a time when the revolutionaries in the Soviet Union felt there was need for a new ideology. Countries of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Armenia and Russia had unique cultures and diverse traditions, according to the revolutionaries, which would have to be united to be able to create a new Socialist music. Many different names were proposed or were used to attempt to codify this aesthetic doctrine. Now considered to be the last and greatest line of “Realisms”, many different names were first proposed such as “Social Realism”, “monumental Realism”, “proletarian Realism”, “new Realism” and some other similar names. The descriptors in these names are meant to invoke revolutionary pathos and provide a dimension for social criticism.

The term “Socialist Realism” was adopted in a series of discussions in 1932, instituted by Stalin himself. These meetings and discussions would form a new cultural policy to rally all artists to the Party’s cause. New artists’ unions would be formed to replace the abolished groups, associations and movements of the old system. This new cultural and artistic language would function as a communication tool across all political and artistic fields. This propaganda machine was finally given the name Socialist Realism.

The definition of this term remains vague and ambiguous even today. Leninist theory dictates “that art should be a ‘mirror’ to reality.” This idea would be central to the aesthetic theory of Socialist Realism. In Lenin’s theory, Socialist Realism is also the only way art should be interpreted. Symbolism is considered to be irrational and obfuscating; blurring and distorting

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12 Ibid., 39.
reality. The theory subscribes to the belief that art has a duty to ‘mirror’ reality and that toleration of the avant-garde could lead to something unrecognizable. According to standards of 1850s French Realism, “art should as far as possible be an objective representation of social reality, set in either present time or a concrete past.” Areas which were previously excluded from art as ‘unsuitable,’ like the depictions of the gruesome, obscene and vulgar could be justified under Realism. These depictions would have to push the boundaries of composition, performance and audience reception.

The idea of “truthfulness” is the main condition for creating realistic works. The question which remains is whether “truth” can always be portrayed. Therefore, this basis for Socialist Realism is also in itself the basic weakness of the ideology. The Party neglected to mention from whose perspective and through whose eyes this “truth” should be viewed and then, portrayed. During the period when this ideology was forced on artists, the political oppression, possible persecution and permanent censorship or self-censorship prevented artists from actually depicting the everyday effects of the revolution and the conditions they were living under.

This theory would, therefore, also claim that music could be used to give a truthful depiction of reality. According to Dahlhaus, any musical Realism, whether ‘socialist’ or ‘bourgeois,’ presupposes the aesthetics in which content takes precedence over form. The beauty of form is expended with because Socialist Realism literature and ideology is suspicious of formalism. Descriptions of reality which are too simple are decried as objectivism; unsuccessful or vague descriptions could also be then dismissed as being avant-garde. The

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 60.
21 Ibid., 19-20.
22 Dahlhaus, Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music, 3.
content would be subject to the whims of the ruling political party or the dictates of the cultural policy. The manipulation of the supposed content leads one to grapple with the gap between actual compositional practice and theory of Socialist Realism. Composers were forced to struggle to identify the musical correlates of the still undefined, ambiguous theoretical doctrine in order to write pieces. This led composers to name their compositions with political titles to legitimize them, without much regard for the actual music and extra musical content. In a more conniving and sinister manner, this was also used as a weapon to further one’s career at the expense of others. Socialist Realism was not first conceived as a musical style or a method of creating music, but a discourse on the conditions of “political correctness” in music. The primary function of such music “is not cognitive but coercive – serving to exclude some from positions of influence and to secure those positions for another group.”

When music is used as a propaganda tool to promulgate an ideology in any political regime, several assumptions and beliefs about music are operating. These beliefs are not new, dating back to the time of Plato (428/427-348/347 BC). In Plato’s Republic, certain modes of music were considered to be inherently disturbing and could arouse unsuitable behavior. The Lydian and Ionian modes would corrupt character with drunkenness, softness and indolence. Musical training would also influence a person, deep down to the soul, with the correct rhythm and harmony. The belief that music has the power to communicate is foremost. Music can stir the emotions in the masses to act or respond in a prescribed manner. Music cannot be abstract and be an end unto itself; it has and serves a greater purpose. Programmatic pieces are preferred

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24 Ibid., 14.
25 Ibid., 15.
27 Ibid., 95
in order to focus the audience’s thoughts on the supposed content, however vague and abstract the title actually is.

What are the correlations between true reality and music? Are they real or just a stretch of the imagination? Are they so firmly ingrained and entrenched, that they are no longer questioned? Dalhaus identified the six main elements which form the foundation for musical Realism. Later, in the same chapter he dismantled all six elements. Some of these elements are rooted in Platonic-Pythagoreanist theory which states that musical forms depict natural or social order.\(^{28}\) The first element is that music can be used to imitate non-musical sounds, both natural and realistic. This concept was often used in the late 19\(^{th}\) century, with pieces bearing descriptive titles of nature. Music also could enable the listener to envision space, through its acoustical properties. The rising and falling melodic lines, expansion of register, form or range, use of instrumentation could depict space. Its imitation of nature can be straightforward, with metaphors such as “high”, “low”, “sharp”, “blunt”, “dark”, and “light.” These concepts are so deeply rooted, that it is now considered to be a natural attribute of music, although they are artificially conceived with interpretative labels firmly attached.

Thirdly, musical representation of speech intonations is understood as imitation of nature, again with nature providing the model for imitation.\(^{29}\) The conventional musical language of the 18\(^{th}\) century was to communicate a certain feeling to listeners. It was believed that music contains elements and strains of the hypothetical primal language, the Adamite language, which now does not exist in current languages. Remnants of this primal language and the emotions it could express remain in music and are now shaped by melody. Music is closer to the original

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 18.
\(^{29}\) Ibid.
language and is now a systematized stylization of screams, groans and shouts of jubilation.\textsuperscript{30}

During the Baroque and Classical eras, the essence of music was the depiction of emotion by representing speech intonations closely. For example, the trembling voice is depicted with a tremolo, usually played by upper strings. Music can both express the inside and the outside emotions. The inner emotion of a piece of music could produce an effect on the listener, which is emotion aroused in that person through the depiction of emotion.\textsuperscript{31} The ‘pictorial’ representation of the outward gestures, like the direction of a melodic line, and inner stirrings connected with an affect is commonly associated with the Baroque and Classical eras. In the Romantic era, the listener is given a musical self-representation of the composer or interpreter. The composer uses music to speak of his own state of mind and to communicate something real or imagined.\textsuperscript{32}

Etymology, the origins of words, became important in Realism as it was believed that the true essence and meaning of an entity was found in its name.\textsuperscript{33} A word would require no other explanation than itself, as its meaning is encapsulated in itself. It is unclear as to how this meaning could be unlocked and how this would actually be translated to music, especially in instrumental music. Realism in music is not just achieved simply through attaching itself to a piece of poetry or prose, or an event. This would be too primitive and simplistic an explanation.\textsuperscript{34}

Another view is the Phythagorean view that “numerical order underlies both the structure of the world and the system of musical tones, which in turn represents an ‘essential music’.”\textsuperscript{35}

Music is able to present a picture of the world as a whole. It is believed to be a mirror of the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 20.
structure of the world ordered according to ‘proportion, number and weight.’ This has been the main apologetic argument for the value of studying music since antiquity, elevating its study as one of the four main disciplines in medieval times. Later, Christian theologians adopted and adapted many of its classical disciplines, thus numerology in music becomes important.

Socialist Realism also held that works of art should be beautiful, turning away from the aesthetic of ugliness, which in its view had already invaded 19th century Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism. Beauty was defined as the “sensual appearance of the ideal” by Hegel. This beauty should be accessible to all, meaning that all should be educated and made wise through such works. This would create a well-coordinated way to utilize propaganda in all social strata. The opposite notion of “beauty” is the notion of the “descriptive.” These two notions are not considered to be the same. By extension, ugliness is the extreme form of the descriptive.

Socialist Realism is also defined by what it is not. Some of the unacceptable patterns in the ideology are avant-garde formalism, Western influences (including jazz), and primitivism of “proletariat” music, all of which were to be avoided. “Music should be beautiful and comprehensible, at the same time monumental, resembling 19th century Russian classical music.” This description paved the way for the musical style of the romantic and nationalistic schools, which embodied Russian classical music in the 19th century, to be used in Socialist Realist music. Socialist Realism also opened a new perspective on and a new depth to the concept of “partiality” and “popular character.” This popular character would be drawn from the indigenous folklore. Beautiful, monumental, realistic music would be expressed through program

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 33.
39 Dahlhaus, Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music, 40.
40 Ibid.
music and vocal music. Certain musical forms were preferred more than others: monumental symphonies and symphonic poems, cantatas, operas and mass songs as a medium of political agitation. This hierarchy of musical form and genres corresponded with political and revolutionary preferences during the French Revolution. The target audience of this music was the new middle class during the French Revolution. This model would be adopted by the Soviet Union when a new middle class was formed there.

The new socialist music would be a direct result of Party theory and criticism. Members of the Party would also decide and argue about “how a Realistic interpretation of music could be created, whether a new Socialist chamber music – based on popular and/or folk instruments – was possible.”41 The unification of a cultural policy would start with the creation of a musical language acceptable to all social classes: peasants and workers (the proletariat), and educated people (the bourgeoisie). The different styles associated with these groups should contribute to forging a common musical language, with none given preferential treatment. “Folk-music would represent the contribution of the peasant class, popular music that of the workers, and European art-music that of the intelligentsia.”42 Realism would provide the radical vehicle for the party and composers to mix the “high” and “low” styles, in contravention of the aesthetic and social rules requiring their separation.43 This would be easily adopted into the socialist realist ideology.

Socialist Realism is very closely related to Romanticism. Socialist Realism’s attitude towards musical Romanticism is that romantic ideas are to be condemned but romantic music is worth saving. It was understood that a composer’s compositional procedures could be related to the institutions of bourgeois musical culture, as in most of Western music history. The public

concert was an establishment for and is an institution of the middle class. The symphony concert is the scene of thoughtful reception of the output of ideas from a composer, embodying “the idea of absolute music and an endorsement of the poetic element of musical art.”\textsuperscript{44} In the eyes of Socialist Realism, bourgeois music reflects the process of general decay and disintegration of bourgeois culture of which the effects of the decay were seen in society. Contemporary music had been imbued with “decadent moods” that resulted in the overemphasis on the sensual and pathologically erotic, the exotic, the barbaric, the mystical and the Naturalistic.\textsuperscript{45}

Socialist Realism was also determined to use any elements of other ideologies to serve its purpose, leading to a term “Romantic Realism.” In simple terms, it is Romantic music infused with ideas of Realism. The ideals of the improbable and the extravagant had to be part of the Utopia which is close at hand. In the Romantic novels of author Sir Walter Scott, the improbable and the extravagant could be indulged. A true novel is a representation of a segment of reality filtered through the author’s mind: reality as it “really exists in the common walks of life.”\textsuperscript{46} Scott’s success is in bridging “the romantic world of the Highlands and the realist world of the Lowlands” with each other subtly so that the reader is still grounded in reality, but is able to enjoy a sliver of extravagance and the extraordinary.\textsuperscript{47} This assumed that the reader would only be a passive recipient of an author’s work, and cannot play an active role in the interpretation of the work.

The Soviet party claimed that current music was experiencing a crisis and needed to be rescued. Western music had become elitist and ungrounded because it had lost touch with its folk roots. Folk music and mass and workers’ songs were regarded as highly appropriate models for

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{46} Dahlhaus, \textit{Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music}, 57.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
new works as these reflect the people who are the working class. The blending of the elements of elitist Western music with the folk, mass and worker's songs would narrow and bridge the gap between “serious” (“high”) and “light” (“low”) music.\textsuperscript{48} It would also abolish the corresponding social class gap between the intellectual elite bourgeoisie and the proletariat.\textsuperscript{49} Party officials believed that the familiarity of the elements of mass songs and folk-song would appeal to the masses, in turn conveying the ideological messages of the Party.\textsuperscript{50} Slogans such as “The folk song of our times is the workers’ song” by Wurm or “The fighters’ song is the real folk-song of the proletariat” by Hanns Eisler, sum up the spirit of the time.\textsuperscript{51}

As the Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers, Viktor Gorodinsky states:

The main attention of the Soviet composer must be directed towards the victorious progressive principles of reality, towards all that is heroic, bright, and beautiful. This must be embodied in musical images full of beauty and strength. Socialist Realism demands an implacable struggle against the folk-negating modernistic directions that are typical of the decay of contemporary bourgeois art, against subservience and servility towards modern bourgeois culture.\textsuperscript{52}

The preferred lush and monumental style of music continued from Russian Romantic nationalism to Socialist Realism. This preference allowed Socialist Realist music in Russia and other countries to adopt the idioms and styles of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Russian concert repertory. The concert repertory of this era is also imbued with nationalistic traditions, and these were upheld as a basis for Socialist Realism.\textsuperscript{53} The Russian “Mighty Handful” - Mussorgsky, Borodin, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev would be the model composers of this movement. The “Mighty Handful,” also referred to as the “Mighty Five,” is often portrayed in a clenched fist - a widely

\textsuperscript{48} Milin, “Socialist Realism as an Enforced Renewal of Musical Nationalism,” 39.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Chew and Bek, “Introduction: The Dialectics of Socialist Realism,” 11.
accepted symbol of revolution. Works of the “Mighty Handful,” folk music and old revolutionary songs, such as the Internationale or other demonstration songs of the French Revolution, and the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, would be the source of inspiration for any Socialist Realist work.

Mussorgsky was particularly favored and considered to be the closest composer in spirit to the Russian people. His music was based on common events and contained elements of folk music. The rhythm and timbre of his music was perceived to have closely imitated the intonations of speech. This was one of the elements in Realist music as defined by Dahlhaus. Mussorgsky’s opera “Boris Godunov”, piano cycle “Pictures at an Exhibition” and song cycle “Sunless”, were well-received and used as models. Surprisingly, the Party also found a way to justify Beethoven, holding him in high esteem for his mixture of tradition and innovation.

When associating musical Realism and nationalism, several premises are in operation. The musical “intonations” which are the intonations of a national language, represent the criterion of a Realist style. This Realist style used by a composer is therefore accepted and acknowledged as a national musical idiom. The use of everyday intonation would be easily recognizable by all strata of the audience, becoming highly convincing and persuasive. In instrumental music, this could be achieved by using vocal music, such as folk songs and revolutionary songs, as the basis for melodic material. This would enable the composer to be realist: expressing the ideas and emotions of the masses, leading to recognition of his music over the course of many generations. This was suggested by Boris Assafjew in his Die musikalische Form als Prozess, Berlin 1976. The use of such compositional techniques bridged the

55 Ibid.
56 Dahlhaus, Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music, 101.
appreciation and understanding gap between the bourgeoisie, the worker and the proletariat, creating a true music for the masses. Music of substance would have to appropriate the musical substance of the language, with originality of the composer rooted in the “popular spirit.” In practice, 19th century Realism and nationalism are two sides of the same coin.\textsuperscript{57}

In search of this folk-like tone, song collectors began their monumental task to serve the Utopian ideals of the revolution. Song collecting would turn from being a nostalgic exercise of the middle class to a revolutionary movement by the working class. The leaders did not consider that this actually put folk culture at risk. Folk songs would be transfigured, appropriated for different use. The folk song, when extracted from its original culture and setting would no longer be authentic. Restoration of a folk culture often meant obliteration.\textsuperscript{58} Folk songs provided a simple way out for this new music’s cause. It need not be asked whether or not folk songs could be modified as they have been always modified. “A condition of their existence was the constant modification they were subjected to.”\textsuperscript{59} Many folk songs would not exist today if it was not for oral transmission, in which modification is the norm.

Music composers were still the educated class. It is difficult to imagine an untrained peasant writing a monumental symphony or a mass chorus which would appeal to the masses. Folk songs and culture were appropriated by the educated bourgeoisie – the composer. A folk song was inevitably placed in a musical context dominated by classic-romantic art music, being the contribution from the peasant class. To justify its use as rhetoric of tones, composers explained that folk music becomes a form of coloration, or characterization available to adopt as

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 102.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 111.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 112.
The process of idealizing a folksong led to the romanticization of the folksong. Although this is a recognized and accepted modification, this practice is in fact an "embourgeoisment" of the essence of folk-art. The proletariat contribution had to be elevated and the bourgeois contribution brought low for the gap to be closed.

Arriving at this point, one can see that Socialist Realism is a difficult aesthetic, full of twists and turns. It exploits ideas which support it and simply disregards those which do not, entangling itself into a mess of definitions and interpretations. This document cannot adequately explain the etymology of Socialist Realism and the breadth of the reach of this ideology. To close this chapter, it is best to state that Socialist Realism is ingrained with a conservative aesthetic strand, and utilized to endorse or reject a piece of work according to political decisions made by functionaries.
CHAPTER ONE: SOCIALIST REALISM “À LA CHINOIS”: MAO’S TALKS AT THE YAN’AN FORUM ON LITERATURE AND ART IN 1942

The relationship between governance and music was not new to 20th century China. These aesthetic notions and their effects were discussed by Chinese philosophers such as Confucius (551-479 BC) and Xunzi (312-230 BC). Music was either good or bad, but never neutral.

Music is mentioned frequently in the writings of Confucius. He believes music could influence a person to proper behavior, for example in observing the rites (correct etiquette) at the official functions and ceremonies. The most important part of culture (wen) is poetry and music. Moral quality of music is deemed to be more important than beauty. Beauty was still important as it is a vehicle to express goodness. Perfectly beautiful music can express the greatest of joy.

In his Book XV of his *Analects*, Confucius states that:

> As for music, adopt the *shao* and the *wu*. Banish the tunes of Cheng and keep plausible men at a distance. The tunes of Cheng are wanton and plausible men are dangerous.

Incorrect music can be attractive but that which lacks goodness corrupts one’s character. Individual characters make up society. From this society, the gentry and the scholars arise. The governance of a society is intrinsically bound to the individual in Confucius’s model. Everyone

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64 Ibid., 40.
65 Ibid., 133-134.
must play his role, no matter what his rank is in society.

Xunzi devotes a chapter to music in his writings. He states that music is joy, and his definition of music includes singing, dancing and musical accompaniment. It should be mentioned here that the Chinese character for music “yue” can also be pronounced as “le” which means joy. Joy and music can be one and the same.

Xunzi states that:

Man must have his joy, and joy must have its expression, but if that expression is not guided by principles of the Way, then it will inevitably become disordered. The former kings hated such disorder, and therefore they created the musical forms of the odes and hymns in order to guide it.

He explains the different forms and the effects they had on the people. The harmonious sounds of music would bring harmony to the family and by extension to the nation. Music also produces an inner transformation in a man. The correct forms of music would produce moderate and good behavior in the citizens, and ready the military to protect the state from enemy attacks. In Xunzi’s words, “depraved and seductive music” would promote rebellion, quarreling and disorder amongst the people leading to revolts. These revolts would weaken the state and result in an invasion by the enemy. Xunzi warns:

Hence, to turn away from the proper rites and music and to allow evil music to spread is the source of danger and disgrace.

According to Confucius and Xunzi’s philosophies, music affected one’s behavior more than the emotions. It is more important to adhere to the rites and the order these rites provided. Music and rites are connected to virtue.

