



DU MINGXIN AND THE UTILIZATION OF MUSIC IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LI
ETHNIC IDENTITY



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An Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of DOCTOR OF ARTS
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THE DISSERTATION TITLED
DU MINGXIN AND THE UTILIZATION OF MUSIC IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LI
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BY
WANG ZHEN

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Du Mingxin is distinguished for his piano suite The Red Detachment of Women, which creatively integrates Hainan Li ethnic music to establish a strong cultural identity and national symbols. This study integrates theories of cultural memory and identity with musical analysis and historical contextualization to investigate Du Mingxin's creative activity. This study analyzes Du Mingxin's career and compositional philosophy, focusing on how his work, Red Detachment of Women, synthesizes Li ethnic elements with Western symphonic techniques to promote cross-cultural dialogue, while simultaneously preserving minority cultural memory and transforming it into a symbol of Chinese national consciousness. This study presents a framework for how modern music might bolster national identity through ethnic expression. It further advances the theoretical framework of ethnomusicology and provides insights into preserving China's cultural subjectivity among a more globalized musical landscape.

Keyword : Du Mingxin, ethnic identity, the Red Detachment of Women, Li ethnic

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WANG ZHEN

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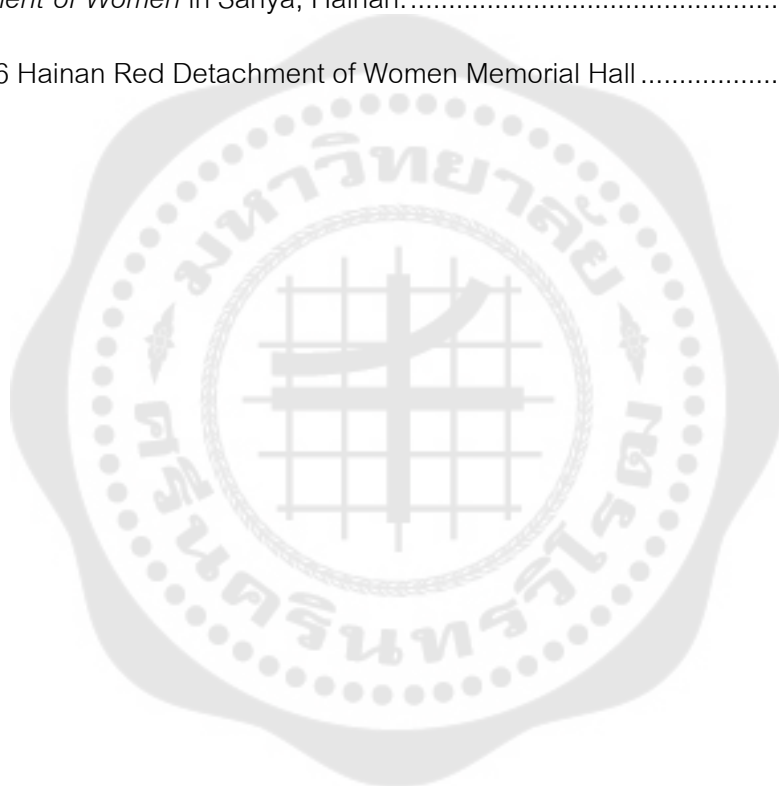
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the introduction of the piano to China in the late 19th century, this Western instrument has undergone a significant transformation within the Chinese cultural context, from passive adoption to active integration, and ultimately to creative localization. As scholar Wen Jing notes in *Exploration of the Nationalization of Chinese Piano Music*, “Over the past century, Chinese composers have continuously explored how to integrate piano techniques with traditional national music to achieve a modern expression of the Chinese sound” (Wen, 2020). As a form of cultural practice, music plays a vital role in articulating both national identity and cultural affiliation.

Within this framework, Du Mingxin's Piano Suite *The Red Detachment of Women* stands as a landmark in the localization of piano composition in China. Most notably, Du's creative incorporation of musical elements from the Hainan Li ethnic group not only enriches the expressive potential of the piano, but also facilitates a nuanced synthesis of regional, ethnic, and national identities. Li music, a significant component of southern China's minority musical heritage, is distinguished by its unique modal structures and rhythmic patterns. Du's fusion of these characteristics with Western pianistic techniques enables the suite to maintain both artistic sophistication and technical fluency, while simultaneously serving as a compelling example of how minority cultural memory is memorialized and symbolized within a national narrative.

Originally premiered in 1964, *The Red Detachment of Women* was one of the most influential "revolutionary modern ballets" in the early People's Republic of China, embodying strong political and cultural symbolism. In adapting this ballet into a piano suite, Du Mingxin preserved its narrative trajectory and character portrayals, while further enriching the musical language by embedding pentatonic modes, antiphonal rhythmic patterns, and arpeggiated motifs drawn from Li musical traditions. In doing so, he created a layered musical text that simultaneously conveys revolutionary ideology and preserves local cultural memory. This act of musical hybridization breathes new life

into Li ethnic music within the framework of national ideological construction, while recontextualizing the piano as a culturally localized medium in the Chinese artistic landscape.(Shi, 2016,11)

This study focuses on Du Mingxin's Piano Suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, examining all seven movements through musical imagery analysis, formal analysis, and, most importantly, a close investigation of how Li musical elements are selected, adapted, and restructured. It explores how Du mobilizes this ethnic musical resource to construct a uniquely Chinese narrative within the modern pianistic idiom.

By filling the current gap in systematic scholarship on the incorporation of minority musical elements into Chinese piano repertoire, this research seeks to reveal how music functions as both a medium of cultural memory and a tool for the construction of national identity. Ultimately, it aims to provide theoretical and practical insights for the continued development of Chinese national piano music in a multicultural and globalized context.

The objective of the study

- 1.To study the musical context of Du Mingxin
- 2.To analyze the construction of Li ethnic identity
- 3.To analyze Du Mingxin's musical interpretation of national identity through the composition of the Red Detachment of Women suite

Significance of the study

1.Innovative significance: The development of Chinese piano art is closely related to China's reform and opening up.In the past 40 years of reform and opening up, not only great changes have taken place in music art standards in China, but also diversified and extraordinary in the trend of music art. Therefore, the study of Du Mingxin's musical style and his works are innovative events that follow the pulse of the times and pace with the times.

2.Theoretical significance: First of all, Du Mingxin is an important piano composer in modern China. He not only accepted the advanced composition concept and technology of Russia early, but also was influenced by many European composers in his music creation. Studying the piano works created by Du Mingxin can help us understand what the composers have inherited and abandoned in the adoption and absorption of western European composition technology. The experience of this important composer in the history of music is the theoretical basis for the development of music. In addition, he was also the first composer of national piano music creation in China. His writing also marked the beginning of Chinese composers in the Chinese style. However, he used different techniques of expression in the specific ethnic creation techniques.

3.Practical significance: The creation of piano works runs through all the periods of Du Mingxin's creation. Among all the works, piano works occupy an important position. Whether the musical analysis of their works, or the interpretation of the works through performance and performance, it is the protection and inheritance of these musical heritages. Therefore, the study of Du Mingxin's piano works has realistic and practical value. In addition, from the perspective of ethnic music culture, the works are put into the past and the future historical period for a comprehensive investigation and research. At the same time, the paper examines the occurrence and turning point and mutual influence of the style of the work, the context of each other, the historical combining and the trajectory of change, analyzes the connotation of the work from the perspective of historical culture and musical aesthetics. It will contribute to the organic combination of music culture and piano music research, so as to expand the academic vision of music.

Scope of the study

This study focuses on Du Mingxin's piano suite *the Red Detachment of Women* as its central object, systematically exploring its creative background, the application of ethnic musical elements, and the work's significance within cultural and political contexts. The scope of the research specifically includes the following aspects:

1.Examination of Du Mingxin's Life and Creative Philosophy: Investigating the historical background of his musical creation and personal artistic ideology, this section explores how Du formed a distinct nationalist creative style within a specific historical context.

2.Analysis from Li Music, Costume, and Dance: This section examines the role of these elements in constructing Li ethnic identity. It explores the visual symbolism of Li costumes, the transmission of cultural genes in music, the representational content, connotations, and classifications of Li dance, and Du Mingxin's incorporation of related elements in his work, shedding light on the process of ethnic identity construction.

3. Musical Analysis of *the Red Detachment of Women*: Combining an analysis of the musical imagery and formal structure of the seven pieces, this section delves into how Du Mingxin selects, refines, and reconstructs elements of Hainan Li ethnic music. It also investigates the integration of Western piano techniques. Drawing from cultural memory and identity theory, this section analyzes how the work musically expresses red historical memories through the integration of ethnic music elements and plays a cultural symbolic role within national narratives.

Through examining Du Mingxin's life and creative philosophy, analyzing the role of Li cultural elements in identity construction, and offering a detailed musical analysis of *the Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, this study aims to uncover the fusion of ethnic music and piano art within his work. It seeks to highlight the unique value of music in expressing Chinese cultural identity, thereby laying a theoretical foundation and providing practical guidance for the nationalism in Chinese piano composition.

Definition of terms.

The eight Yang Banxi:

The "Eight Yang Banxi" were eight exemplary works of art established during the Cultural Revolution, including five Peking operas such as *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and three ballets such as *The Red Detachment of Women*. Centered on revolutionary struggles, these works conveyed ideological values through

stylized performance and politically driven adaptations. They combined historical realism with artistic exaggeration, becoming cultural symbols of a unique era.

Li Folk songs:

Du Mingxin skillfully integrated elements of Hainan Li ethnic folk songs into *The Red Detachment of Women*. His musical language is based on the distinctive rhythmic filler words of the Li dialect (such as "luo" and "lie"), and incorporates melodic motifs from folk tunes like Wuzhishan Song. Through pianistic harmonic textures and symphonic development techniques, he preserved the unique metaphorical and narrative qualities of Li music while infusing it with the revolutionary spirit of the era. This achieved an organic fusion of ethnic musical language and modern compositional techniques.

Musical Integration

Refers to the organic combination of musical elements from different cultures or traditions, including the integration of melody, rhythm, timbre, and harmony. In his compositions, Du Mingxin merges Li ethnic folk music with Western classical compositional techniques, demonstrating a high degree of musical fusion.

Ethnic Identity

Refers to an individual's or group's sense of belonging and self-perception in relation to their ethnic group, typically expressed through shared language, history, culture, and traditions. Ethnic identity is not only a form of cultural awareness but also a socially constructed process.

Collective memory:

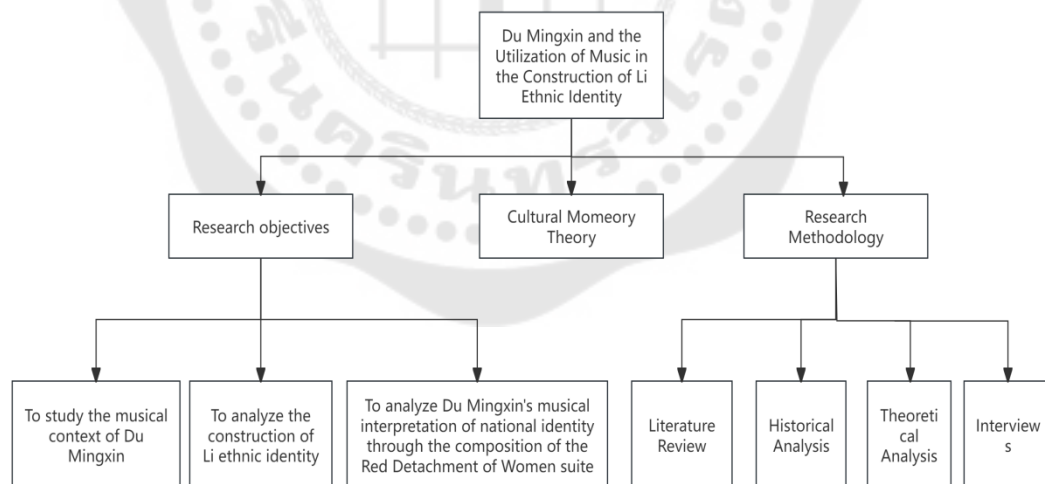
In the context of cultural memory, collective memory refers to a group's shared recollection and identification with historical events. *The Red Detachment of Women*, through its artistic portrayal of revolutionary female figures, transforms narratives of resistance and sacrifice into a vital part of national memory, reinforcing communal understanding and emotional identification with revolutionary ideals.

Dance drama adaptation piece:

A dance drama adaptation piece is a musical work where themes from a dance drama are rearranged for solo or chamber performance. The *Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, adapted from the original score, preserves thematic melodies and emotional expression. It reinterprets and disseminates the revolutionary narrative in a new performative context.

Conceptual Framework

This study explores how Du Mingxin and his music contribute to the construction of ethnic identity. The research objectives include the composer and his music, ethnic identity, and value contributions. The study employs methods such as musicological theoretical analysis, interviews, and historical document review, with a theoretical foundation rooted in cultural identity and identity theory. Through comprehensive synthesis and analysis, it examines the characteristics of Du Mingxin's musical style, the relationship between his music and national identity, and the multidimensional value of his works.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

First and foremost, this paper focuses on the cultural agents and his musical works and compositional styles. The term "cultural agent" was mentioned by Han Zhong'en in *New Trends in Music of the New Era* and primarily refers to key figures who intervene, participate in, and create music-related events. Since music is created by individuals, these creators are the firsthand witnesses and agents of musical culture. (Han, 2002) Yang Yandi, in *A Collection of Writings by Yang Yandi*, also emphasizes the crucial role of the creative subject in the development of musical culture, echoing the concept of the "cultural agent." (Yang, 2007)

2.1 Origin of the Research Question

As a significant composer in modern and contemporary Chinese music history, Du Mingxin's personal experiences and creative achievements not only embody his artistic talent but also reflect the historical transformations and cultural transitions of Chinese society since the mid-20th century. Studying Du Mingxin is not merely an exploration of his musical compositions; rather, it is an attempt to examine the developmental trajectory of Chinese music during specific historical periods through his experiences and to understand how he, as a composer, undertook the mission of both cultural inheritance and innovation amid the tides of history.

Du Mingxin's upbringing and creative career spanned key periods of transition in Chinese society, from wartime turmoil to gradual stabilization. Born in the 1920s, he lived through the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese Civil War, and the socialist construction period following the founding of the People's Republic of China. These historical events not only shaped his personal experiences but also profoundly influenced his musical creations. Positioned at critical junctures of China's social transformations, he played a crucial role as a bridge connecting tradition and modernity, as well as Eastern and Western musical influences.

Du Mingxin's significance lies in his dual identity as both a major contributor to China's music education system and a pioneer in the modernization of Chinese music composition. Having received systematic training in Western music at the Central Conservatory of Music, he later successfully integrated Chinese traditional cultural elements with Western compositional techniques in his works. For instance, his representative work *The Red Detachment of Women* not only encapsulates the revolutionary spirit of Chinese history but also utilizes the piano—a Western instrument—to incorporate Chinese folk melodies, rhythms, and modal structures, thereby creating a musical language that is both nationally distinctive and internationally resonant. His creative practices thus provided a valuable model for the modernization of Chinese music.

What makes Du Mingxin particularly unique is that his career spanned a long historical period, during which he witnessed and actively participated in the transformation of Chinese music from its traditional foundations to modern expressions. Beyond being a composer, he was also a dedicated music educator who trained numerous outstanding musicians, laying a solid foundation for the development of Chinese music education. His compositions and pedagogical contributions not only influenced his contemporaries but also offered invaluable insights and inspiration for future generations of composers.

The significance of studying Du Mingxin lies in his role as a key figure in the modernization of Chinese music and as a symbol of both cultural inheritance and artistic innovation. His works and experiences reveal the cultural tensions and artistic explorations within Chinese music during specific historical periods while also providing a crucial perspective for understanding the modern characteristics and cultural hybridity of Chinese music. By examining Du Mingxin, we gain deeper insights into the unique value of Chinese music within a globalized context and explore how, as a composer, he forged new paths for the development of Chinese music at the intersection of history and culture.

In conclusion, Du Mingxin's legacy is not only reflected in his personal achievements but also in his pioneering role in the modernization of Chinese music and his dedication to cultural continuity. His experiences and compositions offer a distinctive lens through which we can comprehend the historical and cultural evolution of Chinese music, while also providing important insights for contemplating its future development.

2.2 Cultural Dynamics

Regarding the transformation of Chinese music toward “modernity,” Yang Yandi emphasizes that its essence should not be confined to changes in musical forms or external appearances; rather, it should focus on “the profound transformation of Chinese society in terms of functional roles and cultural responsibilities” (Yang Yandi, 2014, p. 237). Therefore, the concept of the “cultural agent” serves as a crucial lens through which to understand the development of contemporary Chinese music. From this perspective, Du Mingxin is undoubtedly a key figure in China's musical modernization process. His musical compositions and pedagogical practices not only demonstrate artistic exploration within specific historical periods but also reflect the deeper driving forces behind China's socio-cultural transformations.

Du Mingxin's musical career spanned critical periods of transition in Chinese society, from wartime upheavals to gradual stabilization. Born in 1928, he experienced the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese Civil War, and the socialist construction era following the founding of the People's Republic of China. These historical events not only shaped his personal experiences but also profoundly influenced his musical creativity. Positioned at the pivotal intersections of China's social transformations, he emerged as a bridge linking tradition and modernity, as well as Eastern and Western musical traditions.

From an artistic perspective, Du Mingxin's exploration of Chinese charm has always run through his creation. His representative work, *The Red Detachment of Women*, not only conveys the revolutionary spirit of Chinese history but also integrates traditional Chinese melodies, rhythms, and modal structures into the Western instrument of the piano. This fusion resulted in a musical language that is both culturally distinctive

and internationally accessible, setting a valuable precedent for the modernization of Chinese music. Furthermore, pieces such as *Dance of the Waterweeds* and *Happy Female Warrior* also exemplify the unique charm of Chinese music through their nuanced emotional expression and strong nationalistic character.

From the perspective of cultural roles and functional contributions, Du Mingxin was not only a composer but also a distinguished music educator. As a long-time faculty member at the Central Conservatory of Music, he trained numerous outstanding musicians, laying a solid foundation for the development of Chinese music education. His teaching practice went beyond technical training; it emphasized the dual imperatives of cultural inheritance and artistic innovation. Through his efforts, Chinese music education assimilated Western musical theories while simultaneously developing a pedagogical system with distinctive national characteristics.

From an international perspective, Du Mingxin's works have been performed and disseminated in multiple countries since their premiere, with their artistic value and cultural significance extending beyond national boundaries. Through the piano—an internationally recognized instrument—his compositions have introduced the richness of Chinese music to the world. *The Red Detachment of Women* has frequently elicited strong responses in international performances, providing foreign audiences with an opportunity to engage with Chinese history and culture through music. Through his artistic creations and pedagogical efforts, Du Mingxin has made significant contributions to the global dissemination and influence of Chinese music.

As previously noted, "From a humanistic perspective, music is a creation of human beings, and human beings are part of nature" (Han Zhongen, 2001, p. 159). Du Mingxin's musical works not only reflect his personal artistic talent but also embody the cultural tensions and artistic explorations of China during specific historical periods. His compositions, as products of human musical creativity, exhibit structural and sonic characteristics that, through their stylistic evolution, indirectly reveal the expressive intentions and aesthetic orientations of their creator. Fundamentally, these intentions and orientations are shaped by deep-seated socio-cultural dynamics. Du Mingxin's musical

output thus serves as a concrete manifestation of China's cultural transformations within the realm of music.

Examining the interaction between history and culture, Du Mingxin's experiences and creative endeavors illustrate the dynamic relationship between the individual and history, in which each shapes and is shaped by the other. His compositions not only document the socio-cultural shifts of their time but also actively contributed to the modernization of Chinese music. In this process, Du Mingxin was both a participant in history and a creator of history. His musical works and educational contributions not only paved new paths for the development of Chinese music but also provided an important window for the world to understand China's musical heritage.

In conclusion, as a pivotal "cultural agent" in China's musical modernization process, Du Mingxin's significance extends beyond his personal achievements; he stands as a symbol of both cultural inheritance and artistic innovation in Chinese music. His life and works offer a unique perspective for understanding the historical and cultural trajectory of Chinese music while also providing valuable insights into its future development. By studying Du Mingxin, we can gain a deeper understanding of the unique value of Chinese music within the context of globalization and explore how, as a composer at the intersection of history and culture, he pioneered new directions for its evolution.

