



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND A
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE *YELLOW*
RIVER PIANO CONCERTO**

SHAN BAI

**THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND A
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE *YELLOW RIVER*
PIANO CONCERTO**

by

SHAN BAI

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Supervisor: Prof. H.J. Stanford

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation behind the study

The *Yellow River* Cantata is a very famous and important work in China and exhibits strong nationalistic characteristics. The *Yellow River* Cantata reflects the patriotism of the Chinese people during the anti-Japanese war and strengthened the Chinese people's determination to defend their homeland against Japanese invasion during World War II. Its dramatic power symbolizes the passion of the Chinese people's struggle for liberty.

When I heard the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto on Classic FM radio station in South Africa, I was inspired and intrigued by this work and started collecting relevant information on the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto, for further studies. Last year, 2005, was the 60th anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945) and the World Anti-Fascist War. I therefore consider it appropriate to research the historical development of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto and analyse the structural feature thereof, thereby making my topic a valuable reference to those interested.

The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto was composed by a group of Chinese composer-pianists in 1969 and is based on the *Yellow River* Cantata, composed in 1939 by the famous Chinese composer, Xian Xinghai (1905–1945). The Concerto comprises four movements, each of which presents a main theme from the Cantata. Although the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto, in recent years, has

gained popularity internationally, and has been played 177 times over the air by the radio station, *Classic FM* from January 2004 to October 2005 in South Africa, very little research regarding this piano concerto has been published. This therefore, affords me the opportunity to do research on a composition, which has played such an important role in the development of Chinese cultural history.

I was born in China and came to South Africa at the age of 15. I matriculated at The National School of the Arts (Johannesburg) with Chinese as a second language. My Chinese language skills have assisted me tremendously in my research as most articles on the *Yellow River Cantata* and *Yellow River Piano Concerto* are in Chinese.

1.2 Research questions

The research questions of this dissertation are best summed up as follows:

- What is the historical development of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*?
- What is the structural feature of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*?

1.3 Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to inform the reader of the historical development of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* and to analyse the structural features of this work.

There is currently very little documented regarding the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, and this study will therefore prove to be interesting reading for

teachers, pianists, students and researchers.

1.4 Method of Research

The study will be conducted by means of the scrutinizing of:

- Literature
- Scores
- Audio materials

With regard to the study of literature, relevant books, Chinese magazines, dictionaries and academic journals were consulted in order to establish a background to this study.

The musical scores of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto and *Yellow River* Cantata will be analysed, so as to ascertain the structural features of the work as well as identifying typical Chinese music characteristics.

Audio materials will assist in the understanding and the analysis of the Piano Concerto and the Cantata.

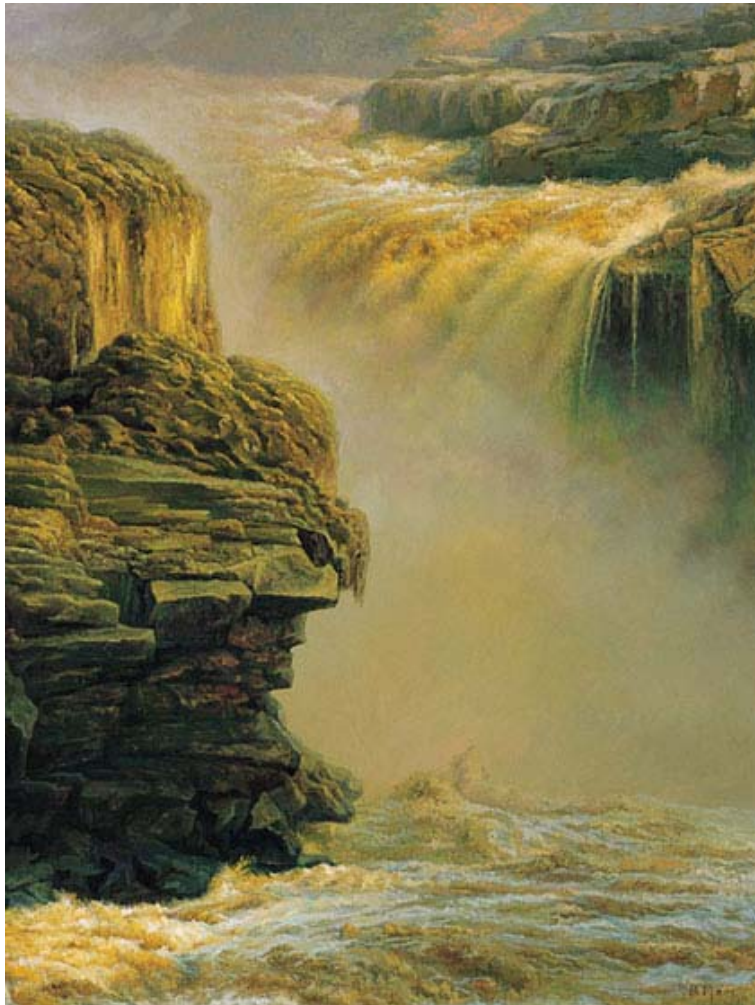
1.5 Delimitation of the study

The study will be limited to the cultural and historical development of both the Cantata and the Concerto, and the structural analysis of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto.

CHAPTER 2

THE *YELLOW RIVER* CANTATA

2.1 The influence of the Yellow River on the evolution of the Chinese people



Hukou (Kettle Mouth) waterfall of the Yellow River



The Yellow River (blue line)

Ever since ancient times, the Yellow River (Huang He) and Yangtze River (Chang Jiang) have traversed endlessly across China. The Yellow River is 5,464 kilometers long and is the second longest river in China - the Yangtze being the longest. Due to the Yellow River's natural tendency of the sediment clogging up, overflowing and migrating, it is one of the rivers in the world, which has exhibited the most complex changes across time. The regions that both the Yellow River and the Yangtze River pass through are known as the Yellow River Basin and the Yangtze River Basin respectively. Both the Yellow River and the Yangtze River merge to form the basis of Chinese agricultural civilization.

The Yellow River flows through more than half of China from west to east. It

originates in the northern slopes of the majestic Bayankera Mountains in Qinghai and flows across to Hekouzhen in Inner Mongolia. This magnificent river flows quietly, irrigating the farmlands and nurturing the people. The middle part of the river ends at Taohuayu in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province. At this point, the Yellow River splits the Loess Plateau in half, forming the longest continuous gorge in the whole drainage area of the river. The Yellow River's lower reaches end in a delta at the Bohai Sea. More than 30 branches and countless streams join the Yellow River on its way to the sea. Being the river with the most excessive fine-grained calcareous silt in the world, the Yellow River gets its name from the muddiness of its water, which bears a perennial ochre-yellow colour .

From the earliest times in the history of mankind, water, in the form of lakes, seas, and especially rivers, has played an essential role in the development of civilization. It is hard to imagine and understand the glory of Egyptian civilization without the Nile River. The Yellow River has the same relationship with China. Chinese civilization and their way of life were greatly influenced by the Yellow River. The Yellow River is the place on which Chinese people focused their spiritual energies.

According to legend, Chinese began to settle in the Yellow River valley more than five thousand years ago. During this period many tribes came to settle around the reaches of the Yellow River. The different tribes clashed with each other over land disputes as each tribe sought to have more farmland. About four thousand years ago, the primitive tribes that inhabited the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River were unified into two powerful tribes under the leadership of the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) and the Fiery Emperor (Yan Di). In order to extend and claim land ownership, they began their arduous journey

southward. Legends said that the chieftains of the two tribes were half brothers (born to different fathers). After years of warfare, they conquered the Sanmiao and Jiuli tribes who were active in South China under the leadership of Chi You. A section of the defeated tribe was incorporated into the tribes of the Yellow and Fiery emperors to become part of the Han people. This marked the beginning of the Chinese nation. This history has also given rise to the term "descendants of the Yellow and Fiery emperors" that Chinese often use to refer to themselves. Finally, a war broke out between Huang Di and Yan Di. It ended in the triumph of Huang Di. As a result, Huang Di was made the chief of the tribal union and ruled in a wide area along the Yellow River. Because his tribe honoured the virtue of the earth, he was given the title, Yellow Emperor, after the yellow color of the earth, the symbol of farming. As the Yellow Emperor he is remembered as having done many great things. He coined bronze money, practiced medicine, invented boats, raised silkworms and divided his realm into provinces .

For thousands of years, from the Xia (21st–16th century BC), Shang (16th–11th century BC) until the Tang (618–907) dynasties, the Yellow River basin was regarded as the centre of agriculture, politics, economy and culture. The Yellow River has been known as the mother river of the Chinese nation, both in the writing of the poets, songs, and in the hearts of the Chinese people. Almost all the Chinese declare themselves as children of the Yellow River.

Sometime around 4000 BC, when the area was much more temperate and forested, populations around the southern bend of the Yellow River supported themselves primarily with agriculture, while also raising livestock.

<http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/12745423.html>

<http://hi.baidu.com/xuejiancao/blog/item/74d8e8198cc00e7adbb4bd06.html>

<http://www.blogcn.com/user76/fuyushuai1212/index.html>

They sowed millet, but some time later, people began cultivating rice. The soil in this area was loose, refined and fertile, which allowed farmers to use relatively simple agricultural tools. This resulted in a higher yield of crops, which attracted more and more people to this area, which then gradually became ancient China's economical and cultural centre .

Tribal people in the Neolithic Age used stone tools. Although animals were domesticated from a very early stage of their existence, they still continued as a hunting society. Many remains of game and domestic animals have been found in excavations in and around the villages of the Yellow River basin. Interestingly, this area is also, and has been for years, the leader in the development of science and technology in China.

The Chinese, who lived for generations in this ancient land of the Yellow River, created and left behind the incredible and amazing Chinese culture and heritage. The ancient walls, tombs, architecture, carved stones, which are scattered over the Central Plains of China, reflect the glory of the ancient Chinese civilization .

Ancient China enjoyed an advanced agricultural and irrigation system, an independent tradition of medicine and comprehensive botanical knowledge. China's four great inventions, namely, the compass, gunpowder, movable-type printing and papermaking, not only changed the world history but also accelerated the evolution of world economy .

<http://www.agri-history.net>

http://www.cc6.com/pages/text/content/2005-06/00159327/00159327_10322.html

<http://lianzai.china.com/books/view.do?bookId=350&chapId=1497&nodeId=13237>

<http://www.ckzl.net/index.html>

http://studentweb.bhes.tpc.edu.tw/91s/s860436/www/new_page_5.htm

<http://www.caigentan.net/user1/daiwei/archives/2006/10.html>

China is a unified and multi-ethnic country. There are 56 different nationalities in China. The Han group has the largest population and constitutes approximately 92% of the total population, while the other 55 ethnic groups, with a population of about 90 million people, constitute 8%, which are called Minority Nationalities or Brother Groups. Those with a population exceeding one million are: Zhuang, Hui, Uygur, Yi, Miao, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, Tujia, Bouyei, Korean, Dong etc .

China occupies a large territory, a huge population and an ancient history. With written records dating back 4,000 years, it is recognized as one of the four great ancient civilizations of the world, together with ancient Egypt, Babylon and India. Moreover, it is the only ancient civilization that has continued to this very day.