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 118.
These ancient Chinese philosophies on music have influenced China throughout the centuries. Music and politics are never considered to be separate subjects. Remnants of these thoughts and practices on music remained even as China turned its back on the feudal and imperialist past. China would need a new model to replace these ancient thoughts and pave the way for modernization.

In the 1920s, China sought to emulate the Soviet Union, which was considered the elder brother and a suitable model. Ideologies, political practices, cultural reform and the revolutions of the Soviet Union became an inspiration for the “new China.” The new China was putting away the past practices of feudalism and imperialism. China’s response to the West in the late 19th century was to aim to absorb the best from the West and adapt it for use in China. The slogan Zhongxue wei ti, Xixue wei yong (in short, tiyong), translates to “Chinese learning as substance and Western learning for application.” The superiority of the Chinese race is still assumed, and the Chinese are only lagging behind in scientific and technological advances of the West. China was determined to catch up with the rest of the world and reassert its status internationally.

The term “Socialist Realism” was not officially used in the PRC until the mid-1950s. Mao’s Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art of 1942 alludes to aspects of Socialist Realism without using the term itself. The political situation in China at this point was difficult. Japan and China were at war with each other but China was also experiencing a civil war. The Nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai Shek were fighting against Mao’s Communist Red Army. The Japanese invasion and the civil war led to a historic event referred to as the Long March.

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70 Ibid.
Mao would lead his troops on a long journey starting from the southern Jiangxi Province finally ending up in Yan’an, located in the northern Shanxi Province. The march which covered almost 4,000 miles was a perilous journey. The troops marched for a year, beginning in October 1934, not knowing their final destination. They were in a cat and mouse game with the Nationalist troops, having to constantly alter their strategy and route to break through to the north. Many did not survive the rough and dangerous conditions. The troops were poorly equipped to handle the conditions they would encounter, believing that their camaraderie and revolutionary spirit would be sufficient to persevere. Illness, hunger, malnourishment, winter weather and warfare, not to mention pure fatigue, killed off the majority of the troops who started this journey. Mao had set out with around 100,000 troops, but only around 7,000 arrived at Yan’an. The ones who arrived in Yan’an were true survivors. They had marched through dense forests and swamps, climbed through treacherous mountain passes and survived Nationalist army and local warlord attacks to arrive at the new Communist base in October 1935.

Conditions at Yan’an were not ideal. Living conditions were harsh in the arid area. They stayed in caves in the mountainside, which provided adequate shelter from the extremes of heat and cold. People who wanted to escape the Japanese, defect from the Nationalists or join the Communists came to Mao’s camp. Yan’an was the new Mecca where the latest revolutionary ideas, anti-Japanese strategies and policies of the Communists would be developed. The community at Yan’an consisted of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary cadres. For them, the Long March and the harsh years at Yan’an became badges of honor, to be flashed at appropriate times to gain political influence or standing.

At Yan’an, Mao developed and codified the revolutionary ideologies which were being discussed. He also adopted and adapted Soviet ideologies to suit China, writing his political
thoughts and disseminating the information to his comrades. Unlike the Soviet Union, China was an agrarian society, so Mao had four classes: the proletariat, the worker, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The peasants toiled on the land owned by the petty bourgeoisie.

This group also included students, intellectuals and small shopkeepers. Mao did not specifically define the national bourgeoisie, at times using this term to describe the former Nationalists, the bureaucracy or the capitalists who had industrial and commercial enterprises.

It was also in Yan’an that Mao married his third wife, the actress Lan Ping who is later known as Jiang Qing. Mao’s first wife, Yang Kaihui was killed by the Nationalists, and he divorced his second wife, He Zizhen. Jiang Qing will later play a key role in enforcing the cultural and artistic policies of the Cultural Revolution 1966-1976.

As Mao developed his ideology, he would give talks and speeches to the community at Yan’an. This community would be the first to hear of Mao’s thoughts and it was also the experimental group upon which Mao’s social experiment would be expressed. Mao believed that music, art, drama and literature were the most effective weapons in inciting and organizing the people. His view was expressed at the founding of the Lu Xun Academy of Art at Yan’an in April 1938. The most significant of Mao’s speeches to this document is the Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Art and Literature. Mao gave his views on his cultural policy in a series of lectures, dated May 4 and May 23, 1942. Mao begins his speech by stating that a cultural army is needed to unite the Chinese people and defeat the enemy. Mao saw the Nationalist forces and the

73 Ibid., 90.
74 Ibid., 78 and 163.
76 Ibid. The Lu Xun Academy of Art was named after influential leftist writer, Lu Xun (1881-1936), also known as Lu Hsun. He wrote literature which was critical of the political systems and social life in China in the early 20th century. He is considered to be the founder of modern Chinese literature.
Japanese imperialist forces as the enemies of the people. Mao states that art and literature must
be honed to advance revolutionary thought. Art and literature must educate and unite the people
to attack and annihilate the enemy. Revolutionary artists who are loyal to the Communist Party
should adhere to Party spirit and Party policies, which are for the proletariat and the broad
masses of the people. Mao elaborates on these to clarify the role of artists.

Revolutionary artists had to assume two attitudes: either to expose or to praise. They are
to expose the tactics of the enemy – the Japanese forces. The cruelty of the enemy should be
exposed in order to rally the people to fight. Praise should be accorded to the allies of the Party,
who are assisting in the effort to defeat the enemy. If these allies are not putting up an active
resistance towards Japan, they should be criticized. As for the workers and the soldiers, their
work should be praised and those who err in their ways should be encouraged to reform. True
revolutionary artists would not hesitate to either praise or expose correctly. Mao states:

All dark forces which endanger the masses of the people must be exposed while
all revolutionary struggles of the masses must be praised – this is the basic task of
the revolutionary artists and writers.\textsuperscript{78}

The audience for this art would start with the different groups of people at Yan’an. Mao
outlined that art should benefit the masses, which includes the workers, peasants, soldiers and
revolutionary cadres. Artists and writers must strive to attain this goal. The problems of
misunderstandings and the lack of a common language stood in the way of this goal. Mao also
assumed that the masses, the recipients of the art, are the passive and reflective element, in

\textsuperscript{77} Mao Zedong, “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature,” in \textit{Selected Works Vol. 4} (Peking: Foreign
Language Press, 1953-1960), 64.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 87.
contrast to the writers and artists, the active element.\textsuperscript{79} To better understand the wider audience, the artists and writers should live amongst and work side by side with the peasants and workers. They are to study, observe and experience the life of these peasants and workers. They must also learn to utilize the language common to the masses and not just that of the educated elite in their works. They had to shed their comfortable lifestyle and be able to live like a peasant or a worker.

In the first of the lectures, Mao stated:

\begin{quote}
If you want the masses to understand you and want to become one with them, you must be determined to undergo a long and even painful process of remolding.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

In Mao’s second lecture, he reiterates and elaborates on this point:

\begin{quote}
All revolutionary artists and writers of China, all artists and writers of high promise, must, for long periods of time, unreservedly and whole-heartedly go into the midst of the masses, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers; they must go into the fiery struggles, go to the only, the broadest, the richest source to observe, learn, study and analyze all men, all classes, all kinds of people, all the vivid patterns of life, struggle and all raw material of art and literature, before they can proceed to creation.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

The harsh life that Mao chose to live would now be forced upon many people. As a direct result of these statements, many artists and educators were sent down to farms and remote villages for their re-education process. They had to be transformed to be instruments of Mao’s revolution. Only revolutionary artists would be able to produce revolutionary art, as the art would be a product of the artist’s brain reflecting the life of a given society.\textsuperscript{82}

Mao quotes Lenin that art should “serve the millions upon millions of working people.”\textsuperscript{83}

Who are the millions and millions in China? Mao gives a hierarchy of the masses in his lecture, naming the revolutionary cadres as the most important audience for art. Secondly, they are

\textsuperscript{80} Mao, “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art,” 67.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 70.
followed by the workers who are staunch allies of the revolution. They are then followed by the peasants and soldiers. The peasants were added into this hierarchy, adapting Marx’s distinctions to China’s agrarian society. Lastly, the urban workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, who are allies of the revolution, form the final group of the broad masses in China.  

Art and literature must be popularized among the workers, peasants and soldiers. Most of these were uneducated and illiterate, and had never been exposed to higher art and culture. Mao claims that they were kept from enlightenment because of the feudal and bourgeois rule. The immediate need would be to popularize the forms of revolutionary art and literature among them, so that they could be able to join in the revolutionary efforts. The art and literature would have to be understandable and be appropriate for immediate consumption without having to educate the illiterate classes. Prior to educating and elevating these groups to a higher level, there is first a duty to learn from them. Standards of the arts and literature would also have to be raised from the basis of the workers, peasants and soldiers along the lines of the proletariat, but not to the level of the feudal, petty bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie. The popularization of art and literature must also include the process of elevation. This would prevent stagnation of any art form and would gradually raise the standards of the masses, especially of the proletariat. However, popularization and elevation must balance each other and they should not be considered as independent of one another.

Revolutionary art and literature for the masses should be under the leadership of the proletariat (the Chinese peasants, workers and soldiers). Bourgeois and feudal art and literature

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84 Ibid., 71-72.
85 Ibid., 78.
86 Ibid., 76.
should be condemned. The bourgeoisie and feudal landlords are both deemed as exploiters and oppressors. The new culture should be anti-feudal and anti-imperialist, in order to overcome these aspects of China’s past. However, these two aspects should not be totally discarded but remolded and reformed with new content to serve the revolution. Artistic and literary works of ancient times and foreign countries can be used as models if they are successful in portraying their own life and times. Elements in these works would have to be properly and critically assimilated into the revolutionary art and literature.

Artists would have to be able to produce a work of art which is proletarian, not petty bourgeois in disguise. Artists must not be sympathetic to the petty bourgeoisie. Their works of art which contain proletarian aspects should not be for novelty’s sake or to glorify primitivism in folk art. They should accurately portray the proletariat, unlike “petty bourgeoisie intellectuals in the clothing of working people.” Artists should unite content and form, balance between politics and art, without compromising either ideological correctness or artistic standards. Mao wanted works of art which would transcend, rather than faithfully reflect, everyday life. When art is more idealized, it would take on a more universal appeal. This would closely resemble a type of revolutionary Romanticism. Instead of stressing the realist aspect of the Soviet ideology, Mao chose to emphasize the accessibility of art to the masses. Art must be subordinate to politics, and there is a direct relationship between the artist and society. He stressed that it was important for art to be propaganda and be a method of educating the masses. Artistic quality would be subservient to these, although still to be considered.

87 Ibid., 71.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 73.
90 Ibid., 77.
The power of art and literature should not be underestimated. Mao quotes Lenin that proletarian art and literature are the cogs and screws of the proletarian revolutionary machine. Mao does not believe that art for art’s sake is possible or appropriate as an ideal. Art is neither independent of politics nor does it stand above the classes. Art and literature must serve the ideology of the revolution. It must be subordinate to the politics of the revolution because it is through these politics that the needs of the classes and masses can be expressed and met. The educated revolutionary statesmen would have a duty to collect ideas from the masses referred to as mass-statesmen. In turn, these raw ideas were submitted to a refining process by the revolutionary statesmen. These refined ideas are returned to the mass-statesmen for implementation and acceptance. This ensured that the revolutionary statesmen do not turn into aristocrats and lose touch with reality. This model explains the difference between a member of the bourgeoisie and a revolutionary statesman. This model was applied to art and literature so that the end products would be a truthful reflection of the ideas of the masses.

Mao gives an example to further explain this point. At this juncture, China was most concerned about the Japanese invasion. Revolutionary artists and writers should unite to produce works which portray resistance to the Japanese. The feelings of the people who are being oppressed by the Japanese should be refined and used in popular art and literature. The popularization of the art and literature will then increase the fervor to resist the Japanese. The unity and increasing Japanese resistance would be a process of elevation.

Mao’s idea of learning from the proletariat also resulted in a mass movement to collect folk songs as a way to discern the feelings of the people. Folk song study groups were formed in the Lu Xun Academy of Arts. These groups were sent to collect songs popular in the different
provinces and communities of China.\footnote{Hung, “The Politics of Songs,” 908.} Leftist poet, He Qifang (1912-1977) agreed with Mao that folk music “reflects [the] life and expresses [people’s] emotion freely.”\footnote{Ibid.} The folk songs were subjected to this process of refinement discussed in the paragraph above. The refinement process was through the lens of Mao’s policies. The songs were not collected by trained musicians or ethnomusicologists, but by Party loyalists.\footnote{Ibid., 909.} There was no systematic collecting and notating the tunes of these songs. The lyrics were deemed to be more important, hence the melodies were often left out. In folk song collecting, variants of songs are common. This factor was also not taken into account. The song collecting movement was also subjected to the bias of the collector. Songs of certain topics were collected, while others were left out. These songs would then be altered. New texts were substituted for the lyrics of the folk song and the familiar tune kept.\footnote{Ibid., 910.}

Art and literature will always be subject to criticism. Revolutionary art and literature would be judged politically and artistically. Mao defines the parameters of what art and literature are considered good and bad in the eyes of the revolution and the Party. According to the political criteria, all works which promote unity and resistance against Japan and promote progress would be considered good. Works which undermined this cause, which sow discord or retrogression would be bad. Mao acknowledges that there is a difficulty with determining whether something is bad because of its motive or effect (practice). However, he makes the statement that an artist would be judged by the effect of his work on the people, no matter what his motives and intentions were. All political attitudes were acceptable in the works except for

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\footnote{Hung, “The Politics of Songs,” 908.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid., 909.}
\footnote{Ibid., 910.}
those which opposed the country, the sciences, the people and Communism.\textsuperscript{96} Such opposition would weaken China’s stance against Japan. As for the artistic criteria, works which are good would be high in artistic quality and works which are bad would be low in artistic quality. Mao states that the works should be judged according to the science of art, to be able to raise a lower level of art to a higher level and to transform unsuitable art to one which meets the requirements of the masses.

Mao also assumes that artists and writers cannot be neutral in society. They must be either proletariat or bourgeoisie, either revolutionary or reactionary. Their works are a reflection of their essence and who they are; therefore, a proletarian artist would extol proletarian works, as a bourgeois artist would extol bourgeois works. The artist again would be judged as to which type of work he extols, the absorption of the correct ideas, his output and the effect his output has on the people. A good artist must be able to judge himself through self-criticism, and be willing to acknowledge the shortcomings and mistakes of his own works.

When the PRC was founded in 1949, Socialist Realism was adopted as the artistic method and the Soviet Union was to be emulated. The Soviet Union had struggled with the issue of ideology and the implementation of cultural policies pertaining to art and literature. China believed it could learn from the experiences of the Soviet Union and did not hesitate to launch a campaign to do so. From 1954 to 1960, a handful of Soviet music experts were brought in to teach at the Central Conservatory of Music, the leading music institution.\textsuperscript{97} The Soviets brought with them their system of musical education, but there were no clear guidelines on how Socialist Realism of the Soviet Union would be applied to Chinese music. However, this did not stop the

\textsuperscript{96} Mao, “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art,” 85.
\textsuperscript{97} Yang, “Socialist Realism and Music in the People’s Republic of China,” 137.
Party from persecuting those musicians and composers who were considered reactionary and not in line with Socialist Realism.

Chinese composer, musicologist and the director of the Shanghai Conservatory, He Luting, was criticized for opposing Socialist Realism. He was attacked because he believed artistic standards and technical training are more important than politics. He outlined his ideas in a speech at the national meeting of the Chinese Musicians’ Association in 1953. He questioned the validity of stressing the study of Marxist and Maoist ideologies, instead of raising technical standards in the music curriculum. He also recognized the necessity of learning from the West while developing a national form for China. The Party was discarding songs from the petit-bourgeoisie, but in his opinion these were still valid and acceptable revolutionary music, as the songs embodied the people’s emotions. He also supported formalism as a valid compositional technique, likening it to the structural framework, as in architecture. As Socialist Realism considered formalism to be a capitalist compositional technique, he was quickly denounced.

One of He’s critics, Xia Bai, wrote an article to attack him and stated that Socialist Realist art should be a true, deep and perfect reflection of reality. Artists should be well versed in Marxism and Leninism. The political and artistic content of the Socialist art must conform to the Party. Socialist Realism in the PRC became both a method of creating art and also a set of rules which dictated an artist’s career. Those who did not follow this method and these rules were

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98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 138.
denounced as “rightist.” He Luting was made to apologize for his remarks and was forgiven, but in the years to come, he would face more persecution.

Several composers were touted to be models of revolutionary music. Two composers, Nie Er (1912-1935) and Xian Xinghai, were recognized in 1955 as outstanding composers of Socialist Realist music. The Party had to name some composers to be models for current composers. Looking to the past to gain legitimacy leaves little room for questioning and suspicion. By 1955, both these composers were dead but had left a number of works composed during the years of the Japanese resistance. They were not survivors of the Long March, but they were present at Yan’an, the Communist base. Both composers leaned towards the Communist agenda. Their music contained anti-Japanese sentiment which had mass appeal and propaganda elements. These were considered to be great examples of Socialist Realist music. One of the pieces which was composed during this period is the *Yellow River Cantata* by Xian Xinghai. Although Xian is hailed as a musical hero, his personal letters reveal that he was only serving the Party to make a living.

To commemorate Xian, Ma Ke (1918-1976) wrote an article to clarify the meaning of Socialist Realism in terms of music. Beethoven, Chopin and Tchaikovsky would be decried as composers whose music did not reflect the society in which they lived.\(^{103}\) The music of these great composers survived only because they transcended reality, thus, the music was not a truthful representation.\(^{104}\) The Soviet composers of the Mighty Five (Borodin, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Cui and Balakirev) are again praised because their compositions successfully portray true Realism in music.\(^{105}\) Realist music must describe current revolutionary incidents.

\(^{103}\) Ibid.
\(^{104}\) Ibid., 139.
\(^{105}\) Ibid.
The meaning and significance of class struggle must be conveyed by the composer as well. Ma also named Xian’s *Second Symphony* as the perfect example of Socialist music, as it was a protest against Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.\textsuperscript{106} This showed that a composer could use his music to stir up revolutionary feelings in the masses.

In the PRC, the Socialist Realist movement was anti-modern. Although it called for new works and a new approach towards composition, the styles of contemporary Western composers were attacked. The music of Schoenberg (1874-1951) and Stravinsky (1882-1971) was condemned as their compositions were difficult for the masses to understand. They did not compose for accessibility and popularization. Another writer, Lu Ji, echoes the stance of the Soviet Union on embracing Socialist Realism as a positive tool to enlighten the masses and develop a healthy Communist morale. He also believed that positive and affirmative music would reinforce a broad and clear worldview. Revolutionary art should not be over-refined but continue to emphasize the naturalistic primitive elements in art. Revolutionary art should not be obsessed with individualism and formalism.