2.3 Current Research on Du Mingxin and His Music

Regarding discussions on the composer Du Mingxin and his musical works, existing research—both domestically and internationally—is primarily concentrated in Chinese-language journal articles and academic theses, with a limited number of studies included in monographs or edited collections. Between 1980 and 2025, approximately 176 research and analytical articles related to Du Mingxin and his compositions have been published in various Chinese academic journals. Among these:

- Graduate Theses: A total of 33 theses, including 1 doctoral dissertation directly related to this research topic and 32 master's theses, primarily focusing on in-depth analyses of specific compositional techniques and sonic elements in Du Mingxin's works.

- Journal Articles: A total of 137 articles published in music-related journals.
- Books: Two Chinese-language monographs dedicated to Du Mingxin and his music.
- Newspaper and Magazine Articles: A total of 4 articles, mostly concert reviews or brief reports on musical events, with limited academic reference value.

The focus of these writings is generally distributed across the following areas:

2.3.1. Studies Focused on Individual Works of Du Mingxin

A significant portion of existing research examines Du Mingxin's compositions individually, with an emphasis on compositional techniques, musical language, and structural characteristics. The distribution of studies on his major works is as follows:

Solo Piano Work *Dance of the Waterweeds*: 18 articles, including 6 master's theses. Orchestral Work *The Red Detachment of Women*: 15 articles, including 3 master's theses. Notably, Zhang Hua's *Du Mingxin's Orchestral Work The Red Detachment of Women and Its Nationalization Exploration* provides an in-depth analysis of the piece's melodies, harmonies, and orchestration, focusing on how the composer integrates Hainan folk song elements with Western symphonic techniques. Violin Concerto *Journey to Xinjiang*: 8 articles, including 2 master's theses. Li Ming's *Study on Pitch Organization and National Style in Du Mingxin's Violin Concerto Journey to Xinjiang* explores the use of pentatonic melodic structures, modal-tonal variations, and folk music materials. Piano Concerto *Spring's Colors*: 5 articles, including 1 master's thesis. Orchestral Work *Youth Symphony*: 4 articles, including 1 master's thesis.

Overall, research in this category predominantly focuses on conventional musical language elements such as melodic modes, harmonic thinking, polyphonic techniques, tonal embedding, timbral structures, orchestration features, and the integration of folk materials. These studies provide valuable analytical insights into Du Mingxin's compositional techniques and musical vocabulary. While some papers extend their scope to explore the composer's creative philosophy and stylistic traits, such discussions often remain within a binary framework of nationalism and modernity,

or Eastern traditions and Western structures. Many studies attempt to bridge these aspects, yet some tend to mechanically separate them, reducing their integration to a formulaic research approach.

2.3.2 Studies Examining Multiple Works of Du Mingxin

A relatively smaller number of studies analyze multiple compositions by Du Mingxin, totaling 7 articles, including 1 doctoral dissertation and 3 master's theses. These studies generally focus on his most influential and stylistically distinctive works, such as *The Red Detachment of Women*, *Dance of the Waterweeds*, *Journey to Xinjiang*, and *Spring's Colors*.

This category of research often examines specific musical elements across different works. For instance, some studies analyze Du Mingxin's frequent use of pentatonic melodies and vertical harmonic structures derived from pentatonic scales.

Wang Jing's doctoral dissertation, *Nationalization and Modernity in Du Mingxin's Musical Compositions: A Study Based on Three Orchestral Works*, systematically examines the use of folk music materials, the integration of Western modern techniques, and the composer's individualized musical language in *The Red Detachment of Women*, *Youth Symphony*, and *Journey to Xinjiang*.

These studies offer broader perspectives on Du Mingxin's compositional trajectory and stylistic evolution, providing a more comprehensive understanding of his contributions to the modernization of Chinese music.

2.3.3 English-Language Literature

The author has conducted a systematic review of English-language research related to Du Mingxin. The findings are summarized as follows:

Studies on Du Mingxin's works primarily focus on the solo piano piece *Dance of the Waterweeds* and the orchestral work *The Red Detachment of Women*, with an emphasis on the incorporation of Chinese national elements. A smaller portion of the research approaches his music from a cross-cultural perspective.

Thematic studies are mainly situated within Western discourses on the development of 20th-century Chinese "New Music," examining the dynamic relationship between the two. Within this broader context, certain chapters discuss Du Mingxin's

works or stylistic characteristics, though often only briefly. Nevertheless, the integrative perspectives and cultural frameworks presented in these monographs offer valuable insights.

For example, some studies explore the fusion of the pentatonic scale with Western harmonic techniques, tracing how contemporary Chinese music integrates different traditional cultural forms. Others analyze themes such as cross-cultural aesthetics, nationalism, and the translation of modernity in Du Mingxin's music. Additionally, there are discussions on his contributions to Chinese music education and his broader influence within the field.

2.3.4 The Related Theories

Simon Frith's Theory of Identity

The renowned British musicologist Simon Frith has made significant contributions to the study of the relationship between music and identity, and his theoretical insights have had a profound impact on the field of music sociology. Frith argues that music does not merely reflect pre-existing social identities in a passive manner, but actively participates in the construction of identity across multiple dimensions. In his seminal work *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (1996), Frith elaborates that music, as a unique form of cultural expression, serves as a crucial medium through which individuals explore the fundamental question of "who we are". Musical elements such as melody, rhythm, lyrics, and performance context together constitute a powerful arena for identity formation.

When audiences engage with music as a sensory experience, these elements work in tandem to guide them into specific social and cultural roles. For instance, rousing and patriotic military songs can stimulate a strong sense of national or military identity, while folk songs with distinct regional characteristics may evoke deep emotional connections and a sense of belonging to one's ethnic group or homeland.

Essentially, music operates on both emotional and corporeal levels. On the emotional front, it resonates with the listener's inner feelings, eliciting powerful affective responses; on the corporeal level, listeners often find themselves physically responding to music's rhythm and movement, such as swaying or dancing, which

reinforces their embodied engagement. It is through this dual affective and physical experience that music facilitates the development of close associations between listeners and specific class, ethnic, gendered, or national identities.

Within the broader framework of national narratives and cultural identity formation, Frith's theory proves especially valuable. It enables researchers to analyze, with fine granularity, the artistic strategies through which musical works shape collective identities and convey particular ideological messages.

Jan Assmann's Theory of Cultural Memory

The cultural memory theory proposed by German cultural theorist Jan Assmann has become a foundational framework in the interdisciplinary study of collective memory and cultural expression. It offers a particularly effective lens through which to understand the role of music in preserving and transmitting historical memory. In his seminal work *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* (1992), Assmann makes a clear distinction between "communicative memory" and "cultural memory". Communicative memory is based on everyday interpersonal interactions and is limited to the lifespan of a single generation; it is relatively ephemeral and transmitted orally. In contrast, cultural memory is sustained through texts, rituals, art, and symbolic representations. It is characterized by its longevity and structured mechanisms of transmission and reproduction. Crucially, cultural memory not only preserves historical facts but also shapes the ways in which groups conceptualize the past and construct their collective identities.

Music, as a key medium of cultural memory, plays an irreplaceable role in this process. On one hand, it is capable of vividly reconstructing historical contexts through distinctive sonic symbols, enabling listeners to experience past eras as if through a temporal and emotional bridge. On the other hand, music functions to "emotionalize" and "ritualize" specific ideologies. For example, in the context of religious music, solemn melodies and sacred lyrics play a vital role in conveying theological doctrines. Through repeated performance, these musical elements help transform

abstract beliefs into deeply internalized emotional convictions. Such convictions are then continuously reinforced and sustained within ritual practices.

When analyzing revolutionary music works such as Du Mingxin's *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, Assmann's theory serves as a crucial analytical tool. It allows us to examine how musical symbols re-activate and reconstruct collective historical memory, thereby contributing to the construction of national identity and the reinforcement of political and ideological narratives.

Summary

In summary, Simon Frith's theory of identity highlights the dynamic and active role of music in the construction of identity, drawing attention to how music shapes individual and collective self-understanding within contemporary cultural practices. In contrast, Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory reveals the profound value of music as a carrier of history and memory, demonstrating how music transcends time and space to transmit and shape collective historical consciousness. These two theories complement and enrich each other, offering a comprehensive and multilayered theoretical foundation for this study.

By employing both frameworks, this research is able to examine Du Mingxin's *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite from three interconnected dimensions: musical language, emotional expression, and cultural function. Together, they enable a nuanced and systematic analysis of how the work participates in the construction of national identity and reflects broader cultural and political meanings.

2.3.5 Related Research and Critical Reviews

There are relatively few studies that comprehensively examine both Du Mingxin as an individual composer and his music within the broader context of contemporary Chinese music. However, if we expand the research scope to a generational perspective—specifically, the “first generation of composers in New China” and their musical activities from the mid-20th century to the 1980s—a wealth of insightful academic discourse emerges.

Senior Chinese scholars, with their keen academic sensitivity, had already begun addressing these issues in the 1980s. Wang Anguo, for example, published a

series of articles that analyzed the phenomenon of the “first generation of composers in New China” and their creative practices. His research, rooted in historical and cultural progress, not only revisited the social causes behind this phenomenon but also examined specific musical activities, works, and composers of the time. Wang’s analysis of the new musical forms that emerged during this period positioned the influence of Western modern music on China as a process of influx and saturation over previously unoccupied musical territory.

A review of existing literature reveals several key trends. Regarding history, there is no shortage of cultural studies that balance objective interpretation with subjective reflection. Concerning the composer group as a whole, numerous works explore their musical compositions and stylistic categories. However, studies on individual composers—such as Du Mingxin—tend to overemphasize technical aspects. Compared to China’s extensive research on Western music theory, the study of Chinese composers remains significantly underdeveloped.

This research gap is evident in two major ways:

Lack of Systematic and Theoretical Studies:

The research landscape lacks systematic and comprehensive studies, and there are very few theoretical writings on Chinese composers. While aspects such as compositional techniques, stylistic traits, and historical impact can be traced, materials like biographies, collections of letters, and primary sources remain virtually absent.

Delayed Academic Response to New Works: Research on new compositions often lags behind. This is partly due to the challenges in publishing scores and recordings, as well as the absence of extensive critical reviews and performance records. In many cases, the collection and documentation of such materials remain dependent on individual composers rather than academic institutions.

At present, attention to contemporary Chinese composers largely follows trends of “topic popularity.” As long as composers like Du Mingxin continue to receive commissions for new works, participate in music festivals, and engage in public

or academic discussions, their visibility remains relatively high—whether actively or passively, and regardless of whether their audience consists of professionals or the general public. However, the overwhelming flow of information in the digital era has, paradoxically, created an illusion of academic progress while simultaneously obstructing deeper inquiry. In reality, the study of contemporary Chinese composers still lacks sufficient depth and breadth, often suffering from thematic gaps, overly narrow focuses on individual works, or a disconnection between the composer's identity, their musical output, and historical influences.

In response to this research gap, this study seeks to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of Du Mingxin, encompassing his historical background, musical works, and expressive intent. By doing so, it aims to further excavate the academic value of this research domain.

2.4 The development history of Chinese piano music:

Music, as a concrete manifestation of culture, evolves in close relation to societal changes and the transformation of national cultural identity. As a result, the cultural significance embedded in music reflects the ideological values and artistic orientations of different historical periods. Chinese musical culture, with its long and rich history, has given birth to a diverse range of folk music traditions, forming a unique and distinctive national musical identity. Given its profound cultural heritage and growing global influence, Chinese music has increasingly become a subject of cultural research.

The piano, often referred to as the "King of Instruments," originated in 18th-century Europe. However, Chinese piano music did not emerge until the early 20th century, undergoing a century-long evolution to establish itself as an indispensable and unique component of global piano music. The national spirit embedded within Chinese piano music is rooted in traditional Chinese culture, while its form and content have been enriched through the integration of Western piano traditions. Through continuous exploration, this synthesis has gradually shaped the distinct characteristics of Chinese piano music.

Outstanding works of Chinese piano music embody the nation's artistic emotions and cultural identity, expressed through a deep sense of national character and a diverse musical language. The development of Chinese piano music can be categorized into the following six stages:

The Germination Period (Before 1913)

In 1673, the Portuguese missionary Thomas Pereira (1645–1708) introduced Emperor Kangxi to Western staff notation and the harpsichord. He played Chinese melodies on the harpsichord, marking the earliest encounter with keyboard music in China. Zhang Jingwei recorded in detail the influence of western music on the development of Chinese music during this period in the History of Modern Chinese Music Culture. (Weizhang, 2003 #1) After 1840, piano accompaniment became increasingly common in church music within China. By the early 20th century, school songs accompanied by piano had become a cultural trend in new-style schools' "music classes."

During this period, China saw the emergence of its first music educators, such as Li Shutong, Shen Xingong, and Zeng Zhizhai, who introduced Western piano music materials to the country. Their contributions were pivotal in establishing the foundation of early piano music education in China. This crucial developmental stage allowed young students and the general public to gain an initial understanding of Western piano music, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent evolution of Chinese piano music. School songs, with their melodic tunes and piano accompaniment, became widely popular among young students and cultural figures.

The Exploration Period (1913–1931)

The period from 1913 to 1931 marked the exploratory phase of Chinese piano music. During this time, the number of Chinese piano compositions gradually increased. These pieces were typically brief in melody, simple in form, focused in register, and refined in technical execution. Composers drew on Western classical piano techniques while incorporating Chinese musical elements and humanistic themes in their compositions.

Musicians such as Zhao Yuanren, Xiao Youmei, and Huang Zi had all received their musical education in the West. Zhao Yuanren and other composers have carried out active creative practice. Sun Jinan has a detailed record of the activities and works of composers in this period in the *History of Chinese Modern Music Education*.(SUN, 1994 #2) In 1913, Zhao Yuanren composed *Hua Baban* and *Xiangjiang Waves*, based on Chinese folk melodies, making it a seminal work in Chinese keyboard music. In 1915, he created *March of Peace*, the first original Chinese piano piece. The work employed Western-style harmonic structures, adhered to a rigorous musical form, and featured vivid, energetic musical expression, conveying people's aspirations for a peaceful society. The publication of *March of Peace* signified the beginning of Chinese piano music composition and paved the way for future developments in the field.

The Development Period (1932–1949)

In 1934, Russian composer and pianist Alexander Tcherepnin (1899–1977) established the first piano composition competition in Shanghai, initiating a call for “piano works with Chinese characteristics.” Li Shiyuan made an in-depth analysis of the influence and significance of this activity in “Chinese Modern Music: Dialogue between Local and Western”.(Yuanli, 2004 #3) Notable award-winning compositions from this event included *Lullaby* by Jiang Dingxian, *Shepherd Boy's Flute* (originally titled *Flute of the Shepherd Boy*) and *Lullaby* by He Luting, *Joy of the Shepherd Boy* by Lao Zhicheng, *Variations in C Major* by Yu Pianmin, and *Overture* by Chen Tianhe.

Despite limitations imposed by the prevailing social conditions, this period produced a modest number of piano works, though their artistic quality remained exceptionally high. Chinese composers began to explore and systematically implement a distinctive “Chinese style” in their piano compositions. This was reflected in several key aspects:

- Melody: Composers primarily employed the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale, utilizing the five core tones—gong, shang, jue, zhi, and yu.
- Form and Structure: While based on Western formal structures, these compositions incorporated elements from Chinese folk music, such as “decorative

variation,” “merged openings,” and “modified codas,” achieving a logical musical development through thematic transformation.

- Harmony: Inspired by Western techniques but adapted for a Chinese aesthetic, composers experimented with stacked chord techniques to create elegant and dignified tonal colors, resulting in a bright and distinctly national character.

- Polyphony: They adopted pentatonic melodies and employed free counterpoint techniques to craft simple yet refined polyphonic textures.

The Flourishing Period (1949–1965)

From the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to 1965, the country experienced increasing social stability and economic and cultural growth. This period marked a new chapter in socialist construction, bringing about a vibrant and thriving development in musical arts. Chinese piano music composition entered an unprecedented era of prosperity, with a substantial number of high-quality works being created. Qi Jihong expounded the prosperity and characteristics of music creation in this period in the History of Music in New China (1949-2000)(Hongju, 2002 #4)

During this time, approximately 360 Chinese piano compositions were formally published, with over 235 of them suitable for public performance. These compositions demonstrated a high level of artistic excellence, showcasing a wide range of themes, genres, and styles, all imbued with strong national characteristics. The musical language of this period was characterized by simplicity, optimism, and an uplifting spirit, reflecting the vitality and collective energy of the era.

Composers continued to study and incorporate Western compositional techniques while extensively integrating Chinese folk music elements. They primarily employed the pentatonic scale and also drew inspiration from the melodic styles of ethnic minorities. The music was enriched with diverse rhythmic patterns and dynamic, linear-driven musical structures.

Most piano compositions from this period carried descriptive titles, often romantic in nature, either impressionistic or narrative, with deep cultural connotations. In terms of structure, the majority of works followed ternary or variation forms, with a

prevalence of small-scale compositions and fewer large-scale works. Instrumental adaptations sought to emulate the performance techniques of traditional Chinese instruments, enhancing the music's distinctly Chinese flavor.

By blending elements of Western Romanticism with Chinese musical traditions, composers vividly demonstrated the youthful vitality and artistic essence of Chinese piano music, solidifying its unique national identity within the broader musical landscape.

Evolution of Piano Music During the Special Period (1966–1976)

From 1966, the ten-year period of the Cultural Revolution left a significant imprint on Chinese piano music composition and performance. Piano works from this time were deeply influenced by the era's ideological themes, reflecting revolutionary beliefs, contemporary social conditions, regional folk traditions, cultural geography, and the personal artistic characteristics of musicians, including composers, performers, and literary-artistic workers.

A defining feature of this period was the widespread artistic practice of arranging traditional folk songs, instrumental pieces, and revolutionary songs for the piano. This led to the emergence of “piano adaptations” as a dominant cultural trend. Despite the restrictions on creative themes and forms, composers produced a number of outstanding Chinese piano works, elevating the art of piano adaptation to an unprecedented level. Liang Maochun sorted out and analyzed the piano music creation in this period in *Contemporary Chinese Music (1949-1989)*. (MaoChunliang, 1993 #5)

The piano adaptations of this period can be classified into three main categories:

1. Adaptations of Model Opera Music – These works were derived from the officially sanctioned revolutionary operas, integrating their themes into piano compositions.

2. Arrangements of Traditional Chinese Instrumental Music – These adaptations preserved the essence of traditional folk music while transferring it to the piano, making the musical imagery more vivid and accessible to the public.

3. Piano Arrangements of Folk Songs and Composed Songs – These works were based on popular folk melodies and revolutionary anthems.

During this time, composers boldly pursued a distinctly national style, drawing inspiration from traditional Chinese instrumental music and experimenting with harmonic techniques. They adapted and reformed traditional harmony by incorporating elements of Western contemporary harmonic language and compositional techniques. Additionally, there was an increased emphasis on pianistic virtuosity within these works. In the process of integrating Western music into Chinese artistic traditions, the nationalization of Chinese piano music made a significant, practical, and forward-looking leap. As a result, many piano compositions from this era achieved both artistic excellence and popular appeal.

The Era of Diversification (1977–2000)

Since 1978, with the rapid advancement of China's economic reform and opening-up policies, the nation experienced a renaissance in cultural development. The comprehensive implementation of open policies allowed modern Western compositional techniques, musical styles, artistic movements, and music education philosophies to flow into China, directly shaping the country's new era of musical culture.

As Chinese culture underwent revitalization, piano music composition entered a period of full-scale development. Piano works with distinctly Chinese characteristics became increasingly prominent, integrating modern Western compositional techniques with traditional Chinese musical aesthetics. This fusion expanded creative perspectives, refined compositional techniques, and led to the diversification of Chinese piano music. Song Jin discussed the diversified development trend of Chinese piano music in the new period in "Analysis of Contemporary Chinese Music Culture"(Jin, 2009 #9)

During this period, Chinese piano music evolved into a multicultural landscape, embracing a wide range of influences and styles. This diversification not only elevated the artistic quality of compositions but also established a new creative

framework that balanced tradition with innovation, marking a significant milestone in the history of Chinese piano music.