2.2 The Anti-Japanese War in China (1937–1945)

2005 marked the 60th anniversary of the Chinese people's victory over the Japanese invasion in the Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945). The Sino-Japanese war is also known as the War of Resistance against Japanese aggression, the war of Resistance Against Japan, the Eight Year war or simply the Anti-Japanese war.

After the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905), Japan had replaced Russia as the dominant foreign power in Manchuria. Japanese military in Manchuria and Northern China enjoyed some degree of independence from both the civilian government and the military authority in Tokyo. There were debates as to whether Japan should attempt to conquer and establish a sort of colonial relationship with China, or strengthen its economic relations with China to

make both countries more dependent on each other. Furthermore, the Japanese government wished to see China more fragmented, because dealing with separate and divided Chinese parties, who were often conflicting against each other, was more beneficial to Japan.

The Mukden Incident of 18 September 1931, also known as the Manchurian Incident, was planned to provide a pretext that would justify Japanese military invasion and replace the Chinese government in the region with a Japanese or puppet regime. They decided to sabotage a part of the railway in an area near the Liutao Lake. The plan was to attract Chinese troops with the explosion and then blame it on them to provide a pretext for a formal military invasion. On 19 September 1931 Japan proceeded to occupy the major cities of Mukden and the surrounding areas. Within three days, all three northeastern provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning, fell under Japanese control.

The Mukden Incident and gradual Japanese invasion led to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident or the Battle of Lugou Bridge, which marked the beginning of the anti-Japanese war. On the night of 7 July 1937, Japanese troops stationed near Lugou Bridge in the southwest of Beijing, demanded to enter the nearby Wanping County seat for the excuse of searching for a missing soldier. The Chinese troops rejected the demand and the Japanese troops then bombarded the county seat and the Marco Polo Bridge. The local Chinese troops fought back and thus started Japan's all-out aggression against China and China's War of Resistance against Japanese aggression. Following this event, the Japanese occupied Shanghai, Nanjing and Southern Shanxi, as part of campaigns involving approximately 200 000 Japanese soldiers, and considerably more Chinese soldiers. It is estimated that as many as 300,000 people perished in the Nanjing Massacre, after the fall of Nanjing.

The Japanese aggression caused 35 million deaths and casualties of Chinese

people and US\$600 billion of economic loss in China. China won the war eight years later.



Nanjing Massacre, 1937
Artist: Li Zijian

Chinese resistance was to be continued in the Japanese occupied areas, so as to pester the enemy and make their administration over the vast lands of China difficult. This formed the basis of Chinese strategy during the war, which can be divided into three periods :

First Period: 7 July 1937 (Battle of Lugou Bridge) – 25 October 1938 (Fall of Hankou).

http://www.chinaqw.com.cn/node2/node116/node125/lizijian/zp_dts.htm

<http://txt.mop.com/static/222/246/5246222.html>

<http://www.qingis.com/bitjapan.htm>

<http://news.sina.com.cn/z/kangri60/>

<http://dlib.mfounder.com/Books/010/150/pdf/L000000000094234.pdf>

<http://military.china.com/dljl/krzz/>

In this period, one key concept was the negotiating of "space for time". The Chinese army would put up token fights to delay Japanese advance to northeastern cities, to allow the home front, along with its professionals and key industries, to retreat further west into Chongqing to build up military strength.

Second Period: 25 October 1938 (Fall of Hankow) – July 1945

During the second period, the Chinese army adopted the concept of "magnetic warfare" to attract advancing Japanese troops to definite points where they were subjected to ambush, flanking attacks, and encirclements in major engagements. The most prominent example of this tactic is the many successful military protection units of Changsha.

Third Period: mid 1944 – 15 August 1945

This period employed a full forward counter-attack.

People will never forget 15 August 1945, the date on which the Japanese government issued a note to the Allied countries, announcing its unconditional surrender. Japanese militarism collapsed. Through their bitter struggles, the Chinese people won the final victory in the anti-Japanese national liberation war.

2.3 A short biography of Xian Xinghai, composer of the *Yellow River Cantata*



Xian Xinghai (13 June 1905 – 30 October 1945)

Xian Xinghai was born in Panyu (Guangdong Province) into a family of a poor sailor. Xian started learning the clarinet at the age of 13 at the YMCA charity school attached to the Lingnan University. In 1926, he joined the National Music Institute at Beijing University to study music. In 1928, he entered the Shanghai National Music Conservatory to study violin and piano. In the same year, he published his well-known essay, *The Universal Music*. In 1929, Xian went to Paris and two years later entered the Paris Conservatory to study composition under Vincent D'Indy (1851–1931) and Paul Dukas

<http://www.jjjpiano.com/xk/blogview.asp?logID=331>

<http://www.baiyunshan.com.cn/Article/Calligraphy/mrzs/2005/1111/156.htm>

(1865–1935). During this period he composed *Wind, Song of A Wanderer, Violin Sonata in D Minor*, amongst others. He returned to China in 1935.

During the anti-Japanese war (1937–1945), Xian composed many vocal works that encouraged and motivated the people to fight the Japanese invasion. The works included *Saving the Nation, Non-Resistance the Only Fear, Song of Guerrillas, The Roads Are Opened by Us, The Vast Siberia, Children of the Motherland, Go to the Homefront of the Enemy, On the Taihang Mountains* and many others.

In 1938 he assumed the position of dean at the Department of Music at the Lu Xun Institute of Arts in Yan'an and composed his most famous work—*The Yellow River Cantata*. Since the Yellow River is the origin of Chinese civilization, this musician used the Yellow River to symbolize the spirit of the Chinese people; that is to say, a firm and unyielding spirit. The roaring waves of the Yellow River expressed Chinese anger towards their invaders and a determination to defend the homeland.

During 1940, Xian visited the Soviet Union to compose for the documentary film *Yan'an* and the *Eighth Route Army*. In 1941, the German invasion of the Soviet Union started and interrupted his composition. He attempted to go back to China via Xinjiang, but the local anti-communist warlord, Sheng Shicai, blocked the way, and Xian got stranded in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, and it was here that Xian composed the *Liberation of the Nation* and the *Sacred War* symphonies, the *Red All Over the River* suite and the *Chinese Rhapsody* for woodwinds and strings. He developed pulmonary tuberculosis due to long-time overwork and malnutrition. After the war, Xian went back to Moscow for medical treatment, but he was not completely cured, and he died in October 1945 in the hospital of the Moscow Kremlin at the age of 40. He composed his last work, *Capriccio for China*, before he died in 1945. In this final work, he

expressed his hopes for his country.

Xian composed over 300 works. In addition, he also published 35 papers, including *Nie Er - the Creator of New Chinese Music* and *On the National Styles of Chinese Music*. For his great contribution to musical composition, he was reputed to be the Peoples Musician .

Chinese people will always remember Xian Xinghai the musician and composer, for his compositions, which emotionally moved and inspired Chinese people to fight against the Japanese invasion during World War II. 2005 marked the 100th anniversary of his birth, as well as the 60th anniversary of the culmination of World War II.

2.4 The birth of the *Yellow River Cantata*

Within the repertoire of 20th-century Chinese music, the *Yellow River Cantata* may be the work that most frequently raises the passion of Chinese people around the world. The *Yellow River Cantata* was composed by Xian Xinghai. It was composed in Yan'an, the headquarter of the anti-Japanese war, in 1939. It was inspired by a patriotic poem by Guang Weiran (a Chinese poet, literary critic and writer), who also adapted the lyrics. Premiered on 13 April 1939 in the Shanbei Gongxue Hall, Yan'an, the work soon spread to all parts of China and greatly inspired the people to unite against Japanese invasion.

<http://www.jjjpiano.com/xk/blogview.asp?logID=331>

<http://www.baiyunshan.com.cn/Article/Calligraphy/mrzs/2005/1111/156.htm>



The rehearsal of the Yellow River Cantata in Yan'an, 1939

According to official accounts by the Chinese Communist Party, after the Chinese city of Wuhan fell to Japanese invasion in November 1938, Guang Weiran led the 3rd Squad of the Anti-Enemy Troupe across the Yellow River near the Hukou waterfall and eastwards into the communist anti-Japanese headquarters in the Luliang Mountains of the Shanxi Province. At the ferry near Hukou (Kettle Mouth), where the waters of the Yellow River flow down from a narrow gorge to form a magnificent waterfall, he witnessed the local boatmen battling against heavy gales and torrential waves, and heard their spirit-lifting songs. This vision inspired him to write a poem on the Yellow River (Qiao 1999:34).

When Guang Weiran reached Yan'an in January 1939, he finished the patriotic

The Hukou waterfall is the second largest waterfall in China and is located 165 kilometers west of Fenxi City, Shanxi Province, and 50 kilometers east of Yichuan, Shaanxi Province. The Hukou Waterfall of the Yellow River is the only yellow-coloured waterfall on earth. The width of the waterfall, which is usually 30 meters wide, but increases to 50 meters during flood season, changes with the season and has a drop of over 20 meters. When the Yellow River surges towards the Hukou Mountain, flanked by mountains on both sides, its width is abruptly narrowed to 20-30 meters. The water speeds up with increasing power and forms a grand waterfall as if water is pouring from a huge teapot, hence the name Hukou (kettle mouth) Waterfall. Beneath the waterfall is the Qilangwo Bridge which connects two provinces, Shanxi and Shaanxi.

poem, *Yellow River*, and recited it during the Chinese New Year celebrations. The poem portrays the oppression of Chinese people under the invaders and calls for all to unite against Japanese invasion. Xian Xinghai (composer), received his education in the Conservatoire de Paris and returned to China in 1935, was also present at the recital. He expressed his desire to set the poems to music for the Theatre Troupe .

According to an account by Xian's daughter (Xian 2005:3), he began work on the composition on March 26 and took a mere four days to complete all seven movements. However, he was not satisfied with the second and sixth movements and took two more days for amendments. On 13 April of the same year, the Cantata was premièred at the auditorium of the North Shannxi Public School (Shanbei Gongxue) in Yan'an. It was performed by a forty-strong choir and a primitive orchestra comprising two or three violins and twenty-odd Chinese ethnic musical instruments. The rest were products of innovation: diesel barrels for bass strings and washbasins for percussion! It soon spread to many parts of China and greatly inspired its listeners to participate in the anti-Japanese war.

The *Yellow River* Cantata laid the ground for Chinese contemporary large-scaled vocal music composition and consists of seven movements, each beginning with a recitation accompanied by the orchestra. In the late 1960s, it was adapted to a piano concerto titled, the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto by a group of composer-pianists led by Yin Chengzong. This arrangement, together with the violin concerto *Butterfly Lovers* by He Zhanhao (1935–) and Chen Gang (1935–), are the two best internationally known musical works that use source materials which are purely Chinese but at the same time employ Western music compositional techniques.

<http://www.zhidaobaidu.com/question/4538420.htm/>

<http://www.ha.xinhuanet.com/xhzt/2004-07/22/content2542195.htm>

The *Yellow River* Cantata reflects the patriotism of Chinese people during the anti-Japanese war. The cantata uses Western choral textures to convey Chinese musical narratives. Although the work is influenced by Chinese folk music, its compositional design reveals a musical seriousness and expressive grandeur. Each movement concentrates on one portrayal of the Yellow River, while the composition as a whole depicts a magnificent panorama of the river; its dramatic power symbolizes the passion of the Chinese people's struggle for liberty.