Mao’s idea that Socialist Realist music should serve an educational purpose is finally implemented in practice. Campaigns of *Shangshan xia xiang* (literally meaning “going up the mountain and down to the fields”) were organized in 1957. This was one of the ways in which Mao purged dissidents. Many of the PRC’s leading composers followed this directive and were sent to the rural areas for six months to two years. How could one write about the truth, when one has not been exposed to the truth? Composers could only write Realist music if they had first-hand involvement and education in the lives of the masses.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

When the Great Leap Forward was declared in 1958, Socialist Realist music was also believed to be able to raise productivity, health and material standards. The aim of this movement was to modernize China from an agrarian society to an industrialized society. The villages were organized into communes and economic standards of the rural areas had to be raised. Production of steel, agriculture, art, music and everything else tangible had to be increased. Music was also subjected to the same economic standards and the emphasis was on quantity, speed, quality and competitiveness. As a result, the number of ensembles grew, performances were given more frequently, the variety of programs also increased and there was a burst of compositional output. Party edict proclaimed that music should reflect the spirit of the people during the Great Leap Forward and depict images of heroic figures from the past. To please the Party and maintain good standing, music conservatories and musicians’ associations turned in reports of thousands of mass songs in preparation along with operas, large ensemble works and small scale works. Conservatories also stated they intended to stage several hundred performances but these were unlikely carried out.\(^{107}\) These numbers are difficult to believe and likely are false representations of reality, just as official figures of agricultural production were grossly exaggerated.\(^{108}\)

Socialist Realism in China would evolve into revolutionary Romanticism because of a concert. The concert, given by the Soviet National Philharmonic on May 18, 1958, consisted of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* and Shostakovich’s *Eleventh Symphony (The Year 1905)*. The current Vice-Premier, Chen Yi, who attended this concert, was deeply moved by the music. He suggested to the Secretary of the Chinese Writer’s Union that composers should compose music

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 141.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.
based on the eight frescoes of the Monument to the People’s Hero in Tiananmen Square. Consequently, composers planned to write music depicting various historical events of a specific period or a specific historical incident. The incidents had to be depicted in the best possible way. These works include symphonies, cantatas, choruses and operas. Revolutionary Romanticism had very similar aesthetics to Socialist Realism. Revolutionary Romantic music should be judged according to the subject or the content it held, rather than the styles or forms of expression as in Socialist Realism. It was concluded that composers should write music on Socialist and Communist themes which glorified the people’s heroes. To be effective tools of the revolution, composers should live with the people. This was, of course, in line with Mao’s policies.

The combination of Socialist Realism and revolutionary Romanticism became a hallmark of the PRC’s cultural policy which artists had to adhere to. This slight change in the policy in 1960 also reflected a change in the relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union. To justify the cultural policy and to distinguish it from the Soviet Union, this assimilation of revolutionary Romanticism and Socialist Realism were traced to Mao. They were presented as the ultimate realization of Marx’s revolutionary philosophy. Zhou Yang, the Cultural Spokesman for the PRC, would also bring in the term “revolutionary Realism” into the picture. He further pushed the bounds by saying that a combination of revolutionary Realism and revolutionary Romanticism would be the best way to represent the current heroic age and the heroes of the day. He stated that grey colors and gloomy language should not be used to realistically reflect the spirit of the people. However, eulogies, grand tunes and bright colors would be more acceptable. These new terms neither mask nor change the aspects of Socialist Realism. This

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109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., 142
111 Ibid.
would still be politically correct music depicting an era from the most positive perspective possible. Musicians were then required to reflect “reality” through beautiful, expressive, optimistic and compassionate images, as mandated in the Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Composers in 1958.\textsuperscript{112} China could not remove itself completely from the Soviet model.

Musicologist Helen Yang identifies six aspects of music which were influenced by Socialist Realism from the 1950s to the 1970s.\textsuperscript{113} Firstly, the genre of the mass song grew and was considered to be the most important. Similar to the mass song, large-scale works and cantatas were composed because these could easily carry propaganda messages. The number of art songs and chamber works declined dramatically, as these genres were considered to be elitist. The composition of symphonies and symphonic poems with revolutionary titles was encouraged. Traditional Chinese music had to undergo modernization in order to be divorced from the past. The emphasis on traditional music would be on its proletarian roots instead of the feudal and imperial past. Lastly, contemporary Western compositional techniques, which were considered modernist or formalist, were banned. With these influences and the restrictions placed on composers, the music of these two decades tends to be pentatonic, romantic and nationalist in the style of the 19th century composers. Instrumental pieces were given vivid and fanciful titles, often dealing with historical episodes in Chinese history. Melodies of revolutionary songs and pentatonic tunes would be absorbed into the pieces to symbolize the revolution and national pride. Operas would have heroes and heroines who were selfless, wise, ingenious, kind, capable Communists who were willing to give up their lives for the Party.\textsuperscript{114} This was a change from the Chinese opera traditions which had mythical or feudalistic storylines with supernatural

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 144.
characters, along with characters from distinct classes. Socialist Realism which was born in the Soviet Union, was now sinified and would be fully exploited by the Mao’s Communist Party in the PRC.
CHAPTER TWO: THE PREDECESSOR OF THE YELLOW RIVER PIANO CONCERTO: XIAN XINGHAI’S YELLOW RIVER CANTATA

The location of Yan’an, the Communist base, is close to one of the rivers off the Yellow River itself. The Yellow River Cantata was written in Yan’an during the Civil war and Sino-Japanese war period by composer Xian Xinghai (1905-1945). Xian was born to a fisherman’s family in the southern province of Guangdong. His early education between the years of 1911-1918 was in Singapore. He was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory but was expelled or dropped out in 1928. He left for Paris in 1929 and studied composition with Vincent D’Indy (1851-1931) and Paul Dukas (1865-1935). In 1935, he returned to Shanghai, where he met Russian composers Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977) and Aaron Avsholomov (1894-1965). These two men attempted to help him reestablish his career in Shanghai, but Xian’s expulsion from the conservatory haunted him. Xian survived by writing songs for the revolution and eventually he decided to join the Communist base at Yan’an. He was appointed music director at the newly formed Lu Xun Arts Academy in Yan’an in 1937. With poet and lyricist, Guang Weiran (b. 1913), he created this cantata to rouse national interest in the face of severe hardship and war.

Guang had crossed the Yellow River with some Communist troops to reach Yan’an after the Japanese captured the city of Wuhan. While he was on this journey, he saw the local boatmen hard at work, battling the raging current of the Yellow River. He also heard their songs
and was so inspired that he wrote some anti-Japanese poetry.\textsuperscript{115} With Guang’s lyrics, Xian completed the cantata in eight days.

Although the cantata predates Mao’s \textit{Talks at Yan’an}, this work contained the revolutionary ideals which were later expounded upon by Mao. In a strange way, this piece and other revolutionary songs could have influenced Mao’s ideology. The cantata still embodied the revolutionary ideals of mass song and art serving the masses. The cantata utilizes folk tunes, work songs and anti-Japanese themes. The cantata was premiered at Yan’an in April 13, 1939 and gained popularity with the Communists.\textsuperscript{116} The cantata consists of eight movements: “Chant of the Yellow River Boatmen,” “Ode to the Yellow River,” “Yellow River like Water from Heaven,” “Folk Song of the Yellow Water,” “Dialogue on the River Bank,” “Lament of the Yellow River,” “Defend the Yellow River,” and “Rage On, O River!.” These movements are woven together by a narrator, who introduces each movement.

Today, four versions of Xian’s cantata exist. It is not within the scope of this document to discuss all the changes in each version;\textsuperscript{117} however, it should be mentioned that Xian’s cantata was reworked by other people to correct the cantata politically for the changing political climate. Xian’s initial version of the cantata had awkward instrumentation because he was limited to the eclectic mix of instruments present at Yan’an. The instruments at Yan’an were accordions, violins, Chinese fiddles like the \textit{erhu} and the \textit{huqin}, a guitar, drums and bugles.\textsuperscript{118} This version

\textsuperscript{115} Shan Bai, “The Historical Development and A Structural Analysis of the Yellow River Piano Concerto” (M.M. diss., University of Pretoria, 2006), 16.
\textsuperscript{117} The scores for the multiple versions are difficult to obtain. For a detailed discussion of the differences in the multiple versions, see Hon-Lun Yang, “The Making of a National Music Icon: Xian Xinghai and his \textit{Yellow River Cantata},” in \textit{Music, Power and Politics}, ed. Annie J. Randall (New York: Routledge, 2005).
\textsuperscript{118} Kraus, \textit{Pianos and Politics in China}, 57.
used Cheve notation for the score which uses numbers, dots and dashes to indicate pitch and rhythm.\textsuperscript{119}

When Xian was sent to Moscow in 1941, he prepared another version of the cantata, scoring the accompaniment for a Western orchestra. Circumstances surrounding his departure for Moscow are unclear, but the reason given was that he was sent to study film music. There are suspicions that Xian was sent away by Mao and not allowed to return to China. Xian did not manage to return to his homeland and died in Moscow in 1945. After his death, he was hailed as a model composer and his image was sacrosanct, not to be questioned by the people.

The lyrics of the cantata define its content. The first movement opens with the narrator conjuring the image of the Yellow River. This is followed by a boat song sung by a mixed chorus in duple meter. The lyrics were said to have been inspired by the boatmen crossing the Yellow River, whom Guang witnessed on his way to Yan’an. The Yellow River can be difficult to cross, with swift currents, surging waves and rapids. The first movement has two themes. Cymbal crashes, upper winds with undulating melodic lines depict the waves of the river. The boatman’s song is set in simple duple meter unlike Western boat songs which are usually in compound duple. The lyrics in this section translate to “forge on” or “rush forward.”\textsuperscript{120} The two motifs in the introduction, shown in Example 1, serve as the refrain of the boatman’s work song.

\begin{example}
\end{example}

\textsuperscript{119} Cheve notation is referred to as \textit{jianpu} notation in Chinese musical terms.

\textsuperscript{120} For ease of reading, I consulted the transcription and translation of the original Chinese cantata lyrics in Shan Bai’s dissertation, “The Historical Development and A Structural Analysis of the Yellow River Piano Concerto.” I disagreed with Shan’s word choices and detected many inaccuracies and omissions in his translation. I have based my translation of the lyrics on his with corrections and additions. A literal measure-by-measure translation of the cantata can be found in Margaret Chan, “The Yellow River Piano Concerto as a Site for Negotiating Cultural Spaces for a Diasporic Chinese Community in Toronto” (M.A. thesis, York University, Ontario), 240-250.
Example 1. Refrain motifs, *Yellow River Cantata*, 1st mvt. mm. 40-44

The call and response pattern typically found in work songs is utilized here in the boatmen’s work theme (see ex. 2). A tenor solo leads this section and the chorus responds in unison. The conditions faced by the boatmen are mentioned: dark clouds cover the sky, the waves billow as high as mountains, the cold wind blows against their faces and the spray of the waves splashes into the boats. This is followed by the refrain motif.

Example 2. Call and response pattern, *Yellow River Cantata*, 1st mvt. mm. 50-55

The next verse encourages the sailors and the ones holding the oars to helm the boat carefully and be brave. They should not fear the billowing waves and sail the boat as if they were fighting the enemy. Their hearts should be united as one to forge on. The work song theme is then contrasted with a variation of the theme which is marked *Andantino* compared to boat song which is marked *Vivace*. The variation is used to depict the boatmen approaching and safely
reaching the shores of the Yellow River (see ex. 3). The lyrics mention that the boatmen have seen the shore and there is some peace in their hearts. The sight of the shore gives them the strength to forge on and cross the river, as the music returns to the work song theme. The movement ends with a resolution to fight the furious, billowing waves of the Yellow River to the very end.

Example 3. Variation of theme, *Yellow River Cantata*, 1st mvt. mm. 103-111

The second movement is a baritone solo and is aptly named “Ode to the Yellow River.” The attributes of the Yellow River are praised in a beautiful, slow melody. The first stanza of the ode sings of the geographical location and physical attributes of the river. The second stanza emphasizes the Yellow River as a symbol of nationalism. The Yellow River is seen as the cradle of the Chinese nation with a 5,000-year history. The reach of the river is likened to arms embracing the people. The river also becomes a maternal symbol, nourishing and feeding the
Chinese people as her sons and daughters. The sons and daughters of the Yellow River should then strive to be like her: mighty, brave and strong.

The third movement is not sung but is a poem which is to be read and accompanied by Chinese instruments. The *pipa*, a fretted lute, is featured prominently in this movement along with Chinese percussion instruments. The poem describes the Yellow River as a gift from heaven, flowing from the mountains to the sea. The Yellow River is China’s artery and in it flows the blood of the people. The red sun shines high in the sky and is reflected in the golden shimmer of the water. The moon rises in the eastern mountains, and the silver waters glisten like snow. The picturesque scenery depicted by the poem extols the glories of the Yellow River and the Communist Party as symbolized by the red sun. The red sun later becomes a symbol for Mao. The Yellow River is also crowned the king of the rivers and is called the flying dragon. The people of China are referred to as the children and grandchildren of the Yellow Emperor in this poem. The poet reminds the Yellow River of its glorious past and laments the current difficult conditions.

The fourth movement continues the thread of nationalistic fervor which began in the second and third movements. The narrator states in the opening:

> We are descendants of the Yellow River
> We are working hard and struggling bravely, closer to victory each day
> But, as long as the enemy invades our land, we must not be at ease.
> Listen to the cries of the people on the East of the river.

A women’s chorus begins the fourth movement with a peaceful and serene quality (see ex. 4). The lyrics paint a landscape prior to the Japanese invasion. The Yellow River, which winds over thousands of miles eastwards, irrigates the land. The people are building dams and digging canals, and a good harvest is expected. They establish the atmosphere prior to the invasion of the
Japanese. Every person - man, woman, old and young - is filled with hope and joy. This serene atmosphere is interrupted by a sudden change in mood.

Example 4. Women’s chorus, *Yellow River Cantata*, 4th mvt. mm. 15-27

Although the melodies of the cantata are pentatonic, Xian utilized Western harmonization. A mixed choir and a minor tonality depict the unwelcome change to the once peaceful situation (see ex. 5). The strings’ tremolo depicts the tense situation. The unnamed enemy in the lyrics is the Japanese.
Example 5. Mixed chorus, *Yellow River Cantata*, 4th mvt. mm 60-64

The crimes of the enemy are listed in the lyrics, including rape, pillaging, arson and murder. The land is now devastated, and people have been displaced from their homes. Some of these people will never see their families or their homes ever again. Families are broken up, spouses are separated from each other and children are lost. Despite this, the Yellow River keeps flowing. The movement returns to the peaceful and serene women’s chorus, as if to find solace in the Yellow River.

The following two movements depict the suffering of the people because of the invasion. The fifth movement is an antiphonal song sung by two men. The singing style is an imitation of
the folk singing style of Shanxi. The men exchange tales about the bitter life they are now living since the enemy invaded their country. They have been separated from their wives and families, and cannot return to their homes. In the sixth movement, a female soloist gives the feminine perspective on the invasion. She laments the loss of her child and her husband. Her life is harsh and bitter, filled with tragedy and suffering. She weeps to nature because there is no one to hear her anymore. She alludes to her own prospective death by suicide and ends the movement with a call for vengeance. This trope of suicide and vengeance was common throughout China’s past.

The seventh movement is a call to arms. After hearing about the atrocities of the enemy and the lamentations of the people, the masses must be rallied to fight back. The narrator summons the people to rise up and not be treated as pigs and sheep. The people should be determined to rise up and defend the Yellow River, the Huabei plain and the whole of China.

The mixed chorus enters and sings:

The wind is blowing
The horses are neighing
The Yellow River is roaring
High mountains tower on the west of the river
Corn has ripened in the east and north of the river
In the endless mountains, resistant forces are aplenty!
In the tall crops, guerilla fighters are heroic!
Lift your weapons, hold your big swords and long spears. Defend our homeland!
Defend the Yellow River! Defend Huabei! Defend China!

This march-like melody is first sung in unison (see fig. 1).

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Figure 1. Melodic theme of *Defend the Yellow River, Yellow River Cantata*, 7th mvt.

The second presentation is in a two-part imitation with the women leading and the men echoing (see ex. 6).

Example 6. Two-part imitation, *Yellow River Cantata*, 7th mvt. mm. 45-62
This is expanded into a three-part imitation as shown in the example given (see ex. 7).

Example 7. Three-part imitation, Yellow River Cantata, 7th mvt. mm. 75-86

The voices unite again at the end of the movement, this time in a more march-like style.

The final movement of the cantata serves to unite all the ideas expressed in the previous movements. Several rivers of China are mentioned in this final movement to portray the vast geographic expanse and population of the country. The narrator mentions the Yangtze and the Pearl Rivers, two major rivers of the South, to begin this movement. These rivers are roaring and are calling on the Yellow River to rise up and unleash its wrath on the enemy. The raging waves of the river and its power will inspire the enslaved people of China to rise up and fight for freedom. The chorus joins in and echoes the same words of the narrator, adding that suffering has been brought upon the people who have a rich 5,000-year history. The people of China
cannot bear the suffering brought by the Japanese. The people are proud of their long history and heritage and should not be cowered by the Japanese. The movement provides a glimmer of hope, stating that a new China is around the bend. Almost half a billion people are united and ready to defend their homeland with their lives. The Songhua and Suifen rivers are shouting, and have joined the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers. These rivers are symbols of the Chinese people in different geographical areas of China who have now united to battle and resist the Japanese invasion. They now join in to call on the Yellow River to roar loudly. The last two lines of the cantata, which allude to the final lines of the Communist Manifesto by Marx, repeat the call to arms:

Suffering people of China, sound the battle cry!
Workers of the world, sound the battle cry!

This work was completed and presented at Yan’an. Mao was present at its premier in April 13, 1939 and approved of the work. Because of his approval, the work gained popularity and was performed many times. The cantata was eventually hailed as the greatest Socialist Realist work and became the yardstick by which other pieces would be measured.

There are elements of Socialist Realism in Xian’s work. There are several contributions from the folk culture of Shanxi which could be considered proletarian. Xian had to use folk instruments and he employed folk tunes in his cantata. The first movement opens with a work song. A work song would be sung by workers and would fulfill the need of the proletariat. The basic function of work songs is to coordinate movements and actions. Work songs are able to motivate workers and unite them to a common goal. Texts and melodies for work songs are usually fairly simple and repetitive. The work song could easily be interpreted as a genre both by the workers and for the workers.

\[122\] Ibid., 22.
Xian also utilized the recitative style of Chinese opera for the narrator. The narrator does not sing, but the text is spoken in a declamatory style. This allows for the narrator to set a context for the song which follows. Xian also uses a dialogue song style which is from Shanxi. This style enables the composer to portray a conversation realistically. This straightforward style allows for more text, which could be easily understood by the listener. As in the earlier discussion of Socialist Realism in music, compositions should closely resemble speech intonations and the natural inflection of the language. The Chinese opera declamatory style and dialogue songs fit this criterion. The text is not obscured by musical elements and is easily understood.

In the seventh movement, a thin texture and simple canonic writing, without complicated counterpoint, again allow the lyrics to be understood. The three and four-part imitation is a simple method of elaboration, but very effective to depict the different groups of people rising up to defend China. Xian’s melodies are also fairly simple and were not difficult to learn. The catchy tunes and march rhythms would attract instead of overwhelm the audience. The cantata could be considered a beautiful and moving piece of music, especially the second, fourth and fifth movements which are more lyrical than march-like.

The cantata is also not written in an archetypical Western musical form; however, it can fit the descriptions of binary and ternary forms, with recitative and through-composed features. Without the strict use of form, the cantata cannot be accused of being formalist. The simple structure of the pieces would also serve as a way to initiate the proletariat, the unlearned audience, into higher forms eventually. The education of the proletariat needed to happen, but only at their own pace and from their starting point.