2.5 Li Ethnic Elements

The Chinese nation is a vast, multi-ethnic collective composed of 56 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own unique cultural characteristics. Throughout history, these groups have continuously interacted, integrated, and developed together, shaping the pluralistic yet unified structure of contemporary Chinese society. Each of these ethnic groups possesses a distinct ethnonym and origin, both of which have evolved over time and are deeply rooted in historical processes rather than arising arbitrarily.

An ethnonym serves as a cultural marker of identity for a given group, encapsulating collective memory and self-perception. Some ethnonyms are derived from ancient legends, others from geographical settings, modes of production, or other sociocultural factors. Behind each ethnonym lies a meaningful narrative that reflects the heritage and worldview of the group. Ethnic origins, meanwhile, trace the formation and evolution of a people, whether through the differentiation and merging of ancient tribes, or as a result of migration, conflict, and adaptation. These origins represent living epics of historical development and are imbued with rich cultural significance, forming the spiritual roots of each ethnic group.

To gain a deep understanding of an ethnic group's cultural richness and spiritual essence, one must begin by exploring its ethnonym and historical origins. These elements serve as the key to unlocking the door to that group's cultural world, guiding us into the vibrant and diverse tapestry of China's ethnic heritage.

2.5.1. The Ethnonym of the Li People

The ethnonym of the Li people has long been a subject of interest among scholars and researchers. It did not emerge all at once, but rather developed gradually over a long historical process. Based on both academic research and field investigations, the Li ethnonym can be understood from two perspectives: self-designation and external designation.

The Li people are widely distributed across different regions of Hainan Island. Due to regional differences, various Li subgroups exhibit distinct customs and lifestyles. However, they share a common self-designation: “sai”, which means “host,” “native,” “our own people,” or “kinsfolk.” This term reflects how the Li distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups. In contrast, the Li refer to the Han people as “mai” , meaning “guest,” indicating their perception of themselves as the island’s indigenous inhabitants and the Han as later arrivals.

According to historical records, beginning in the Tang dynasty, the Han Chinese began to refer to the Li people with the character “Li” a designation that has remained in use to this day. The formalization of this ethnonym had significant historical implications, marking the recognition of the Li by the Han-majority mainstream society and promoting a unified ethnic identity among various Li subgroups. Some scholars suggest that both historical and current designations of “Li” are phonetic transcriptions of the Li people's original self-name.

Due to regional dialectal diversity, the Li people have also developed distinct internal subgroup names used within their own communities. These names are primarily used within the Li community during inter-group communication and reflect the linguistic and cultural richness of the group, as well as the broad geographic distribution and distinctive customs of Li society.

2.5.2 Based on linguistic evidence

The Li people primarily reside in several regions of Hainan Province, including Sanya, Wuzhishan, Dongfang, Lingshui, Baisha, Changjiang, Ledong, Qiongzong, and Baoting. Smaller Li populations are also found in Wanning, Qionghai, Danzhou, and some areas of Guizhou Province. Their language belongs to the Zhuang ,Dong branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family, which includes the Zhuang, Dong, Shui, Buyi, and Maonan peoples. Historically, the Li have maintained close contact with the Han Chinese, which has significantly influenced the development of the Li language.

Linguistic studies reveal that the Li language shares distinct phonological, grammatical, and lexical characteristics with other Zhuang-Dong languages. Phonologically, these languages tend to have simple initial consonants and more complex final sounds, with each syllable beginning with a consonant and lacking syllables that start with pure vowels. Grammatically, they often employ an inverted syntactic structure, placing modifiers after the nouns they qualify, and subject elements before modifiers—a trait that can be traced back to ancient Yue language forms, as seen in historical records such as the “Yue Jue Shu”, where phrases like “official salt” reflect reversed word order. Lexically, basic vocabulary items such as nouns “sun,” “wind,” “rain,” “water,” “fire,” “pig,” “dog”, verbs “sleep,” “go,” “sit”, and adjectives “high,” “low,” “thin,” “thick” show strong commonality across the Li and Zhuang-Dong languages, indicating deep linguistic connections and shared ancestral roots. (Jueya, 1983 #7)

2.5.3 Modern Historical Development of Li Society

The advent of modern history marked a particularly significant period for the Chinese nation. Prior to this era, the working people had long suffered under the exploitation and oppression of the feudal system. With the onset of modernity, the situation grew even more dire, as the Chinese people, including the Li ethnic group, were subjected to dual pressures: domestic feudal forces and foreign imperialist aggression. Following the First Opium War in 1840, China gradually became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, undergoing profound political, economic, and cultural transformations. Like other ethnic groups, the Li people experienced severe exploitation and oppression during this tumultuous time.

Due to its strategic importance in both military and economic terms, Hainan Island became a target of Western colonial ambitions. After the Opium War, the Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties with Western powers, ceding territory and paying reparations, and Hainan was not spared. Western imperialists encroached upon and exerted control over the island through the establishment of treaty ports, consulates, and churches, severely exploiting the local population. Meanwhile,

the decaying Qing dynasty further tightened its control over Hainan, intensifying the oppression of the Li people.

Refusing to be subjugated, the Li people stood up against exploitation and oppression, joining hands with the Han people in courageous and persistent resistance efforts. Though these uprisings did not succeed in overthrowing the feudal system, they dealt significant blows to the ruling elite and prompted a degree of policy adjustment toward Li areas, contributing to the broader anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle.

The 1911 Xinhai Revolution marked a major historical turning point, toppling the Qing dynasty and ending over two millennia of imperial rule in China. However, it did not fundamentally alter the exploitative conditions faced by the people. Warlords representing the interests of landlords and comprador bureaucrats rose to power, and the country was plunged into continuous conflict, leaving the population in misery. Nonetheless, the Li people never ceased their resistance efforts.

The founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 launched a new era of proletarian-led democratic revolution. The Li people actively participated in this transformative movement. Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China, they joined forces with other ethnic groups in an arduous but ultimately victorious struggle, culminating in the founding of the People's Republic of China and the beginning of a new chapter in the development of Li society.

The establishment of New China signaled that the people had become true masters of the state. After centuries of resistance, the Li people entered a new era of socio-economic progress. China's system of regional ethnic autonomy is a fundamental political institution for addressing ethnic affairs. It guarantees the rights of ethnic minorities to independently manage the internal affairs of their own regions. This system not only empowered ethnic minorities to participate actively in governance but also played a critical role in promoting national unity, safeguarding social stability, and advancing the comprehensive development of autonomous regions. Under this framework, the Li people of Hainan have achieved remarkable progress in both economic and social spheres.

From the founding of New China to the period before the reform and opening-up, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, significant changes and substantial progress took place in the society of the Li ethnic group. The "land reform and land survey" campaigns were carried out, comprehensive socialist transformation was promoted, and major developments were made in agricultural and industrial production, as well as in the construction of irrigation systems. Active efforts were also made in road construction, and various sectors such as postal services, finance, trade, culture, healthcare, and education experienced continuous development. After the reform and opening-up, the development of Li society accelerated further, particularly in the following aspects: tropical agriculture became an advantageous industry, an initial industrial system was established, transportation and postal services kept pace with the times, and commerce, trade, and tourism flourished. Moreover, ethnic education and cultural undertakings achieved remarkable success.

In 1937, the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression saw the Japanese invasion of Hainan Island, where they engaged in widespread pillaging, arson, and violence. The Nationalist forces stationed on the island were gradually defeated and retreated into the mountains. Meanwhile, the anti-Japanese forces led by the Communist Party, working together with the Li people, firmly resisted the Japanese invasion. During this period, many Li folk songs emerged, closely related to the themes of anti-Japanese resistance, the celebration of the Communist Party, and the glorious achievements of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. One such song is *Five Finger Mountain Song* which became popular in the early stages of the War of Resistance in the Five Finger Mountain region, the revolutionary base of Hainan. The song is presented in a question-and-answer format, with profound meaning, a fresh and beautiful melody, and expresses the Li people's affection and support for the Red Army and Chairman Mao. The song's gentle and sweet tune leaves a lasting impression. Another example is *Heroes on Wuzhi Mountain*, a widely spread revolutionary Li folk song that was sung before and after the liberation, expressing the Li people's praise for revolutionary heroes, love for the people's government, and longing for a better life.

Additionally, songs like *The Three-Character Classic of the Red Army*, *Only the Communist Party Can Win*, and *If Anyone Has a Comrade, Quickly Hide the Secret*, all of which are deeply rooted in the local Li culture, bear the strong imprint of revolutionary struggle. During the War of Liberation, many more folk songs praising revolutionary heroes emerged, such as *Li People Produced Wang Guoxing* and *The Red Army Produced Feng Baiju*. During this period, revolutionary folk songs accounted for more than half of Li folk songs. Through these revolutionary folk songs, we can deeply feel the Li people's profound hatred toward reactionary rule, as well as their firm belief in the struggle for freedom, equality, and liberation through revolution. These songs are a true reflection of the Li people's spiritual longing for freedom and equality.

2.5.4 The Close Relationship between the Red Detachment of Women and the Li Ethnic Group

The Li people, as the earliest indigenous inhabitants of Hainan Island, played a foundational role in the revolutionary history of the Qiongya region. During the arduous years of revolutionary struggle, the Li population provided crucial logistical and strategic support to revolutionary forces such as the Red Detachment of Women. Their settlements in the Wuzhi Mountain area became vital revolutionary bases, offering essential space and support for the development and expansion of these forces.

Many Li women actively participated in the revolution, becoming an integral part of the revolutionary ranks. For instance, during the 1943 Baisha Uprising, Wang Fuda, sister of the Li leader Wang Guoxing, infiltrated Nationalist strongholds under the guise of a traditional "tattooed woman" to gather intelligence. After the victory of the War of Resistance in 1945, the Qiongya Column established a central base in the Wuzhi Mountains, where a large number of Li youths joined the troops. Among them, many women were organized into "mass mobilization units" within each company, undertaking tasks related to propaganda, healthcare, and intelligence work.

Li culture and the arts provided rich sources of inspiration for works related to the Red Detachment of Women. In the creation of the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*, composers such as Wu Zuqiang conducted field research in Li and Miao villages near the Wanquan River, collecting Hainanese folk music. The Li folk song

Wuzhi Mountain, Five Creeks Flowing had a profound influence on the iconic theme song *The Wanquan River is Clear*. In terms of choreography, the ballet includes a segment titled “Li Ethnic Dance”, showcasing the distinct characteristics of Li dance culture. Through artistic expression, the ballet integrates Li culture into the narrative of the Red Detachment of Women, enabling its dissemination and celebration within a classic red-themed work.

Drawing upon their lived experience and indigenous knowledge, the Li people made indispensable contributions to the logistics of the revolutionary forces. Li women, for instance, wove “guiding belts” from traditional Li brocade to lead revolutionary troops through the dense Wuzhi Mountain forests. They also utilized traditional Li medicine to establish “forest hospitals”, providing shelter and treatment for the wounded during enemy encirclement campaigns. In daily life, the Li people supported revolutionary forces with food, supplies, and other material assistance, thereby playing a vital role in the ultimate victory of the revolution.

Li women also effectively employed traditional cultural rituals such as the *Firewood Dance* and the *March Third Bonfire Festival* to promote revolutionary ideas. They incorporated political messages like “The Communist Party divides the land for the Li people” and “The People's Liberation Army is the army of the poor” into folk songs, spreading revolutionary ideology among the masses and igniting widespread enthusiasm for the cause. These efforts helped build a solid popular base for the Red Detachment of Women and other revolutionary groups.

The Piano Suite of *The Red Detachment of Women* skillfully incorporates Li ethnic elements, greatly enriching both its musical style and cultural significance. Melodically, the suite draws on the unique pentatonic scales and dynamic rhythmic patterns of Li folk music, such as syncopations and dotted rhythms, infusing the music with distinctive ethnic flair. This not only preserves the ballet’s original heroic momentum but also adds a vivid regional character.

In terms of harmony, Du Mingxin fuses harmonic features from traditional Li music with Western compositional techniques to create novel and distinctive sonic

textures. This approach satisfies contemporary musical aesthetics while highlighting the charm of ethnic music. The incorporation of Li elements also broadens the emotional and cultural dimensions of the work, portraying not only the Red Detachment of Women's fearless revolutionary spirit but also the resilience and strength of the Li people. The result is a classic example of the organic fusion between red revolutionary culture and Li ethnic culture. Through this integration, listeners experience the beauty of intercultural exchange, which contributes profoundly to the preservation and promotion of both red culture and the cultural heritage of the Li people.

Conclusion

This literature review aims to analyze the development of Chinese piano music by examining Du Mingxin and his representative work, *The Red Detachment of Women*, focusing on his compositional style and the historical factors that shaped it. The study seeks to explore Du Mingxin's musical characteristics, artistic value, and social significance. By conducting this research, it is hoped that outstanding Chinese piano works can be better preserved, traditional national music culture can be promoted, and confidence in and appreciation for Chinese national music can be strengthened, ensuring the continuation and flourishing of Chinese piano music for future generations.

The researcher has reviewed various academic monographs and research papers related to the topic and has conducted field studies at the Red Detachment of Women Museum in Hainan and the Wuzhishan Revolutionary Base. Additionally, based on personal performance practice, this study aims to provide an in-depth discussion of the cultural and artistic value of Du Mingxin's *The Red Detachment of Women* suite.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Approach

Based on the available data, this study is structured around the following key areas of research:

Firstly, A Rational Analysis of Du Mingxin's Creative Background and Works. Every composer and their works are inevitably influenced by the historical and social environment of their time, as well as their personal life experiences. The formation and transformation of a composer's musical style are not solely driven by personal factors but are also shaped by the integration of national culture. This study focuses primarily on Du Mingxin's representative work, *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, conducting an in-depth analysis of its historical background, compositional techniques, structural analysis, musical style, and performance techniques. As a piano work that best reflects the composer's creative thinking, this suite serves as a quintessential example of his artistic characteristics and compositional style. It is also a topic of widespread academic interest, as it encapsulates both the creative and performative aspects of piano music.

Secondly, the researcher conducted interviews with experts and scholars familiar with Du Mingxin's work to gain insights into his educational background, social recognition, and contemporary influence. Additionally, field research was carried out at The Red Detachment of Women Museum in Hainan to explore the cultural origins and real-world significance of his compositions. Through these investigations, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural context that shaped Du Mingxin's musical creations.

Thirdly, through literature collection, material analysis, interview, and ethnic musicology, sociology and other theories as the support, to construct Du Mingxin's national identity, and to complete the unity of its identity from the cultural value, economic value, theoretical inheritance and educational value.

2. Research Methodology

In academic research, a diverse and rigorous methodological approach is essential for deeply exploring a subject and uncovering its intrinsic value and meaning. This study integrates literature review, historical analysis, theoretical analysis, and interviews to comprehensively examine Du Mingxin's musical compositions, particularly *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite. The objective is to expand the existing research framework by introducing new analytical perspectives.

2.1 Literature Review Methodology

This serves as the foundational stage of the research. The author conducted extensive fieldwork at the Central Conservatory of Music and Tsinghua University Library in Beijing, two institutions with vast academic resources. A wide range of materials, including literature, musical scores, journal articles, and books, were meticulously examined to gather information on Du Mingxin. During the data organization process, materials were categorized based on themes such as Du Mingxin's biography, work analysis, and national identity.

For instance, in compiling biographical data, the researcher carefully traced Du Mingxin's life trajectory, educational background, and key milestones in his musical career to identify the origins of his compositional style. Regarding stylistic analysis, each segment of his works was examined in terms of structure, harmony, and melody. By incorporating musical diagrams and insights from personal performance practice, the study critically assesses the depth, breadth, and perspectives of previous research. This process not only reveals the limitations of existing analyses but also clarifies new areas for scholarly advancement, laying a solid foundation for further research.

2.2 Historical Analysis Methodology

This method provides the temporal and spatial coordinates for the research. On one hand, the study situates *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite within the framework of music history, examining its position and significance in the broader trajectory of musical development during that era. On the other hand, field investigations at historical sites, such as the Red Detachment of Women Memorial Hall, allow for an

immersive experience of the historical and cultural atmosphere in which the work was conceived.

In the musical score analysis, particular attention is given to melodic and rhythmic characteristics, exploring how melodic contours reflect emotional fluctuations and how rhythmic density variations create musical tension. Additionally, by comparing this work with other contemporary compositions, the study identifies both its unique and shared attributes, thereby uncovering its artistic significance and deep historical and cultural connotations.

2.3 Theoretical Analysis Methodology

This approach adds a scholarly depth to the research. Using cultural memory and identity theory, the study examines the ways in which historical memory and national cultural elements are embedded in Du Mingxin's musical compositions.

From the perspective of "cultural memory", the research investigates how *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite encapsulates collective memories of a specific historical period, vividly portraying the revolutionary era. By correlating Du Mingxin's biographical experiences with the socio-cultural context of his time, the study explores how national cultural elements—such as the use of traditional Chinese modes and the integration of folk music materials—manifest in his works. This analysis ultimately reveals the deeper cultural significance and spiritual essence of his compositions, leading to a more profound and comprehensive understanding of his musical artistry.

2.4 Interview Method

This method further enriches the dimensions of the research. By interviewing Du Mingxin's students, the study gathers firsthand information about his creative characteristics from those who directly received his guidance. This helps understand how he passed on his creative philosophy in the teaching process. Engaging with music experts in related fields allows for a professional academic discussion of his social contributions and the cultural significance of his works.

Additionally, in-depth conversations with music professors from Chinese universities focus on the impact of Du Mingxin's compositions on contemporary society, particularly in terms of cultural inheritance and aesthetic shaping. The research explores the practical application of his works in university education, including how they can be integrated into music curricula to cultivate students' musical literacy and national cultural identity. This provides valuable insights for music education practice.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

1. Du Mingxin's Life and Musical Works

1.1 A Brief Introduction to Du Mingxin's Life and His Musical Creations

Du Mingxin (1928–present) is one of the most important cross-century composers in the history of music in New China, and he is originally from Qianjiang, Hubei (Xu Chun, 2006). His father was a soldier who died in battle during the Battle of Shanghai. To escape the ravages of war, his mother sent him to a children's shelter, which was later relocated to Sichuan. He was then assigned to the Second Children's Welfare Institute in Yongchuan, where he met his first music teacher, Jiang Rongying. Under Jiang's care and guidance, Du was successfully selected in 1939 to study music at Chongqing Yucai School, founded by Tao Xingzhi, marking the beginning of his formal music education.

During his time at Chongqing Yucai School, Du received instruction from many renowned musicians, including He Luting, Ren Guang, and Fan Jisen. Through professional music training, he made significant progress in areas such as music theory, solfège, ear training, harmony, composition techniques, and instrumental performance. After the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan, Yucai School moved to Shanghai. During this period, Du studied piano with distinguished pianists such as Zha Halov and Wu Leyi. Later, he accompanied Wu Leyi on a performance tour in Indonesia, marking the beginning of his career as a professional musician.



Figure 1 Du Mingxin

Source:https://baike.so.com/gallery/list?ghid=first&pic_idx=1&eid=5839793&sid=6052624)

In 1949, Du Mingxin was appointed as a solfège and piano instructor at the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1951, he was admitted to the piano department of the conservatory to further his piano studies. In 1954, he was sent to the composition department of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Russia for advanced studies in composition. After returning to China in 1958, he joined the composition faculty of the Central Conservatory of Music, where he has taught ever since.



Figure 2 In 1955, Du Mingxin was in front of the Moscow Theatre.

Source: http://www.sohu.com/a/308994915_99973893



Figure 3 Du Mingxin and his students in the Central Conservatory of Music.

Source: <https://zhuanli.ccom.edu.cn/dangjian/info/1011/2051.htm>

Throughout his career, Du Mingxin has composed numerous classic musical works for the country and society. In addition to his contributions to composition, he has also trained many outstanding musicians and composers, including Xu Peidong, Shi Fu, Zheng Qiufeng, and Wang Liping.