There are altogether four different versions of the *Yellow River* Cantata that had been performed in public. The first was the initial composition by Xian Xinghai in Yan'an which was lacking musical instruments at that time, as the orchestra comprised of only violins, a Chinese flute, harmonica, sanxian, erhu and dahu, among a few percussion instruments.

A year after Xian departed for the Soviet Union in 1940, he amended his composition for performance by a fully-equipped Western orchestra, together with a few Chinese ethnic instruments. He also made some amendments to the choral arrangement. In addition, a prologue was added, increasing the number of movements to eight.

The third and fourth revisions were respectively made by Xian's students, Li Huanzhi (1919–2000) and Yan Liangkun (1923–). Li simplified the "Soviet" version for performance by the Shanghai Orchestra, while Yan incorporated the prologue into the first movement to revert the cantata to its initial arrangement of seven movements for performance by the Central Orchestra during the 1980s. This last revision became the most played and heard version today.

The lyrics of the *Yellow River* Cantata are magnificent, passionate, realistic and



technically sound. Moreover, it is directly geared to the need of the present stage by proposing the great slogan of “Defend the Yellow River!” The variety of the moods it contains easily gains the sympathy of the common people who have not crossed the river. Only the lyrics itself is sufficient to depict the great history of the Yellow River.

Each movement of the *Yellow River Cantata* begins with a narrator who tells the basic story of each movement. This is followed by the appropriate sung lyrics. The text of this Cantata has been freely translated to the best of my abilities, and renders a near perfect interpretation of the Chinese text.

2.5 First movement: *Song of The Yellow River Boatmen*

NARRATOR

朋友！
Friends!

你到过黄河吗？
Have you been to the Yellow River?

你渡过黄河吗？
Have you crossed the Yellow River?

你还记得船上的船夫拼着性命和惊涛骇浪搏斗的情景吗？
Do you still remember those boatmen who struggled against the surging and rolling billows while risking their lives?

如果你已经忘掉的话，那么你听吧！
If you have forgotten, then listen!

(合唱歌词)
(CHORUS LYRICS)

划哟！划哟！划哟！划哟！冲上前！……
Hua you! Hua you! Hua you! …… (Work-chant)

乌云啊，遮满天！
The sky clouded over!

波涛啊，高如山！
The waves surging and rolling!

冷风啊，扑上脸！
The chilling wind on our face!

浪花啊，打进船！
The spray splashing into the boat!

夥伴啊，睁开眼！
Sailors, watch carefully!

舵手啊，把住腕！
Steersman, hold the helm firmly!

当心啊，别偷懒！
Be careful, we can't rest!

拼命啊，莫胆寒！
Try your best but do not fear!

咳！划哟！咳！划哟！
(Work-chant)

不怕那千丈波浪高如山！
Face the huge waves bravely!

行船好比上火线，团结一心冲上前！
Sailing is like fighting with enemies. Move forward shoulder to shoulder!

咳！划哟！咳！划哟！咳哟！划哟！……划哟！冲上前！划哟！冲上前！咳哟！哈哈
哈哈……！
(Work-chant)

我们看见了河岸，我们登上了河岸，心啊安一安，气啊喘一喘。
The shore across the river comes closer and closer. We will set foot on the land shortly.

回头来，再和那黄河怒涛，决一死战！决一死战！
After a quick rest, let us conquer the Yellow River to the best of our ability!

This movement is written for a mixed choir.

The movement depicts the difficulty of crossing the Yellow River. A work-chant is used almost entirely throughout this movement. To overcome the struggle of the torrents and wild waters while crossing the Yellow River, the boatmen sing a rhythmic chant in unison while rowing. This work-chant, created unity and comradeship amongst the men in the boat. All the emotions are depicted through the vivid orchestration, which is similar to that of the Piano Concerto and will be discussed in the relevant chapter.

If one listens to the first movement of the *Song of the Yellow River Boatmen*, one can visualize dozens of boatmen with anguished expressions on their faces as they approach the rapids and waves of the Yellow River. There are several moods in this movement, which deserve mentioning. The exciting beginning in 2/4 time, portrays the struggle of the boatmen against the torrents while crossing the river. Huge crescendi and cymbal crashes are heard, which reflect the swells and crashes of the waves and the wild torrents.

The last section is relatively relaxed which expresses the feelings of the boatmen as they reach the bank of the river. They are filled with joy and hope.

This movement is in two-part form with an introduction and a coda. Section A is based on two ideas and section B is through-composed. Both the introduction and the coda use the work-chant motif as material.

Work-chant motif

Work-chant motif



2.6 Second movement: *Ode to the Yellow River*

NARRATOR

啊，朋友！

Ah, friends!

黄河以它英雄的气魄，出现在亚洲的原野；它表现出我们民族的精神：伟大而又坚强！
The Yellow River, regarded as the origin of the Nation's spirit, flows through the heartland of China, like a brave and honourable hero.

这里，我们向着黄河，唱出我们的赞歌。

Here, we stand on the bank, presenting a song of praise to the Yellow River.

(男声独唱歌词)

(BARITONE LYRICS)

我站在高山之巅，望黄河滚滚，奔向东南。

I stand on top of the mountain, looking down upon the Yellow River flowing to the southeast.

惊涛澎湃，掀起万丈狂澜；

The raging waves are breaking on the shores.

浊流宛转，结成九曲连环；

The river winds through numerous sudden turns and dangerous sandbanks to the sea.

从昆仑山下，奔向黄海之边；把中原大地劈成南北两面。

The valley starts from the foot of the Kunlun mountain in the west, and ends at the Huang Hai (the Yellow Sea) in the east, dividing the land into two pieces, north and south.

啊，黄河！你是中华民族的摇篮



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Ah, the Yellow River! You are the cradle where the Chinese Nation grows!

五千年的古国文化，从你这里发源；

The 5000 years history of China originates from here;

多少英雄的故事，在你的身边扮演！

Countless hero legends we have witnessed!

啊，黄河！

Ah, the Yellow River!

你是伟大坚强，象一个巨人出现在亚洲平原之上，用你那英雄的体魄筑成我们民族的屏障。

How glorious and magnificent you are! Your presence is like a giant standing in the vast plain, your body like a strong barrier protecting the nation.

啊，黄河！

Ah, the Yellow River!

你一泻万丈，浩浩荡荡，向南北两岸伸出千万条铁的臂膀。

An enormous area across the valley is covered by thousands of your branches, just like thousands of strong arms embracing your people.

我们民族的伟大精神，将要在你的哺育下发扬滋长！

Fed by you, the spirit of the nation will be growing healthily.

我们祖国的英雄儿女，将要学习你的榜样，像你一样的伟大坚强！像你一样的伟大坚强！

The Chinese people, as your sons and your daughters, will try to become as brave and as strong as you!

The Ode to the Yellow River is written in praise of the greatness and strength of the river. It is solemnly and stirringly sung by a baritone. The orchestration is simple and very much restrained so as to give all the attention to the soloist, who is singing praises to the Yellow River.

The lyrics portray the Yellow River as the cradle of Chinese civilization.

This movement is in through-composed form, which emphasizes the dramatic and narrative texts in which the situation changes with every stanza.



2.7 Third movement: *Ballad of the Yellow River*

NARRATOR

我们是黄河的儿女！

We are descendants of the Yellow River!

我们艰苦奋斗，一天天接近胜利。

We are working hard and struggling bravely! We are getting closer to victory everyday.

但是，敌人一天不消灭，我们一天便不能安身；

But, we cannot stop fighting as long as the enemies are invading our land.

不信，你听听河东民众痛苦的呻吟。

Let us listen to the painful moan of the people living to the east of the Yellow River.

(女声合唱歌词)

(FEMALE CHOIR LYRICS)

黄河奔流向东方，河流万里长。

The Yellow River winds itself over 10,000 kilometers eastwards.

水又急，浪又高，奔腾叫啸如虎狼。

The torrent, together with the huge waves, are surging forward, and roaring like a lion.

开河渠，筑堤防，河东千里成平壤。

People are busy digging canals and building dams in order to make the eastern area of the Yellow River fertile and rich.

麦苗儿肥啊，豆花儿香，男女老幼喜洋洋。

Good harvest of wheat and corn is expected. Everybody is full of joy and hope.

(MIXED CHOIR)

自从鬼子来，百姓遭了殃！

However, things have completely changed since the enemies arrived! People are suffering under the enemy.

奸淫烧杀，一片凄凉，扶老携幼，四处逃亡，丢掉了爹娘，回不了家乡！

Criminal acts such as rape, robbing and murder are taking place everywhere!

The land is devastated. People, from young to old have left their homeland.

Many lose contact with their parents and will never have the opportunity to return to their homes!



(FEMALE CHOIR)

黄水奔流日夜忙，妻离子散，天各一方！

Couples are separated, children are lost, and the Yellow River still keeps flowing day and night!

This movement is in ternary form.

Section A is sung by a female choir. It depicts the peacefulness and harmony of the Chinese along the banks of the Yellow River. This is supported by soft and calm orchestration.

Section B is sung by a mixed choir. This section depicts the Japanese invasion and the atrocities thereof. This is supported by a tempo and dynamic change and has heavy orchestration.

Section A returns and is sung by a female choir again. This movement is based on a Chinese folksong of unknown origin. Despite the atrocities inflicted on the Chinese by the Japanese, the river remains a comfort to the Chinese.

Chinese folk song





2.8 Fourth movement: *Dialogue Song by the Riverside*

NARRATOR

妻离子散,天各一方!

Families are broken up.

Husbands lose touch with their wives and children.

但是,我们难道永远逃亡?

Are we destined to be in exile forever?

你听听吧,这是黄河边上两个老乡的对唱。

Listen, this is the antiphonal duet at the bank of the Yellow River.

(对唱,合唱歌词)

(LYRICS)

张老三,我问你,你的家乡在哪里?

Zhang Lao San, where is your hometown?

我的家,在山西,过河还有三百里。

My home is over 300 kilometers from here, across the river, in Shanxi province.

我问你,在家里,种田还是做生意?

How do you make your living there, farming or trading?

拿锄头,耕田地,种的高粱和小米。

I am a farmer, growing corn and millet.

为什么,到此地,河边流浪受孤凄?

Why do you come here, wandering lonely along the banks?

痛心事,莫提起,家破人亡无消息。

The enemy occupies my homeland. I have lost contact with all my family. I am reluctant to recall this.

张老三,莫伤悲,我的命运不如你!

Zhang Lao San, don't feel grieved. My story is worse than yours.

为什么,王老七,你的家乡在何地?

Why did you say this, Wang Lao Qi? Where are you from?



在东北,做生意,家乡八年无消息.

I am a businessman, coming from northeast China, which has been ruled by invaders for eight years.

这么说,我和你,都是有家不能回!

In this case, our experiences are almost the same. Both of us cannot go back to our hometown!

仇和恨,在心里,奔腾如同黄河水!

Hatred and wrath are surging in our hearts, like a rip current in the Yellow River.

黄河边,定主意,咱们一同打回去!

*Facing the grand Yellow River, we can make up our mind.
Let us join the army and claim back our land.*

为国家,当兵去,太行山上打游击!

Join the army for the survival of the Nation. Fight the enemy at the Taihang mountain.

从今后,我和你一同打回老家去!

From now on, you and I will hold up our weapons and claim back our hometown.

This movement is for baritone and tenor and is based on two ideas, which continually alternate with each other.