Most important of all, the cantata portrayed and captured the sentiments of the people who were affected by the Japanese invasion. The duty of art to “mirror” reality is fulfilled here.
The expressing of emotions in the dialogue song and the lament is also meant to arouse the same emotions in the audience. The anti-Japanese sentiments expressed in this cantata would have been easily identifiable to the audience at Yan’an. Many had lost their families and homes to the prolonged conflict. If the audience could relate to the cantata, it could therefore unite the people to resist the enemy. All these elements would be discussed by Mao and codified into a set of rules for the cultural practice and standards of the revolution.

Several posthumous versions of the cantata exist. These reworkings were done with all good intentions of “improving” or “correcting” Xian’s composition. His music must still serve a political agenda even though he is no longer alive. A version with solo piano accompaniment and one with Western orchestral accompaniment exist. The current version, which is published and used for performance was reworked by Yan Liangkun (b. 1923) in 1975. These versions demonstrate that even this approved work had to undergo political correction and evolve as the times changed.

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123 Hon-Lun Yang, “The Making of a National Music Icon,” 92. Yan also plays a role in the creation of the Yellow River Piano Concerto.
CHAPTER THREE: THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE YELLOW RIVER
PIANO CONCERTO: THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The sinification of the piano began a long time before the Cultural Revolution. Chinese composers were encouraged to write pieces for the piano with local flavor in the early 20th century. Russian composer, Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977), who was teaching in Shanghai in the 1930s, organized the first piano composition competition in 1934. The prize winner of this competition was He Luting (1903-1999), with his Buffalo Boy’s Flute. Tcherepnin himself wrote several sets of pieces intending to fully exploit the use of Chinese musical elements, such as the pentatonic scales, sound color and rhythmic qualities. Tcherepnin wrote a set of pentatonic exercises, Chinese Bagatelles and the Five Chinese Concert Etudes op. 52. These pieces would demonstrate to the music world that the often trivialized pentatonic tunes could be elevated to concert standards, without jeopardizing authenticity. Tcherepnin’s compositions turned away from the chinoiserie movement of the late 19th century, by composers like Debussy, Ravel and Puccini.

The adaptation of Chinese music to piano music began, especially using folk tunes and folk rhythms, which are abundant in China. This technique was encouraged as nationalistic composers in Eastern Europe, like Béla Bartók (1881-1945), Rimsky-Korsakov (1884-1908), Antonin Dvorak and Bedrich Smetana had already done so. Although these pieces were mostly successful, the piano had its limitations – it is a fixed pitch instrument. The piano would not be able to capture all the subtleties of pitch bending and pitch sliding common in Chinese music, as
the music mirrors the tonal qualities of the languages and dialects in China. The contour of Chinese vocal melodies followed the tonal inflections of the dialects. If not, the lyrics would be unintelligible to the listener.

The interest in the piano grew as the years went by. Piano factories in China began to appear. One of the companies produced the Xinghai piano, named after Xian Xinghai, who was posthumously awarded the title of the “People’s Musician.” The piano was a symbol of the new, modernizing China. Piano students of great potential were sent to study in the Soviet Union, while the two nations were on friendly terms. Chinese students would be exposed to the vast repertoire of Western piano literature and also new techniques in composition in the early 20th century.

Pianists from China were competing internationally and winning acclaim, participating in the prestigious Tchaikovsky and Chopin piano competitions. Pianist Fu Tsoung (b. 1934) placed third in the Chopin Competition of 1955 and was awarded a special prize for his performance of Chopin’s mazurkas. He was behind the Polish pianist, Adam Harasiewicz (b. 1932) and Soviet pianist, Vladimir Ashkenazy (b. 1937). His achievement was significant, as he was the first Asian to be placed favorably in an international competition. Liu Shikun (b. 1939), another contemporary, won the third place in the Liszt Competition in 1956 and the second place in the Tchaikovsky competition in 1958. Li Mingqiang (b. 1943) also won prizes in the Smetana and Enescu Competitions. Pianist Yin Chengzong (b. 1941) shared the second prize in the 1962 Tchaikovsky Competition, along with American pianist, Susan Starr (b. 1942). The first prize was shared by John Ogdon (1937-1989) and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

125 Ibid., 130.
126 Ibid., 131.
Things began to change when the People’s Republic of China was declared on October 1, 1949. These pianists were winning international acclaim as part of the progressive ventures of China after the declaration of the new republic. Mao’s thoughts and revolutionary ideas were brought to the fore. The revolutionary fervor increased and the tide turned in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The early 1960s still saw favorable conditions for artists, as evidenced with their international competitive sojourns. The “three highs” policy was in place, guaranteeing an artist high wages, high royalties and high privileges.\(^\text{127}\) This favoritism would soon end as the middle class became viewed with suspicion.

According to composer Mao Yu Run, performances of music by the “Mighty Five” and Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) and other similar Russian nationalists were allowed in the 1950s.\(^\text{128}\) This list was later expanded to include Eastern European composers like Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) and Franz Liszt (1811-1886).\(^\text{129}\) The musical influences of these composers remained during the Cultural Revolution and gave Chinese composers a model to follow. Mao states that he was thankful to have the music of Borodin and Tchaikovsky and similar composers. The music of the revolution would have potentially been different than the conventional tonal practices of the two composers.\(^\text{130}\) As the cultural debates on Western music and absolute music intensified, composers like Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Shostakovich and Debussy would be denounced.\(^\text{131}\) They were labeled as modernist

\(^{127}\) Ibid., 132.  
\(^{128}\) Mao Yu Run. “Music under Mao, Its Background and Aftermath,” *Asian Music* 22, no. 2 View on Music in China Today (Spring-Summer 1991): 108. Attempts to find the composer’s dates have been unsuccessful without the Chinese characters for his name. Mao spent several years at Brigham Young University as a visiting Professor of Composition. He was attached to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, chaired by He Luting.  
\(^{129}\) Ibid.  
\(^{130}\) Ibid., 110.  
\(^{131}\) Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes*, 136.
and formalist, with little explanation given. Music students studied the works of Schoenberg and Hindemith, along with other classical composers in secret.\textsuperscript{132} Electronic music and musique concrète were considered to be products of imperialism and were denounced.\textsuperscript{133}

The Great Leap Forward, which ended in 1961, was unsuccessful and catastrophic to an extent. Many people died from starvation from famines due to Mao’s policies.\textsuperscript{134} The revolution was not going as smoothly as Mao intended. Other Party leaders were beginning to doubt Mao’s leadership. He was also increasingly suspicious of his Party officials. In order to secure his position, Mao would purge anyone he suspected was in opposition to him. In 1965, a play entitled “Hai Rui Dismissed from Office” was written by Ming dynasty scholar and the vice-mayor of Beijing, Wu Han. The main character, Hai Rui, was a just Ming official who was purged by a wicked emperor. He critiqued the Jiaqing emperor for being vain, cruel, selfish, suspicious and foolish. He also judged the emperor as having failed in his official and family duties.\textsuperscript{135} Mao was present at the performance of this play and approved of it. Later, he realized that this play was a subtle critique of his leadership and his purging of Peng Dehuai, the Minister of Defense. Peng had traveled to the countryside to see the effects of the Great Leap Forward and exposed Mao’s mistakes.\textsuperscript{136} Mao wrote an article denouncing Wu’s play. The play was not only guilty of critiquing him but was also considered to be feudalistic and set in the old imperial period of the Ming dynasty. Mao launched a new campaign – The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 136.
\textsuperscript{136} Spence, \textit{Mao Zedong}, 145.
The Cultural Revolution between the years of 1966 and 1976 were years of upheaval in China. Mao felt that a cultural revolution was needed and the opportunity had arrived to finally rid China of anti-revolutionary aspects. An “army forum on literature and art work” was established with Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife, briefing the army on the bourgeois decadence which had corrupted the arts.137 In May, the revolution was further spurred on by a Peking University teacher, Nie Yuanzi, who posted a big character poster138 stating that the revolution should be extended. Nie was well-connected within the Communist Party as she had joined them in 1938 and spent many years at Yan’an. The officials and professors of the university should not be spared either, she wrote.139 Nie was in trouble with her employers at the university, and she saw this as one of the ways to lash out at the administration. The poster contained three slogans – “Defend the party center! Defend Chairman Mao’s thought! Defend the dictatorship of the proletariat!”140 As a result of Nie’s actions, universities and schools were suspended. Students were unencumbered with studies and were now free to join the Red Army, executors of Mao’s cultural policies.

Chairman Mao’s statements of “To rebel is justified” and “Bombard the headquarters” became slogans of this revolution.141 With these two slogans, the terror was unleashed in the country. Between the months of August and September, thousands of people were murdered or committed suicide.142 The Four Olds and all things Western would be considered to be anti-

137 Ibid., 160.
138 Character posters were a form of protest. Chinese characters would be written on this poster and displayed in a public area.
140 Ibid., 56.
141 Spence, Mao Zedong, 161.
142 MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, Mao’s Last Revolution, 87, 90, 124. “To rebel is justified” is a four-word slogan derived from Mao’s response to the Qinghua students who sent him a character poster on July 28, 1966 (see p. 87). “Bombard the Headquarters” was written on August 5, 1966 (see p. 90).
revolution and reactionary. The Four Olds are old customs, old habits, old ideas and old culture. There were no clear guidelines by the Communist Party as to what is considered as “old.” The Red Guards would ransack the country, destroying anything they considered to be old. Consequently, a lot of China’s historical art, architecture, books, records and religious artifacts were destroyed. All things Western or bourgeois also became a target, including clothes and music records. As these ideas began to spread, classical musicians became targets of the revolution. They were indulging in an art form which came from the West and was bourgeois in origin. Pianos which were once treasured were quickly disposed of so the owners could escape persecution. Most musicians were taught by Westerners or had studied abroad in Europe. Even those who had not studied abroad were also targets, simply because they had been exposed to classical music’s bourgeois ideas and needed to be made repentant for such reactionary actions. Musicians had to flee for their lives, hide or destroy their instruments, books and records. Some who were not so fortunate were caught by the Red Guards and suffered public “struggle sessions.” Public struggle sessions were a form of public humiliation and physical/mental assault. Many did not survive these struggle sessions which could last for hours and was repeated for days. Others survived but some were permanently injured. Respected piano and violin teachers found themselves dragged through the streets, objects of their students’ hatred. He Luting, who was well-respected, was formally denounced and, ironically, jailed in the conservatory he once chaired. A pianist’s or violinist’s worst nightmare would be to have his fingers broken. This happened to instill fear and prevent any further spread of bourgeois reactionary ideas. Prize-winning pianist, Liu Shikun had his arm broken.143 Those who could not stand the thought of being caught or living through such persecution saw suicide as the only way

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143 Cheng, “The Yellow River Piano Concerto” 12. Liu originally told reporters his fingers were broken, but eventually retracted his story and said the Red Guards only broke his arm.
out. Some exiled themselves in other countries, causing their families to suffer persecution on
their behalf. Others were sent for re-education in the countryside, so they could learn to be
peasants and workers.

The piano found an unlikely savior during the Cultural Revolution – Comrade Jiang Qing
(1914-1991), also known as Lan Ping, the wife of Chairman Mao. Jiang Qing was an actress
prior to her marriage to Chairman Mao. In her early years, she was accepted as a student at the
Experimental Arts Academy, in Jinan, Shandong Province.¹⁴⁴ She was taught to sing and act in
the traditional Chinese opera styles. Jiang Qing, who was known as Li Yunhe during this time,
was not a particularly good student in music. Classmates recall that she had rhythm and pitch
problems in Beijing opera. At this art school, students were required to learn a Western
instrument as well. Yunhe chose the piano, as she deemed it to be a vehicle of self-expression.
Piano lessons, however, were not the most pleasant experiences for her as she recalled being
struck on her fingers with bamboo strips by her teacher.¹⁴⁵ Although her life was unstable and
tumultuous, her acting career was somewhat successful. With a rebellious streak, she always
sought to be on the forefront of the avant-garde in China. When the changes in the political scene
brought Communism, she could not resist trying out the new movement at Yan’an. At Yan’an
was where she met and married Mao Zedong, thus becoming the wife of the most powerful man
in China.

Her ideas fueled the censorship of art and music during the Cultural Revolution. Her
leadership and control dictated the forms of entertainment which would be suitable for the
masses. Many forms of entertainment were banned. Chinese operas were considered to be traces

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 27.
of past feudalism. Popular songs were deemed to be licentious in nature and unhealthy for the mind. Western music would symbolize the bourgeois, the Capitalist and the invader of China. For example, the ballet, *Swan Lake*, by Tchaikovsky was considered to be a symbol of bourgeois culture.

Jiang Qing would have to come up with Party-approved entertainment to fill this gap. With her committee and advisors, several ballets, operas, symphonies were commissioned. These approved works, which were named the *Eight Model Plays*, were imbued with Communist themes and revolutionary ideals became the staple of entertainment for the masses.\textsuperscript{146} The two ballets were *The White-Haired Girl* and *The Red Detachment of Women*. The operas were *The Red Lanterns, Sweeping the Tiger Regiment, The Harbor, Taking the Tiger Mountain* and *Shajiabang (Spark in the Reeds)*. A symphony based on themes from *Shajiabang* was part of the *Eight Model Plays*.\textsuperscript{147} The accompaniment for these operas was problematic. Western instruments were not allowed in the ideology of the Cultural Revolution, but the traditional Chinese instruments lacked dynamic power. Traditional forms of Beijing opera accompaniment were considered old and not to be used. Eventually, several Western instruments were used in the accompaniment of the plays to increase the dynamic and expressive range of the ensemble. Military wind bands had been formed and many wind instruments were still in favor officially. In 1963, some revolutionaries tried to reform the wind bands and removed the Western instruments without prior approval from the Party.\textsuperscript{148} This arbitrary censorship or approval of Western instruments changed throughout the Cultural Revolution.

\textsuperscript{146} Other model plays would be added to the list of approved entertainment. Works based on themes and characters based on *Eight Model Plays* were also produced. Some of these were approved and others censored.

\textsuperscript{147} Melvin and Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 248.

\textsuperscript{148} Jiang Qing, *Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi* (Taipei: Zhonghua minguo guoji guanxi yanjiusuo, 1974), 68.
With the confusing problem of which instruments are appropriate, Jiang Qing was asked for clarification. She did not have an official post, but she was very powerful and exerted her influence over the policy makers in the Communist Party. Jiang Qing gave a series of speeches on the Eight Model Plays and art at the height of her power. She reminded the people to remember the issues raised in Mao’s “Talks at Yan’an on Art and Literature” given twenty-two years before in 1942. She echoed the words of Mao stating that Marx and Lenin are the two great doors of foundational knowledge for the class struggle. Work and living amongst the masses were regarded as highly important. In the collection of speeches, there are two which specifically deal with the issues of music. The appropriate use of musical instruments and the job of musicians are discussed in these two speeches given in 1964. These speeches give a glimpse into the mind of Jiang Qing. At times, she comes across as an intelligent, bright and fervent revolutionary in total support of Mao. However, parts of her speeches are like the ramblings of an ignorant child and display her personal vengeful agenda towards certain individuals who had hurt her in the past.

In Jiang Qing’s speech on the role of music, she believed that one could not separate the content and form of a piece from the skill of a composer. Debussy’s music was popular and had a wide influence, and his compositional skill was praised by many. Jiang Qing criticized his music heavily, likening it to ramblings of a madman who should be ignored. Western symphonies and concerti were considered to be bourgeois art, which the masses, especially the proletariat, could not understand. The proletariat should not need to undergo any education to be able to understand the art. This correlates with Mao’s idea that revolutionary art must be popularized and fit for immediate consumption. In Jiang’s opinion, the multi-movement form of

\[ \text{\footnotesize (149 Ibid., 65.)} \]
\[ \text{\footnotesize (150 Ibid., 69.)} \]
Western symphonies did not make sense, as they seldom correlated in meaning within the movements.\textsuperscript{151} If there was a meaning and a connection, these were too abstract to be identified easily by the proletariat.\textsuperscript{152} She surmised that the bourgeoisie audience of these symphonies only pretended to identify or understand the meaning of the movements and act refined.\textsuperscript{153} This blanket critique rendered most of Western music literature reactionary in China. The abstract meanings and unseen correlations in Western symphonies would be subject to the interpretations of the Party. The basis for the interpretations is as arbitrary as the interpretations. These could change as quickly and as easily as the wind. The same stick which was used to measure was also used to beat, at whim. Musicians and composers found themselves standing on shaky ground as they tried to please the Party.

Several attributes of Western instruments were described by Jiang Qing. The bassoon and the French horn are singled out. She laughs about how silly the Western suona looks because it is so long it touches the floor.\textsuperscript{154} This description fits the bassoon. She tells the story of a young French horn player who goes down to the village. He plays on his horn but the villagers do not like his music. He then plays a folk tune which is recognizable to the villagers and gains their approval.\textsuperscript{155} Popular music would not only be easier for the proletariat to understand, but also cheaper to mass produce providing greater accessibility. In another account, Jiang complained about the sound of the trombone and ordered it to be removed from all ensembles. Conductor Li Delun (1917-2001) intervened and convinced her that the instrument she disliked was a tuba.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 65.  
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{154} The suona is the Chinese term for a reed wind instrument, which translates to oboe.  
\textsuperscript{155} Jiang Qing, \textit{Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi}, 69.
instead.\textsuperscript{156} He determined that it would be less detrimental to do without tubas than trombones. For the next ten years, there would be no tubas in any ensemble. Jiang’s likes and dislikes were very important and, apparently, followed but not always made into official policy.

Jiang believed that the foreign instruments could be reformed to fit the revolution. It would be a great pity to eliminate all these instruments because the talent of many musicians would be wasted, if they had to retrain on folk instruments.\textsuperscript{157} The essence of the foreign instruments must be maintained and not destroyed, but reformed.\textsuperscript{158} These instruments were made by the proletariat in other countries. The local traditional instruments, termed as “people’s instruments,” which had been assimilated into Chinese culture were once foreign, too.\textsuperscript{159} She stated that it was not the problem with the instruments but with the content and what was played, except for the tuba. In her opinion, she found that the traditional instruments of China were not well-suited to the revolution because of their narrow range, inaccuracy of pitch and timbre less pleasing to the ear. She observed that the development of Western instruments is tied to the economic development of their original countries. The capitalist process the instrument was subjected to eventually had led to its perfection. She determined that it would take many more years for the traditional instruments to reach the same quality of the Western instruments.

The piano and violin are singled out in these two speeches as model Western instruments that could be adapted for revolutionary use. The range of the piano and the emotive capabilities of the piano were deemed suitable for their cause. The Chinese piano, the ancient \textit{guqin}, a zither-like instrument that is portable, could not match the Western piano in power. It does not have the

\textsuperscript{156} Melvin and Cai, \textit{Rhapsody in Red}, 254. Li Delun was a cellist and joined the Communists at Yan’an in 1946. Li received his conducting training at the Moscow Conservatory under the well-known conductor, Nikolai Anosov. See Melvin and Cai’s \textit{Rhapsody in Red} for Li’s educational pursuits and musical contributions in China.