Figure 4 Du Mingxin and his students

Source:[http://www.musiceol.com/news/html/2010-](http://www.musiceol.com/news/html/2010-1/201011215474168919350.html)

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1.2 .An Overview of Du Mingxin's Musical Compositions

Du Mingxin's musical compositions are closely related to his life experiences. Before studying in the Soviet Union, his specialization was piano performance and pedagogy. In 1954, he began studying composition in the Soviet Union, marking the start of his career as a composer. His creative output spans a wide range of genres, encompassing almost all forms except opera and musical theater. His most significant achievements lie in ballet, symphonic works, piano compositions, and large-scale instrumental pieces such as violin concertos. (Wang Ye,2011)

During his time at Chongqing Yucai School, in addition to his studies, Du Mingxin also experimented with composition. In 1941, he wrote his first piece, the song *Who Deserves the Most Credit?*, which reflected his strong patriotic passion. He later composed *New Mountain Song*, demonstrating his natural talent for composition. After the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan, when Yucai School relocated to Shanghai, Du, alongside his piano studies, composed *Song of the Jialing River Boatmen*, a song with a distinct Sichuan folk music style. During the Chinese Civil War, he wrote the satirical song *Salary Is a Great Treasure* and the lyrical song *Nostalgia*

Melody. It was during this period that he began to incorporate elements of traditional Chinese music into his compositions.

While studying in the Soviet Union, Du Mingxin not only devoted himself to composition but also attended numerous rehearsals and performances. Exposure to world-class ballet and opera productions broadened his artistic vision, planting the seeds for his future musical creations. During his studies, he composed orchestral works such as *The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl* and *Festive Overture*, chamber music pieces like *Piano Solo* and *Violin Solo*, as well as the solo song *A Young Black Girl Sings*. These works received high praise, and upon his return to China, the Ministry of Culture organized a concert featuring compositions by students returning from the Soviet Union, including Du Mingxin's works.

In 1958, after returning to China, Du Mingxin took on the task of composing music for the ballet *The Mermaid*, a collaboration with the renowned composer Wu Zuqiang (Liu Lei, 2011). The piece *Dance of the Waterweeds* from the ballet became widely celebrated. Later, he once again collaborated with Wu Zuqiang and others to complete the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*, which became one of the eight model operas *yangbanxi*. From the time Du Mingxin returned from studying abroad until the end of the Cultural Revolution, his primary focus was on composing music for ballet. In 1957, he adapted the model ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* into a piano suite.

After the Cultural Revolution, now in his fifties, Du shifted his creative focus to symphonic music. He composed numerous symphonic works, including *Youth Symphony*, *Youth Waltz*, *The South Sea of the Motherland*, *Luo Shen*, *Violin Concerto*, *Autumn Thoughts*, *Fly High*, *Military Flag*, and *Melody of the Water Town*. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of his compositional career, the Beijing Symphony Orchestra performed many of his symphonic works in a dedicated concert.

From the 1980s onward, Du Mingxin experienced a renewed artistic vitality, creating a vast array of works across different genres. His ballet compositions from this period include *Xuanfeng* and *Peony Fairy*; his symphonic works include *The Great Wall* and *The Female Generals of the Yang Family*; and his film and television scores include

In the Name of Revolution, The Eclipse, The Wilderness, Xian Xinghai, Farewell Again, Cambridge, and Li Siguang. He also composed music for plays, such as The Legend of Chinatown, and numerous piano pieces, including Piano Concerto No. 1: Spring Colors, Piano Concerto No. 2, Piano Concerto No.3: Dedicated to Gulangyu, and New Century Children's Piano Suite.

Du Mingxin's compositions are characterized by rigorous structure, a distinctive style, and strong national elements. As a composer with a background in piano and violin performance, he possesses profound practical expertise. His instrumental works adhere to the natural principles of instrumental performance, integrating traditional instrumental language with Chinese national characteristics, making him one of the most representative composers in China's instrumental music scene.

Mr. Du Mingxin explored a wide range of creative fields, producing a diverse and rich body of musical works across various genres. Liu Yi, in her study on the music of The Red Detachment of Women, described Du's compositions as being characterized by "melodies that are elegant, unrestrained, and grand, paired with orchestration techniques that are concise, refined, and balanced in tone. His musical style is rigorous, fresh, beautiful, and sophisticated, imbued with a strong sense of romanticism" (Liu Yi, 2007).

Du Mingxin's creation chronology:

Period of Creation	Place of Creation	Title of work	Genre	Evaluation
The 1940s	Chongqing Yucai School	<i>Who contributes the most</i>	Song	First composition, reflecting strong patriotic enthusiasm
The 1940s	Chongqing Yucai School	<i>A New Mountain Song</i>	Song	Showcased early creative talent
In the 1940s (after the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan)	Shanghai	<i>Jialing River Boatmen's Song</i>	Song	This piece, influenced by the style of Sichuan folk songs, exemplifies the application of national musical elements in composition.
The 1940s (Chinese Civil War period)	Shanghai	1. <i>Salary Is a Big Treasure</i> 2. <i>Nostalgic Melody</i>	Song	Including both satirical and lyrical songs, gradually incorporating elements of national music.
The 1950s	The Soviet Union	<i>the Cowherd and the Weaving Maid</i>	Orchestra	The broad influence of the world first-class artistic vision reflects the national theme
The 1950s	The Soviet Union	<i>Festival Overture</i>	Orchestra	Rigorous structure, widely praised
The 1950s	The Soviet Union	1. <i>Piano Solo</i> 2. <i>Violin Solo</i>	Chamber music	Show off personal composition techniques
he 1950s	The Soviet Union	<i>A Black Girl Is Singing</i>	Song	Excellent vocal music creation during my study abroad
In 1958	Beijing	<i>Fish Beauty</i>	Dance music	In collaboration with Wu Zuqiang, <i>Dance of the Waterweeds</i> became a classic that has been passed down.

In 1964,	Beijing	<i>The Red Detachment of Women</i>	Ballet	In collaboration with Wu Zuqiang, Shi Wanchun, and others, it became a red classic in music.
In 1975,	Beijing	<i>The Red Detachment of Women</i>	Piano suite	Adapted the ballet into a piano suite.
From the late 1970s to the 1980s	Beijing	1. <i>Youth Symphony</i> 2. <i>Youth Waltz</i> 3. <i>The Goddess of the Luo River</i>	Symphony	Transitioned from ballet to symphonic composition, showcasing the diversity of his personal artistic style.
The 1980s	Beijing	1. <i>Fly, Military Flag</i> 2. <i>Ode to the Water Town</i>	Symphony	Showing the mature symphonic techniques
The 1980s	Beijing	1. <i>The Mysterious Wind</i> 2. <i>The Peony Fairy</i>	Dance music	Exploring a broader range of artistic themes
In the late 80s	Beijing	1. <i>The Great Wall</i> 2. <i>The Yang Family Female Generals</i>	Symphony	The combination of national culture and historical themes
In the late 80s	Beijing	1. <i>In the Name of Revolution</i> 2. <i>The Lost Years</i> 3. <i>The Fields</i> 4. <i>Washing Xinghai</i> 5. <i>A Farewell to Cambridge</i> 6. <i>Li Siguang</i>	Film and television music	Film and television music, expanding the music creation genre
In the early 21st century	Beijing	1. <i>Spring's Harvest</i> 2. <i>Dedicated to Gulangyu</i>	Piano Concerto	Works dedicated to different regional cultures
In the early 21st century	Beijing	<i>New Century Youth Piano Suite</i>	Piano suite	Creating for the new generation of piano learners, and showing the educational significance

Figure 5 Du Mingxin's creation chronology.

Source: By the author

1.3. Du Mingxin's Musical Style

Du Mingxin grew up in an environment rich in folk music, deeply influenced by Chinese national culture. In his youth, he spent several years studying at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in the former Soviet Union. This unique cultural background, shaped by both Chinese and Western musical traditions, left a profound mark on his compositions, particularly his piano works, which reflect an ongoing fusion of Eastern and Western musical elements.

Du's compositional style is rooted in solid traditional techniques, yet it incorporates modern musical thinking. His music is characterized by its refined, ethereal, and emotionally engaging language. He integrates the tonal music system with national and folk music elements, distinguishing himself with a unique perspective, fresh melodic writing, and a strong sense of the times. His compositions consistently leave a lasting impression due to their beauty, accessibility, and emotional depth. Rather than pursuing technical complexity for its own sake or isolating himself in self-expression, Du prioritizes the aesthetic needs of the general public. He approaches composition from the perspective of musical content, striving to create works that are both artistically refined and widely appreciated.

A key aspect of Du Mingxin's musical language is his emphasis on lyrical melody. He carefully shapes melodic contours and phrase structures, ensuring an organic balance between breadth and coherence. By placing melody at the core of his compositions, he achieves an expressive and dynamic artistic effect—at once expansive and heroic, yet also delicate and deeply sentimental. Unlike Beethoven's dramatic, highly contrasting musical conflicts, Du favors a bright and open musical character, leading some music scholars to associate his works more closely with composers of the Romantic tradition, such as Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Dvorák.

In terms of polyphonic techniques, Du Mingxin employs relatively little use of strict counterpoint, such as canon or fugato passages. Instead, he prefers freer contrapuntal writing, utilizing imitative interactions between voices to create call-and-response textures. He also frequently layers contrasting themes or melodies in a freely

contrapuntal manner, producing a rich interplay of musical lines across different registers.

Conclusion:

On May 1942, Comrade Mao Zedong presided over the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, delivering significant remarks on the role of literature and art. Mao explicitly emphasized that literature and art should serve the broadest masses of people, resonating strongly among individuals in the cultural, artistic, and educational fields. In his speech, Mao stated that the goal of literary and artistic work was to “study the relationship between art and the broader revolutionary cause, ensure the correct development of revolutionary literature and art, and enable revolutionary art to better assist other revolutionary efforts, thereby defeating our nation's enemies and completing the task of national liberation” (Mao Zedong, 2002, p. 48). This speech set new standards for artistic work at the time and charted the course for the development of Chinese literature and art.

Du Mingxin's musical compositions were profoundly influenced by the era in which he lived, skillfully responding to the social, political, and cultural demands of his time. He achieved a unique balance between tradition and innovation, making significant contributions to the development of Chinese music. His works are diverse in content and distinctive in style, blending traditional Chinese elements with Western techniques, embodying both national identity and modernity. In doing so, Du laid the foundation for the expression of national identity through music.

2. Analyze the construction of Li ethnic identity

The construction of Li ethnic identity is a dynamic cultural practice, in which cultural symbols such as music, clothing, and dance serve not only as carriers of collective memory but also as core mediums for ethnic identity. Li melodies, rhythms, costumes, and dances together form a unique system of cultural expression. Through intergenerational transmission and adaptation to modernization, they have strengthened the Li people's self-awareness and sense of social belonging.

This section will analyze the role of music (melody and rhythm), clothing, and dance in the construction of Li ethnic identity. In Du Mingxin's musical compositions, the incorporation of elements such as Li melodies, rhythms, costumes, and dances has played an important role in constructing Li ethnic identity. These elements are not only sources of musical inspiration but also symbols of Li culture, carrying the historical memory, values, and aesthetic tastes of the Li people. Through the dissemination of music, they have reinforced the Li people's recognition of and attachment to their own culture.

2.1 Li Ethnic Costumes as Visual Symbols and Identity Markers

Li ethnic costumes represent the most direct visual expression of group identity. The patterns, colors, and styles of clothing vary among different dialect subgroups (Ha, Qi, Run, Sai, and Meifu), serving as bases for internal differentiation and identification. For example, the "resist-dyed" tube skirts of Ha-speaking women use geometric patterns to symbolize ancestral migration routes, while the "human figure motifs" embroidered by the Run-speaking group allude to ethnic myths. The techniques of costume production—spinning, dyeing, weaving, and embroidery—have been inscribed on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The very process of transmitting these techniques constitutes a dynamic practice of identity construction.



Figure 6 Li Ethnic Tube Skirt

Source: by author

In contemporary society, the symbolic significance of Li ethnic costumes has been further expanded. The ceremonial display of traditional dress during festivals, the stage-oriented adaptation and redesign of costumes (such as shortening the length of tube skirts to align with modern aesthetics), and even cross-sector collaborations with fashion brands (such as Li brocade elements appearing at international fashion weeks) have all turned traditional attire into a dynamic tool for actively constructing “Li-ness”.

As Russian aesthetician Borev noted, “In art, a symbol is the tangible and perceptible foundation that reveals thought”. The patterns of Li brocade are both cultural legacies and emotional expressions of the Li ancestors.

Within the broader field of ethnic minority cultural studies, costumes—as vital carriers of material culture—bear the historical codes and cultural genes of a group's development, serving as a “living history book” worn on the body. From the

ornamented swaddling clothes of newborns to the elaborate traditional attire of elders, minority costumes, through tangible practices of weaving, embroidery, motifs, and adornments, outline a vivid narrative of migration, social transformation, and spiritual belief. Over the course of history, costumes have not only functioned as visual markers for distinguishing different ethnic groups but have also evolved into symbolic emblems of cultural continuity. In some communities, the tradition of preserving costume forms unchanged for centuries crystallizes reverence for ancestors and the safeguarding of cultural roots into the ongoing practice of every stitch and thread.



Figure 7 Li Ethnic Costumes

Source: Byauthor

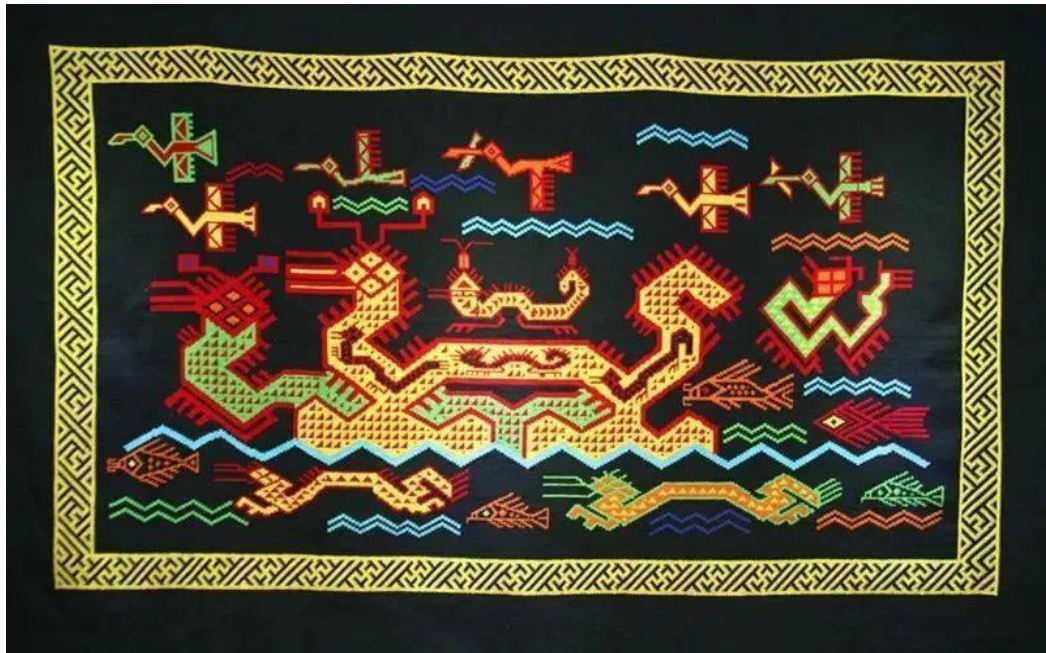


Figure 8 Li Ethni Costumes

Source: <http://www.58zhikao.com/index.php?c=show&id=23660>

As the indigenous people of Hainan Island, the Li have embedded within their costumes a profound cultural discourse system. Their unique textile techniques, vibrant totemic patterns, and exquisite skills in embroidery and dyeing are not only the crystallization of their production wisdom and daily life experience but also bear the survival memories, migration routes, and spiritual beliefs of their ancestors. These costume elements transcend time and space, narrating the history of the Li people through material form, constructing a visual bond that sustains cultural identity, and serving as a vital key to decoding the cultural genes of the Li ethnicity.

Li ethnic costumes are highly distinctive, founded on four major traditional crafts: spinning, dyeing, weaving, and embroidery. They are made by stitching together materials such as island cotton, hemp, and kapok. Over a long historical evolution, Li costumes have exhibited distinct features across different periods. For instance, during the Song Dynasty, Li women typically wore a type of upper garment known as "choubian," featuring a central opening through which it was slipped over the head.

Their lower garment was a simple skirt, sewn together along the edges to form a bag-like shape, called "duleng" during the Song period and later referred to as "Li tube skirt."

Li costumes are diverse in form, including Li brocade, Li plain weave and tube skirts. The designs often feature straight lines, parallel lines, squares, and triangles to depict fantastic plants, birds, animals, and human figures, sometimes embellished with gold threads, silver foil, or mica pieces. Traditionally, materials used in Li clothing included island cotton, hemp, kapok, bark fibers, and silk. In ancient times, some regions even utilized the bark of paper mulberry trees or the deadly "arrow poison tree" as clothing materials. The bark would be stripped from the tree, beaten to remove the outer layers, leaving the fiber core, which was then soaked with purple cabbage ash (produced by burning seashells) and dried to create wearable fabric.

2.2 The Transmission of Cultural Genes and the Construction of Identity in Li Ethnic Music

2.2.1 Oral Transmission and Heartfelt Instruction

Li ethnic music has been preserved and transmitted primarily through oral tradition and personal mentorship, with its melodies and rhythms carrying the historical narratives of the group. Characterized by distinctive melodic and rhythmic patterns, Li folk songs cover a wide range of themes and exhibit diverse styles. For instance, labor songs such as those found in *Luone Tune: Ancient Songs of the Twelve Months* vividly depict the agricultural life of the Li ancestors who practiced slash-and-burn cultivation. One lyric states, "When January comes, we buy a knife; whoever wants to clear a field must take the lead. On the high mountains and lowlands, the people cut and burn." The melody of such songs is typically slow and flowing, rich with the atmosphere of everyday life.

There are also love songs that express the affection between young men and women. Li folk songs generally follow a structure of five syllables per line and are often performed as solos or duets, closely linked to music and dance, with a strong emphasis on rhythm and cadence. Their melodic style is characterized by flexible ornamentation, closely tied to the tonal features of the Li language, thus forming a unique musical language. For example, in the ritual song *Zhaohun Tune*, specific

melodic contours are used to imitate natural sounds, symbolizing the symbiotic relationship between the Li people and the natural landscapes of mountains and rivers.

Du Mingxin skillfully incorporates Li ethnic melodies and rhythms into his compositions. For example, in his *First Piano Concerto*, he draws inspiration from the distinctive melodic contours of Li music. The melodic rises and falls echo the simplicity and freedom of emotional expression found in Li folk songs, allowing listeners familiar with Li music to immediately recognize its ethnic characteristics.

In terms of rhythm, Du employs syncopated rhythms and dotted patterns commonly found in Li music. These rhythmic features, reminiscent of those in Li dance music, infuse his works with energy and dynamism. When Li people hear such rhythms, they can quickly associate them with their cultural traditions, thereby reinforcing their sense of ethnic identity. Through his use of Li melodies and rhythms, Du transforms music into a vessel for cultural transmission; even in a modern society, Li people are able to establish a strong connection with their traditional culture through these musical works, feeling the charm and vitality of their heritage, and thus strengthening their sense of belonging to their ethnic identity.

Rhythmically, traditional Li instruments—such as the “single-log drum”, “nose flute”, and “dingdong wood”—emphasize complex meters, such as “3+2” groupings or free, unmeasured rhythms. This asymmetrical rhythmic structure sets Li music apart from the more regular rhythmic organization typical of Han Chinese music, making it a defining feature of Li musical identity.

In contemporary times, Li musicians have reinterpreted traditional melodies by incorporating popular elements, such as electronic arrangements. This fusion enables the younger generation to perceive the uniqueness of their ethnic music even within a modernized context, further reinforcing their cultural identity.

2.2.2 Melodic and Modal Characteristics of Li Folk Songs

In the musical system of the Li people, melody is not only the core vehicle for musical expression but also the very soul of their musical culture. Through its distinctive organization of pitches and linear contours, melody carries the emotional

memory and cultural genes of the Li people, serving as a crucial marker distinguishing their music from that of other ethnic groups.

From existing documentation—whether contemporary collections such as “Three Thousand Li Folk Songs” or the traditional songbooks compiled during the era of the Hainan Li and Miao Autonomous Prefecture—it is evident that Li folk music is predominantly characterized by monophonic vocal lines. This pure, linear mode of musical expression grants Li folk songs a high degree of recognizability. Even when separated from their lyrics, the rise and fall of the melodic lines alone vividly convey the rich flavor of Li musical style.