This duet, which is a conversation between two men standing at the river bank, describes the loss of their families and their homes to the Japanese invasion. It is based on a folk song of Shanxi origin.

Folk song of Shanxi origin



The last four stanzas is a combination of the vocal phrases of the two singers, i.e., it turns from an antiphonal song into a two-part duet by combining the melodies of the two singers. The two-stringed fiddle (erhu)^① and the sanxian^② represent the two singers respectively, playing transitional passages in a vivid way. There is no orchestra that can detract from the dialogue between the two men.

2.9 Fifth movement: *Lament of the Yellow River*

NARRATOR

朋友!

Come on, my friends!

我们要打回老家去!

We must claim back our hometown.

老家已经太不成话了!

Our hometown has been suffering under the enemy's atrocities for many years.

谁没有妻子儿女,谁能忍受敌人的欺凌?

Everybody has family. Who can tolerate the enemy's enormity?

^① The erhu, sometimes known in the West as the "Chinese violin" or Chinese two string fiddle, is a two-stringed bowed musical instrument, used as a solo instrument as well as in small ensembles and large orchestras. It consists of a long vertical stick-like neck, at the top of which are two large tuning pegs, and at the bottom is a small resonator body (sound box) which is covered with python skin on the front (playing) end. Two strings are attached from the pegs to the base, and a small loop of string placed around the neck and strings acting as a nut, pulls the strings towards the skin, holding a small wooden bridge in place.

^② The sanxian is a Chinese lute — a three-stringed fretless plucked musical instrument. It has a long fingerboard, and the body is traditionally made from snakeskin stretched over a rounded rectangular resonator. It has a dry, somewhat percussive tone and loud volume similar to the banjo. The larger sizes have a range of three octaves. It is primarily used as an accompanying instrument, as well as in ensembles and orchestras of traditional Chinese instruments, though solo pieces and concertos also exist.

亲爱的同胞们!你听听一个妇人悲

My dear brethren, listen to the sad voice of



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(女声独唱歌词)

(LYRICS)

风啊,你不要叫喊!

Wind, don't you scream!

云啊,你不要躲闪!

Cloud, don't you escape!

黄河啊,你不要呜咽!

Yellow River, don't you cry!

今晚,我在你面前哭诉我的仇和冤.命啊,这样苦!

Tonight, in front of you, I sob out my heart. My miserable life is so tough and unfair to me.

生活啊,这样难! 鬼子啊,你这样没心肝! 宝贝啊,你死得这样惨!

What a hard life! Damn the enemies! My dear baby, your death is such a tragedy!

今晚,我要投在你的怀中,洗清我的千重愁来万重冤!

Tonight, I want to jump into your arms to wash away my suffering and misery!

丈夫啊,在天边!

My dear husband, you are too far to touch!

地下啊,再团圆!

We can only unite in heaven!

你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨!

Never forget that your wife and children died in misery!

你要替我把这笔血债清算!

You must avenge the enemies for us!

This movement is sung by a mezzo-soprano.

Lament of the Yellow River portrays the voices of the suppressed women who suffered rape and other atrocities inflicted by the Japanese. The melody is tragic and sad. It is a lament sung with tears and intense emotion. The different emotions of the women are depicted by the orchestration. This lament follows a

through-composed form structure, so as to allow the story and emotions of the Chinese women to unfold.

2.10 Sixth movement: *Defending the Yellow River*

NARRATOR

但是，中华民族的儿女啊，谁愿象猪羊一般任人宰割？

Rise up, Chinese people. Who is willing to be treated like a pig and a sheep?

我们要抱定必胜的决心，

We must keep striving with great determination.

保卫黄河！保卫华北！保卫全中国！

Defend the Yellow river! Defend the Huabei plain! Defend the whole China!

(齐唱、轮唱歌词)

(LYRICS)

风在吼。

The wind is blustering.

马在叫。

The horses are neighing.

黄河在咆哮。

The Yellow River is roaring.

黄河在咆哮。

(Repeat)

河西山岗万丈高。

High mountains situated on the west bank.

河东河北高粱熟了。

Corn in the east and north of the river has ripened.

万山丛中，抗日英雄真不少！

Resistant forces are fighting among the endless mountains!

青纱帐里，游击健儿逞英豪！
Guerillas are active everywhere!

端起了土枪洋枪， 挥动着大刀长矛， 保卫家乡！
Hold up your weapons. Wield your swords and spears. Defend our hometown!

保卫黄河！ 保卫华北！ 保卫全中国！
Defend the Yellow River! Defend the Huabei plain! Defend the whole China!

This movement is written for a mixed choir.

Defending the Yellow River starts as a two-part canon, and develops into a three-part and a four-part canon. The canon theme is a quick duple march-like melody. It is sung continuously and is manipulated polyphonically so as to create organized chaos, which depicts the defending force of the Chinese.

The orchestration is large and colourful and at times forceful. This describes the determination of the Chinese to defend the Yellow River.

The continuous beating of the snare drum portrays the military-like defence of the Chinese.

2.11 Seventh movement: *Shout Aloud, Yellow River*

NARRATOR

听啊：珠江在怒吼！扬子江在怒吼！
Listen: The Pearl River is roaring! The Yangzi River is roaring!

啊！黄河！
Ah! The Yellow River!

掀起你的怒涛,发出你的狂叫,向着全中国被压迫的人民,向着全世界被压迫的人民,发出你战斗的警号吧!

Unleash your wrath with your raging waves and overwhelming power to all the enslaved people throughout China and the World. Awaken them to rise up and fight for freedom!

(合唱歌词)

(LYRICS)

怒吼吧,黄河!

Roar loudly, Yellow River!

掀起你的怒涛,发出你的狂叫!向着全世界的人民,发出战斗的警号!啊----!

Unleash your wrath with your raging waves and overwhelming power to all the enslaved people throughout China and the World. Awaken them to rise up and fight for freedom!

五千年的民族,苦难真不少!

Too much suffering has been forced upon the Chinese Nation who has 5000 years of history!

铁蹄下的民众,苦痛受不了!(重复)受不了.....!

Our people cannot bear the suffering brought by the invasion of the enemy any more!
(Repeat)

但是,新中国已经破晓;

Nevertheless, the birth of a new China is around the corner;

四万万五千万民众已经团结起来,誓死同把国土保!

All 400,000,000 people have been united and are determined to defend their land with their lives!

你听,你听,你听:

Listen, listen, listen:

松花江在呼号;

The Songhua River is shouting;

黑龙江在呼号;

The Suifen River is shouting;

珠江发出了英勇的叫啸;

The Pearl River is raging;

扬子江上燃遍了抗日的烽火!

Battles and resistances against the Japanese enemy are taking place all over the Yangzi River!

啊!黄河!怒吼吧!怒吼吧!怒吼吧!

Ah! The Yellow River! Roar loudly! (Repeat)

向着全中国受难的人民,发出战斗的警号!

Rise up and fight back! All the suffering people of China!

向着全世界劳动的人民,发出战斗的警号!(反复三次)

Hold up your weapons! All the suffering people of China! (Repeat three times)

Shout Aloud, Yellow River is written for a mixed choir. The melody is sincere and full of passion and encouragement. It is the main theme of the *Yellow River Cantata*. In order to conduce the audience to the same mood, the last two lines “Hold up your weapons! All the suffering people of China!” are repeated three times until the conclusion. The theme is played by the cornets and accompanied by the snare drum.

The main themes in the previous movements are all heard in this movement. The movement ends with a triumphant sounding eight-part choir and full orchestra.

² A comprehensive reform movement (1966–1976) in China initiated by Mao Zedong, to eliminate counter-revolutionary elements in the country's institutions and leadership. It was characterized by political fanaticism, sweeps of intellectuals, and social and economic chaos.

³ Peking Opera has existed for over 200 years. It is widely regarded as the highest expression of the Chinese culture. Peking Opera is a synthesis of stylized action, singing, dialogues and mime, acrobatic fighting and dancing to represent a story or depict different characters and their feelings of gladness, anger, sorrow, happiness, surprise, fear and sadness. The costumes in Peking Opera are graceful, magnificent, elegant and brilliant, most of which are made to be different ordinary.



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CHAPTER 3

THE YELLOW RIVER PIANO CONCERTO

3.1 The origin of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*

The *Yellow River Piano Concerto* is a creative adaptation of the *Yellow River Cantata* by a group of composer-pianists from the Central Philharmonic Society led by Yin Chengzong in 1969 during the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, musical composition and performances were greatly restricted. The Cultural Revolution, named thus because the Communist party wanted to consciously break ties with the past, and wanted people to think differently, so traditional Chinese music was banished and culture was reorganized around a new set of Marxist and Maoist principles. Chinese artists were cut off from Western advances as well as traditional culture. One of the leaders of the Cultural Revolution, Jiang Qing (known as Madam Mao), suggested that traditional music such as Beijing Opera and the *Yellow River Cantata* needed to be arranged for piano. Having accumulated experience on arranging Chinese traditional music, Yin Chengzong initiated the project which attracted the composers (Liu Zhuang, Chu Wanghua, Sheng Lihong and Shi Shucheng) to assist in the arrangement of the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*.

In February 1969, the composers decided to add the melody of the *East is Red*

A comprehensive reform movement (1966–1976) in China initiated by Mao Zedong, to eliminate counter-revolutionary elements in the country's institutions and leadership. It was characterized by political fanaticism, purges of intellectuals, and social and economic chaos.

Beijing Opera has existed for over 200 years. It is widely regarded as the highest expression of the Chinese culture. Beijing Opera is a synthesis of stylized action, singing, dialogue and mime, acrobatic fighting and dancing to represent a story or depict different characters and their feelings of gladness, anger, sorrow, happiness, surprise, fear and sadness. The costumes in Beijing Opera are graceful, magnificent, elegant and brilliant, most of which are made in handicraft embroidery.

The *East Is Red* is also the title of a musical promoting Communism, especially Maoism, produced in the early 1960s. The film version of the musical was released in 1965. The musical depicts the history of the Communist Party of China under Mao Zedong.

and *The Internationale* to the fourth movement. This was to acclaim the great victory achieved by the Communist party and Chairman Mao.

The première took place successfully on 1 January 1970, with Yin Chengzong as soloist. The concerto soon became a household piece in a very special way, contributing to the preservation of piano music in China during the tribulation of the Cultural Revolution.

The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto won international recognition when Yin Chengzong performed this work with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Ormandy during their visit to China in the 1970s.

With the official end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto (as with all the works premièred between 1966 and 1975) was banished from the concert stage in China. However, Yin Chengzong planned to resume the performance of the concerto and emigrated to the United States of America to continue his performing career in the early 1980s. Through him, the Concerto became popular throughout the world.

3.2 Short biographies of the composers

Yin Chengzong, Liu Zhuang, Chu Wanghua, Sheng Lihong and Shi Shucheng, a group of pianists from the Central Philharmonic Society (Beijing), adapted the *Yellow River* Cantata to a Piano Concerto.