\textsuperscript{157} Jiang Qing, \textit{Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi}, 69.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
dynamic power or the pitch range of a piano and is more suited for a chamber performance than for a concert hall. According to Jiang Qing, the violin also has very expressive qualities and beautiful sound. She preferred it over the Chinese two-stringed violin, the “erhu.” Since both the violin and piano were made by the hands of laborers, therefore, they were suitable for proletariat use and their music could be made accessible to the masses. Although the violin is a Western instrument and one with a long history, Jiang Qing raises up the slogan of “Make the old serve the new, foreign things to serve China.” The violin would have a new role, despite its bourgeois past: it will now serve the revolution. The violin, a Western instrument, should now be adapted for Chinese use. This slogan recalls the philosophers who at the turn of the century spoke of tiyong, the Chinese substance, absorbing Western forms and practice. The Western piano and violin would be suitable instruments when combined with the superior Chinese art and music forms.

Vocal music was raised as the model for instrumental composition. Foreign songs also needed to be properly adapted to China and blended with Beijing opera. Most of these songs required some form of vocal training in diaphragmatic breathing and vocal production. Jiang Qing deemed the Western operatic style of singing to be unacceptable as the words were obscured, as if one were singing with an object in one’s mouth. In addition, she also criticized the falsetto singing style of the Beijing opera school. The Beijing opera traditions are feudalistic. The plots for the operas contained mythical, feudalistic and imperialistic characters which are symbols of the old China. For arousing the revolutionary masses, she stated that luxuriant, beautiful singing should still be important and a proper technique should be applied. The

160 Ibid., 66.
161 Ibid., 65.
162 Ibid., 70.
combination of Western training, diaphragmatic breathing technique and a more revolutionary
singing style would be appropriate. Folk songs from the Chinese minority groups are being
united with the “People’s Music,” but their unique traits and specialties must be maintained.\textsuperscript{163}
She also believed that the artistic resources for a song or instrumental music were embodied in
the language itself. This idea falls in line with the Socialist Realism ideals of using natural
speech patterns and intonations as a basis for art. This also fits the notion that the essence of a
language was contained within itself. The new generation of composers must have courage to
create, establish new and different models.\textsuperscript{164}

To further explain the ideals of using vocal music as a basis for composition, Jiang Qing
specifically mentions Xian Xinghai’s \textit{Yellow River Cantata}, a piece which uses the revolutionary
singing style, in her speech. The piano was chosen as the instrument which could be transformed
using this vocal model. On her discussion regarding the piano, Jiang mentions:

[He] plays the piano very well, but he played Liszt, and the workers did not understand.
The pianist should study Beijing opera and make use of the clapper.\textsuperscript{165} Then, the masses
will be able to understand [the music].\textsuperscript{166}

She mentioned that a piano concerto had already combined elements of Beijing opera and
folk song.\textsuperscript{167} She asked rhetorically, why shouldn’t Xian’s cantata be adapted into a piano
concerto?\textsuperscript{168} At the premier of the cantata in 1936, Jiang Qing was present in the audience. She
further claimed that there was a lack of suitable music not only for the piano but also for the
orchestra. A suitable composer was need for this task and she turned to pianist Yin Chengzong.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} The clapper (\textit{ban}) is made from two pieces of wood and is slapped together to produce a sound. This is one of the
main percussive instruments in the Beijing opera ensemble.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 64. The unmentioned pianist here could be Liu Shikun who was denounced for competing in international
competitions. See also Kraus, \textit{Pianos and Politics}, 136.
\textsuperscript{167} This piano concerto is likely the \textit{Chinese Youth Piano Concerto} written in 1959 by a committee in the Central
\textsuperscript{168} Jiang Qing, \textit{Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi}, 64.
Yin had transcribed several other Chinese folksongs in 1964, aptly naming them with Communist tinged titles.\textsuperscript{169} For example, a folk tune “Fishing Song” was entitled “Fishing People Sing of the Communist Party.”\textsuperscript{170} He used his talent to his full advantage and for the betterment of his peers.

In the fall of 1966, the arrests and persecution of the pianists were at its heights. Yin’s colleagues were either jailed, exiled or had committed suicide. In protest of the absurd ban on pianos, Yin very bravely dragged a piano onto Tiananmen Square and played revolutionary tunes on it. Yin chose a special occasion to perform this feat – the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mao’s \textit{Talks at Yan’an} on May 12, 1967.\textsuperscript{171} Yin played transcriptions from the \textit{Eight Model Plays}, revolutionary songs and eulogy songs which praised Chairman Mao. Yin was joined and supported by the Central Philharmonic’s piano propaganda team, which organized performances in Beijing’s factories, nearby villages and army bases.\textsuperscript{172}

One of the \textit{Eight Model Plays}, “The Red Lantern,” was transcribed for voice, clapper and piano, with the piano transcription by Yin in 1968. The singing style in the piece is in Beijing opera tradition, with a piercing quality and sliding pitches. This is not the \textit{bel canto} singing style of the West. The piece demonstrates the dichotomy of the clash of East and West, with two styles that are highly distinct. The piano and voice stand out in stark contrast to each other. Remaining significant in the history of the piano in China, the piece represents an attempt to sinify the piano. Yin also wrote a transcription of the symphonic piece “\textit{Shajiabang}.” The piano

\textsuperscript{169} Kraus, \textit{Pianos and Politics in China}, 133.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid. This piece is found in Yin Chengzong, \textit{Selected Works for the Piano} (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing, 2005), 8-11 and is simply entitled “Fishing Song,” with no hint of the revolutionary title it once had.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 144.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
was slowly regaining status through these works, but not until the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* did it come to full favor with the revolutionaries.

This led to the appointment of a committee of pianists to write a piano composition based on the *Yellow River Cantata*. This committee was sent to live amongst peasants and workers in order to learn to be proletarian. They spent several weeks living in the loess caves of an old revolutionary base near the Yellow River. They were interviewed old peasants regarding the Sino-Japanese War and participated in the boating activities on the river. They were also exposed to the northern Shaanxi folk tunes. As required by the Party, they studied the works of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong. The committee consisted of Yin Chengzong, Chu Wanghua (b. 1941), Liu Zhuang (b. 1932) and Sheng Lihong (b. 1926). Some other sources list additional composers, Shi Shucheng (b. 1946), Xu Feixing (b.1946) and Du Mingxin (b. 1928). All these are pianists and were active at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Some of them were also trained in conducting and composition as well.

The unofficial leader and most prominent pianist of this committee was Yin Chengzong. Yin was born in the southern Fujian Province, on the island of Gulangyu, to a fairly wealthy Christian family. Yin was exposed to music at a young age and learned to play the piano very quickly. His ability and talent was recognized, and he was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory. He studied under two Soviet teachers, Tatulian and Krafchenko. In 1960, he was sent to study at the Leningrad Conservatory. It was during his years in Leningrad that he won the second place in the Tchaikovsky Competition. Yin’s early career followed the ups and downs of the revolution. Richard Kraus aptly nicknamed Yin as the “court pianist of the Cultural

174 Shan Bai, “The Historical Development and A Structural Analysis of the Yellow River Piano Concerto” 41. See Shan’s dissertation 35-42 for brief biographies of all the composers.
Revolution.” Chu Wanghua was responsible for composing most of the piano part of the concerto, while Liu Zhuang and She Lihong composed the orchestration to match. Chu Wanghua mentioned that he was not allowed to compose on his own because his father was considered a political criminal during the Cultural Revolution. The authorities were worried that he would insert bourgeois elements into the sacrosanct *Yellow River Cantata* because of his family background. Another composer and pianist, Du Mingxin (b. 1928), was originally on the composing committee but was called away to revise the orchestration of another revolutionary work, *The Red Detachment of Women.*

176 Ibid., 128.
178 Ibid., 47.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE YELLOW RIVER PIANO CONCERTO
AND SOCIALIST REALISM

The Yellow River Piano Concerto is essentially an arrangement of elements from the *Yellow River Cantata* for piano and orchestra. The piano concerto contains only four movements instead of eight and contains two additional songs in the final movement. The four movements are entitled “Yellow River Boatman’s Song,” “Ode to the Yellow River,” “Wrath of the Yellow River,” and “Defend the Yellow River.” The following table shows the movements of the cantata which were adapted in the piano concerto (Table 1). Since the lyrics of the cantata were removed, the titles were changed slightly to reflect the current revolutionary times. Lyrics were replaced with slogans which were annotated in the score. Other songs would also be inserted in the piano concerto to legitimize the political content.

Table 1. Comparison of the *Yellow River Cantata* and the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yellow River Cantata</th>
<th>Yellow River Piano Concerto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Song of the Yellow River Boatmen</td>
<td>1. The Song of the Yellow River Boatmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ode to the Yellow River</td>
<td>2. Ode to the Yellow River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Yellow River like Water from Heaven</td>
<td>(Not used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Folk Song of the Yellow Water</td>
<td>3. Wrath of the Yellow River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lament of the Yellow River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dialogue Song on the River Bank</td>
<td>(Not used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Defend the Yellow River</td>
<td>4. Defend the Yellow River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Rage on, O River!</td>
<td>(Not used)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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This version is scored for strings, a piccolo, a Chinese flute, two flutes, two clarinets, two oboes, two bassoons, a contrabassoon, two trumpets, four French Horns, four trombones, a harp, timpani and cymbals. There would be no tuba in this orchestra.

The concerto was premiered on January 1, 1970. According the accounts by Chu Wanghua and Shi Shucheng, the live performance of the concerto was accompanied by the slogans. At the premier of the concerto, Chu was responsible for the projection of the slogans in subtitles. These slogans were flashed on the screen for the audience prior to each movement and at certain points in the concerto. The audience was left with little chance to imagine what the music was depicting. These slogans are found in an older version of the orchestral score published in 1972 but have been removed from the most recent edition published in 2001 (see Appendix I). Musical terms and performance indications were given in Chinese in the earlier score, but changed to Italian in 2001. These changes could reflect attempts to distance the concerto from the Cultural Revolution. The premier was attended by the top Party members including Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng (1898-1975), Lin Biao (1904-1971) and Chen Boda (1904-1989). The performance was well-received by the Party officials and the performers were warmly greeted on stage when it was over.

Following this premier, a film of the concerto was made and broadcast all over China. Millions of peasants and workers who had never heard or seen a piano watched this film. They had to be able to understand the work without further education. The concerto had to serve as an

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182 Ibid. Lin Biao was second to Mao as the military advisor during the Cultural Revolution whereas Kang Sheng was in charge of intelligence and security. Kang Sheng was ranked behind Premier Zhou Enlai. Chen Boda was secretary to Chairman Mao and the chair of the Cultural Revolution Group.
183 Ibid.
appropriate introduction to Western music, which would have to be patriotic and adhere to the Party’s policies. Currently, this historic footage can be viewed over the internet through video sharing websites. The film was officially released by the Communist Party. In the video footage, there is an additional Chinese instrument, the *pipa*, a fretted lute, which was dropped from the orchestral score published in 2001. The *pipa* was featured very prominently in the third movement of the cantata and would be a familiar instrument to the Chinese masses when this film was shown. The omission of the *pipa* in the later version makes the concerto accessible to foreign orchestras. The Central Orchestra was conducted by Li Delun and the featured soloist was Yin Chengzong. The atmosphere of the performance is strange and unsettling for the viewer in the 21st century. The performers were all dressed in military style, unisex uniforms. They had similar haircuts, sitting postures and playing positions. The ensemble resembled a machine, producing a shockingly accurate but a non-emotive musical performance. The performers had expressionless faces and showed no hint of emotion. The music had to speak for itself, with little interpretation from the performers. Yin, the pianist, played the concerto flawlessly to show that the piano could indeed be revolutionary.

During the 1940s, the enemy of the masses was the Japanese, and the enemy of the Communist Party was the Nationalist Party. In the light of the Cultural Revolution, the anti-Japanese sentiment of the cantata was transferred to anything which was considered reactionary. Anything reactionary was considered to be in opposition to the revolution. This would include anything foreign, or anything deriving from the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the Four Olds. Jiang Qing advocated the musical practice of “throwing out the lyrics and keeping the

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184 Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China*, 149.  
melody” as an application of Mao’s “making the old serve the new.” One can argue that this is speculative and arbitrary, but the fluidity of the interpretation of instrumental music was the norm. No one dared to question the legitimacy of the concerto as a composer, Mao Yu Run, mentions:

Why was this concerto a “proletarian” one? Nobody cared and nobody dared to ask. This work could also have been interpreted as a propagation of morbid and pervasive (sic) passion and toxic bourgeois sentiment. Then, the work and its author would undoubtedly have been hurled to the bottom of hell.

The composing group’s intentions of writing this concerto were already judged to be good before any work began, especially since Jiang Qing commissioned the work herself. The intended audience of the piano concerto had the necessary background to understand it prior to its composition. The Yellow River Cantata was well-known and its composer, Xian Xinghai, was held in high esteem by the Party and the masses as an example of a patriotic composer. In the 1950s, there was mass propaganda of praising Xian and all his works. The lyrics of Xian’s cantata were not entirely appropriate for the political climate of the Cultural Revolution and thus, Jiang Qing personally asked that the melodies of the Yellow River Cantata be kept and the lyrics removed. Although the concerto is purely instrumental, the lyrics could have been inferred through the similarity of the melodic material to the cantata. When the old lyrics did not fit the new Cultural Revolution interpretations, the new slogans which accompanied the concerto ensured that the new meaning of the instrumental work would be made known and understood. These were inserted by the composing group while the draft was prepared at the suggestion made

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186 Jiang Qing, Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi, 66.
187 The Party changed their interpretations of instrumental pieces at different times to serve their own ends. A discussion of Beethoven’s symphonies is presented later in this chapter.
188 Mittler, Dangerous Tunes, 64. Mao likely meant to say “pervasive” instead of “perversive”.
by the Central Broadcasting Station Literary Arts Department. Most of the slogans in the score are similar in meaning to those in the cantata, with a few exceptions. It is therefore not purely an abstract piece of music without extra-musical meanings. The composers would not have to worry they could be faulted with the wrong practice or outcome.

The melodies of the cantata were based on folk material, which were considered to be proletarian. Because the melodies of the concerto are taken from the cantata, most of the melodic material is based on vocal material. The melodic material would closely resemble speech intonation and language patterns because Chinese vocal melodies follow the tonal inflections of the language. Otherwise, the lyrics would be unintelligible to the listener. An instrumental piece would be considered more nationalistic when based on these Chinese melodies, especially when the lyrics expressed anti-Japanese sentiments. The piece would not be exploiting the primitive notion of language when using folk material, but elevating this proletarian contribution in an acceptable artistic manner. Because musical intonations are presumed to imitate the intonations of a national language, the style of the concerto is therefore accepted and acknowledged as a national musical idiom. The use of these intonations in the concerto, through the use of material from the cantata, would be easily recognizable by the Chinese revolutionary audience. It would also therefore be highly convincing and persuasive, leading to popularization and recognition of this concerto among the masses.

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190 Ibid., 7.
Table 2. Key, length and form of the movements, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Movement/Key</th>
<th>Measure Numbers</th>
<th>Strophic Organization</th>
<th>Tonal Structure</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Song of the Yellow River Boatmen/ D major</strong></td>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>Intro/Refrain:</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>Verse 1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-38</td>
<td>Refrain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39-46</td>
<td>Verse 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47-74</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75-83</td>
<td>Refrain (Cadenza)</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84-92</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93-103</td>
<td>Refrain</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104-113</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Codetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ode to the Yellow River/B-flat major</strong></td>
<td>1-25</td>
<td>Antecedent group</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(March of the Volunteers)</em></td>
<td>26-59</td>
<td>Consequent group</td>
<td>I-V-I</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60-72</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrath of the Yellow River/E-flat major</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Folk Song of the Yellow River)</em></td>
<td>2-53</td>
<td>Verse 1</td>
<td>I-V-I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54-72</td>
<td>Verse 2</td>
<td>vi-V-I</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73-81</td>
<td></td>
<td>I-V9/IV</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Lament of the Yellow River)</em></td>
<td>82-88</td>
<td>Verse 3</td>
<td>VI-V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89-134</td>
<td></td>
<td>VII-V</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Folk Song of the Yellow River)</em></td>
<td>135-142</td>
<td>(Antecedent)</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143-148</td>
<td>(Consequent)</td>
<td>I-V-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>149-156</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Codetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defend the Yellow River/D major</strong></td>
<td>1-18</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>V/V</td>
<td>Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19-40</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-49</td>
<td></td>
<td>Codetta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-71</td>
<td>Variation 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72-93</td>
<td>Variation 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94-115</td>
<td>Variation 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>116-132</td>
<td>Variation 4</td>
<td>I/V-V/I (Codetta/Transition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>133-154</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>154-163</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Codetta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>164-180</td>
<td>I-V</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>181-218</td>
<td>Variation 5</td>
<td>VI-VII</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>209-217</td>
<td></td>
<td>V/III</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>218-239</td>
<td>Variation 6</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>239-272</td>
<td></td>
<td>III, IV, (Codetta/Transition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>272-279</td>
<td>Var. 7 (truncated)</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>280-302</td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(East is Red)</em></td>
<td>303-326</td>
<td>(Patriotic quodlibet)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>327-363</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(The Internationale)</em></td>
<td>363-369</td>
<td>(Patriotic quodlibet)</td>
<td>vi-V-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>369-383</td>
<td></td>
<td>I-V-I</td>
<td>Codetta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 summarizes the organization of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*. It is not the present author’s intention to only discuss the Western forms in this concerto, without considering Chinese musical forms and folk music practices. However, the information presented in Table 2 could shed light on the overall organization of the concerto as observed. The concerto begins and ends in the key of D major. The middle movements of the concerto are related to D major through the borrowing of B-flat from D minor and the Neapolitan key of E-flat major.\textsuperscript{191} The brief analysis in the table serves to point out possibilities for other interpretations. A theoretical study and analysis of the several versions of the *Yellow River Cantata* is needed to draw parallels to the concerto, but these scores are not available to the present author. The *Yellow River Cantata* differs in its tonal organization, beginning in D major but ending in F major in the last movement. In the later versions, the cantata ends in B-flat major.\textsuperscript{192} An analysis might shed further light on how the composers negotiated among the Western models, the cantata and the requirements of ideological purity. When Xian first wrote the cantata, he was limited to the eclectic mix of Chinese and Western instruments, and the low skill level of the musicians at Yan’an. The second version of the cantata was written in Moscow where he had access to Western instruments and well-trained musicians who could handle a more difficult and adventurous score.\textsuperscript{193} Xian’s Moscow version was revised in 1975 by Yan Liangkun.\textsuperscript{194} A complete discussion would entail a study of Chinese forms and the cantata which cannot be sufficiently dealt within the scope of this document. Besides the difficulties mentioned above,\textsuperscript{191} This scheme forms an overall structure of I- flat VI - flat II – (V) I for the four movements respectively. See Margaret Chan, “The Yellow River Piano Concerto”, 196-233, for a complete measure-by-measure analysis.\textsuperscript{192} Yang, “The Making of a National Music Icon,” 93. See article for a table on the tonal structure of the different cantata versions.\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 91.\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 92.
the methodology and vocabulary for researching this cross-cultural musical genre during the Cultural Revolution are also still in the developmental stages.