In terms of scale and modality, Li folk songs generally build upon the traditional Chinese pentatonic framework, while simultaneously exhibiting rich variations and unique characteristics. Among these, *zhi* and *gong* modes—formed by four-, five-, six-, or seven-tone collections, often with the addition of altered tones—are the most common. These modes typically convey a bright and expansive musical color, reflecting the passionate and uninhibited character traits of the Li people.

In contrast, “yu”, “shang”, and “jue” modes appear relatively rarely in Li folk music, indicating a distinctive ethnic aesthetic preference in their musical traditions.

From the perspective of melodic contour, Li folk songs can be categorized into three typical types:

First is the “stepwise melodic type”, characterized by smooth progressions of seconds and thirds, resulting in fluid and gentle melodic lines. This style often appears in narrative folk songs, such as labor songs depicting scenes of production and daily life. Second is the “leaping melodic type”, marked by frequent intervals of fourths or larger leaps. These wide intervals create strong rises and falls in the melody and are typically used to express intense emotions or to accompany ritualistic songs. Third is the “wave-like melodic type”, formed through continuous fluctuations in pitch, producing winding and lyrical melodic lines. This style is commonly found in lyrical folk songs, vividly capturing the Li people's delicate emotional world.

These distinctive melodic forms together construct a rich and diverse musical language system for Li folk music.

More specifically, the melodic contours of Li folk songs exhibit clear ethnic characteristics and can be summarized into three structural types:

Speech-like Stepwise Melodies:

These melodies are primarily based on stable unison and second intervals, with smooth and restrained melodic lines. They closely align with the intonation and phrasing patterns of Li dialects. The singing resembles natural, conversational speech, presenting songs with an unadorned, everyday flavor that vividly reflects the unique cadence of Li daily communication.

Arc-shaped Stepwise Melodies:

Centered around the pitches "2 (re)," "3 (mi)," "6 (la)," and "5 (sol)," this melodic type features an ascending-then-descending contour. The melody rises gradually from the lower register to the higher range before slowly descending back to the tonic, forming a graceful arc. Phrases are often repeated or slightly varied to enhance memorability and emotional resonance. This structure is especially common in Li lyrical folk songs.

Leaping Wave-like Melodies:

Built around core pitches such as "5 (sol)," "1 (do)," "2 (re)," or "5 (sol)," "6 (la)," "2 (re)," these melodies use large leaps spanning a third to an octave, resulting in strong melodic fluctuations. The melody surges and falls like ocean waves—sometimes soaring dramatically, sometimes plunging swiftly—imbued with dramatic tension and expressiveness. This style is frequently found in Li songs such as the *Mountain-Chopping Songs*, vividly showcasing the passionate emotions and heroic spirit of labor scenes.

Among these, the most representative is the *Mountain-Chopping Song*), which stands as a quintessential example of Li labor songs, preserving the ancient style of primitive agricultural work. Its melody is bold and stirring, powerful and full of energy, using tense large interval leaps to vividly depict the grand scenes of the Li

people's ancestors clearing mountains and reclaiming land. The melodic lines sometimes surge like crashing waves, full of force, and at other times descend with the fluidity of a cascading waterfall, vividly expressing the strength and vitality of labor.

Take the classic piece *I Climb Up the Branches* as an example: the melody begins in the higher register and, through continuous wave-like leaps and winding descents, captures the hardship and resilience of labor. This song exemplifies the modal and scale characteristics of Li folk music, making it a model work for interpreting Li folk music's musical features.

It is important to note that these foundational melodic forms are not static. They adapt and evolve based on the content of the song, the structure of the lyrics, and their close integration with the tonal patterns of the Li language. This dynamic process gives rise to new musical forms, demonstrating the immense artistic vitality inherent in Li folk music.

2.2.3 Rhythm and Meter Characteristics of Li Folk Songs

The rhythm and meter system of Li folk songs displays a rich artistic variety, encompassing both regular rhythms closely tied to daily life and freer, more tension-filled rhythms. Together, these create a distinctive musical language filled with ethnic characteristics. The rhythmic features of Li folk music can be categorized into two main types:

Regular Rhythm:

In narrative and lyrical folk songs, regular rhythmic patterns dominate. Simple, evenly spaced rhythms are widely used across songs of varying tempos, conveying a range of emotions through rhythmic variation. In medium- and slow-tempo songs, stable rhythms set a calm and soothing emotional tone. For example, in the male-female duet *Ge You Xin Lai Mei You Yi*, the even rhythm pairs with the gentle melody to delicately depict the subtle emotions between lovers. Faster rhythms, on the other hand, create an atmosphere of excitement and intensity, matching the fervor of festive or labor scenes. In some slower songs, the relaxation of the rhythm

aligns with the expansive melodic arcs, creating a majestic and grand musical atmosphere.

The meter predominantly follows 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time signatures, providing the structural framework for regular rhythms. While 3/4 time songs are less common, they stand out with their distinctive characteristics. For example, songs like *Song Qinja Weng* and *Nong Mu Sheng Nong Zhen Shi Hao* use unique strong-weak rhythmic patterns to deliver a unique musical beauty. These 3/4 rhythms break from the traditional strong-weak accent pattern, with flexible placements of the strong beats. The alternating strong and weak beats create a rich variety of rhythmic combinations, reflecting the inner pulse of the singers and adding dynamic artistic color to the songs.

Free Rhythm:

Another significant rhythmic type in Li folk songs is free rhythm, which is particularly prevalent in labor songs and ritual chants. This rhythmic style breaks free from the constraints of fixed meter, using numerous ornamentations and prolonged notes to create intense emotional tension, especially in medium- to slow-tempo performances. For example, in the labor song *Before Plowing the Field*, the flexible, stretching rhythm closely mirrors the labor scene, fluctuating between rapid and expansive movements, vividly recreating the dynamic energy of farming activities.

Additionally, folk songs in mixed meters, such as 6/8 and 9/8, possess an ancient, primal artistic appeal. A notable example is *Cicadas Sing Between the Bamboo*, sung in the H dialect of the Li people. The loose and free rhythm breaks away from conventional metrical patterns, complementing a distinctive melodic progression to evoke the natural beauty of the mountain and forest landscapes. This piece is a typical example of Li primitive mountain songs, capturing the essence of the Li people's connection with nature.

These free rhythms and mixed meters, characterized by their raw, organic qualities, not only preserve the life memories and emotional expressions of the Li people but also highlight their unique musical aesthetics and cultural depth, offering valuable artistic examples for ethnomusicological research.

2.3 Li Ethnic Dance: Bodily Practice and Collective Identity

2.3.1 Content of Li Ethnic Dance

In terms of content, Li ethnic dance serves as a mirror reflecting the daily life of the Li people, encompassing their attitudes and perspectives toward marriage, festivals, and religious beliefs. Through these dances, one can trace the historical transformations of Li culture. For instance, residents of Tongshi Town in Hainan Province have preserved traditional Li dances closely linked to religious rituals and ceremonies, such as the "Peace Dance" and the "Soul-Summoning Dance." These ancient dance forms provide critical insights into the Li people's views on life and death as well as the origins of their spiritual beliefs. Researching these distinctive dance traditions not only promotes the further development of Li cultural arts but also offers valuable resources for scholars investigating the culture and historical origins of the Li people.

From a social perspective, Li dance is not only associated with religious beliefs but is also intimately tied to the everyday lives of the Li people. Throughout its development, Li dance has undergone numerous adaptations, making its content more aligned with contemporary sensibilities while preserving the artistic essence of traditional ethnic dance. This fusion of traditional aesthetics and modern tastes enhances its appeal and relevance today.

Many Li dances, such as the *Chopping Wood Dance* and the *Rice Pounding Dance*, use bodily movements to reenact scenes from daily labor and production, with rhythms and tempos that are closely synchronized with traditional musical patterns. For example, in the *Chopping Wood Dance*, the rhythmic opening and closing of bamboo poles demands a high level of coordination among participants. This collective synchronization not only reinforces community cohesion but also transmits cultural knowledge through embodied memory. The symbolic movements within these dances—such as squatting and jumping to simulate hunting, or hand gestures imitating weaving—function as non-verbal cultural textbooks, preserving and conveying the collective identity of the Li people.

The adaptation of Li ethnic dance for modern stage arts—such as the incorporation of lighting and multimedia technologies—has not diminished its function in reinforcing collective identity. On the contrary, these visual enhancements have expanded its reach and amplified its communicative power. During the "San Yue San" Festival, celebrated by the Li and Miao ethnic groups in Hainan, the performance of collective dances functions not only as a display of cultural heritage but also as a ritual through which younger generations reaffirm their sense of identity and belonging through active participation.

Li dances are characterized by distinct ethnic features and a strong connection to everyday life and can be categorized into ancestral dances, daily life dances, and production dances. Ancestral dances, such as the *Ghost-Catching Dance* and the *Blessing Dance*, reflect the Li people's reverence for their ancestors and their aspirations for a prosperous life. Daily life dances, including the *Chopping Wood Dance* and the *Drum Dance*, portray scenes from the everyday experiences of the Li people. Production dances, such as the *Rice Pounding Dance*, embody the labor processes central to the community's livelihood.

2.3.2 The Connotations of Li Ethnic Dance

Within the unique natural ecology and historical context of Hainan Island, Li ethnic dance stands as a three-dimensional cultural epic, vividly reflecting the spiritual landscape of the ancestors' dialogue with nature and struggle against fate. Situated on the frontier, the Li people have long contended with harsh environmental challenges such as typhoons and endemic diseases. This survival pressure fostered a primordial belief system centered on nature worship and reverence for spirits. In ritual dances such as the *Ghost-Catching Dance* and the *Blessing Dance*, performers employ exaggerated bodily movements and solemn ritual gestures to express awe toward supernatural forces, while simultaneously embodying a spirit of resistance against adversity. Through dance as a medium, they reconstruct the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine within ritual contexts, transforming fear into a persistent pursuit of survival.

These dance forms, rich in artistic value, function not only as vessels for emotional expression but also as crucial means of transmitting communal knowledge and values. From production dances simulating hunting and farming to narrative dances depicting migration journeys, performers use dynamic bodily expressions and vivid facial gestures to pass down the Li people's survival wisdom, ethical beliefs, and aesthetic ideals across generations. Particularly moving are the daily life dances such as the *Chopping Wood Dance* and the *Rice Pounding Dance*, where the Li people, with optimism and resilience, elevate scenes of labor into artistic performances. In the leaps and bounds of the dance, they convey a fervent longing for a better life, showcasing a tenacious and enduring national character.

With the deepening of cultural exchanges, Li ethnic dance, with its distinctive artistic charm and profound spiritual connotations, has not only flourished on Chinese stages but has also gained widespread acclaim in international artistic circles. Its dynamic yet harmonious bodily rhythms and vibrant artistic expressions serve as an important window for the world to understand the cultures of China's ethnic minorities. In the contemporary context, these dance traditions, imbued with national spirit, have gained renewed significance. Through innovative interpretations and modern modes of dissemination, they are revitalizing the essence of Li culture, allowing these ancient artistic treasures to thrive in the new era and continue to contribute to the rich, unified diversity of Chinese civilization.



Figure 9 The *Chopping Wood Dance*

Source: Photo taken by author at the Hainan



Figure 10 The *Rice Pounding Dance*

Source: Photo taken by author at the Hainan

2.3.2 Classification of Li Ethnic Dances

The Qianling Double-Saber Dance

The *Qianling Double-Saber Dance* is a classic piece within traditional Li ethnic dance, frequently performed at significant gatherings of Li youth. According to legend, this dance originated from martial contests among young Li men in ancient times and embodies the community's admiration for strength and courage.

The dance employs distinctive props: performers wield a two-foot-long staff, known as the "qianling stick", with a copper coin attached to each end. When the staff is moved, the coins collide, producing a crisp, resonant sound. During performances, dancers wear bright red headscarves and elaborately embroidered traditional Li costumes, vividly showcasing the rich ethnic character of the dance. The performance typically features two dancers facing off: one brandishing double sabers in an attacking posture, while the other uses the "qianling stick" to defend with agile and dexterous maneuvers. Through swift offensive and defensive exchanges, the dancers create a captivating dynamic interplay.

The movements of the *Qianling Double-Saber Dance* are vigorous and forceful, characterized by a brisk rhythm. Throughout the performance, the dazzling flashes of blades and staff, coupled with the clinking of coins, generate a powerful sensory impact, immersing audiences in a tense and thrilling atmosphere. In response to modern safety considerations, live blades have been replaced by specially crafted prop sabers, preserving the dance's thrilling essence while effectively minimizing the risk of injury.

As a vital vessel of Li cultural expression, the *Qianling Double-Saber Dance* not only reflects the brave and indomitable spirit of the Li people but also highlights the exceptional artistry and unique charm of Li dance traditions. It stands as a vivid and dynamic medium for the preservation and promotion of Li culture.

The Chopping Wood Dance

As one of the most representative traditional dances of the Li ethnic group, the *Chopping Wood Dance* is deeply rooted in the Li people's unique views on life and death as well as their religious beliefs. The Li ancestors firmly believed in the immortality of the soul, holding that after death, spirits ascend to the heavenly realm. This belief gave rise to ancient traditions of using dance to comfort the deceased and to honor the ancestors. The origins of the *Chopping Wood Dance* can be traced back to antiquity, when it initially served the dual purpose of warding off wild beasts from the bodies of the deceased and commemorating lost loved ones. Having been passed down for millennia, it remains a vital element in Li funeral rites today.

In areas such as Yazhou District in Sanya City, Hainan Province, traditional practices of the *Chopping Wood Dance* are still preserved. Whenever a family member passes away, members of the community gather to perform the dance during the relocation of the coffin to a designated place. Dancers move rhythmically amid the steady, synchronized clacking of bamboo poles, using expressive bodily movements to convey grief and prayers for the deceased's peaceful passage. This ritual dance, deeply embedded in daily life, not only showcases the rich cultural heritage of the Li people but also reflects their strong communal bonds.

With societal development and increasing cultural exchange, Li culture has gradually gained broader visibility, offering new opportunities for the evolution of the *Chopping Wood Dance*. In response to the demands of modern dissemination, cultural workers have creatively transformed the traditional form while preserving its ethnic essence. By softening its original religious and sacrificial elements and incorporating brighter, more lively elements from contemporary dance vocabulary, the *Chopping Wood Dance* has evolved from a solemn ritual into a dynamic and vibrant stage performance.

The adapted version of the dance, with its distinctive rhythmic patterns, agile physical expression, and rich ethnic flavor, retains its cultural roots while radiating a renewed vitality. It has become an important artistic medium for showcasing

the spirit and beauty of Li culture. This transformation not only enhances the dance's appeal and communicative power but also enables it to shine brightly on the cultural stages of the new era.

2.3.3 The Application of Li Ethnic Dance Elements in Du Mingxin's Compositions

Du Mingxin skillfully integrates elements of Li ethnic dance with musical expression in his compositions. In the *Red Detachment of Women* suite, the rhythm and pulse of certain musical sections closely correspond to the movement rhythms characteristic of Li dance. The dynamic shifts in the music—its accents, crescendos, and decrescendos—mirror the bodily rises, leaps, and spins found in traditional Li choreography. As the music unfolds, listeners can almost visualize the energetic movements of Li dancers and sense the passion and vitality embodied in their performances. This fusion of musical and dance elements not only enriches the expressive power of the music but, more importantly, evokes collective memories of the Li people's dance culture. Given that dance is a vital form of cultural expression among the Li, the interplay between music and dance elements deepens the community's recognition of their cultural uniqueness, reinforcing ethnic identity and supporting the ongoing transmission and development of their heritage.

In Act III of the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*, titled "Nan Batian's Birthday," the incorporation of Li dance elements not only enhances the ballet's artistic expressiveness but also intensifies the dramatic tension between oppression and resistance through potent bodily language. The choreographers distilled and adapted traditional Li dance movements, skillfully integrating them with the vocabulary of ballet to seamlessly merge the cultural characteristics of the Li with the narrative demands of the production, creating a profoundly moving stage experience.

In terms of movement form, dancers draw from the physical qualities of Li folk dance, which combine flexibility with strength. In the scene depicting Li girls being forced to perform for the oppressors, dancers employ low-centered, bent-knee stances paired with supple torso twists and serpentine, vine-like arm motions. These movement prototypes originate from the labor- and nature-imitative gestures typical of

traditional Li life dances. While showcasing the unique grace and fluidity of Li dance, the performers also convey, through tense muscle lines and subtly trembling bodily control, the fear and helplessness experienced by the girls under coercion.

In terms of rhythmic application, the choreographers skillfully extracted the dynamic rhythmic characteristics of Li ethnic dance. Within the dance sequences, rapid, fragmented footwork rhythms simulate the quick, lively steps found in the traditional Li *Chopping Wood Dance*, accompanied by percussive instrumentation to create a tense and oppressive atmosphere. Conversely, when expressing the inner emotions of the young girls, the tempo slows, and movements become elongated and fluid, echoing the solemn and devout rhythms of Li ritual dances. This sharp rhythmic contrast intensifies the dramatic conflict of the scene.

Costume and prop design further reinforce the ethnic characteristics of the Li dance elements. Dancers wear modified versions of traditional Li attire, featuring geometric patterns, totemic embroidery, and silver accessories on their tube skirts. These designs preserve the cultural symbols of Li clothing while incorporating ballet-style tailoring and lightweight fabrics to ensure the fluidity of dance movements. Certain segments of the choreography also introduce traditional Li props such as coconut shells and bamboo poles, integrating elements of daily Li life into the ballet's tragic narrative and thereby deepening the cultural resonance of the performance.

On the emotional level, the incorporation of Li dance elements achieves a profound fusion between cultural symbolism and narrative themes. Through nuanced expressions, eye movements, and bodily gestures, dancers vividly portray the humiliation, silent endurance, and yearning for freedom experienced by the Li girls under oppressive rule. This style of performance not only continues the Li dance tradition of emphasizing emotional expression but also resonates with the ballet's overarching theme of resistance against oppression and the pursuit of liberation. In this way, Li dance elements become crucial artistic means for advancing the narrative and shaping character development.

Through the innovative adaptation of Li ethnic dance elements, *The Red Detachment of Women* not only showcases the unique charm of Hainan's indigenous culture but also offers an artistic interpretation of profound themes of oppression and resistance. It enables audiences to appreciate the aesthetic power of ethnic dance while gaining a deeper understanding of the ballet's ideological message.

Conclusion:

The Li ethnic group, renowned for their musicality, dance, industriousness, and wisdom, has deeply embedded their folk songs into every aspect of daily life. From labor chants that unite collective strength to love songs expressing emotional aspirations; from celebratory songs marking the joy of marriage to funeral laments conveying grief and remembrance, Li folk songs have consistently served as vital vehicles for emotional expression and the transmission of communal values. Throughout history, these songs have not only preserved the living memory of the Li people's history and culture but also transformed into rallying cries of resistance during revolutionary periods, collectively shaping the spiritual home of the Li community.

Composer Du Mingxin's creative transformation of Li musical elements further advanced the construction of ethnic identity. By integrating the unique melodies, rhythms, and other musical features of Li culture with contemporary compositional techniques, he transcended the limitations of regional cultural dissemination and, through artistic innovation, awakened the cultural memory of the Li people. This fusion is not a mere juxtaposition of elements but rather a reconstruction and transmission of the historical memory, values, and aesthetic ideals inherent in Li culture, using music as the medium to revitalize ethnic traditions within a modern context.

The evolution of Li folk songs from grassroots transmission to contemporary artistic creation vividly illustrates the dynamic nature of ethnic identity construction. Throughout this process, Li culture has maintained the stability of its indigenous cultural DNA while simultaneously achieving temporal development through innovation. The creative practices of artists like Du Mingxin demonstrate that the

inventive transformation of ethnic cultural elements is not only an artistic innovation but also a testament to the intelligence and creativity of the Li people in cultural inheritance and identity construction, offering new pathways for the continuity and flourishing of ethnic culture.