3.2.1 Yin Chengzong

The Internationale is the anthem of international revolutionary socialism.

http://www.cnlxx.com/yiya/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=596

<http://210.77.218.4:8080/Resource/GGXXK/YY/YYJ/ZGYYJ/YCZ.htm>



Yin Chengzong was born in 1941 on the island of Gulangyu in Xiamen, Fujian Province. He started learning the piano in 1948 when he was seven years old, and gave his first recital at the age of nine. At twelve, he joined the preparatory school of the Shanghai Music Conservatory. In 1959, Yin won an award at the World Youth Peace and Friendship Festival in Vienna, Austria, and in the following year, he went to the Leningrad Conservatory, Russia, to study under the famed Tatiana Kravchenko. In 1962, he was second-prize winner at the International Tchaikovsky Competition (Vladimir Ashkenazy took the first-prize), and since that time he has gained numerous honours and awards. Three years later, in 1965, he joined the Central Symphony Orchestra of China as a soloist.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when all Western art forms were forbidden, Yin ingeniously found an application of his talent: he created the piano-accompanied version of *The Legend of the Red Lantern*, the only play which was permitted during this period. Although, musically speaking, there was not much originality in the work, it was refreshing for genuine music lovers who were longing to have access to Western music.

During 1983, Yin emigrated to the United States of America, and in the same year, he made his American début in the Carnegie Hall, New York. He returned five times for solo recitals. The *New York Times* referred to him as “China’s best pianist”. Throughout his career Yin touched millions of souls with his playing. Bernard Holland of the *New York Times* wrote that he demonstrated an “absolutely beautiful command of piano colours.” (Su 2005:146)

Over the years Yin performed worldwide. He performed under the baton of Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Claudio Abbado and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Kirill Kondrashin and the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. Yin also performed in Boston, San Francisco, Chicago and Toronto. His solo performances were featured on China's Central Television and *CBS Sunday Morning*.

Yin is not only a virtuoso interpreter of Western masters, he is also a composer of renowned piano pieces. His piano arrangements and interpretations of traditional Beijing opera and other classical Chinese music, combined with his contribution to the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* have made him a household name in China. His recording of the latter piece received a Gold Record award, which has already sold over 3 million copies. He became a legend in the music world and is one of four Chinese musicians who are listed in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, published in 1980.

Yin has released more than 20 albums, among them recent releases of an all-Chopin CD, a recording of Debussy's Preludes, *The Seasons* by Tchaikovsky, and various Chinese ancient and traditional pieces arranged by himself and others.

During the autumn of 2002, Yin brought the prestigious Fourth Tchaikovsky International Competition for Young Musicians to his hometown, Xiamen, China, where he served as the Chairman of the Competition. He also served on the jury of the Third Chinese International Piano Competition in 2004.

2006 marks the 56th anniversary of Yin's musical career. Extensive tours of North America and Chinese cities include; Atlanta, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Xuiamen, Guangzhou, etc. In September and October 2005, Yin performed the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto at Beijing's Minzu Theatre and New York's Carnegie Hall respectively, marking the 35th anniversary of this work.

Formerly a professor and artist-in-residence at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Yin now lives in New York City.

3.2.2 Liu Zhuang

Liu Zhuang was born in 1932 in Shanghai and spent her early years studying piano in Hongzhou, China. After graduating in composition from the Shanghai Conservatory, she continued her studies in Russia under prof. Gorov where she earned her M.Mus. She then taught at the Shanghai Conservatory and in the Central Conservatory in Beijing until 1969. In 1970 she was appointed composer-in-residence with the Central Philharmonic in Beijing and was also a Fulbright Asian Scholar from 1989–1991 at Syracuse University, where she remained teaching until 2003.

Her major compositions include the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto (co-composed), a violin concerto, many orchestral works and symphonic poems. In addition she wrote many chamber works and film scores, several of which have won awards, and choral works. Her music has been performed throughout the United States of America, Germany, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Japan and China.

3.2.3 Chu Wanghua



Chu Wanghua was born in 1941 in China. His compositions were first played at the First National Music Week of China when he was only 14 years old. He studied piano and composition at the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, and was appointed a lecturer there following his graduation.

<http://www.tcbuu.com/news/news1/zxxx/200552495802.htm>

http://yy.zjnu.net.cn/xyjj/more_info.asp?id=14

Chu Wanghua went to Australia in the 1980s to pursue postgraduate studies at the University of Melbourne, where he studied composition with Peter Tahourdin, and piano with Donald Thornton. He graduated with a Masters degree in Music in 1986. He received the Albert Maggs Composition prize in 1987, and has been attached to the Australian Music Centre since 1988.

Since arriving in Australia, Chu Wanghua composed a number of pieces, including symphonies, string quartets and piano concertos. His compositions have been performed and recorded around the world. Two of his symphonies, *Ash Wednesday* and *Autumn Cry*, have been performed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, while *The Borderland Moon*, for soprano, sextet and percussion, was performed at the First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival in Hong Kong. His Piano Sonatina was awarded a prize at the 21st Century Chinese Children's Piano Composition Competition in 2000.

Chu Wanghua was invited by the Chinese Cultural Council to give a number of piano recitals of his own works at the Beijing Concert Hall and other venues in September 2002. His book, *Selected Works for Piano*, published by the Music Publishing House of China, was launched during this tour.

3.2.4 Sheng Lihong

No biographical details on Sheng Lihong are available, even after many Internet searches and communicating telephonically with Yin Chengzong, who lives in the United States of America.

3.2.5 Shi Shucheng

www.dukepiano.com.cn/eng/news/25/2005427105010.htm
www.pianohome.cn/n2709c167.shtml



Shi Shucheng is a renowned pianist and conductor in China. He was born in Beijing in 1946. In his childhood, he was already awarded first prize at the Beijing Concert for Children.

In 1958 he attended the music school attached to the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where he studied under the guidance of professor Li Changsun. He gave his *début* piano recital at the age of sixteen. In 1969, after graduation from the Conservatory, he became a soloist of the Central Philharmonic Society of China.

Shi Shucheng studied conducting with David Gilbert (an American conductor) in the United States of America and made his conducting *début* with the Central Philharmonic Orchestra in 1981.

Two years later he won the DAAD scholarship of the Federal Republic of Germany and a scholarship from Friedrich Naumann. He enrolled at the Cologne Musikhochschule and studied under the well-known conductor, Volk Wangenheim. During his three-year study, Shi Shucheng made guest appearances in more than ten cities in Germany and appeared on German television.

Shi Shucheng has given more than a thousand concerts in his homeland and abroad. He has a wide repertoire of Chinese and western classical works.

As a soloist, Shi Shucheng worked with famous conductors and as a conductor he worked with famous soloists and symphony orchestras. Shi Shucheng has made many recordings with various international labels. His playing was widely acclaimed as the most prominent and authoritative interpretations by both musicians and critics in his homeland and abroad.

Shi's superb skills and excellent performance standards have both received high acclaim by the critics and also earned him two awards presented by the Chinese Ministry of Culture in 1981 and 1991. He is dubbed the "gem of the Chinese music arena" and "a rare pianist maestro".

Shi Shucheng was appointed as the Assistant Artistic Director of the China Philharmonic Orchestra in May 2000.

3.3 Introduction to the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*

All the themes, except for the two themes used in the fourth movement, from the *Yellow River Cantata* are employed in the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*. The seven-movement structure and the orchestration of the *Yellow River Cantata* have successfully been adapted into a four-movement Piano Concerto.

An unusual style element of this Piano Concerto is the fact that each movement has a descriptive title, giving it a type of program music element.

Each movement and some sections thereof have a Chinese inscription, which is based on the text of the Cantata. This aids the performer to interpret the composition according to the composer's intentions.

The table below shows how the seven-movement Cantata is reduced into a four-movement Piano Concerto

The <i>Yellow River Cantata</i>		The <i>Yellow River Piano Concerto</i>	
Movement	Title	Movement	Title
1	<i>Song of the Yellow River Boatmen</i>	1	<i>Song of the Yellow River Boatmen</i>
2	<i>Ode to the Yellow River</i>	2	<i>Ode to the Yellow River</i>
3	<i>Ballad of the Yellow River</i>	3	<i>The Wrath of the Yellow River</i> The third and fifth movements of the Cantata are merged into one movement. (The fourth movement of the Cantata is omitted, as the material is not conducive to piano writing.)
4	<i>Dialogue Song by the Riverside</i>		
5	<i>Lament of the Yellow River</i>		

6	<i>Defending the Yellow River</i>	4	<i>Defend the Yellow River</i> The sixth and seventh movements of the Cantata are merged into one movement.
7	<i>Shout Aloud, Yellow River</i>		

This Piano Concerto does not follow the typical three-movement concerto structure. It does not contain the characteristic cadenza indicated by the tonic six-four chord (marked with a *fermata*). The cadenzas in this work are similar to those of Chopin and Liszt, in that they consist of relatively short portions of glittering finger-work written in small notes where a momentary retardation or a display of pianistic brilliancy are desired.

Both the Piano Concerto and the Cantata are entirely based on eight different pentatonic scales together with a typical orchestra, Chinese traditional instruments such as the Chinese bamboo flute, pipa, erhu and sanxian.

Traditional Chinese music usually uses a five-tone scale. These tones in ancient times were dubbed Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi and Yu, equivalent notes in Western music would be: do, re, mi, so and la. Any one of the twelve standard pitches may be used as Gong (do) so that in theory there are twelve possible pentatonic scales.

3.4 First movement: *The Song of the Yellow River Boatmen*

The first movement (in D major) of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto is adapted from the opening movement of the *Yellow River* Cantata. The title, melody and programmatic elements of the first movement of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto, correspond with those of the Cantata.

The principal feature of this movement is the use of a typical Chinese work-chant, which is based on the pentatonic scale of D (D E F[#] A B). This work-chant creates a very definite rhythmic drive throughout this movement. This work-chant is used throughout the movement and is played either by the piano or orchestra. Second to the principal feature of this movement is the vivid orchestration and pianistic sweeps and arpeggios depicting the surges of the waves. According to the Chinese inscription at the beginning of this movement, the whole movement is based on the struggle of the boatmen crossing the wild waters of the Yellow River.

Work-chant motif



The image displays two musical examples of the work-chant motif. Both are in D major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first example, marked with a circled 6, shows a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking is *sf* (sforzando), and the word *cresc.* (crescendo) is written above the bass staff. The second example, marked with a circled 8, shows a similar structure but with a treble clef staff featuring a more complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass clef staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking is *sf*.

The structure of this movement is in rondo form:

Sections	A	B	A1	B1	Link	C	A2	D	Coda
Bars	1–16	17–24	25–38	39–46	47–50	51–74	75–83	84–92	93–113

The movement opens with an exciting orchestral introduction comprising ascending and descending chromatic scales played by woodwinds and supported by heavy brass. The ascending and descending passages depicts the powerful surges of the waves of the yellow river.

From bars 6–11, the brief and powerful work-chant “hua you, hua you” is heard for the first time and is played by the strings. This is interrupted by sweeping arpeggio-like figures played by the piano, which, according to the Chinese inscription, depicts the frightening torrents.

In section B (bars 17–24), a second work-chant motif, of two bars, is heard. This work-chant is also based on the pentatonic scale of D (D E F[#] A B). In bars 17, 19, 21 and 23, this work-chant is sung by the leader, and is answered by the boatmen in bars 18, 20, 22 and 24. This is according to the Chinese inscription above bar 17.



Second work-chant motif





The musical score for the second work-chant motif is presented in two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 2/4 and the key signature is two sharps (D major). The score begins at bar 17, marked with a circled '17' and a forte 'f' dynamic. It features a series of notes with slurs and triplets, indicating a rhythmic pattern. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings.