The form of the movements in the concerto was a point of contention between the composers and the Party officials. The first movement of the concerto was originally written as a sonata with an exposition including a modulation to a secondary tonal area, a development section prolonging the dominant, and a predictable recapitulation reestablishing the tonic.\(^{195}\) The primary theme was drawn from the “Yellow River Boatmen’s Song” and the secondary theme from the “Ode to the Yellow River.”\(^{196}\) This was not accepted by the Party. Conductors, Li Delun and Yan Liangkun of the Central Philharmonic Orchestra, together with several ministers, inspected the first draft of the first movement. The conductors stated that the sonata form must not be allowed and cannot be accepted by the Chinese people, as it is a form of “foreign dogma.”\(^{197}\) Thematic and key relations in a sonata form would be too abstract for the proletariat to understand, as Jiang Qing mentioned.\(^{198}\) The revolutionaries needed to “smash all things foreign.”\(^{199}\)

Not all things foreign were smashed if one could prove that foreign things could be used or adapted to serve China. The melodies of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* are mostly pentatonic but are harmonized diatonically, like its predecessor. The absence of half steps in pentatonic scales accounts for some distinct characteristics of pentatonic melodies. Pentatonic melodies can begin and end on any note of the scale because the scale is non-directional. Unlike the Western tonal system, chromaticism is also impossible with pentatonic melodies. Western

\(^{195}\) Li, “A Survey of Chu Wang-Hua’s Piano Works” 47.
\(^{196}\) Chu Wanghua, “Huanghe gangqin xiezhouqu she zhenyang danshende,” 7.
\(^{197}\) Ibid.
\(^{198}\) Jiang Qing, *Jiang Qing tongzhi lunwen yi*, 65 & 71.
\(^{199}\) Ibid., 65. See also Chu Wanghua, “Huanghe gangqin xiezhouqu she zhenyang danshende,” 7.
harmonic practices and underlying tonal structures combine with clearly defined features of
design to project recognizable two-part and three-part tonal forms (see Table 2). This was not
viewed as the Westernization of Chinese music but considered a form of elevation and
modernization of folk practices to suit the revolution.

The visiting conductors singled out the first movement in particular for revision.
Adjustments, such as the omission of modulations at critical points were made to disrupt any
possibility of a perception that this movement exhibits sonata form. As an alternative, design
features inspired by strophic organization in the cantata were adopted. In neither Chu
Wanghua’s nor Shi Shucheng’s recollections of the compositional process of the concerto, is
there mention of why the modulations in the last two movements were acceptable. The double
exposition which is often used in the concerto genre is also not present in this concerto and the
piano seldom plays unaccompanied. The different motives of the boatmen’s cries, the boatmen’s
song and the depiction of Yellow River shoreline are presented in the same order as in the
cantata. The piano part contains additions of rapid octave and arpeggio figurations in the style of
Liszt to serve as transitions between the themes. The piano figuration is indicated in the score
as a depiction of the “billowing Yellow River rapids,” and is followed by the work song of the
boatmen. The second passage, also in the style of Liszt, is explained as “breaking through the
rapids.” This is followed by the contrasting melody, which depicts the boatmen approaching the
shore. The slogan for the re-statement of the boatmen’s song is to “fight on [and] press ahead.”

There are clear sections in the first movement. The first movement best fits a modified
strophic form if it is analyzed based on the cantata’s text layout (see Table 2). The opening
motifs of the boatmen’s cry can be understood as a refrain based on the text of the cantata (see

_____________________________________________________________________

200 Ibid.
ex. 8a and 8b). The movement could also be analyzed as a sectional ternary form based on the
tonal divisions in the piece (see Table 2).

Example 8. Opening motifs, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt

a. Opening motif 1, mm. 1-2

b. Opening motif 2, mm. 7-8

The text of these two motifs are “huai you,” which is a cry or an exclamation of the
boatmen. The verses of the song of the boatmen are interspersed with the two motifs throughout
the piece. The boatmen’s theme is a dialog between the piano and the orchestra – in imitation of
the antiphonal singing style of the work song (see ex. 9).

Example 9. Boatmen’s song theme, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt. mm. 17-20
The slower theme in measures 84 to 87 (see ex. 10) cannot be considered a secondary theme because it is very similar to the boatmen’s theme (see ex. 9).

Example 10. Variation of theme, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt, mm. 84-87

The ending of the first section (A) in the tonic, the absence of a clear secondary theme and modulations, rule out the sonata and concerto forms in this movement. There are hints of sonata form with transpositions of thematic and motivic material in the B section, but these features alone do not make it possible to perceive this piece as a “sonata.” This section (mm 47-83) could also be interpreted as the B section of a ternary form (ABA). The example below shows that the motivic material, which is initially presented in B minor, is then transposed to C major in the second system (see ex. 11). Following this section, the opening motifs return.

Example 11. Piano part, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt. mm. 51-62
The second movement also was originally conceived as a theme and variations by the composing group, but it was modified to a strophic form. The second movement stays in the same key and mirrors the design of the original cantata. This movement uses the form of Chinese art song which is in a binary form instead of the ternary form usually found in the slow movement of a Western concerto. The return of the tonic in m. 61 brings the movement to its high point. This welcomed return contains the insertion of a fragment of the National Anthem. The coda has the highest tessitura in the whole movement, utilizing the upper range of the winds, strings and the piano.

The third movement is in a ternary form and combines two songs of the cantata. The “Folk Song of the Yellow River” is used in the A section and is alternated with the “Lament of the Yellow River” in the B section. The B section contains two parts and begins in m. 54 with a change of key to C minor, the relative minor. The first part in C minor portrays grief with the Japanese invasion and the subsequent removal from home, as in the cantata. This is prolonged with the insertion of the melodic material from the “Lament of the Yellow River,” the soprano lament, which forms the second part beginning in m. 74. The keys of D-flat major and C-flat major are used in this section, portraying the grief and intended suicide.

Looking at the overall organization of this concerto, the last movement is the most substantial in length and is best described as a set of theme and variations with the insertions of two additional songs. The variation technique is acceptable because this practice is common in folk music, which is considered to be of the proletariat. Variations or elaborations in Chinese music are referred to as “jiahua”, literally meaning “adding flowers.” This usually refers to the elaborations added to melodies. The goal of this set of variations was to raise a proletariat art

\[201\] Ibid., 48.
\[202\] Cheng, “The Yellow River Piano Concerto” 51.
form technique to a higher level. The original movement in the cantata is fairly short, lasting only 203 measures. The first three variations are presented in fragments until the fourth variation which begins at m. 133. The variation of the theme presented in full, arrives finally at the tonic of D major (see ex. 12).

Example 12. *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt. mm. 133-140

![Example 12](image1)

In the B section, the theme is fragmented and not always presented in full. Fragments of the theme are augmented in this section (see ex. 13a and b).

Example 13. Theme fragments, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*

a. Trumpet part, 4th mvt. mm. 185-189

![Example 13a](image2)

b. Flute and clarinet parts, 4th mvt. mm. 205-212

![Example 13b](image3)
The expansion of the movement in the concerto is in preparation for the return of the tonic key of D major. The extra-musical elements in this expansion are also very significant because of the insertion of two songs, *East is Red* and the *Internationale*.

It is clear from the record and the score itself that composers attempted to hide the presence of archetypical Western forms such as sonata and concerto. They reverted instead to simpler two and three-part forms which allowed greater flexibility in aligning strophic designs inherited from the cantata and variation techniques allowed by authorities with the overall design and tonal structure of each movement. The tripartite organization in the movements of the concerto is common in Western music but this was not known to the functionaries of the Party. This organization could be related to Chinese musical forms. The diatonic and chromatic treatment of the pentatonic melodies is distinctively Western, but without it, the piece could reversely be accused of being primitive and regressive. Such Western treatment would be again justified as an application of “Chinese substance, Western practice.”

The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* derived its extra-musical meanings from the *Yellow River Cantata*. It is presumed that the audience of the concerto would have some knowledge of the cantata. The lyrics of the first movement of the cantata and the new slogans inserted in the first movement of the concerto are similar in meaning. These slogans would be out of place without the lyrics of the cantata as their background. There are a total of six slogans in the first movement (see Table 3).
Table 3. Slogans and measure numbers, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1\textsuperscript{st} mvt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Measure No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The boatmen contend with the waves</td>
<td>m. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The billowing rapids of the Yellow River</td>
<td>m. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The determined and strong work song of the boatmen</td>
<td>m. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Breaking through the rapids</td>
<td>m. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The boatmen see the brightness of the shore</td>
<td>m. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fight on, bravely press ahead</td>
<td>m. 93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first four slogans summarize the content of the lyrics but omit any mention of an enemy. The fifth slogan mentions the brightness of the shore, with unmentioned reference to the original lyrics in which dark skies are threatening the boatmen along with the billowing waves.

The last slogan is rather generic without specific mention of the Yellow River or its waves, but it was revolutionary in nature. The first four words of the slogan is the Chinese title of a popular French Revolution song “Ça ira”, but also translate to “fight on.” The slogans that accompany the second movement are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Slogans and measure numbers, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} mvt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Trace the long history of the Chinese people</td>
<td>m. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Praise the Chinese revolutionary tradition</td>
<td>m. 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The awakened Chinese nation has risen in the Eastern part of the world</td>
<td>m. 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar to the first movement of the concerto, the first slogan recalls the long history sung in the lyrics of the cantata. The second movement of the cantata is an ode sung in praise of the Yellow River. In the cantata, the Yellow River is praised as the cradle of Chinese civilization and is given a maternal image. If this first slogan is taken out of the context of the cantata, the “long history” of the Chinese people could be interpreted in many different ways. The slogan could serve as an introduction to the two slogans which follow. The second slogan alludes to the past Long March and Yan’an years and justifies the current Cultural Revolution. The last slogan inserted in the coda provides a contemporary meaning to the concerto. Both the coda and the meaning are unique to the concerto and are not found in the cantata. The rise of the Chinese nation would be depicted by the insertion of the Chinese National Anthem, which will be further discussed.

The meaning of the third movement of the concerto differs from the cantata. At a glance, the accompanying slogans display rage and anger (see Table 5).

Table 5. Slogans and measure numbers, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 3rd mvt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A revolution is like the rays of the sun</td>
<td>m. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The invading enemy’s iron heel has trampled our motherland’s rivers and mountains</td>
<td>m. 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The people endure bitter and heavy suffering</td>
<td>m. 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The people’s seething rage is like a fire</td>
<td>m. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The waves of the Yellow River roll, the people are filled with anger</td>
<td>m. 137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no slogan mentioning the waters of the Yellow River or the serene atmosphere prior to the invasion of the enemy, as there is in the cantata.

The introduction of the third movement of the concerto immediately mentions a revolution. This revolution could refer to the Long March and Yan’an years or the current Cultural Revolution. The “rays of the sun” is a foreshadowing of the arrival of the revolutionary leader, Chairman Mao, and also represent a glimmer of hope. It is again presumed that the audience remembers the cantata, as the following two slogans mention the “iron heels of the invaders” and the “suffering of the people.” The invaders here could still refer to the Japanese or other foreign invaders. The invasion may not be a physical battle but an ideological battle against foreign thought and practices. The suffering of the people could also be blamed on the exploitation by the bourgeoisie. These slogans correspond with the C minor section in the concerto. The woman’s suffering and subsequent call for vengeance is altered in the concerto. The new slogan represents a collective instead of an individual. Instead of a suicidal lament, the emotions expressed here are like a burning wrath. The depiction of burning wrath or intense hatred towards enemies was common in art of the Cultural Revolution, especially in the Eight Model Plays, serving to motivate the people to sacrifice for the revolution and love the Communist Party. The return of the folk song melody is marked by the final slogan. The Yellow River has joined in the people’s anger with its rolling waves. It is transformed from a place of solace and comfort to a rallying point for battle. The meanings of the slogan justify the title of this movement – Wrath of the Yellow River.

The slogans which accompany the last movement are more contemporary to the concerto, mentioning Chairman Mao and the current revolution (see Table 6). The last movement is a call

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to arms entitled “Defend the Yellow River.” The title of this movement is the same as the
cantata, but the interpretation again differs. The first four slogans still allude to the Sino-Japanese
War. The second slogan used the words “kangri” which can only be translated to mean “resist
Japan.” The last three slogans were popular during the Cultural Revolution. The study of
Marxist, Leninist and Chairman Mao’s thought was considered to be a revolutionary activity and
the concerto composing committee did likewise.

Table 6. Slogans and measure numbers, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chairman Mao and the Central Party Committee launch a war appeal</td>
<td>m. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Japanese Resistance fighters descend on the battlefield</td>
<td>m. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The armed revolutionary forces are expanding</td>
<td>m. 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Battle horses are galloping, brave warriors engage the enemy</td>
<td>m. 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Long Live Chairman Mao! Long Live the People’s War!</td>
<td>m. 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lift up Marxist, Leninist and Maoist thought! Raise the red flag and march forward!</td>
<td>m. 345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Carry the revolutionary through to the end!</td>
<td>m. 361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Usually in Socialist music, the main choices were a symphony for a purely instrumental
ensemble or a mass choir, which was likely accompanied by an orchestra. In a symphony or a
mass song, every part has its role and no particular instrument or voice is unusually favored.
Because of natural acoustics, the upper range would be more audible; therefore, the upper parts
would carry the melodic material. The middle and lower parts would often times be the support
and foundation but this does not mean they are of lesser importance. This would easily embody
the ideals of the different classes working towards a common goal. The most striking aspect of this piece is the chosen form of a piano concerto instead of other forms of large ensemble music. The *Yellow River Cantata* could have been transcribed as a symphony.

I would argue that the choice of the piano was arbitrary and an artistic decision made by Jiang Qing. Although the piano received official endorsement from her and subsequently the Communist Party, there are aspects of the piano which contradict the ideals of the Cultural Revolution. Firstly, the piano is a Western and bourgeois instrument. Jiang is correct that the piano is made by workers, but she disregards the refined and specialized skills required in piano manufacturing. The use of the piano is justified as a means of modernizing China, and replacing the “old,” which are revolutionary goals. Secondly, collectivism was highly regarded during this period, whereas individualism was suppressed. The piano is a solo instrument because of its wide range, encompassing the span of an entire orchestra. Consequently, there is a vast amount of solo piano literature and at most, one piano can be played by three persons as a novelty. Besides the individualism which the piano espouses, the piano is also a very expensive instrument, costing more than a worker’s annual wages. There were factions in the Party who were against the use of the piano, and they considered whether the accordion should be popularized among the masses.

The accordion is also a foreign instrument to China. Accordion ensembles were present and used in street performances to accompany revolutionary songs and dances. Compared to the piano, the accordion was cheap and easily portable. The accordion would also be easier for the masses to play. Kraus argues that the acceptance of the piano rescued musicians and urban intellectuals from an onslaught of accordion music.\(^{204}\) The commissioning of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* endorsed the piano officially.

\(^{204}\) Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China*, 150-151.
The adaptation of Socialist Realism in China included the addition of revolutionary Romanticism. The choice of a piano concerto fit aspects of revolutionary Romanticism because this ideology allowed for an idealized version of the revolution and its effects. From this perspective, the choice of a concerto is entirely acceptable to revolutionary ideals. The portrayal of a hero for the proletariat is one of the aspects of Socialist Realist art. The *Eight Model Plays* which preceded the concerto contained a heroic role who was always Communist. This revolutionary stage genre was intended to portray the theory of “the armed struggle of the masses,” to promulgate that the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie was always present and to present a heroic depiction of the proletariat (workers, peasants and soldiers).\(^{205}\) The revolutionary hero in these plays performs the role of a worker, a peasant, or a low-level party official who is aware of the class distinctions and moral righteousness.\(^{206}\) This hero always triumphs over the greatest adversity and is the model Communist. Based on this observation, I would argue that the soloist in this concerto would therefore embody the role of a hero and would represent the rise of a new leader in Chairman Mao. The best role model for Communism in China was Chairman Mao himself. Although, the concerto is not the best fit for an egalitarian agenda, it was a fitting choice for the Socialist ideals of a hero. In Confucian philosophy, the musical orchestra represents the court. The soloist would then be the leader and the orchestra is his court.

In a 19\(^{th}\)-century concerto, the Western image of a soloist is expected to contend with the orchestra. The soloist could also be expected to lead the rest of the orchestra and hold all the other parts together. The piano is a good choice for a heroic soloist because of its broad range, vast color properties and dynamic power. The piano has always been exploited for these

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 115-116.
\(^{206}\) Ibid.
properties throughout Western music history. Madame Mao herself had officially sanctioned this instrument to be used as a revolutionary instrument. I would also argue that the unifying factor of the solo part could thus symbolize the capabilities of a Communist hero, likened to Chairman Mao, to join the masses together and move China forward into a new era.

The choice of a concerto allowed for a virtuosic showcase. China did not lack pianistic talent of high caliber, and given the several pianists on the composing committee, a highly difficult and virtuosic piano part could be written for this concerto. There is no doubt that the part was written for none other than Yin himself, who also premiered the concerto. Chu Wanghua was named the secondary pianist because of his father was a political prisoner of the revolution. How would the composers justify such virtuosity? In the \textit{Eight Model Plays}, which preceded the concerto as approved entertainment, virtuosity embodied the role of the hero. Virtuosic ballet and dance moves were executed by these actors and dancers. The heroic piano part had to be difficult and virtuosic to point towards only one capable leader and not just any layperson. If these qualities were absent, this piece would be much more accessible to many pianists and not only to those at the top echelon of pianistic technique. I would further argue that the inaccessibility of the piece itself is a symbol of the office of the Chairman itself. The virtuosic qualities would be to portray Chairman Mao as one who is capable and fearless, brave enough to lead a revolution. Only one who is capable will be qualified; this person then also should not be questioned.

The piano part contains rapid octave figurations and repeated notes, commonly found in the virtuoso piano repertoire of Liszt, Chopin and Rachmaninov. Bursts of virtuosity are used as introductions or transitions between the themes that are materials drawn from the cantata. After a brief orchestral introduction, the piano makes its first entrance with an opening cadenza...
utilizing rapid arpeggios and sequential scale passages (see ex. 14). This passage is interpreted as a representation of the waves and rippling water of the river. In the cantata, this introduction immediately follows the narrator’s text describing the Yellow River and its waves. Moreover, the new slogan attached to this passage states that “the boatmen contend with the waves of the river.” The use of musical gestures to imitate nature is definitely within the realms of Realism in music.

Example 14. Opening cadenza, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 1st mvt. mm. 13-14
The piano plays another cadenza to lead into the second theme of the first movement. In this cadenza, the composers use arpeggios and rapid alternating chords to create a wall of sound (see ex. 15). This wall of sound portrays the hydropower and the furiousness of the Yellow River, subtitled as the “boatmen breaking through the waves.” Conversely, this could also symbolize the fortitude and physical strength of the boatmen.

Example 15. Piano cadenza, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 82-83
In the last movement, rapid octave figuration is used in the introduction to propel the concerto forward (see ex. 16). This is reminiscent of the virtuoso playing styles of Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninov which require technical accuracy and stamina.

Example 16. Opening cadenza, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt. mm. 6-8.