3. Analyze Du Mingxin's musical interpretation of national identity through the composition of the Red Detachment of Women suite

3.1. Origins and Background of the Piano Suite *The Red Detachment of Women*

3.1.1 The Background of The Red Detachment of Women

The Red Detachment of Women piano suite was adapted by Du Mingxin in 1975 from the music of the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*. The ballet premiered successfully in 1964, quickly becoming well-known among the Chinese public, with its music leaving a lasting impression. After the onset of the Cultural Revolution, the ballet was designated as one of the "Eight Model Plays" (Yangbanxi), leading to certain modifications in its musical content. The ballet features several key musical themes, including the Detachment Theme, the Hong Changqing Theme, the Wu Qinghua Theme and the Nan Batian Theme. Additionally, the melody of Huang Zhun's March of the Women's Detachment was incorporated into the "Detachment Theme" and maintained throughout the work.

During the initial stages of orchestration, composers such as Du Mingxin and Wu Zuqiang first composed and arranged the music on the piano. This approach facilitated rehearsals for the performers while also providing a fundamental musical framework for subsequent orchestration. In 1975, within the socio-political context of the time, Du Mingxin developed the piano suite based on the original piano score of *the Red Detachment of Women* ballet. He selected seven representative musical sections and integrated key thematic material, including the "Detachment Theme," the "Hong Changqing Theme," and the "Wu Qinghua Theme," throughout the suite. As a result, the *Red Detachment of Women* piano suite exhibits a powerful and inspiring musical character, ensuring its enduring influence to this day.

3.1.2 Historical Background of *The Red Detachment of Women*

From 1966 to 1976, China experienced the political turmoil of the *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, during which extreme leftist ideology dominated society, severely disrupting daily life. The arts community was among the first to be targeted, leading to the suspension of normal teaching, creative activities, and performances in arts institutions. Many scholars, professors, and artists were persecuted, and Western classical music was entirely banned. Composers faced severe restrictions, with their creative output confined to politically sanctioned themes. As a result, artistic production nationwide was limited to the “Eight Model Plays” (Yangbanxi) and a small number of revolutionary music adaptations. The field of piano composition also suffered immensely during this period.

In 1968, Yin Chengzong's Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* premiered successfully, marking the beginning of a survival strategy for piano music through adaptation. To sustain and develop piano composition, composers and pianists turned to revolutionary music and Chinese traditional music as source material, producing numerous piano adaptations. Representative works from this era include the *Yellow River Piano Concerto*, Li Yinghai's *Sunset Flute and Drum*, Wang Jianzhong's *Three Variations on Plum Blossom*, and Chu Wanghua's *Moon Reflected in the Second Spring*. Du Mingxin's *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite emerged within this historical context. While it did not introduce new musical elements, it played a significant role in preserving and sustaining piano music during a time of artistic suppression.

The *Red Detachment of Women* piano suite retains the thematic essence of the ballet, preserving its melodies and stylistic characteristics while reinterpreting them through the texture and expressive capabilities of the piano. This adaptation not only ensured the continued presence of piano music in China during this restrictive period but also secured the suite's place as an important contribution to the body of Chinese piano works.

The period from the 1960s to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1978 was a highly distinctive phase in China's modern history. In 1964, Mao Zedong issued two directives calling for a rectification of cultural and artistic activities, leading to the suspension of normal operations in artistic institutions. As a result, European classical music was entirely banned, and piano composition, like other cultural activities, was forced to come to a standstill. Later, Premier Zhou Enlai introduced the directive emphasizing the "Three Transformations" in music composition

"revolutionization, nationalization, and popularization" further influencing artistic creation.

During the 1970s, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four implemented a policy of cultural autocracy, further suppressing musical composition. Instrumental works could only exist in the form of adaptations of "Yangbanxi" and revolutionary songs. It was not until 1968 that Yin Chengzong's *Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* was permitted, allowing piano composition to survive through adaptations. This period thus became dominated by arrangements and adaptations, leading to the emergence of many significant works, such as Li Yinghai's *Sunset Flute and Drum* and *Three Variations on Yangguan*, Wang Lisan's *Ballad*, and Wang Jianzhong's *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*, *Three Variations on Plum Blossom*, *Embroidered Gold Plaque*, and *The Red Blossoms of the Mountain Shine Brightly*.

Du Mingxin was also influenced by this trend, and during this period, he composed very few new piano works. His adaptation of *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite was finalized during this time and officially published in 1975. Due to political constraints, the thematic and ideological content of the work had to adhere strictly to the "Three Transformations" principle, prohibiting any unauthorized modifications. Since *The Red Detachment of Women* was one of the "Eight Model Plays", Du Mingxin had to ensure that the original themes and ideological content remained intact in the piano adaptation. His challenge was to transpose the ballet music to a piano setting while preserving its melodies and stylistic elements, requiring extensive effort and numerous revisions before reaching the final version. This dedication and meticulous

craftsmanship ultimately secured the suite's place among outstanding piano adaptations of the period.

The creation of *the Red Detachment of Women* piano suite was not an isolated artistic endeavor. Before its composition, various adaptations of the same work had already been produced in different genres, including film, ballet, Peking opera, and symphonic suites. These existing interpretations were closely intertwined with the piano suite's development, shaping its musical and artistic direction.

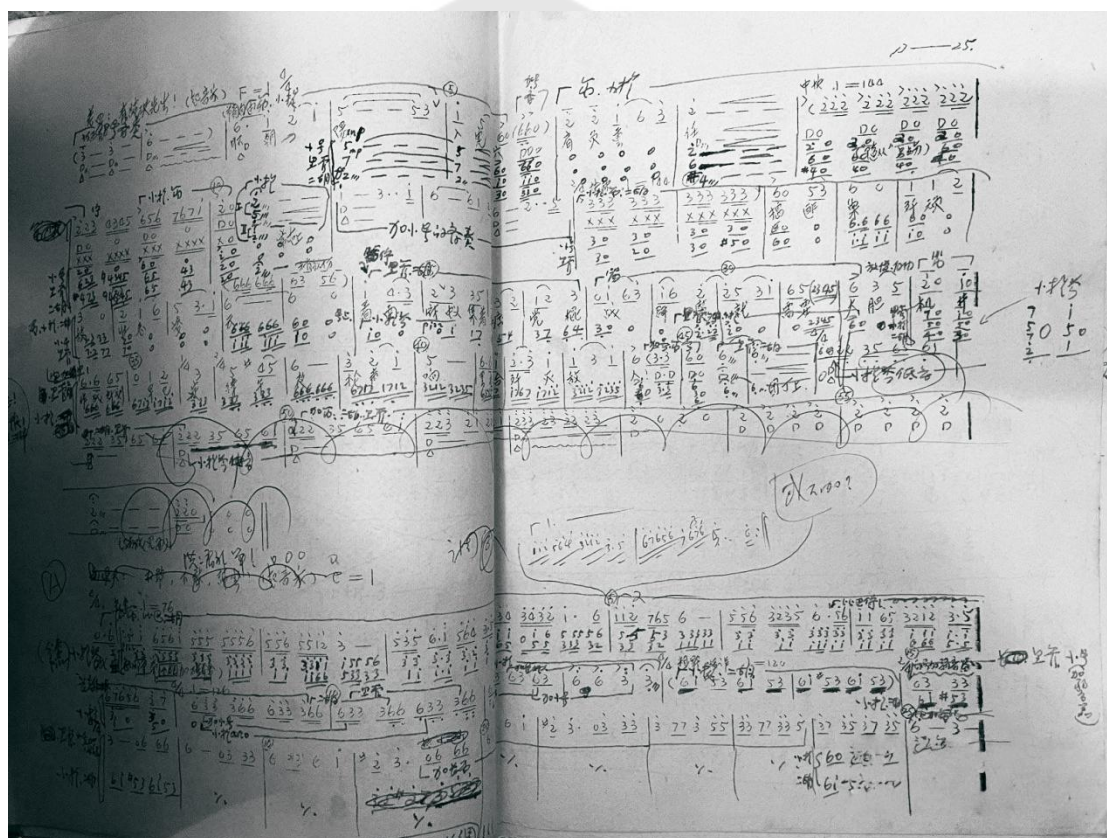


Figure 11 The Manuscript of The Red Women's Army.

Source: Photo taken by author

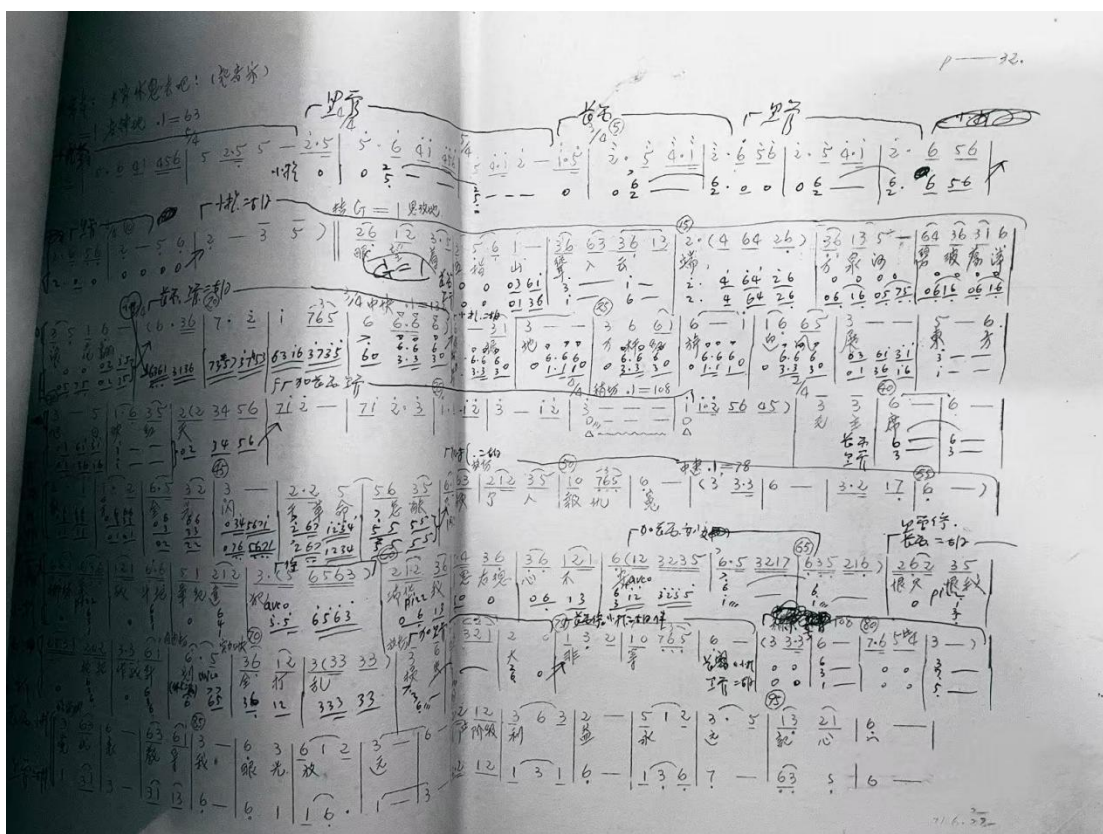


Figure 12 The Manuscript of The Red Women's Army.

Source: Photo taken by author

3.1.3 Prototype of the Work The Red Detachment of Women

The story of The Red Detachment of Women became widely known after its adaptation into a ballet during the early years of the People's Republic of China. The ballet was based on the real-life female special operations company of the 3rd Regiment of the 2nd Independent Division of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. Established in 1931 during the Land Reform Movement, this unit was a subordinate armed force under the Hainan Soviet's Red 3rd Regiment, led by General Feng Baiju.

Most of the unit's members were young rural women, including peasant militia fighters, Communist Party members, and Communist Youth League members. The first company commander was Pang Qionghua. Apart from two logistics staff members, a porter, and a bugler, the entire unit was composed of women. They were

known for their unwavering political commitment and bravery in combat. Their primary responsibilities included protecting leadership institutions, guarding prisoners, mobilizing and organizing the masses, and supporting the main Red Army forces when necessary. They maintained close ties with the local population, often participating in agricultural production, which earned them the support and admiration of the people.

Liu Wenshao, in a research study, pointed out that "In June 1931, they assisted the Red Army in repelling the Nationalist attack, and the name of the Red Detachment of Women spread throughout Qiongzhusi Island. In 1932, during the Nationalist encirclement and suppression, the women's detachment protected the evacuation of government offices. Later, due to the Red Army's defeat, they were forced to disband" (Liu Wenshao, 2007). In 1932, as Chiang Kai-shek launched his fourth counter-revolutionary encirclement campaign, the Guangdong warlords also ordered a second siege against the Hainan Soviet and the Red Army. During this period, the Women's Army Company played a crucial role in covering the retreat of leadership units and engaging in direct battles alongside the main Red Army forces. However, after suffering heavy losses, the Hainan Red Army was ultimately defeated, forcing the Red Detachment of Women to disband. Its members dispersed into civilian life, facing various fates thereafter.

The legacy of *the Red Detachment of Women* embodies the revolutionary spirit of women's liberation. Their struggle against feudalism and oppression, as well as their fight for gender equality, continues to inspire future generations.



Figure 13 Group Portrait of Women Soldiers

Source: Photo taken by the researcher at the Hainan Red Detachment of Women Museum.

3.1.4 The Ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*

In September 1964, the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* had its successful premiere, leaving a deep imprint on the hearts of the Chinese people through its music and dance. The ballet became a unique gem in the history of Chinese dance drama. As the public became familiar with and accepted the story of the Red Detachment of Women, the ballet's contribution to the series of *the Red Detachment of Women* works was by far the most significant. However, before the ballet, the 1961 film *The Red Detachment of Women* had already laid a foundation for its text.

The film, directed by Xie Jin with a script by Liang Xin, starred Chen Qiang, Zhu Xijuan, and Wang Xingang. Its plot, the stirring melody of the theme song *The Red Women's Army Song* by Huang Zhun (with lyrics by Liang Xin), and the enthusiastic response it generated nationwide contributed significantly to the creation of the ballet.

In 1963, the Chinese government introduced the "Three Transformations" (revolutionary, national, and mass-oriented) for the arts. That same year, after Premier Zhou Enlai watched the classic European ballet *Notre-Dame de Paris*, he suggested creating a ballet based on a revolutionary theme to align with the times. Lin Mohan, then the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture, organized a meeting and decided to adapt the film *The Red Detachment of Women* into a ballet. A creative team was formed, with leading figures like Du Mingxin, Wu Zuqiang and Bai Shuxiang visiting Hainan to meet former members of *the Red Detachment of Women* and gather traditional local music and customs as part of their research.

After months of hard work, the music for the ballet was completed by composers Du Mingxin, Wu Zuqiang, Wang Yanqiao, Shi Wanchun, and Dai Hongwei. The ballet's music revolves around several key themes, primarily the "Red Women's Army Theme", the "Hong Changqing Theme", and the "Wu Qinghua Theme". The "Red Women's Army Theme" is the most important, drawn from Huang Zhun's "The Red Women's Army Song". This theme runs throughout the ballet, unifying the work and becoming its soul and center.

During the Cultural Revolution, the "Eight Model Operas" were established, and the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* became one of them. However, the music and dance elements were altered under Jiang Qing's direction, with the "Wu Qinghua Theme" being changed to the "Wu Qinghua Theme" and more revolutionary musical elements being added. The ballet, thus adapted during the Cultural Revolution, became part of the "model operas" of that era.

The plot of the ballet, while based on the film script, made several modifications. It follows the story of Wu Qinghua, a female slave in the household of the local landlord Nan Batian. After failing to escape, she is beaten unconscious and rescued by Hong Changqing of the Red Army, who guides her to join the Red Detachment of Women. Under the army's training, Wu Qinghua gradually grows. In one battle, her hatred for Nan Batian causes her to break discipline, leading to a military setback. However, through the education of the Party and the army, she matures, and ultimately kills Nan Batian, securing victory for the army. The ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* had a profound influence, inspiring many other artistic adaptations, including Peking opera, symphonic suites, and piano suites, all based on the ballet's themes and success.



Figure 14 the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*.

Source: <https://jiuyingzhi.com/antiquephotos/178.html>

3.2 Musical Image Analysis of *The Red Detachment of Women* Suite

3.2.1 Musical Image Analysis of *Women's Militia Drill*

This section is excerpted from the second scene, second segment of the ballet, depicting Wu Qionghua overcoming numerous hardships to reach the gathering place. The red revolutionary base is filled with stirring songs, creating an atmosphere of harmony and joy. Wu Qionghua denounces Nan Batian's crimes and then resolutely joins the army. The company commander hands her a rifle, and the women's militia begins their drill.

The musical theme of this piece is taken from *Women's Militia Drill*, the second segment of the second scene in the ballet. The piano suite incorporates these dance music themes, with the first measure of the introduction featuring *Women's Militia Company Song* as the thematic background for the drill scene, setting the overall tone of the piece. The first measure consists of several juxtaposed musical segments, depicting the energetic and heroic training scenes of the female warriors. In the ballet, these musical segments correspond to various scenes, including the first measure of "Female Warriors' Shooting Dance", the first measure of "Female Warriors' Sword Dance", the first measure of "Warrior Xiao'e's Solo Dance", and the first measure of "Female Warriors' Bayonet Dance". At the end of the "Female Warriors' Bayonet Dance", the music returns to the theme of *Women's Militia Company Song*, echoing the introduction and further emphasizing the thematic image.



Figure 15 the Women's Militia Drill

Source: <http://m.dahepiao.com/yanchupiaowu1/2019080682547.html>

3.2.2 Musical Image Analysis of The Red Guards' Five-Inch Dagger Dance

The Red Guards' Five-Inch Dagger Dance is taken from the music of Scene Two in the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*. Scene Two depicts a joyful gathering of soldiers and civilians celebrating the founding of the red detachment of women. After the militia completes their drill, the Red Guards take the stage to train with their five-inch daggers. The piece vividly portrays the bold, uninhibited, and heroic Red Guards, wielding their daggers with passionate and dynamic dance movements.

Adapted from the ballet, this piece utilizes the piano to simulate the various functional parts of a symphony orchestra. The composer carefully selected registers and musical textures to reflect the unique characteristics of different instruments, thereby enhancing the depiction of the scene and shaping the musical imagery. In the original ballet score, the melody is played by the flute, so the piano suite adopts a higher register. To imitate the double bass and bass drum, the composer employs strong, octave passages in the lower register, ensuring a steady and powerful foundation.



Figure 16 The Red Guards' Five-Inch Dagger Dance

Source: <http://m.dahepiao.com/yanchupiaowu1/2019080682547.html>

3.2.3 Musical Image Analysis of *Qionghua Joins the Army*

Qionghua Joins the Army depicts a scene in which Wu Qionghua, wounded and unconscious, slowly regains consciousness in a torrential downpour. Her body is covered in bruises, her wounds throb with pain, and hunger gnaws at her stomach. Facing the vast darkness of the night, she feels a deep sense of desolation. Changqing and Xiaopang discover her collapsed on the ground, rush to her side, lift her up, and ask with concern about what happened. Qionghua bitterly denounces Nan Batian's atrocities, and Changqing and Xiaopang guide her toward a new path. Resolute in her decision, Qionghua joins the army.

The musical theme of this piece centers around Qionghua's theme, which conveys an underlying resistance amidst sorrow and suffering. Various thematic variations are employed to highlight her character. Additionally, the composer uses piano techniques to mimic the orchestral accompaniment, enhancing the expression of

the theme. When Qionghua's theme first appears, the use of three-octave parallel motion and the contrast between large leaps in the high and low registers replace the unison sound of the violin, viola, flute, oboe, and clarinet. The final ascending arpeggio imitates the "liangxiang" gesture in Chinese opera, serving as a striking musical highlight that enhances the dramatic effect.



Figure 17 Qionghua Joins the Army

Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/321329578_753250

Exemple1:The piano effect



3.2.4 Musical Image Analysis of The Army and the People Are One Family

This piece originates from a classic ballet and takes place at the Red Army's encampment by the Wanquan River. The sun shines brightly, illuminating every inch of the revolutionary base. Hong Changqing is giving a political lesson to the soldiers of the women's militia company. Meanwhile, the local villagers, filled with deep affection, are busy picking lychees and weaving straw hats as gifts to show their support for the Red Army. In this scene, the soldiers love the people, and the people support the army, creating a warm and harmonious atmosphere of unity between the military and civilians.