Section A1 (bars 25–38) starts with the ascending and descending chromatic scales, heard in the opening of this movement, but this time played by the piano. The orchestra now plays the first work-chant motif. From bars 29–38, the first work-chant motif is played by the piano and the ascending and descending chromatic scales, which portray the movement of the waves, is played by woodwinds.

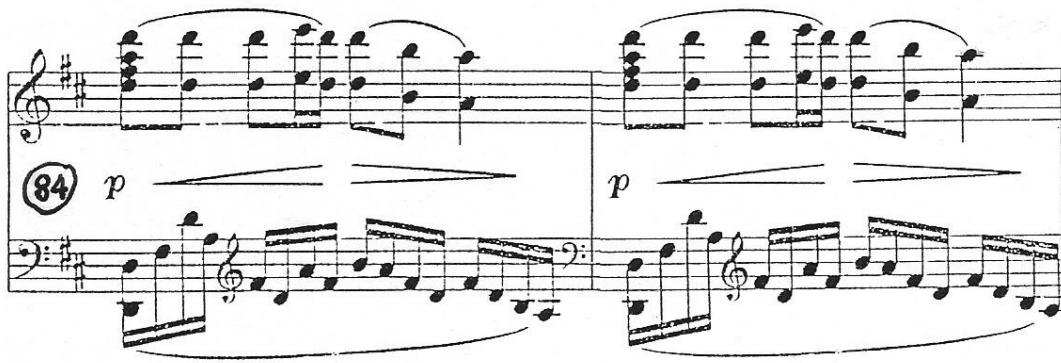
In section B1 (bars 39–46), the rhythmic energy is suddenly interrupted by the same work-chant heard in section B.

Bars 47–50 can be seen as a link leading to section C (51–74). In section C, two new rhythms are introduced () and (). However, these rhythms can be seen as fragmentation and variation of the original work-chant motif. This section leads to section A2 (bars 75–83).

The reappearance of the first work-chant motif accompanied by sweeping arpeggios from bars 75–82 is heard. This leads to a massive climax, comprising dominant seventh and diminished seventh chords from bar 83 onwards and can be seen as a cadenza, which also serves as a link leading to section D. According to the Chinese inscription, the cadenza portrays the boatmen passing the torrents and dangerous sandbanks. This cadenza seems to highlight the Yellow River's insurmountable vigour.

In the following contrasting section, section D (bars 84–92), a folk melody of eight bars, played by flute, oboe and piano is heard. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4 and the tempo changes from =152 to =52, thereby giving the listeners a feeling of calmness and serenity as the boatmen have almost reached their destination. This is according to the Chinese inscription above bar 84.

Chinese folk melody (bars 84–87)



Musical score for measures 84 and 85. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. Measure 84 is marked with a circled '84' and a piano 'p' dynamic. The right hand features a complex, arpeggiated texture with many beamed notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A hairpin crescendo is shown above the right hand. Measure 85 continues the texture with a hairpin decrescendo.



Musical score for measures 86 and 87. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. Measure 86 is marked with a circled '86'. The right hand continues with the arpeggiated texture, and the left hand accompaniment remains. A hairpin decrescendo is shown above the right hand. Measure 87 concludes the section with a final hairpin decrescendo.

After a calming end to this section, a vigorous glissando on the piano, leads to the Coda (bars 93–113). The coda is indicated by the Chinese inscription, which says that the boatmen must move forward bravely and fight against the torrents and waves. The coda is based on the material from section C (but in a different guise) as well as the first work-chant motif.

The whole movement represents the boatmen's solidarity and strong will to fight against terrifying waves, symbolizing the unwavering belief of the Chinese people during their harshest struggles.

3.5 Second movement: *Ode to the Yellow River*

The *Ode to the Yellow River* is a beautiful movement in ballad style. It is very peaceful and lamentable. The movement is adapted from the second movement of the Cantata with the same name and same theme. The entire movement is based on the pentatonic scale of B flat (B^b C D F G). This movement is a trip down history according to the Chinese inscription, which says that the Chinese nation must trace China's long and old history.

This movement portrays a beautiful scene on the yellow river. It starts with a slow and solemn introduction played by the cellos, which shows the beauty and the grandeur of the yellow river. The civilization of the five thousand year old nation is symbolized by the waters in China, which eventually flow into the Yellow River.

Opening theme



Although this movement is entirely based on the pentatonic scale of B flat and suggests one long continuous melody, definite cadences, time signature changes and change of material, divides this movement into different sections. The structure of this movement is as follows:

Sections	A	B	C	D	Coda
Bars	0–34 ²	34 ³ –48	49–58	59–65	66–72

Section A (bars 0-15³), is entirely played by the orchestra. From bar 15⁴ onwards the piano repeats the theme heard in the preceding bars. This is introduced by a triplet figure in the left hand. The theme is grand and expressive which portrays the beautiful and majestic surrounding of the Yellow River. The pianist writing in this movement, which is rich in chromaticism, bares a strong resemblance to Rachmaninoff.

The accompaniment in section B (bars 34³-48) becomes more fluid as it changes from triplets to semi-quavers. The time signature has changed from simple-quadruple to simple-triple. The Chinese inscription above bar 35, states that praise must be sung to the Yellow River and this entirely section must be played slightly faster.

Opening of section B

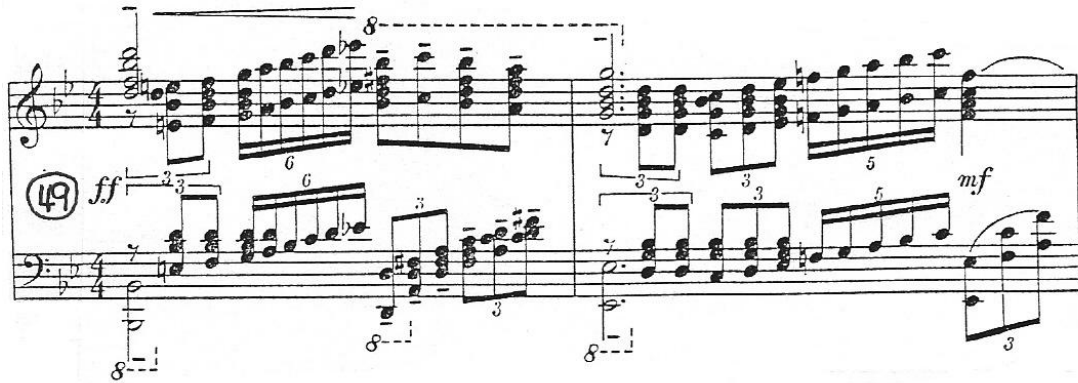


The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piano accompaniment. The first system, starting at bar 34, shows a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a more active accompaniment. It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the bass, a dynamic marking of *f*, and a triplet of eighth notes in the treble. The second system, starting at bar 37, continues the accompaniment with a sixth in the bass and a triplet of eighth notes in the treble. The notation is detailed, showing fingerings and articulation marks.

Section C (bars 49-58), begins with new material, comprising of rapid ascending octaves and chords played by both the piano and orchestra. This is indicated by the Chinese inscription above bar 49, which states that the Chinese must praise the glorious revolutionary traditions of their culture. The time

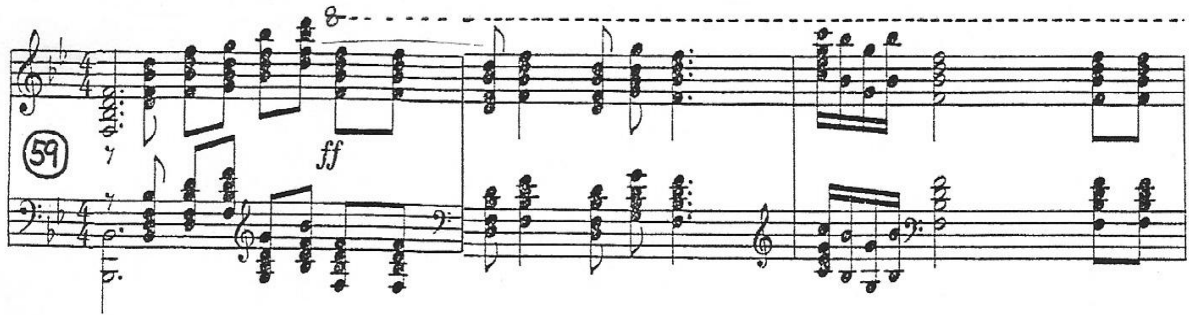
signature changes from simple-triple to simple-quadruple.

Opening of section C



As the climax of this movement, the theme of section D (bars 59–65), introduces new melodic material. According to the Chinese inscription, portrays the awakening of the whole nation. It is exhibited by strongly played ascending chords and a slightly faster tempo. With its sonorous and powerful chords, the piano is singing in praise of the great Yellow River.

Opening of section D



Although the piano ends triumphantly, the orchestra ends this movement with a calm atmosphere as if to portray the Yellow River flowing into the distance.

3.6 Third movement: *The Wrath of the Yellow River*

The Wrath of the Yellow River is adapted from the third movement (*Ballad of the Yellow River*) and the fifth movement (*Lament of the Yellow River*) of the *Yellow River Cantata*.

The structure of this movement is as follows:

Sections	Introduction	A	B	C	D	E	A1	Coda
Bars	1–3	4–55	56–83	84–90	91–107	108–136	137–150	151–158

This movement is based on four different pentatonic scales and starts calmly with a bright and broad introduction, played by the traditional Chinese bamboo flute, based on the folk song melodies from Yan'an in the Shaanxi province, (Northern China). This movement, up to section B (bars 56–83), according to the Chinese inscription, depicts the prosperous life of the people along the banks of the Yellow River. Fast ascending and descending arpeggios, based on the pentatonic scale of E flat (E^b F G B^b C) are played by the piano. This imitates the movement of the water.

Section A (bars 4–55) uses the main theme of the *Ballad of the Yellow River* from the *Yellow River Cantata*. The whole section is based on the pentatonic scale of E flat. The sound effect of the Chinese zither, played by the piano is

The Chinese bamboo flute (Dizi) is a traditional Chinese transverse flute made of bamboo with six holes and tuned to a diatonic major scale. Most special about the Dizi is the "Mo-Cong" (membrane hole), which is located between the blowhole and 6th finger hole. Some people mistake this membrane for rice paper, but it is actually made from the inner tube of a bamboo or reed plant. When the Dizi is played, the membrane vibrates with the Dizi, producing a sweet, bright tone.

The Chinese zither, commonly known as *Guzheng*, is a plucked string instrument that is part of the zither family. It is one of the most ancient Chinese musical instruments according to the documents written in the Qin dynasty (before 206 BC). Due to its long history, the zheng has been called *Guzheng* where "Gu" stands for "ancient" in Chinese. The *Guzheng* is built with a special wooden sound body with strings arched across movable bridges along the length of the instrument for the purpose of tuning.

the most prominent characteristic in this section. Throughout this section, the music is cheerful and lively. It depicts the scene of the prosperous life of the people along the banks of the Yellow River.