In contrast to the virtuosity, there are parts of the piano solo which are very simplistic, especially in the transcription of the cantata melodies. The texture is thinned to a single note per hand which is rather elementary and not very pianistic (see ex. 17). These are then juxtaposed with the virtuosity. These varying degrees of technical demand actually increase the difficulty for the performer.
Example 17. Piano part, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt mm. 48-55

Socialist Realism allowed for the mixing of high and low styles in a piece of music to bridge the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, making the piece acceptable to all layers of social strata. 207 The virtuosic and jocular passages would be joined together in this ideological aesthetic. According to Mao’s artistic standards in his *Talks at Yan’an*, the piece could be accused of being bourgeois and inaccessible to the masses if it consisted only of virtuosic display. 208 If the piece was too simple, it could be accused of using proletarian aspects for novelty’s sake or to glorify the primitive notion, but not realistically portraying the proletariat. 209

The virtuosity and the simplicity which are both found in the concerto could also be a form of elevation as outlined by Mao in his *Talks at Yan’an*. The masses would have to be educated to continually raise the standards. It would therefore not be acceptable if the piece was only at the level of the cantata or only at the virtuosic level. This disparity would have to be reduced or eliminated. The audience must be introduced to a higher form of art in small increments and not overwhelmed by pianistic display. This would explain the sudden or subtle embedding of extra material not derived from the cantata. The difficult cadenza passages always serve as transitions.

208 Mao Zedong, “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature,” 77.
209 Ibid., 73.
Kraus argues that the concerto was written to allow pianists to practice and keep their technique until the terror of the Cultural Revolution was over.\textsuperscript{210} Without such a piece, it would have been highly difficult for many pianists to reemerge after the revolution. Because this concerto was accepted by Mao and his Party, any pianist could use this piece as a practice and didactic tool. The piece would provide the gymnasium to practice a wide range of technical aspects of piano playing: repeated notes, rhythmic control, voicing, octave passages, scales and arpeggios and different articulation patterns are all found in the concerto. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that pianists could have added other etudes or exercises to their practice routines, with the excuse that they were using this outside material to enhance their performance of the concerto. Anything other than utter perfection would have been considered a disservice to the revolution. Referring to Yin, Richard Kraus writes:

\begin{quote}
The Cultural Revolution was not an easy time for a virtuoso; only by wrapping his technique in this sacred hymn of the revolution could Yin justify maintaining and developing his brilliant piano artistry.\textsuperscript{211}
\end{quote}

The other primary concern of Mao and Jiang Qing was with the popularization of art. The art must first be accessible for the masses before it could be popularized. The piano which was largely unfamiliar to the Chinese masses had to be sinified for accessibility. Chinese elements absorbed into piano compositions would be familiar and please the ears of the proletariat who have not been exposed to much Western music. This would also satisfy the requirements of Mao who stated that art and literature must be popularized among the masses. The piano and Western orchestral instruments are foreign, but these can be used to imitate Chinese instruments and Chinese sounds. The slogan of \textit{tiyong} and letting things of the West serve China fit this setting. The concerto would have to utilize melodies and idiomatic compositional techniques familiar to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[210] Kraus, \textit{Pianos and Politics in China}, 149.
\item[211] Ibid., 148.
\end{footnotes}
the masses to secure its place in the revolution. Several examples of this idiomatic writing will be discussed here.\footnote{212 See Cheng’s dissertation for a more complete discussion of the Chinese elements in this concerto. Cheng also compared specific piano figurations to those of Liszt, Chopin and Rachmaninov.} The concerto would also have to mimic Chinese instruments and the idiomatic sounds to be familiar to the Chinese audience and the Western orchestra would also have to mimic Chinese instruments. Chu Wanghua was first criticized for the lack of Chinese musical idioms in the concerto.\footnote{213 Li, “A Survey of Chu Wang-Hua's Piano Works” 48.} Necessary changes were made to the piano score to satisfy this requirement.

The unmeasured Chinese flute solo opening in the third movement of the concerto is reminiscent of Chinese melodic writing which is more improvisatory in style (see ex. 18). The third movement of the concerto is based on the fourth and sixth movements of the cantata. The introduction is slightly altered from the cantata but still provides a setting to depict the surroundings of the river. The annotation states that the revolution is like the rays of the sun. The flute solo is intended to portray the outdoors and is a likely imitation of birdsong heard at sunrise.

Example 18. Chinese flute solo opening, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 3\textsuperscript{rd} mvt. m. 1

This Chinese flute solo is followed by the piano entrance shown in Example 19 which is similarly unmeasured. The piano figuration imitates the strumming of the guzheng, a stringed instrument. In Chinese programmatic music, the guzheng is often used to portray the flowing and...
rippling of water through the use of *glissando* techniques. The piano writing here is also reminiscent of Ravel and Liszt.

Example 19. Piano introduction, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 3rd mvt. m. 1

The piano again imitates the *guzheng* in the example below (see ex. 20). The melody is usually plucked on the *guzheng*, with strummed elaborations. In *guzheng* music, the melodic notes are usually decorated or filled in (*jiahua* technique) such as in the first measure given below. The original melodic line of the cantata is therefore decorated in Chinese instrumental style, to be played by the piano.

Example 20. Piano part, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 3rd mvt., mm. 2-5
The piano imitates the *yangqin*, a Chinese hammered dulcimer with repeated note figurations (see ex. 21). This repeated note technique is also commonly used in the playing style of the *pipa*, the Chinese lute. The melodic outline of the repeated notes is also doubled by the left hand. This is an advanced technique in piano playing but this passage is not meant to be a technical display as it is marked to be played rather slowly. This adaptation of the *yangqin* or *pipa* style would be familiar to the peasant and worker audience who were mostly only familiar with Chinese instruments. The trembling effect of the repeated notes by a *pipa* is also meant to depict tears and great emotion.

Example 21. Piano part, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 3\(^{rd}\) mvt. mm. 64-68

Realist music also had to depict nature. Some of the musical symbols utilized in this concerto have also been used by previous composers like Grieg and Smetana. In order to clarify the content and depictions of the music, slogans and explanations were written into the score of the concerto. The opening of the concerto is similar to the cantata with the upper winds imitating the waves of the Yellow River (see ex. 22). The annotation for the introduction reads “the boatmen contend with the waves of the river”. The first oboe represents the cry of the boatmen in measures two and four (see ex. 22).
Example 22. Upper winds opening, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt. mm. 1-5

The harp is used to depict the flowing and rippling of the water whereas the cymbals depict the crash of the waves against the boat of the boatmen (see ex. 23). These sounds combine to demonstrate the vastness and the power of the Yellow River, with which the boatmen had to contend.

Example 23. Harp and cymbal parts, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 1st mvt. mm. 1-3
String tremolos are used to indicate tension as shown in the example below. This example is taken from the third movement, “Wrath of the Yellow River,” which begins in E-flat major. The sudden change to C minor is marked by the string tremolo (see ex. 24). This section also corresponds with the cantata, where the mood changes abruptly to portray the Japanese invasion. The same sentiment is captured in the slogan stating that “the invading enemy’s iron heel has trampled our motherland’s rivers and mountains.”

Example 24. Strings and piano parts, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 3rd mvt. mm. 55-58

The piano also descends into the low register with a descending melodic line in the example given (see ex. 25). Descending melodic lines in a minor key are often used to depict sorrow and tragedy in Western music. The minor key is used for this effect in certain types of Chinese music. Xian Xinghai mentioned that he based this melody on a lament “Meng Jiang

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The low register corresponds to the use of the men’s chorus in the cantata to depict the invasion. The piano is able to reach lower notes than the human voice. The tragic element is expanded in the piano with the additional notes in the second measure of the example (see ex. 25).

Example 25. Piano part, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 3rd mvt., mm. 55-58

These notes are doubled in octaves by the left hand producing an effect of a low growl, symbolizing deepest sorrow. The ascending *glissando* in the following measure alludes to a ray of hope as in the cantata when the solace is found again in the Yellow River. The *yangqin* or *pipa* repeated note figuration played by the piano is used to depict the deep, heavy and bitter hardship of the people as indicated by the annotation. The folk element of the piano figuration represents the people.

Brass instruments are usually orchestrated in the more militant style of music and are heavily used in the last movement, which is a call to arms, as in the cantata. The military fanfare marked by dotted rhythms herald the beginning of the final movement (see ex. 26). The opening of the fourth movement ushers in the first statement of *East is Red* which is played by the full

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orchestra. The slogan reads “Chairman Mao and the Central Party Committee launch a war appeal.” The orchestration thins out after this initial brass fanfare, giving way to a piano cadenza.

Example 26. Orchestral introduction, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4\(^{th}\) mvt., mm. 1-4
The brass instruments are also featured with the piano in the fourth variation marked “marziale,” meaning it is to be played in martial style (see ex. 27). The trombones dialog with the piano similar to the two-part imitation found in the cantata.

Example 27. Brass and piano parts, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 4th mvt. mm. 133-140

The concerto also uses rhythm to depict horses in battle in the last movement. The subtitle, “Battle horses are galloping, Brave warriors engage the enemy,” accompany this section. This section originally utilized the pipa and strings to imitate the gallop of the horses, but the pipa has been removed from the newer version of the concerto (see ex. 28). This imitation is used to accompany the theme played by the trumpets. The theme is augmented in this section and presented in B-flat major.
Example 28. *Pipa* and strings, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt. mm. 183-189

The compositional techniques used in this concerto are also not new. The classical topics of expression are used in this concerto along with romantic techniques of memory. A musical quotation from existing music is inserted into new compositions to evoke a memory.\(^{216}\) The quotation is often in fragments and is adapted to fit the new composition. An extra-musical subject, which is attached to this musical quote in its original composition, serves as a memory device in the new composition. This technique was used by Beethoven, Schumann and Schubert, to name a few. The training that the concerto composers have received would have included the composers of the past like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. A parallel with Beethoven’s Symphony no. 5 can be drawn. Beethoven’s music, especially Symphony no. 5, was particularly singled out at the Socialist music and this specific piece as a representation of the struggle of the masses.\(^{217}\) The symphony is significant because the usual four-movement


structure of a symphony is the start of the revolution. In the Soviet Union, Beethoven was hailed as a composer whose compositions propelled towards the last movement instead of an emphasis on the first. The resolution of the conflict raised in the initials movements is only found in the fourth movement. Beethoven’s symphony begins in C minor, a dark key, but ends in bright, triumphant C major. During the Cultural Revolution in China, Beethoven fell out of favor with the revolutionaries and his Symphony no. 5 was banned, but the Symphony no. 6 “Pastorale” was permitted for its depiction of nature. The following quote describes the interpretation of Beethoven’s Symphony no. 5 during the revolution:

Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 was considered to be a work of propaganda. The first thematic idea, according to Beethoven’s own explanation, was to describe the knocking sound of fate. The conflict and fight between human will and fate was expressed through the contrast and variety of two thematic statements. In fact, it reflected the political reality and wish of the German bourgeoisie. The aggressive revolutionary party wanted to break through the boundaries of feudalism. The emotional diversity and contrast was apparently embodied in a political statement.

Even though Beethoven’s music was considered as bourgeois propaganda, vestiges of his compositional techniques would still be present in this work. The composers of the concerto and Xian Xinghai had studied Beethoven symphonies.

Firstly, the technique of memory is used here in the second movement of the concerto.

The national anthem of China prior to the Cultural Revolution was the March of Volunteers by Nie Er (1912-1935). Lyrics of this song were written by left-wing writer Tian Han (1898-1968). The song was originally written for a film, Children of Troubled Times (1935) and it became very popular because its lyrics reflected a nation who was frustrated by the internal and external

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218 There were many debates and discussions on the non-programmatic works of Beethoven during the Cultural Revolution. Conductor Li Delun programmed this in 1955 and was questioned whether this piece was ideologically sound. The Philadelphia Orchestra, under Eugene Ormandy, visited China in 1973. They were forced to substitute Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony with the Sixth Symphony in their performance. See Melvin and Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 194 and 270.

The March of the Volunteers is originally in the key of G major (see Appendix II). This insertion, utilizing only a fragment of the introduction, is rather subtle and does not lead anywhere. The brass plays the introduction theme of the National Anthem twice under the climax of the second movement. It is first presented in the key of B-flat major, and then in E-flat major (see ex. 29). The piano and orchestra soar over this theme. The highest tessitura for the piano in this movement lies at this point. This secondary theme is then buried or taken over by other primary themes in the second movement.

Example 29. March of the Volunteers, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 2nd mvt. mm. 61-64

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221 Xing Lu, Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 110.
223 Xing Lu, Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 111.
The symbolic struggle for the establishment of a new China is present here. There is a hint of nostalgia and the longing for a utopia in this section. The official subtitle for this section is “the Chinese nation has risen in the Eastern part of the world.” I would offer several other interpretations for the embedding of the *March of Volunteers*. It could be a reminder of the past that is to be subjugated to the present leadership, or it could be a subtle defiance of the current leadership and longing for the past glory of the Yan’an years to return. The young revolutionaries of the Cultural Revolution had no experience equaling the Long March, and should be given the opportunity to participate in revolutionary activities. The melody was popular during the Long March and Yan’an revolutionary years. The melody itself may have been acceptable since there were no lyrics here. The memory device is not new, as it is found in Beethoven’s Symphony no. 5, where the theme of the third movement is inserted in the fourth movement. This device was also used by pianist and composer, Robert Schumann. The pianists on the committee were of high caliber and products of Western training; hence, they would definitely have been acquainted with the works of Beethoven and Schumann.

The last movement is significant with the embedding of two famous songs of the revolution. The songs, *East is Red* and the *Internationale* are both found in this movement. Jiang Qing suggested that these two songs be inserted in the piano concerto. The *East is Red* was a mass song and dance paean to honor Mao. This song and dance production is named after the opening number, *East is Red*. This was made into a television feature that was broadcasted all over China. The feature required a cast of thousands of performers to sing, dance and play in this massive production. The *East is Red* praises the rise of Chairman Mao and glorifies his leadership. During this time, many forms of entertainment were banned and cinemas were only allowed to show officially endorsed and approved features. The *East is Red* would therefore
become very well-known among the masses. The tune for *East is Red* was also taken from a folksong from northern Shanxi Province, where Yan’an is located.\(^{224}\) The tune was based on “Riding a White Horse” and was first adapted into a new song “Migrant Melody” before becoming popular with the lyrics of *East is Red* (see Appendix III).\(^{225}\) The lyrics were written by Liu Chi (b. 1921) and Wang Dahua (1919-1946) after the defeat of the Japanese. The lyrics likened Mao to the sun and a helmsman, a recurring theme for revolutionary songs since the 1930s.\(^{226}\) The hint of *East is Red* is presented in the opening of the movement (see ex. 30).

Example 30. The *East is Red* theme, *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4\(^{\text{th}}\) mvt. mm. 3-7

The use of *East is Red* guaranteed that this concerto would not be censored. This song propelled Mao to a godlike status and followed the ancient Chinese myth that a leader was a deity sent from heaven.\(^{227}\) The East and the red sun are symbols for Mao; therefore, *East is Red* is a musical depiction of Mao. This red sun was the source of the radiance which emanated over the China. The song was sung often, and usually opened an event. This was also often accompanied by a “loyalty dance” as part of the cult-like ritual to deify Mao.\(^{228}\) Anything that was connected to, symbolized, or bore an image of Mao was declared to be sacrosanct. The song

\(^{225}\) Ibid., 920. See the lyrics and translation of *East is Red* provided in Appendix II.
\(^{226}\) Ibid., 918 and 920.
\(^{228}\) Ibid., 102. The loyalty dance is referred to as “zhongzi wu.”
was performed countless times by the masses and was broadcasted over the thousands of loudspeakers across Beijing.\(^\text{229}\)

The last movement opens with the first line of this song before the piano enters with a cadenza (see ex. 30). After seven variations of the theme, *East is Red* is added for the climax of the piece. One complete stanza of *East is Red* is presented in the last movement (see ex. 31 and 32).

Example 31. The *East is Red, Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4\(^{th}\) mvt. mm. 301-304

\(^{229}\) Ibid., 103.
Example 32. The *East is Red, Yellow River Piano Concerto*, 4th mvt. mm. 305-308

The last line of the stanza is repeated twice. The lyrics of this particular line refer to Mao as the great savior of the people. In the film of the concerto, a picture of young Mao is flashed onto the screen at the moment the orchestra plays *East is Red*. The slogan of this particular section reads: “Long live Chairman Mao, Long live the People’s war.” The instrumentation of
this section utilizes the upper winds, upper strings and the upper register of the piano for the melody; the harp plays ascending figurations to accompany. In examining the score, the most active part belongs to the piano. The piano texture in both Example 31 and Example 32 is full of chords and utilizes a broad range. This attempts to portray the spatial concept of breadth and elevation; and the concept of light and brightness. Mao is the red sun and the light who leads the people into a new China. The next slogan which follows East is Red states: “Lift up Marxist, Leninist and Maoist Thought! Raise the red flag and march forward.” The East is Red is finally merged with the theme played by the piano (see ex. 33) and winds (not shown).

Example 33. Piano and strings, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 4th mvt. mm. 345-352

As in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, the lengthening of the coda in the triumphant key of C major prevents any return to the darkness of C minor. The East is Red plays the same role here. The insertion of East is Red at this point in the movement is no mistake. There is no return

to the conflicts the Yellow River had experienced and the solution is finally present. The theme is presented in lush, dramatic texture as one would expect in a Hollywood soundtrack, a criticism of the concerto raised by New York Times reporter, Harold Schonberg.\textsuperscript{\textit{231}}

Example 34. The \textit{Internationale}, Yellow River Piano Concerto, 4\textsuperscript{th} mvt. mm. 361-366

\begin{quote}
To continue to drive home this notion of success and triumph in this concerto, the final phrase of the Socialist anthem \textit{Internationale} closes this concerto (see ex. 34). The final slogan
\end{quote}

urges the people to carry the revolution through to the end. The *Internationale* was the first anthem of the Soviet party which became the universal song of Communism (see Appendix IV). It was translated into many languages. The *Internationale* was introduced to China in 1923 by Qu Qiubai, who translated the song into Chinese. While *East is Red* opened the radio broadcasting daily, the *Internationale* closed the programming for the day.

At the end of the *East is Red* feature, the *Internationale* is played and sung in Chinese. The use of this technique follows in the footsteps of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, again recalling to the nationalism in the late Romantic era. This piece was not unknown to the Chinese public. The Vice Premier Chen Yi was present at the performance by the Soviet orchestra concert in 1958. Tchaikovsky’s overture depicted the Russian-Franco wars of 1812 and the unsuccessful invasion of Russia by Napoleon. Strains of *La Marseillaise*, the French national anthem, permeate the overture to symbolize an invasion. In the closing section of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, the French national anthem is drowned out with the pealing of bells and the Russian national anthem as symbols of the Russian victory over Napoleon’s French army.

Musically, the *March of the Volunteers* and *East is Red* will lead to the *Internationale*. Ideologically, this would mean the former regime symbolized by the *March of the Volunteers* has given way to the new Communist era in *East is Red*, led by Chairman Mao. The *East is Red* will eventually lead everyone to the most ideal Communist state in the *Internationale*. This was exactly what Jiang Qing wanted. This idea is expressed musically through the order in which these pieces were presented in the concerto. The order also correlates with the use of *East is Red* and the *Internationale* in daily radio broadcasts and at the opening and closing of events. This

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233 Ibid.
extra-musical connection knits the movements in this concerto together in a different manner than the Western concerto.