The entire piece is based on the *Wanquan River Water* theme, making the melody highly lyrical. The introduction employs a musical texture in which the left hand plays continuous 32nd-note arpeggios, vividly imitating the gentle, flowing movement of the Wanquan River. Sustained tremolos skillfully mimic the bright and melodious timbre of the flute, establishing a tranquil and peaceful ambiance. This introduction gradually fades, blending seamlessly into the background and preparing for the main section.

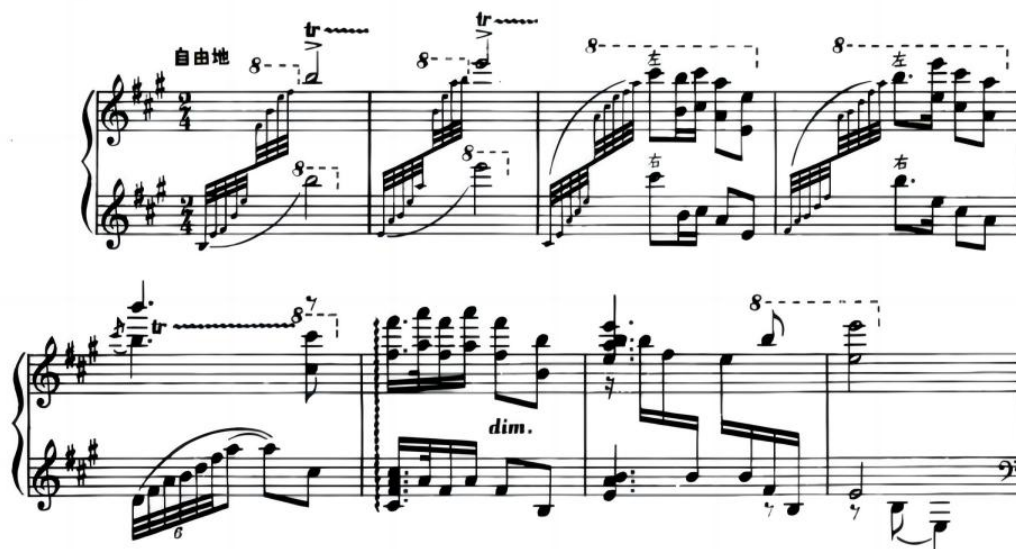
When the exposition begins, the *Wanquan River Water* theme officially appears, painting a musical picture of the beautiful Wanquan River. The theme then undergoes several subtle variations, depicting the river's diverse imagery—sometimes shimmering under the sunlight, sometimes flowing smoothly. Each variation enhances the sense of serenity and elegance, immersing the listener in the breathtaking scenery of the Wanquan River and the harmonious unity between the army and the people.



Figure 18 The Army and the People Are One Family

Source: http://www.sohu.com/a/321329578_753250

Exemple2: The introduction of The Army and the People Are One Family



3.2.5 Musical Image Analysis of *The Happy Female Warrior*

The theme of this piece originates from the fifth section of the fourth act in the ballet *The Female Warrior and the Cook Squad Leader's Dance*. This work portrays the lively, optimistic, and cheerful personality of the female warriors, as well as the honest and simple nature of the old cook squad leader. Through this characterization, it further reflects the innocence and vitality of the Red Army's female warriors and the atmosphere of unity and camaraderie in the military camp. Using a variety of instruments and musical techniques, the music vividly recreates the scene's ambiance and emotions.

First, the introduction in the ballet music uses the harp to imitate the sound of the Wanquan River, creating a serene and flowing natural backdrop. The violin employs tremolo in divided bowing, enhancing the depth of the water sound, while the oboe plays the "Wanquan River Water" theme, enriching the musical color. The addition of the triangle brightens the tone, resembling sunlight shimmering on the water's surface. In the piano version, arpeggios mimic the water's movement, while tremolos create the effect of sparkling waves, further enhancing the vividness of the scene.

The first theme in the exposition is lively and playful, as if portraying the mischievous young female warriors frolicking by the river, teasing the old cook. This section is full of childlike joy and energy. Following this, the second theme appears, derived from the melody of the *Female Warriors' Dance*. It is bright and flowing, forming a distinct contrast with the playful first theme and showcasing the grace and strength of the female warriors during their dance. Finally, the first theme returns, gradually fading with eighth notes raised an octave, bringing the music to a light and nimble conclusion. This ending evokes an image of the female warriors playfully running away, disappearing into the distance, leaving a lingering sense of joy and vitality.

Overall, this piece vividly portrays the ballet scene through rich instrumental arrangements and delicate expressive techniques. It captures both the tranquility of nature and the liveliness of the characters, exemplifying the perfect fusion of music and dance.



Figure 19 The Happy Female Warrior

Source: https://m.sohu.com/a/148140140_659180

Exemple3:The introduction of *The Happy Female Warrior*

The Happy Woman Soldiers

Ad libitum

3.2.6 Musical Image Analysis of *Changqing's Martyrdom*

Changqing's Martyrdom portrays the heroic execution scene of Hong Changqing, the party representative of the Women's Red Army, after being captured by the enemy warlord Nan Batian. Through variations in melody, harmony, and rhythm, the music vividly depicts Hong Changqing's complex psychological state in the face of life and death. It conveys both his unwavering loyalty to the revolutionary cause and his steadfast belief in ultimate victory. This conviction is embodied in the solemn yet rousing main theme, symbolizing his unshakable confidence in spreading the red flag across the land. The piece employs contrast to highlight Hong Changqing's fearlessness and composure in the face of the enemy. Intense and dramatic sections create a sense of oppression, reflecting the enemy's coercion, while more lyrical and heartfelt passages express his steadfast dedication to revolutionary ideals and his deep affection for his comrades. This contrast enhances the dramatic tension and underscores Hong Changqing's noble spirit and fearless sacrifice. In the climax, powerful orchestration and stirring melodies depict his courageous martyrdom. The grandeur and tragic emotion of

the music celebrate the revolutionary spirit of self-sacrifice while reaffirming the certainty of victory.

Overall, *Changqing's Martyrdom* successfully shapes Hong Changqing's heroic image through rich musical expression. It not only presents his noble character and profound ideological convictions but also deeply conveys the revolutionary's unwavering integrity and loyalty to the cause. This piece is not only a tribute to Hong Changqing as an individual but also a salute to the revolutionary spirit itself.

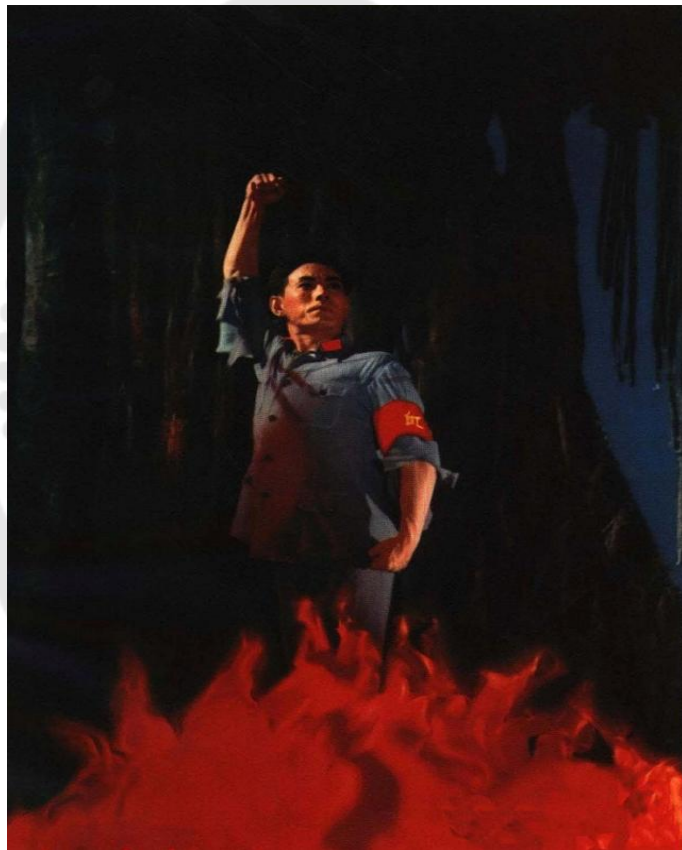


Figure 20 Hong Changqing bravely faced martyrdom, standing amidst roaring flames.

Source: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1610867295946950140>

3.2.7 Musical Image Analysis of *Marching Forward with Courage*

The seventh movement *Marching Forward with Courage* is taken from the interlude *Overwhelming Force, Pursuing Victory* between the fifth and sixth scenes of the ballet. This piece portrays the Red Army soldiers' collective dance after the heroic martyrdom of Hong Changqing, the party representative of the Women's Red Army. The music depicts how the soldiers transform their grief into strength, inherit the revolutionary spirit of their fallen comrade, and vow to carry the revolution to the end, ultimately achieving victory by defeating the enemy. Through rich musical techniques, the piece conveys the unstoppable revolutionary momentum and the unwavering fighting spirit of the Red Army soldiers.

First, the musical theme is derived from the closing phrase of *The Song of the Women's Red Army*, distilling four core notes that form the "leading motif" of the first section. These four notes are developed using various techniques throughout the piece, serving as a central thread in its musical progression. This motif not only enhances the unity of the composition but also symbolizes the soldiers' steadfast commitment to their revolutionary beliefs.

Exemple4:the wide tonal range of *Marching Forward with Courage*

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Marching Forward with Courage". The score is written for piano and features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked "Allegro vivo". The score is divided into five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a forte (ff) dynamic. The second system includes a piano (p) dynamic and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The third system features an 8-measure rest in the treble staff. The fourth system includes a 5-measure rest in the bass staff. The fifth system includes an 8-measure rest in the treble staff. The score concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

Additionally, the music employs "polyphonic textures" and a "wide tonal range" to create a grand and powerful soundscape. The interwoven and echoing polyphonic voices reflect both the collective strength of the Red Army soldiers and their complex emotions—grief for their fallen comrades and an unshakable conviction in revolutionary victory. The expansive tonal range further amplifies the dramatic and impactful quality of the music, evoking the image of the Red Army advancing like an overwhelming tidal wave, unstoppable in their pursuit.

Furthermore, the piece utilizes strong rhythms and stirring melodies to depict the soldiers' relentless charge and pursuit of the enemy. The combination of a

driving rhythmic pulse and soaring melodic lines creates a sense of urgency and power, symbolizing the unstoppable force of the revolution. The climax, marked by intense sound effects and dramatic contrasts, pushes the emotional intensity to its peak, capturing the triumphant moment of the Red Army's final victory over the enemy.

Overall, *Marching Forward with Courage* vividly portrays the revolutionary spirit of the Red Army soldiers as they transform sorrow into strength, carry on the legacy of their fallen comrades, and charge forward with unwavering determination. Through the development of the leading motif, polyphonic textures, expansive tonal range, and powerful rhythmic and melodic elements, the music not only serves as a response to Hong Changqing's heroic sacrifice but also passionately celebrates the certainty of revolutionary victory and the unstoppable strength of the revolution.



Figure 21 *Marching Forward with Courage*

Source: http://www.sohu.com/a/472818662_482071

Through a brief analysis of the musical imagery in the seven movements of the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, it is evident that composer Du Mingxin showcases a distinctive personal style and creative philosophy in this work. His music is characterized by its melodious and accessible nature, with expressive, individualized melodies playing a leading role in shaping the musical narrative. This results in an artistic effect that balances grandeur with delicate lyricism, maintaining a bright tonal color while avoiding intense dramatic conflict.

Du Mingxin places great emphasis on structural balance and precision, ensuring well-defined themes and clear phrasing. For example, in *The Happy Female Warrior*, the four-bar phrasing progresses in a layered manner, demonstrating a rigorous musical logic. Adapted from the ballet music, the suite seamlessly integrates elements of dance and drama. The composer skillfully employs tonal melodies combined with dance rhythms, utilizing techniques such as register shifts, textural transformations, and modulations to achieve dramatic expression through harmonic layering and voice distribution.

Moreover, Du Mingxin remains committed to a tonal framework while incorporating folk melodies, actively blending Western modern techniques with traditional music to forge a unique compositional style. These seven pieces collectively highlight his mastery of melodic construction, structural discipline, and innovative transformation of national musical language.

3.3 Analysis of the ethnic music style of the Suite of *The Red Detachment of Women*

In a detailed examination of the formal structure of the entire suite, the unique and sophisticated compositional techniques of Du Mingxin are brought clearly to light. Drawing upon a profound foundation in musical theory and practice, Du skillfully employs fundamental Western compositional forms, such as sonata form and rondo form, thereby endowing the suite with a coherent logical framework and a dynamic structural progression. However, his creative vision extends beyond the confines of the Western musical tradition. Du actively seeks pathways for integrating Chinese musical elements, achieving a seamless synthesis between the two systems.

Chinese national musical forms possess distinctive developmental trajectories and aesthetic principles, characterized by a focus on linear melodic development and the evocation of musical imagery. Du Mingxin demonstrates a keen sensitivity to these qualities, integrating them organically with Western formal structures to achieve a complementary relationship. Furthermore, he meticulously incorporates the Chinese pentatonic scale—comprising the tones “gong”, “shang”, “jue”, “zhi” and “yu”—which imparts a pronounced Eastern timbral color and strong national character to the work. Through his masterful compositional approach, Du imbues the suite with a rich infusion of Chinese cultural identity, allowing audiences to perceive and appreciate the unique aesthetic that emerges from the dialogue between Eastern and Western musical traditions.

3.3.1 The National and Revolutionary Character of the Musical Themes

As a red classic piece of music, *The Red Detachment of Women* is still a melody that people can easily remember and often sing today. This is due to its central theme — “Mao Zedong’s Great Military Thought.” Mao’s military philosophy primarily revolves around “armed struggle,” “people’s war,” and “the Party’s leadership,” and the ballet vividly expresses this central idea. When adapting the ballet into the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, Du Mingxin also upheld this central thought, making the music simple, direct, unadorned, and inspiring, with clear “revolutionary theme” characteristics, making it more accessible to the people. As Du Mingxin once stated, “Although the smoke and flames of war have faded, that period of history must never be forgotten. As we embark on a new journey, we must make full use of the invaluable legacy of red classic music, ensuring that these revolutionary works continue to resonate as the main theme of our era.” (Cao Liya, 2022, 13, 61-63)

In creating the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* around Mao Zedong’s great military philosophy, multiple musical images were created. Based on these images and the plot, various musical themes were designed, with three primary themes: the “Women’s Army Theme,” the “Wu Qinghua Theme,” and the “Hong Changqing Theme.” When Du Mingxin adapted the ballet into a piano suite, he used

these three themes as the framework for composition. Among these, the "Women's Army Theme" is the most important and runs throughout the entire suite. The three main musical themes are closely tied to the central idea, becoming the soul of the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women* determining the suite's value orientation and stylistic characteristics.

In the suite, Du Mingxin repeatedly uses the "Women's Army Theme", reflecting the central idea of armed struggle. The melody of this theme adopts the tune of Huang Zhun's *The Women's Army Song*, which runs throughout the entire suite. This gives the suite a clear combat style and revolutionary spirit, vividly conveying the image of armed struggle. The "Women's Army Theme" melody is used at the beginning and end of *Women's Army Drill*, the conclusion of *Qinghua Joins the Army*, the second part of *Changqing's Martyrdom*, and the final part of *March Forward Bravely*, all highlighting the unshakable revolutionary belief of the Women's Army. The continual use of this theme throughout the piano suite creates organic cohesion between the different sections, showcasing the suite's distinct characteristics and the era's imprint, making it a representative piece of "red classics."

The fourth piece of the suite, *The Army and People Are One Family*, reflects the central idea of People's War. This piece uses the melody from *The Clear Waters of Wanquan River* from the ballet. The music is warm and beautiful, expressing the close relationship between the army and the people, and their firm belief in uniting to fight the enemy and move forward. This is a concentrated embodiment of People's War in Mao Zedong's military philosophy.

The sixth piece, *Changqing's Martyrdom*, uses the "Hong Changqing Theme" from the ballet, reflecting the central idea of "the Party's leadership." The piece, in five parts, depicts Hong Changqing's heroic actions as he infiltrates enemy lines and sacrifices his life. It emphasizes his role as a leader, fearless in the face of danger, leading the Women's Army to ultimate victory. In the final section of the music, the melody of *The Internationale* is introduced, symbolizing how the soldiers march forward,

stepping on the blood of martyrs, further strengthening the portrayal of Hong Changqing's heroic image.

The third piece of the piano suite, *Qinghua Joins the Army*, is a concentrated embodiment of the "Wu Qinghua Theme." Most of the melodies in this piece are derived from the "Wu Qinghua Theme." It follows Wu Qinghua's journey from escaping from danger to joining the Red Army, from denouncing the actions of the reactionary forces to receiving the Party's education and training. The piece ends with the "Women's Army Theme" melody, showing that the "Wu Qinghua Theme" and the "Women's Army Theme" are interconnected and unified.

3.3.2 Use of Chinese Pentatonic Modes

Du Mingxin, with his professional expertise in composition, masterfully fused Western traditional compositional techniques with Chinese folk music materials, seamlessly incorporating them into the tonal music of the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*. This approach not only enhanced the work's contemporary relevance but also reinforced its national identity. Many Chinese composers, when creating piano works, have drawn on Western concepts and methods while integrating elements of Chinese national music. This synthesis serves as a means of expressing their deep appreciation for national musical traditions.

In the compositional process, creative and adaptive melodies often utilize the Chinese pentatonic scale. These melodies originate from a wide range of sources, including traditional folk music and ethnic minority melodies. Additionally, elements such as pentatonic intervals, compound chords, tertian and quartal harmonies are incorporated to enrich the musical texture.(Fan Zuyin,2013)

For example, in the coda section of measures 61–63 in *Women's Detachment Drills*, Du Mingxin employs a pentatonic melody. The performer's right hand plays the pentatonic melody, while the left hand predominantly features arpeggios, enhancing the music's sense of urgency and compactness. In *Army and Civilians as One Family*, Du draws on the theme melody from the folk song *The Waters of Wanquan River Are Clear and Pure*. In the first eight measures, the music incorporates triple-

octave ornamental arpeggios, with the chords progressing in octave unison and overlapping with trills. This effectively highlights the pentatonic character of the piece.

Example 5: Measures 61–63 of Women's Detachment Drills.



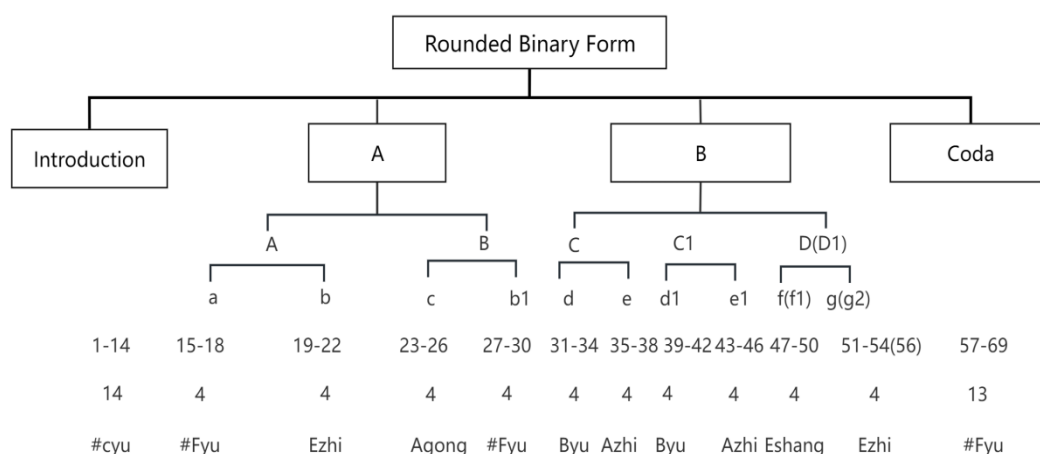
Example 6: The thematic melody of The Waters of Wanquan River Are Clear and Pure.



Through the use of pentatonic melodies, Du Mingxin enrich their works with both cultural depth and artistic innovation, contributing to the development of a uniquely Chinese piano repertoire. By drawing from folk traditions and weaving them into Western piano techniques, these compositions become a bridge between tradition and modernity, reinforcing the identity of Chinese piano music on the global stage.