Chinese folk melody based on the pentatonic scale of E flat (E^b F G B^b C)

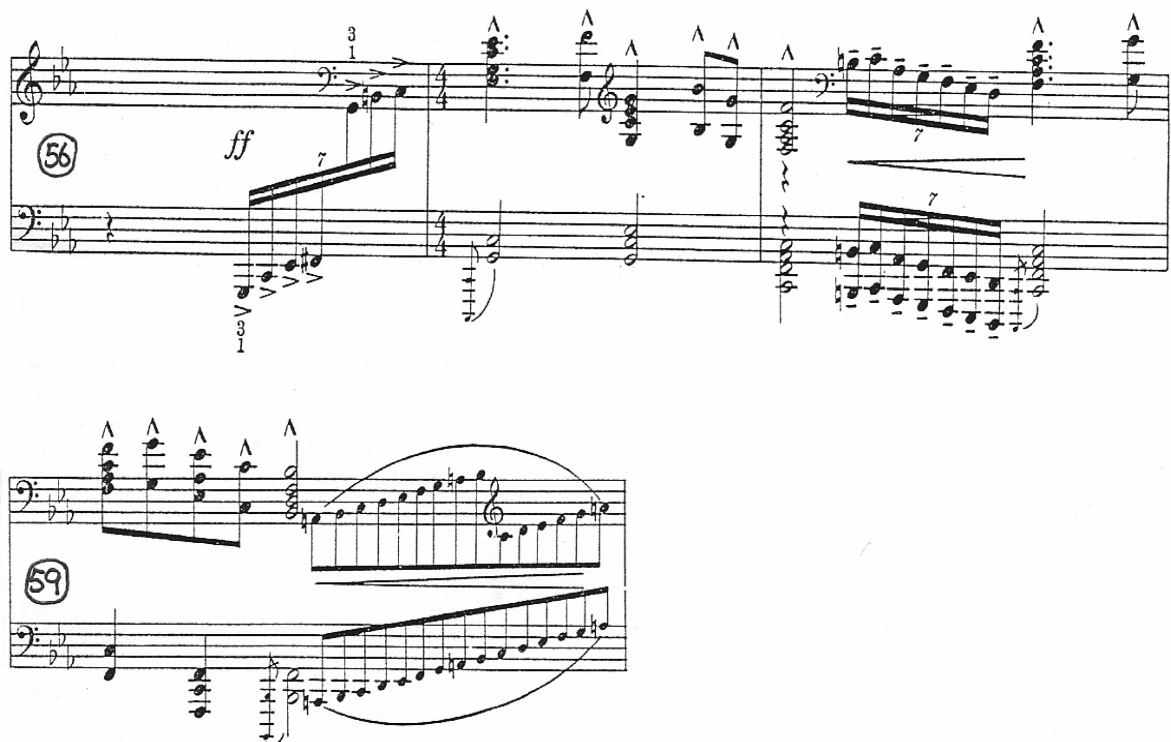


□ = Chinese zither sound effect

In early times the *zheng* had 5 strings; later on developed to 12 or 13 strings in the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907AD) and 16 strings in the Song and Ming dynasty (from the 10th to 15th century). The present day *zheng* usually has 21-25 strings. There are many techniques used in the playing of the Guzheng, including basic plucking actions with the right and left hand. Plucking is done mainly by the right hand with four plectra (picks) attached to the fingers. Advanced players may use picks attached to the fingers of both hands. Ancient picks were made of ivory and later also from tortoise shell. The sound of the guzheng expresses a cascading waterfall, thunder and the scenic countryside.

A sudden change in dynamics, introduces section B (bars 56–83), which is played by the piano. The music becomes dramatic, and is full of pathos and suppressed anger. This section, according to the Chinese inscription, portrays the invasion of the enemy. Chords in the low register of the piano, together with muted brass, turn this movement into a sombre description of the catastrophe caused by the enemy.

Opening of section B



The image shows the musical score for the opening of section B, starting at bar 56. The score is written for piano (ff) and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a series of chords and melodic lines. The second staff (bass clef) features a series of chords and a melodic line that is circled in red. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In the second half of this section (bars 66–83), repeated notes played by the piano, imitate the sound effects of the Chinese lute . According to the Chinese inscription, this presents a moving lament for the suffering people of China.

The Chinese lute, commonly known as *pipa*, is a four stringed lute with a pear-shaped body. Its short, bent neck has 30 frets which extend onto the soundboard, offering a wide range (3.5 octaves). This instrument appears in texts dating up to the second century B.C. There are a lot of written texts of the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD) about pipa music played and the stories that inspired the composition for those pipa pieces. The pipa technique is characterised by spectacular finger dexterity and virtuoso programmatic effects. Rolls, slaps, pizzicato, harmonics and noises are often combined into extensive tone poems vividly describing famous battles or other exciting scenes.

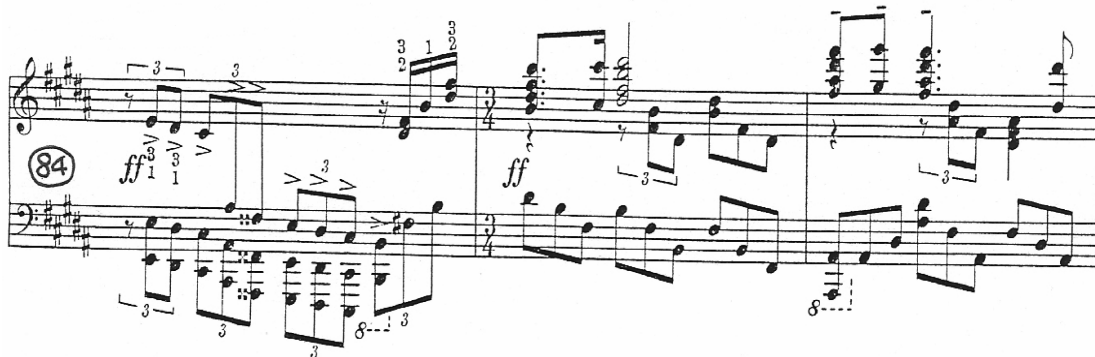
Repeated notes played by the piano imitating the sound effects of the Chinese lute

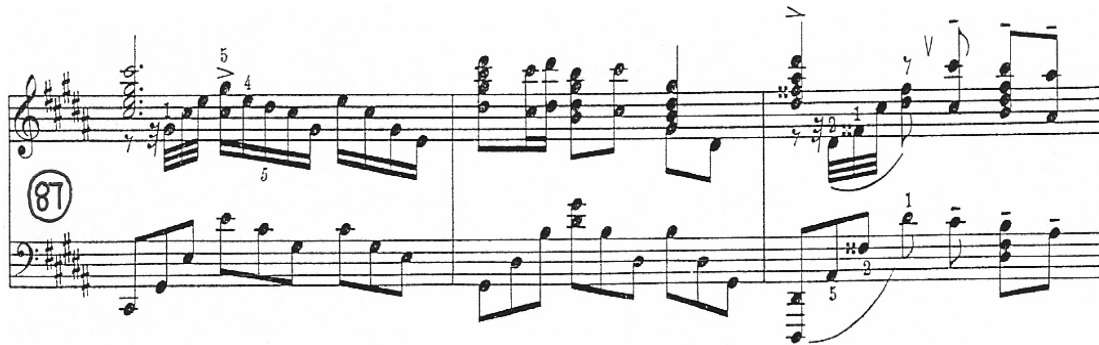


An orchestral modulatory link (bars 75–83), which indicates a faster tempo change, leads to section C.

Section C (bars 84–90), is based on the pentatonic scale of B, and is written for piano solo. The melody of *Lament of the Yellow River* is heard and according to the Chinese inscription, describes the hopeless screaming of a woman in misery.

Bars 84 to 90 showing the pentatonic scale of B (B C# D# F# G#)





Immediately, a change to the pentatonic scale of D flat, indicates section D (bars 91–107). According to the text of the Cantata, the three bar melody played by the orchestra, accompanied by the overwhelming piano arpeggios, characterises the rage and hatred of the Chinese people against the Japanese invaders.

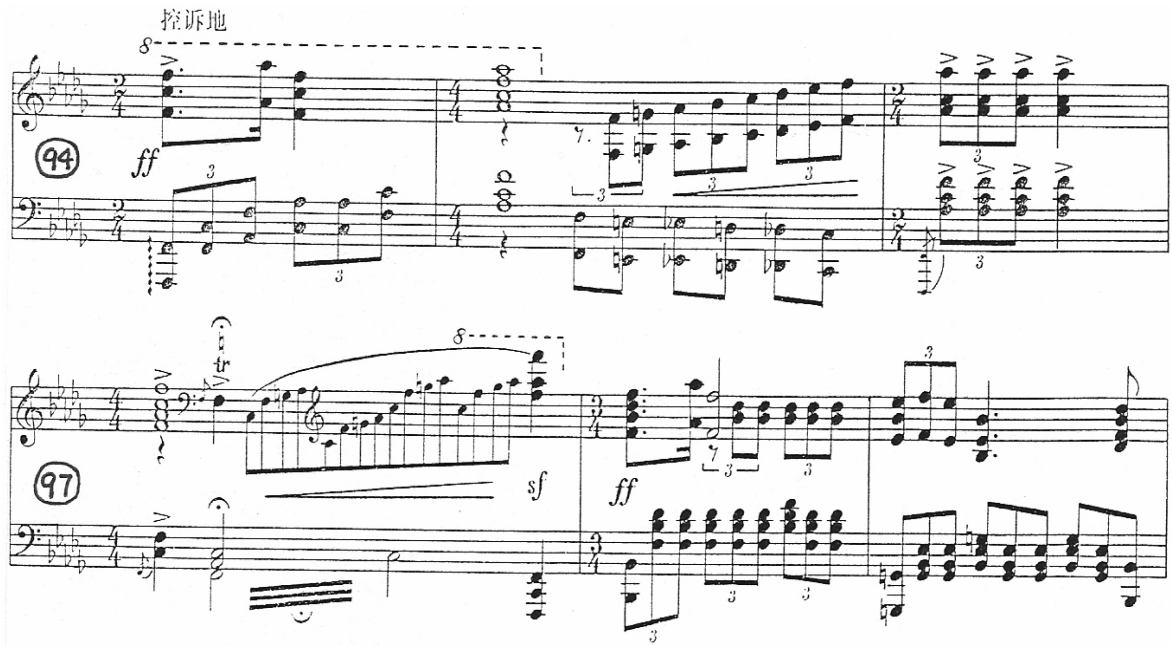
Pentatonic scale of D flat ($D^b E^b F A^b B^b$)



According to the Chinese inscription above bar 94, the vigorous piano solo in

bars 94-107 portrays the anger and bitterness of the Chinese people and leads to the climax of this movement (bars 130–158).

Vigorous piano solo



Section E (bars 108–136) is introduced by a simple folk-like, which is based on the pentatonic of D flat ($D^b E^b F A^b B^b$). This single note melody is played by the right hand forcefully and is accompanied by triplet figures in the left hand.



Finally, when the theme of the *Ballad of the Yellow River* from the *Yellow River* Cantata occurs in the orchestra (bars 137–150), now based on the pentatonic scale of E flat, the piano accompanies with a series of stormy arpeggios.