The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* became a staple of Chinese concert halls for years, until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. There were eight performances of this concerto given by the Central Philharmonic every month.²³⁵ The concerto was considered a successful piece that reformed Western bourgeois instruments and music, and Chinese folk traditions to the cultural policies of the Cultural Revolution. Foreign orchestras who were allowed to visit China had to play this obligatory piece. Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra were invited to perform in Beijing in 1974. Furthermore, the London Philharmonic and Vienna Philharmonic were also extended invitations. Yin performed the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* with each of these orchestras.²³⁶ The piece was not favorably received by the musicians of the visiting orchestras; mockingly, they nicknamed it the “Yellow Fever Piano Concerto.”²³⁷

The success of this piano concerto and the acceptance of the piano as a revolutionary instrument led to a resurgence of solo piano compositions in the 1970s. Solo piano pieces in this era were often transcriptions of model opera tunes, folk dance tunes or folk songs.²³⁸ Yin Chengzong and Chu Wanghua continued their collaboration to write a set of solo piano pieces entitled *New Village Songs*. They were joined by Liu Zhuang in another set entitled *Ambush on All Sides* (1973). Yin also published a solo piano version of the *Red Lantern* arias. Chu Wanghua wrote transcriptions of Chinese folk melodies, including the well-known *erhu* tune *Second Springs over Moonlight* (*Erquan Yinyue*), by folk musician Hua Yanjun (also known as Abing.

²³⁵ Kraus, *Pianos and Politics*, 150. Other pieces on the program were the *Shajiabang Symphony* and the arias from the *Red Lantern* with piano accompaniment.
²³⁶ Ibid., 152.
²³⁷ Ibid.
²³⁸ See Wei Tingge, *30 Famous Piano Pieces* (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing House, 1996), for a sample of solo piano literature of the early years of the PRC and the Cultural Revolution. This anthology also contains pieces written prior to the Cultural Revolution including the prize-winning composition *Buffalo Boy’s Flute* by He Luting.
1890/1893-1950). Although the restrictions on piano music were loosened slightly, composers still had to toe the Party’s line. Some compositions were accepted and others were not. Pianists chose their practice and performance repertoire carefully.

The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* is undoubtedly one of the most successful and famous pieces composed during the Cultural Revolution. The goals of the revolution are mirrored in the concerto and it was popularized alongside the *Eight Model Plays*. Revolutionary art was meant to advance the thoughts of Mao and to propel the revolution forward. The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* had to familiarize the audience with its extra-musical associations attached. As with other revolutionary songs and the *Model Plays*, the concerto was part of the propaganda machine to move the masses to “disseminate ideas, eradicating class enemies and maximizing cult-like devotion to Mao.”239 The plays and songs had a distinct advantage over the concerto, because they contained lyrics and could carry concrete meanings. The instrumental genres of music had to be transformed to move the masses without using words. The Party could not neglect the orchestra as it was a large instrumental ensemble, capable of producing the dramatic and heroic revolutionary music it envisioned. The concerto helped reinforce revolutionary ideas through its slogans, and also through its melodies which were mnemonic reminders of the of militancy and class stereotypes depicted in revolutionary songs and plays. The concerto allowed instrumental musicians to join in the revolutionary efforts by making the past serve the present and adapting foreign things to serve China. As with the roles in the plays, I argue that the individual instruments of the orchestra each represented an individual who had to play a role in serving the revolution. The collective is always comprised of individuals who are working towards the same goal, in this case, playing in the orchestra, and accompanying the soloist in the concerto. They

239 Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 120.
each act as a vehicle to help indoctrinate the ideas of Chairman Mao through the concerto, and also show their personal loyalty and sacrifice to him.\textsuperscript{240}

The piece displays aspects of Socialist Realism and revolutionary Romanticism as spelled out by Chairman Mao, Jiang Qing and the Communist Party. The concerto contemporized the \textit{Yellow River Cantata}’s revolutionary content. The merging of virtuosity and simplicity, and Chinese and Western elements is unique to this piece. Most other piano pieces of the Cultural Revolution are fairly simple, in form, harmony and technique. The depiction of nature and extra-musical meaning in the concerto were achieved through musical devices and supported by the use of slogans. The insertions of the three additional songs, \textit{March of the Volunteers}, \textit{East is Red} and the \textit{Internationale}, provided political content and propaganda. The piece afforded pianists and instrumentalists of a Western orchestra musical material to play, practice and perform during the Cultural Revolution. The \textit{Yellow River Piano Concerto} remained the safest and most politically correct piece until the end of the Cultural Revolution.

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., 120-121.
CONCLUSION

Almost forty years have passed since the inception of the Yellow River Piano Concerto and the Cultural Revolution. Jiang Qing was deposed after Chairman Mao’s death in 1976. The Cultural Revolution represented a time of heavy political and artistic repression and chaos. The post-Mao and post-Cultural Revolution China moved forward and put the past behind. The concerto and the model works were seldom heard during the 1980s, as these were too connected to the pain and suffering of the revolution.

Yin Chengzong’s connection to Jiang Qing landed him in trouble with the new administration. He was banned from playing the piano for a few years, but he eventually obtained permission to leave China for the United States in 1983. 241 Yin has resumed his piano career and now divides his time between New York, NY and Gulangyu, Fujian. Chu Wanghua is now a resident of Australia, devoting himself to composing. Pianist Liu Shikun does not perform but is now one of the most sought after teachers at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Many of the composers and musicians have resumed their interrupted careers.

The concerto was re-written or modified in 1989 by Shi Shucheng, Liu Zhuang, Sheng Lihong and Shi convened a meeting with conductor Li Delun. Liu and Sheng were part of the original composing group. 242 Chu Wanghua, Yin Chengzong and Hu Feixing had already

migrated from China. In an effort to make the concerto appeal to an international audience, *East is Red* and the *Internationale* were removed from the last movement of the concerto and replaced with the boatmen’s song from the first movement. These two anthems were deemed to be too connected to the revolution and deemed inappropriate. Without these two anthems, the concerto would only export its Chinese musical aspects and nationalism, without the shadow of the Cultural Revolution. This change, no doubt, reflected the change in the political landscape of China. Shi, himself an accomplished pianist, premiered his new version. There is an additional version by Du Mingxin, who was removed from the concerto committee before the first version was completed. None of these alternate versions are widely published or widely performed. A ballet was also choreographed to the concerto and premiered by the National Ballet of China. This revolutionary ballet was performed at the Great Hall of the People in celebration of the ballet company’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999.\(^{243}\)

The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* may not be an outstanding piano composition when compared to other piano concertos, but it is not to be dismissed as a piece of Maoist kitsch only to be displayed on a curio shelf. The composers admitted that they had to plagiarize musical and pianistic elements from different composers to create this piano concerto. China only had a few decades of piano history in the 1960s and had to look to Western composers for compositional techniques. It would be unfair to judge the concerto without considering the political pressures the composers were under. The composers risked everything when they composed this piece. The successful premier and the acceptance of the concerto is one of least disturbing events of the Cultural Revolution. In an interview in July 2008, Yin states that *the Yellow River Piano Concerto* is a “work [which] represents a great Chinese national spirit centering on patriotism

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and featuring unity and solidarity, a love of peace, industry, courage and ceaseless self-improvement.”

Yin’s comments capture the spirit in which the concerto was first conceived despite the political turmoil around him.

There is more research to be conducted on the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* which is beyond the scope of this document. Some of the areas of research which have yet to be conducted are the examination of the technical aspects of the piano solo, the orchestration of the concerto, the different versions of the concerto and a comparison of the orchestration in the cantata and the concerto. A study of the correlation between the rhetoric in the *Eight Model Plays* and the concerto also remains. The opportunities for translation of Chinese primary sources to English are endless. The speeches of Jiang Qing have neither been transcribed to simplified Chinese nor translated to English. Her speeches contain a wealth of resources regarding the implementation of Mao’s cultural policies on music, especially on the *Eight Model Plays*.

For China’s National Day celebrations on October 1, 2008, many musical performances were held leading up to the celebrations. There were performances of the *East is Red* and the *Yellow River Cantata* in October. The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* was performed on October 2. The concerto remains as a nationalistic symbol, even though most of the circumstances of its composition and inception are not openly discussed in China. The Cultural Revolution and Jiang Qing have remained sensitive topics even now. Although the concerto can and has somewhat divorced itself from the Cultural Revolution, it cannot remove itself from China. The revolutionary songs and overt nationalistic pride found in the concerto are strong cultural

barriers. My research has discovered that only a few foreign pianists have performed this piece, usually as a guest soloist in China.

A recent concert by a Chinese pianist, Shen Wenyu, featured a solo version of the concerto transcribed by him. A score for his solo version has not been published as far as I know. Shen, a child prodigy and former student at the Central Conservatory, following along the line of competitive pianists in China, recently won the coveted Queen Elizabeth prize for solo piano. Was Shen’s version motivated by politics or the intention of further raising the virtuosic level? Watching and listening to his live performance, my observations support the latter. New works of virtuosity will have to be composed for these young artists. Judging from the audience, primarily made up of children and their parents, Shen’s version was well-received. The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* has now entered another chapter in history and emerged in a different political landscape.

In the 21st century, China is an economic, military and cultural power to contend with. It is difficult to sum up the vast changes which China has undergone in the past thirty years since the Cultural Revolution. Mao lives on as a cult figure, and China continues to move forward. Composers and musicians have much more freedom to practice their art, albeit with some censorship. Abstract and formal piano compositions are gaining more popularity among composers. Contemporary Western forms, like atonality, serialism and electronic music, are now used. Although the Cultural Revolution is officially over, one of its foremost slogans remains: “Make the old, serve the new.” These new forms of composition still absorb elements from traditional Chinese music. Pop music has also revitalized some of the revolutionary songs and operas, now fused with techno, rap and hip hop styles. The concept of *tiyong* has not ever been more present than now.
During the opening ceremony of the Olympics, China wanted to showcase the great achievements of its civilization from ancient inventions to the Ming naval explorations of Zheng He. The organizers of the ceremony specifically chose to feature Lang Lang, one of China’s most famous pianists. The piano is fully restored to its former glory, and China boasts twenty million pianists. Higher economic living standards have allowed music lessons to become popular. Piano concerts and recitals are well-attended by young piano students who aspire to follow in the footsteps of current international pianists like Lang Lang, Yundi Li, Shen Wenyu and Sa Chen. Concert halls and recital venues have been built. Beijing’s newest performing arts center, nicknamed “The Egg,” is within walking distance of the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. Local and international artists now grace the stages of these venues. The repertoire is no longer limited to the few works allowed during the Cultural Revolution but has expanded to include international and local, Western and Eastern music of varied genres.

From the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution to China’s basking in the afterglow of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* still lives on, carving a history for itself like its namesake, the Yellow River. It has firmly entrenched itself in the cultural heart of China.
REFERENCES


## APPENDIX I: CHINESE SLOGANS IN THE YELLOW RIVER PIANO CONCERTO

Table 7. Chinese slogans in the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* and translations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Chinese Slogan</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The Yellow River Boatmen’s Song</strong></td>
<td>船工们同惊涛骇浪搏斗 (m. 2)</td>
<td>The boatmen contend with the waves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>黄河激流汹涌澎湃 (m. 16)</td>
<td>The billowing rapids of the Yellow River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>坚定有力的船工号子 (m. 17)</td>
<td>The determined and strong work song of the boatmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>冲过急流险滩 (m. 83)</td>
<td>Breaking through the rapids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>看见胜利的曙光 (m. 84)</td>
<td>The boatmen see the brightness of the shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>继续战斗 勇往直前 (m. 93)</td>
<td>Fight on, bravely press ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Ode to the Yellow River</strong></td>
<td>追溯中华民族的悠久历史 (m. 1)</td>
<td>Trace the long history of the Chinese people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>歌颂中国人民的革命传统 (m. 49)</td>
<td>Praise the Chinese revolutionary tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>觉醒的中华民族屹立在世界东方 (m. 59)</td>
<td>The awakened Chinese nation has risen in the Eastern part of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Wrath of the Yellow River</strong></td>
<td>革命根据阳光的普照 (m. 1)</td>
<td>A revolution is like the rays of the sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>敌寇铁蹄践踏了祖国河山 (m. 55)</td>
<td>The invading enemy’s iron heel has trampled our motherland’s rivers and mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>人民遭受深重苦难 (m. 64)</td>
<td>The people endure bitter and heavy suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>阶级仇民族恨如火燃烧 (m. 83)</td>
<td>The people’s seething rage is like a fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>黄河怒涛滚滚 人民愤愤满腔 (m. 137)</td>
<td>The waves of the Yellow River roll, the people are filled with anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Chinese Slogan</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Defend the Yellow River</td>
<td>毛主席党中央发出战斗号召 (m. 1)</td>
<td>Chairman Mao and the Central Party Committee launch a war appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>抗日军民奔赴战场 (m. 9)</td>
<td>Japanese Resistance fighters descend on the battlefield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>革命武装发展壮大 (m. 94)</td>
<td>The armed revolutionary forces are expanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>战马驰骋 英勇杀敌 (m. 181)</td>
<td>Battle horses are galloping, brave warriors engage the enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>毛主席万岁 人民战争万岁 (m. 303)</td>
<td>Long Live Chairman Mao! Long Live the People’s War!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>高举马克思主义，列宁主义，毛泽东思想伟大红旗奋勇前进 (m. 345)</td>
<td>Lift up Marxist, Leninist and Maoist thought! Raise the red flag and march forward!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>将革命进行到底 (m. 361)</td>
<td>Carry the revolutionary through to the end!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX II: NATIONAL ANTHEM: MARCH OF THE VOLUNTEERS**

*March of the Volunteers* lyrics by Tian Han, Chinese characters and *pinyin* pronunciation:

起来！不愿做奴隶的人们！
把我们的血肉，筑成我们新的长城！
中华民族到了最危险的时候，
每个人被迫着发出最后的吼声。
起来！起来！起来！
我们万众一心，
冒着敌人的炮火，前进！
冒着敌人的炮火，前进！
前进！前进！进！

Qǐlái! Bùyuàn zuò núlì de rénmen!
Bà wǒmen de xuèròu, zhùchéng wǒmen xīn de chángchéng!
Zhōnghuá mínzú dào lǐáo zuì wēixiǎn de shíhou.
Měi ge rén bèipòzhe fāchū zúihòu de hōushēng.
Qǐlái! Qǐlái! Qǐlái!
Wǒmen wànzhòngyīxīn,
Màozhé dírán de páohuǒ, qiánjìn!
Màozhé dírán de páohuǒ, qiánjìn!
Qiánjìn! Qiánjìn! Jìn!

*Translation:*

Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves!
Let us amount our flesh and blood towards our new Great Wall!
The Chinese nation faces its greatest peril,
The thundering roar of our peoples will be heard!
Arise! Arise! Arise!
We are many, but our hearts beat as one!
Selflessly braving the enemy's gunfire, march on!
Selflessly braving the enemy's gunfire, march on!
March on! March on! On!

*Source:* Chinese Government’s Official Web Portal,
APPENDIX III: THE EAST IS RED

Table 8. The East is Red.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>东方红，太阳升，</td>
<td>Dōnfāng hóng, tài yáng shēng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中国出了个毛泽东。</td>
<td>Zhōngguó chū le ge Máo Zédōng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>他为人民谋幸福,</td>
<td>Tā wèi rénmín móu xīngfú,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呼尔嗨哟，他是人民大救星！</td>
<td>Hū’èr-hi-yo, tā shì rénmín dà jiùxīng!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>毛主席，爱人民，</td>
<td>Máo zhǔxí, ài rénmín,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>他是我们的带路人，</td>
<td>Tā shì wǒmen de dàilùrén</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>为了建设新中国，</td>
<td>Wèile jiànshè xīn Zhōngguó,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呼尔嗨哟，领导我们向前进！</td>
<td>Hū’èr-hi-yo, lǐngdào wǒmen xiàng qiánjìn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>共产党，像太阳，</td>
<td>Gòngchǎn dǎng, xiàng tài yáng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>照到哪里哪里亮。</td>
<td>Zhàodào nǎlǐ nǎlǐ liàng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>哪里有了共产党，</td>
<td>Nǎlǐ yǒu liáo Gòngchǎndǎng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呼尔嗨哟，哪里人民得解放！</td>
<td>Hū’èr-hi-yo, nǎlǐ rénmín de jiěfàng!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Translation:
The east is red, the sun is rising
China has brought forth a Mao Zedong.
He works for the people's welfare.
Hurrah, He is the people's great savior.

Chairman Mao loves the people,
He is our guide,
To build a new China,
Hurrah, our leader, we want to move forward!

The Communist Party is like the sun,
Wherever it shines, it is bright.
Wherever there is a Communist Party,
Hurrah, there the people are liberated!

Figure 3. The *East is Red* in Cheve notation, from Dongfanghong Gesheng, Beijing: Geological Institute of Beijing Broadcasting (1968).

Figure 4. A transcription of the Cheve notation of the *East is Red* to be harmonized in the key of F major

*Moderato, Serioso*
Figure 5. The *International*, original lyrics in French and score, 1888, from David Walls, “Billy Bragg’s Revival of Aging Anthems: Radical Nostalgia or Activist Inspiration?,” Sonoma State University, http://www.sonoma.edu/users/w/wallsd/smm-aging-anthems.shtml (accessed April 1, 2009).
Table 9. First Verse and Refrain of the *Internationale*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>起来,饥寒交迫的奴隶,</td>
<td>Qǐlái, jīhánjiāopò de nǚlì,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>起来,全世界受苦的人!</td>
<td>Qǐlái, quānshǐjiè shòu ku deren!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>满腔的热血已经沸腾,</td>
<td>Mǎnqiāng de rèxuè yǐjīng feiténg,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>要为真理而斗争!</td>
<td>Yào wéi zhēnliǐ ér dōuzhēng!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>旧世界打个落花流水,</td>
<td>Jiù shìjiè dà ge luòhuāliúshuǐ,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>奴隶们起来起来!</td>
<td>Núlímen, qǐlái, qǐlái!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不要说我们一无所有,</td>
<td>Bu yào shuō wǒmen yìwú suoyou,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我们要作天下的主人!</td>
<td>Wǒmen yào zuò tiānxià de zhūrén.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>这是最后的斗争,</td>
<td>Zhè shì zuìhòu de dōuzhēng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>团结起来到明天,</td>
<td>Tuánjí lái dào míngtiān,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英特纳雄耐尔</td>
<td>Yīntè'ěrlǎxióngná'ěr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>就一定要实现。</td>
<td>Jiù yídìng yào shíxiàn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>这是最后的斗争,</td>
<td>Zhè shì zuìhòu de dōuzhēng,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>团结起来到明天,</td>
<td>Tuánjí lái dào míngtiān,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英特纳雄耐尔</td>
<td>Yīntè'ěnràxióngná'ěr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>就一定要实现。</td>
<td>Jiù yídìng yào shíxiàn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Translation:*

Arise, cold and hungry slaves,
Arise, the afflicted of the world!
The blood which fills my chest has boiled over,
We should realize one last war!
The old world, it shall be destroyed like fallen petals and spilled water,
Arise, slaves, arise!
Do not say that we are worthless,
We want to be the rulers of the world!

This is the final struggle,
Unite together and arise towards tomorrow,
The *Internationale*
Shall certainly be realized.
This is the final struggle,
Unite together and arise towards tomorrow, The *Internationale*
Shall certainly be realized.

Figure 6. The *Internationale* in Cheve notation, from Dongfanghong Gesheng, Beijing: Geological Institute of Beijing Broadcasting (1968).
Figure 7. A transcription of the Cheve notation of the *Internationale*