Pentatonic scale of E flat (E^b, F, G, B^b, C)



Piano

$\text{♩} = 76$

ff

(137)

VI. I *unis.*
f

VI. II *unis.*
f

Vle. *unis.*
f

Vc. *unis.*
f

Cb. *div. arco*
pizz.
f

Piano

mf

(139)

VI. I *mf*

VI. II *mf*

Vle. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

In the coda (bars 151–158), the piano takes over the melody, which is accompanied by quickly repeated chords.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system shows the beginning of the coda, with the piano part (bass clef) playing a melody of eighth notes and the right hand (treble clef) playing chords. The second system continues the piece, featuring a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking over the piano part, which is playing a melody of eighth notes. The right hand continues with chords. The piece concludes with a final chord in both hands, marked with a *p* (piano) dynamic.

3.7 Fourth movement: *Defend the Yellow River*

The fourth movement is derived from the passionate *Defending the Yellow River* and *Shout Aloud, Yellow River* (the sixth and seventh movements of the *Yellow River Cantata*). *Defend the Yellow River* concludes the concerto with a triumphant battle.

This movement is a theme with variations, preceded by an introduction and ending with a coda. The seven variations are interrupted by links and episodes. This movement is the climax of the whole work. According to the Chinese inscription, bars 1–10, calls for the Chinese nation to stand together and fight the invasion.

Section	Bar numbers	Key
Introduction	1–10	C major
Link	11–20	A major
Theme	21–42	A major
Link	43–51	A major
Variation 1	52–73	A major
Variation 2	74–95	A major
Variation 3	96–117	A major
Episode 1	118–134	A major
Variation 4	135–156	D major
Link	157–165	D major
Episode 2	166–182	D major
Link	183–198	B ^b major
Variation 5	199–218	C major
Variation 6	219–239	F major
Link	240–248	F major

Episode 3	249–328	F major, B ^b major, D major
Variation 7	329–368	D major
Coda	369–383	D major

The introduction (bars 1-10) is based on the pentatonic scale of C. It is based on the seventh movement of the Cantata. The solemn brass imitates a loud and clear battle horn, accompanied by rapid ascending scales played by the woodwinds.

In bars 4-7, the theme of the song *The East is Red* is introduced. This is taken over by a cadenza-like passage (bars 8–10) of alternating ascending octaves.

This is followed by an orchestral link (bars 11-20), which according to the Chinese inscription calls for the Chinese nation to move to the battlefield.

The march-like theme (bars 21 – 42), based on the pentatonic scale of A (A B C[#] E F[#]) is played by the piano. This reveals, according to the Chinese inscription, the decisive spirit of the soldiers and the common people who are marching to the battlefield. The *forte* character of the theme is enhanced by the descending tetrachord in the left hand against a dotted rhythm melody in the right hand. Furthermore, the tempo is fast and the metre is simple-duple. The harmonies used are predominantly tonic and dominant and the rhythm thereof, changes with each crotchet, as if to suggest the left-right-left-right marching rhythm. The accompaniment is a steady quaver movement played by the strings.

Theme



Variation 1 (bars 52–73) has a single note melody and is accompanied by repeated chords played by the strings. The left hand accompaniment of the piano comprises single crotchet notes as opposed to the descending octave playing of the left hand in the theme. The dynamic level of this variation is *piano*.

Variation 1



Musical score for Variation 1 (bars 52-57). The score includes staves for Piano, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The Piano part starts at bar 52 with a circled number 52 and a dynamic marking *p*. The Violin II part has a *sempre.* marking. The Viola and Violoncello parts also have *sempre.* markings. The Contrabasso part is mostly silent.

In variation 2 (bars 74–95), the theme is played by the first violins, while the piano plays a counter-melody, based on the descending left hand accompaniment figure of the theme. The articulation is *staccato* throughout and the dynamic level is *piano*.

Variation 2



Musical score for Variation 2 (bars 74-79). The score includes staves for Piano, Violin I, Violin II, and Viola. The Piano part starts at bar 74 with a circled number 74 and a dynamic marking *p*. The Piano part has a *sempre.* marking. The Violin I part has a dynamic marking *mp* and a *v* marking. The Violin II and Viola parts are mostly silent.

In the third variation (bars 96–117), imitation between the piano and the orchestra predominates. The descending left hand accompaniment is maintained almost throughout the variation. The dynamic level is *mezzo-forte* and accents in the melody are used throughout this variation.

Variation 3



The first episode of 17 bars (bars 118–134) is almost entirely played by the piano. The last four bars are ascending scales in octaves and introduce the fourth variation, which is based on the pentatonic scale of D.

In the fourth variation (bars 135–156), imitation between the piano and orchestra predominates. The character of this variation is majestic and the dynamic level is *fortissimo*. According to the Chinese inscription, this represents the determination for a revolution.

Variation 4



The image displays a page of a musical score, likely from a symphony, covering measures 135 to 165. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are Cor. (Coronet), Trbe. (Trumpet), Trbn. (Trumpet), Timp. (Timpani), Piano, Vl. I (Violin I), Vl. II (Violin II), Vle. (Viola), Vc. (Violoncello), and Cb. (Contrabass). The Piano part is marked 'Marziale' with a tempo of quarter note = 152. The score includes various dynamics such as *sf*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. A circled number '135' is visible in the Piano part. The score shows various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The link in bars 157–165 is based on the same material as the link in bars 43–51.

In the second episode (bars 166–182), the material is identical to that of the first episode. The difference is that the melodic material is entirely orchestral.

The link (bars 183–198) is based on the pentatonic scale of B flat. This is entirely played by the orchestra. In this variation, ascending and descending chromatic scales played by the first violins and flutes are heard. Fragments of the theme are used in this link. The dynamic level is predominantly *pianissimo*.

Variation 5 (bars 199–218) is based on the pentatonic scale of C. The melody, in this variation is played by the woodwinds, while the strings play the same rhythm as the previous link (bars 183–198). The piano plays mostly chromatic scale patterns in sixteenth notes and the dynamic level is predominantly *pianissimo*.

Variation 5



The musical score for Variation 5 (bars 199–218) is presented in a multi-staff format. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Fl. (Flute):** Melodic line with accents and slurs, dynamic *mp*.
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Melodic line with accents and slurs, dynamic *mp*.
- Cor. (Cor Anglais):** Rests throughout the variation.
- Piano:** Chromatic scale patterns in sixteenth notes, dynamic *pp*.
- VI. I (Violin I):** Rests throughout the variation.
- VI. II (Violin II):** Rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes, dynamic *p*.
- Vle. (Viola):** Rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes, dynamic *p*.

Variation 6 (bars 219–240) starts *fortissimo* and is based on the pentatonic scale of F (F G A C D). The piano plays chords in a dotted rhythm throughout this variation, while the first and second violins are playing fast sixteenth notes.

Variation 6



Piano *ff*

219

VI. I *f*

VI. II *f*

Vle. *f* pizz.

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

In the link (bars 241–248), similar material is used to that of the previous link in bars 157–165. However, the last four bars comprise sequences along with a *crescendo*, which leads to the third episode.

In the third episode (bars 249–328), similar material from the previous episode is used. In bars 267–280, material from the theme is heard in the left hand of the piano. From bars 305–328, the *East is Red* melody is used. The Chinese inscription above bar 305 expresses long life to the people of China and long life to Chairman Mao.

***East is Red* (single line melody and orchestra part)**



Piano

305 *ff*

VI. I *ff*

VI. II *ff*

Vle. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Cb. *ff*

Piano

307

VI. I *ff*

VI. II *ff*

Vle. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Cb. *ff*

The melody of *The East is Red* is used to honour Chairman Mao's great victory of his concept of the people's war. In this section, the doubling of the piano and the orchestra is used to heighten the climax, which leads into variation 7.

In variation 7 (bars 329–368), the dynamic level is *piano*. Imitation between the piano and orchestra predominates until bar 347. A gradual crescendo leads to bar 347 where the Chinese inscription suggests the nation to march forward and to follow the theories of Marx, Lenin and Mao. In bar 363, the great victory of the revolution is suggested by the Chinese inscription. The theme from *The Internationale* anthem is heard in bars 363-368 and is played by piano and orchestra. This signifies that the Chinese Nation has been liberated under the leadership of Chairman Mao (Communist Party).

The Internationale melody



The musical score shows the beginning of the 'The Internationale' melody at bar 363. The Piano part is marked with a circled '363' and includes a first ending bracket. The Violin I and II parts are marked with 'ff' and 'p' dynamics. The Viola part is marked with 'ff'. The Violoncello and Contrabass parts are marked with 'ff'. The score is in 2/4 time and G major.

This part (*The East is Red*) is not from the Cantata. It was added by Yin Chengzong's group in 1969.

Finally, in the coda (bars 369–383), the piano plays forceful descending triplet octaves, as if to express the determination and progress of the Chinese people. This thrusts the whole concerto to a climax of victorious celebration.



Musical score for piano, bars 369–383. The score is in 2/4 time and features a descending triplet octave pattern. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 84$. The dynamics are *fff* (fortississimo) and *f* (forte). The key signature is one sharp (F#).



Musical score for piano, bars 384–383. The score is in 2/4 time and features a descending triplet octave pattern. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 69$. The dynamics are *sf* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo). The key signature is one sharp (F#).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto is one of the most successful Chinese compositions. It has a significant influence on the development of music in China and plays an important role in the history thereof. Currently, this work is highly appreciated not only nationally but also internationally.

The theme of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto originates from the *Yellow River* Cantata, which was composed during the anti-Japanese war, a special period in Chinese history. Consequently, it gained great appreciation from Chinese people after it was composed, as it reminds them of that sad memory that awakened their pursuit of liberation, freedom and fighting spirit. In the Chinese people's minds, the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto is a prominent musical work that bears great historical significance in the spiritual development of the nation.

The melodic and formal structure of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto evolved from the *Yellow River* Cantata. Several Chinese folk music elements, such as pentatonic scales, the song of *East is Red*, and traditional instruments, such as the bamboo flute, pipa, erhu etc. are employed in this concerto. Despite the strong Chinese tonal system influences, European compositional techniques are evident in this Concerto. The structure of this work is like telling a story, presented to the audience in music. The composers take advantage of the resourcefulness of the piano in order to capture the various colours and moods of this work. The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto is a successful work that combines Chinese folk music in Western musical idiom.

Since the birth of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto, it has received international

acclaim for its strong nationalistic and programmatic elements. This work is probably best suited for western people to appreciate the greatness of Chinese music. Because of the demanding technical difficulties and sheer beauty of this work, it wouldn't be surprising if the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto becomes a standard optional Concerto in present piano competitions and those to come.

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Keywords:

Yellow River, Cantata, Piano Concerto, Structural, Analysis, Xian Xinghai, Birth, Yin Chengzong, Orchestra, Adaptation, Anti-Japanese War

SUMMARY

The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto was adapted from the famous *Yellow River* Cantata, a grand choral work composed by Xian Xinghai in 1939, during the Japanese invasion of China. It is a very famous and important work in China and exhibits strong nationalistic characteristics. The Cantata inspired the entire Chinese nation during their defense against the largest and most brutal genocide in human history. It has since become a symbol of heroism and solidarity of all Chinese people around the world.

The *Yellow River* Piano Concerto was composed by a group of Chinese composer-pianists in 1969 led by Yin Chengzong. All the biographies of the composers of both the Cantata and the Piano Concerto are supplied in this dissertation. The Piano Concerto consists of four movements: *The Song of The Yellow River Boatmen*, *Ode to the Yellow River*, *The Wrath of the Yellow River* and *Defend the Yellow River*. Each movement has been analyzed in terms of structure. Music examples are provided to assist in the understanding of the work.