3.3.3 The Formal Analysis of the *Red Detachment of Women* Piano Suite

Formal Structure of *Women Soldiers under training*



Women Soldiers Under Training adopts a rounded binary form, in which the various sections are interwoven to collectively shape a stirring and emotionally charged musical movement. The piece opens with a 14-bar introduction that exhibits a symmetrical structure of 8+6 measures. In this introductory section, powerful octave chords marked “ff” (fortissimo) boldly present the iconic “Women’s Army Theme”. This dramatic and forceful opening immediately establishes a majestic and awe-inspiring atmosphere, capturing the listener’s attention and evoking the passionate and vigorous spirit of the revolutionary era.

The A section consists of two musical phrases, each made up of four symmetrically structured sub-phrases. The structure is precise and orderly. As the melody unfolds, the upper voice carries the main theme with agile and leaping notes,

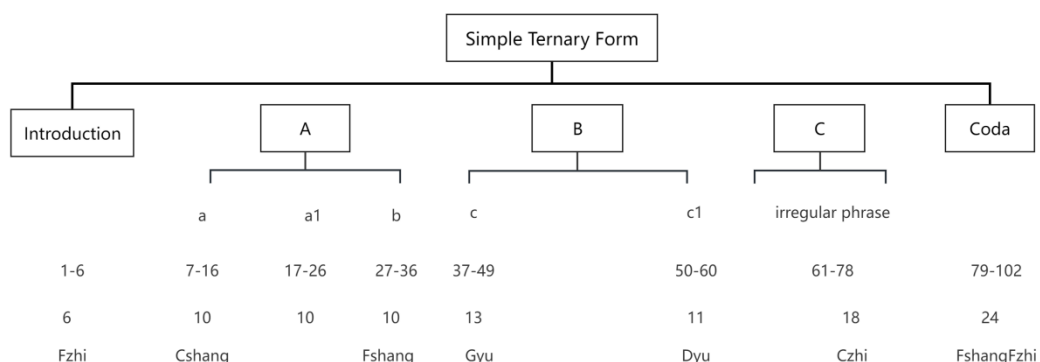
vividly portraying the heroic and spirited demeanor of the women soldiers. The middle voice features half-note chords, while the lower voice alternates with quarter-note chords, together forming a rhythmic pattern that ingeniously mimics the sound of a military drumbeat. This creates a strong sense of pulse and movement, allowing listeners to visualize the disciplined and resolute training of the women soldiers.

The following B section is composed of three progressively developing musical phrases, each comprising two sub-phrases. These layers further enrich the musical content and emotional expression. The C1 phrase functions as a clever echo and development of the preceding C phrase. In C1, the right hand reiterates the rapid sixteenth-note motion found in C, resembling nimble “musical sprites,” which infuse the piece with energy and vitality. Meanwhile, the left hand shifts from block eighth-note chords to a decomposed texture consisting of eighth notes with widened major second intervals. This transformation enhances the harmonic palette and provides the melody with a richly supportive backdrop.

The D section introduces new thematic material characterized by dotted rhythms and syncopation, effectively disrupting the previously established rhythmic pattern. This innovation injects the music with renewed vitality and contrast. The repetition of this section further reinforces the impression of the distinctive rhythmic motif, intensifying the overall emotional trajectory of the piece.

Toward the coda, the key modulates to F-sharp Yu mode (a traditional Chinese pentatonic mode), and the initial theme from the introduction is restated, achieving an elegant thematic recapitulation. This return not only completes a structurally satisfying musical arc but also conveys a sense of emotional resolution and sublimation. As a result, the central theme of the work is rendered even more poignant and enduring, leaving a profound and lasting impression on the listener.

Formal Structure of The Militia Dagger Dance



The Militia Dagger Dance adopts a simple ternary (ABA) form. The piece opens with a six-measure introduction, performed at a relatively slow tempo. Each note appears to gather strength, as if laying an emotional and narrative foundation for the listener, gradually leading the audience into the world of the Red Guards.

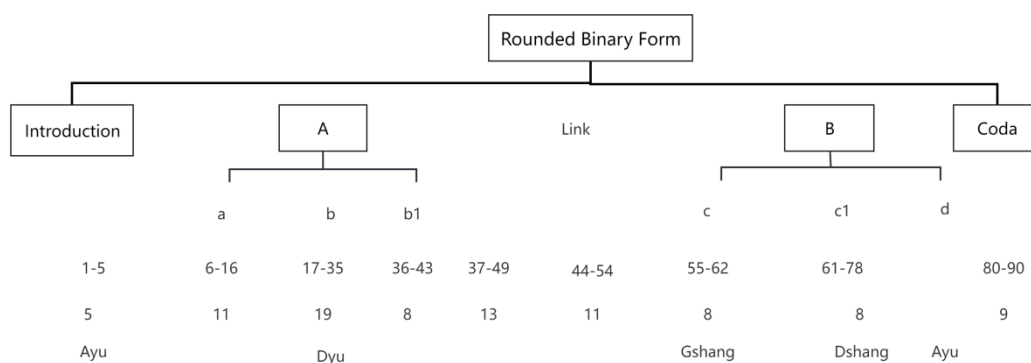
The subsequent A section consists of three phrases. The initial a phrase functions as the thematic statement—like a shining star, it establishes the tone of the entire section. With a concise yet forceful melodic line, it vividly conveys the unwavering faith and distinctive character of the Red Guards. The following a1 and b phrases serve as the first and second variations of the a phrase, respectively. Rather than being mere repetitions, these variations creatively develop the original theme through subtle rhythmic adjustments and pitch modifications. Each phrase spans ten measures, and the symmetrical, well-proportioned structure reflects a high degree of formal rigor. Additionally, the tempo of Section A gradually accelerates from a slower pace, generating a strong sense of contrast. This tempo change evokes the transformation of the Red Guards from calm readiness to high-spirited determination, as they prepare to charge into battle.

Section B comprises two repeated phrases: c and c1. The c phrase begins with a five-measure introduction, while c1 concludes with a three-measure ending, rendering the entire section structurally complete and rhythmically cohesive. The repetition of these two phrases reinforces the thematic material and enhances the expressive power of the music.

Section C presents a marked contrast to the preceding sections. Spanning 18 measures, it breaks away from symmetrical phrase construction, forming a non-periodic structure. The melodic lines here are broad and expansive, creating an impression of grandeur and strength. At first, the tempo is slightly slower, seemingly reflecting the introspection and resolute determination of the Red Guards. However, at measure 75, the tempo suddenly increases, igniting the music with a fiery energy that propels the melody toward the coda, pushing the emotional intensity to a new climax.

The coda extends over 24 measures and features a brilliant reworking of thematic material from Sections A, B, and C. This structural design not only recalls the suite's principal melodies but also weaves together the emotional and thematic threads of the preceding sections. Notably, the key modulates from F “Shang” mode back to F “Zhi” mode—a tonal return that symbolizes a spiritual resolution and closure. This harmonious and well-rounded conclusion leaves a lasting impression, immersing the listener in the evocative atmosphere of the music.

Formal Structure of Qinghua Joins The Army



Qinghua Joins the Army adopts a rounded binary form. The piece opens with a five-measure introduction, consisting of five successive block chords that are concise yet powerful. The A section unfolds like a slowly emerging portrait, composed of three sub-sections: “a”, “b”, and “b1”. Each sub-section revolves around

the central “Wu Qinghua” thematic motif, while maintaining its own distinct emotional character and tonal color.

The a section introduces the “Wu Qinghua” theme in a unique mode. Its impassioned melody seems to directly convey Qinghua’s inner turmoil—an intense outpouring of suffering and defiant resistance, vividly expressing both her personal anguish and her unwavering spirit of rebellion. The subsequent b section expands upon the theme through elongation of rhythmic values and a slower tempo. This transformation shifts the emotional tone from passionate indignation to sorrow and lament, as though Qinghua is silently tending to her wounds in darkness, sharing with the audience a profound sense of grief and hardship.

The b1 section further intensifies the emotional narrative of “b”. By thickening the melodic texture and enriching the harmonic structure, the music gains greater depth and complexity. This conveys the intricate, turbulent emotions that surge within Qinghua, heightening the emotional resonance and leading to a deeper, more poignant expression.

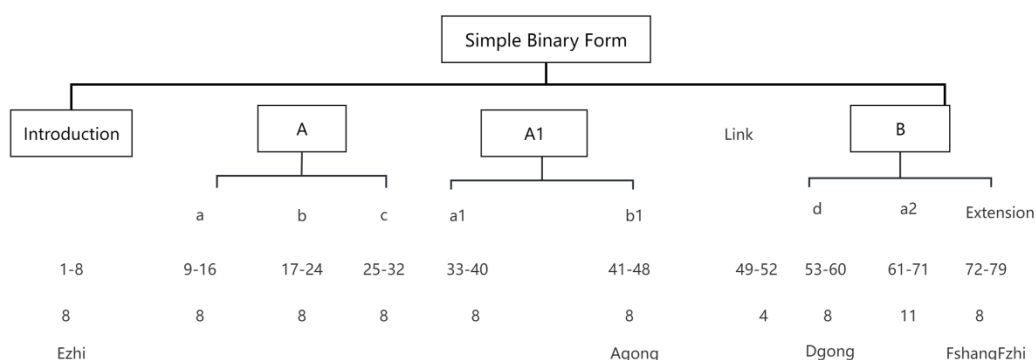
Between the A and B sections lies an 11-measure transition. This passage develops and sequences a motivic fragment derived from the “Wu Qinghua” theme. Through persistent repetition, variation, and intensification, the motif gathers momentum like surging waves, gradually building emotional intensity and driving the music toward a dramatic climax. The audience, drawn into this powerful emotional arc, becomes fully immersed in the expressive force of the music.

The B section consists of three sub-sections. The “c1” subsection is a repetition of “c”, employing a balanced and symmetrical structure. Its steady, regular rhythm resembles firm, deliberate footsteps, propelling the music forward and reinforcing the listener’s memory of the central theme. The “d” section spans nine measures and functions as the concluding passage of Qinghua’s emotional monologue. At this point, the tonality shifts from D “Shang” mode to A “Yu” mode—a symbolic transformation reflecting a turning point in Qinghua’s emotional state. The earlier

impassioned outcry transitions into deeper reflection and emotional resolution, portraying the full arc of her inner journey.

The coda, which extends for 11 measures, reintroduces the familiar “Women’s Army Theme” with lyrical resonance. The reappearance of this theme elevates the emotional atmosphere of the piece. It signifies Qinghua’s rediscovery of belonging and the source of her strength. At the same time, it underscores the unity between Wu Qinghua and the Women’s Army—they are one and the same in their shared pursuit of ideals and freedom. In this moment, the music reaches a state of powerful harmony and emotional fulfillment, resonating deeply with the audience and leaving a lasting impression.

Formal Structure of The Army and the People Are One Family



The Army and the People Are One Family is composed in a simple binary form, a structure that, while concise, allows for rich emotional layering. The form serves as an expressive vehicle for the warm and touching sentiment conveyed by the music, vividly portraying the deep bond between the military and the people. The piece begins with an eight-measure introduction, characterized by a rhythmically free and unrestrained style.

Following the introduction, Section A unfolds, consisting of three distinct phrases, each precisely eight measures in length, reflecting a symmetrical and well-proportioned formal design. The “a” phrase sets the tone for the section. With its simple and sincere melodic line, it evokes the quiet, everyday lives of the people gentle and

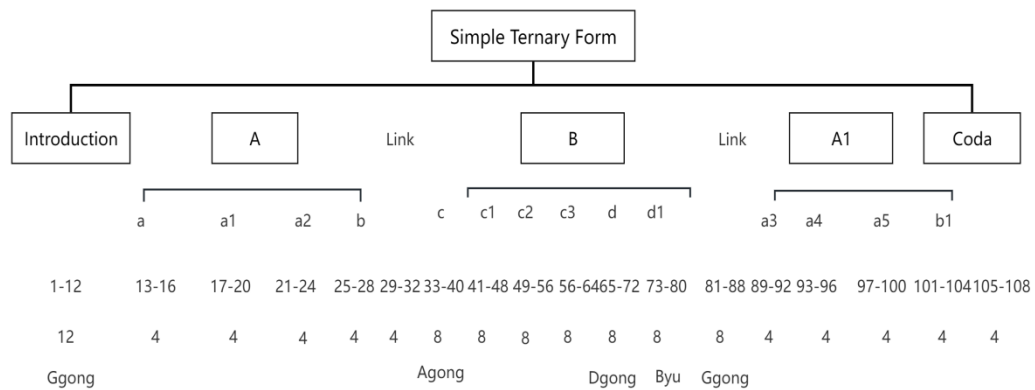
unassuming. The second phrase, “b”, follows naturally and introduces variation and development upon the “a” phrase. Its melodic contours gently rise and fall, like the minor undulations of daily life, adding layers of emotional nuance and variety. The “c” phrase emerges as an extension and elaboration of “b”, further enriching the expressive content and deepening the sense of familiarity and closeness, like the growing warmth between neighbors over time.

The A1 section presents a mirrored variation of the A section. This reflective transformation of the familiar material infuses the melody with renewed character, much like viewing everyday life from a different perspective. Although the musical material remains recognizable, this variation introduces fresh beauty and insight, offering the listener a renewed auditory experience.

The transitional passage is constructed with rapid sixteenth-note dyads arranged in sequence. These tightly clustered notes serve as an emotional accelerant, propelling the piece forward and gradually intensifying its previously tender atmosphere. This musical momentum simulates the heightened emotional energy of collective effort, as if evoking the spirited unity of the military and civilians working together in times of adversity.

Section B introduces new thematic material and consists of a new melodic phrase, a varied restatement, and a concluding supplemental phrase. The new phrase adds a sense of freshness, as though depicting a newly encountered aspect of life. The “a2” phrase revisits and expands upon the original “a” theme by adding three measures, enriching the melody and suggesting personal growth or the ongoing development of shared experiences, life becoming more robust and fulfilling over time. The supplemental phrase, repeated twice, concludes the piece firmly on the tonic chord. This final cadence conveys a sense of completeness and stability, much like the enduring and comforting relationship between the army and the people. The piece ends not only with musical resolution but also with emotional fulfillment, leaving the listener with a lingering sense of peace, warmth, and reflection.

Formal Structure of *The Joyful Female Warrior*



The Joyful Female Warrior is composed in a simple ternary form, using delicate musical language to depict a vivid and picturesque soundscape. The piece opens with a 12-measure introduction, performed at a moderately slow tempo. Its freely flowing and graceful rhythm evokes the image of early morning mist drifting gently along the banks of the Wanquan River, effectively painting a tranquil and serene morning scene.

Section A is formally balanced, comprising four phrases of four measures each. The rhythm is brisk and regular, and the closely connected phrases resemble a cheerful folk tune, each one narrating the comfort and beauty of everyday life. The light and pleasant melody suggests the simple activities of the riverside inhabitants, evoking a sense of warmth and familiarity.

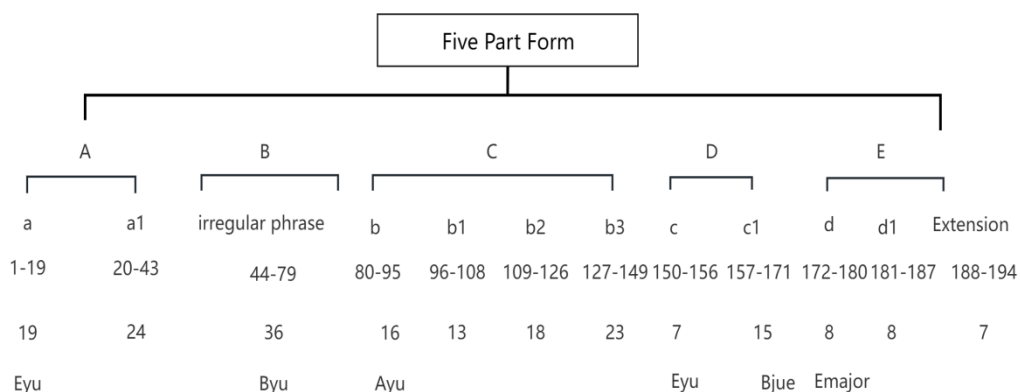
A natural transition occurs via a four-measure linking passage, leading into Section B, which presents distinctive design features in both melody and texture. This section consists of four parallel phrases followed by two repeated phrases. The “c” and “c1” phrases are voiced in the left hand, providing a solid rhythmic foundation that propels the music forward with steadiness and depth. In contrast, the “c2” and “c3” phrases are carried by the right hand, characterized by agile melodic leaps that create a responsive interplay between the two hands. The entire B section is supported by a sixteenth-note broken chord accompaniment texture, resembling a murmuring stream.

This fluid motion imbues the music with rhythmic vitality, vividly depicting a lively riverside scene—teeming with people working, playing, and filled with the energy of life.

Following B is an eight-measure phrase introducing new musical material, functioning as a transitional bridge into Section A1. In A1, the original melody of Section A is fully restated. This reprise reinforces the thematic material and allows listeners to revisit and re-experience the previous joyful imagery, serving as both a musical and emotional reflection.

The piece concludes with a spirited passage of ascending sixteenth-note scale figures, which propel the musical emotion toward a final climax. As the passage gently fades away, it leaves a lasting echo that reflects the peaceful and lively spirit of the Wanquan River, drawing the listener to stay emotionally connected with the music long after its final notes.

Formal Structure of *Changqing's Martyrdom*



Changqing's Martyrdom employs the uniquely Chinese "Five-Section Form" to shape its musical narrative and emotional development. The A section consists of two phrases. The initial "a" phrase introduces a simple yet evocative melody, rich in the distinctive charm of Chinese folk music, and paints a picture of tranquility and beauty. The following "a1" phrase, a parallel version of the first, enhances the melodic

line with a fuller harmonic texture, transforming the once modest theme into something more resonant and dimensional.

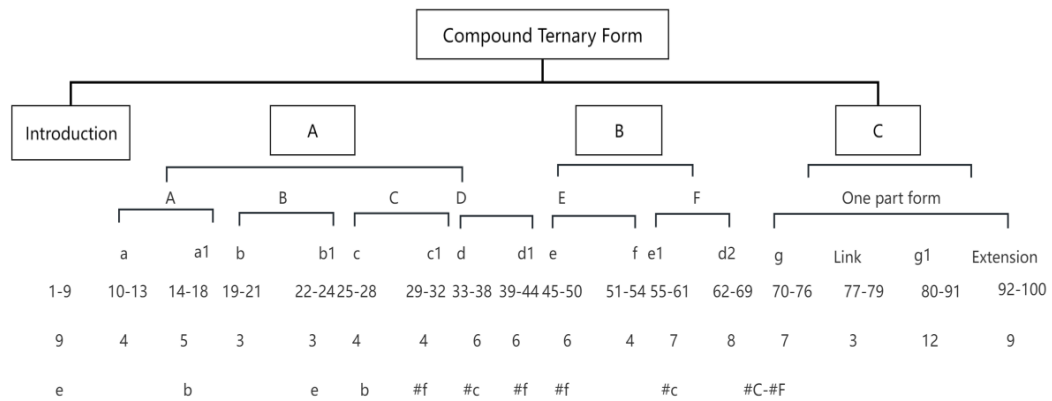
The B section introduces a new thematic idea at a slightly faster tempo, like a gentle breeze stirring the previously calm atmosphere and bringing a renewed sense of energy. This section plays a crucial transitional role, both preserving the emotional continuity from Section A and laying the groundwork for the ensuing development, drawing the listener deeper into the narrative world of the music.

The C section is comprised of four parallel phrases. The b phrase presents entirely new thematic material, akin to a fresh spring of musical expression, offering a novel and engaging auditory experience. The subsequent “b1”, “b2” and “b3” phrases are developmental variations of “b”, crafted through subtle alterations in pitch and rhythm. This continuous transformation enriches the thematic material, suggesting a dynamic and evolving story, full of life and movement.

In the D section, the music reaches its dramatic peak. It is formed by two parallel phrases that feature rapid thirty-second-note runs combined with octave passages, introducing new musical content. These sweeping gestures create an overwhelming sonic force, reminiscent of powerful surging waves, evoking a profound sense of passion and heroic intensity—undoubtedly the emotional and structural climax of the work.

The E section, which concludes the piece, is a two-phrase segment with an extended coda. It features the theme of *The Internationale*, lending the music a profound ideological and emotional weight. An additional seven bars further enhance its expressive power. The work ends with a majestic “fff” dynamic, leaving a resounding, awe-inspiring impression. This powerful conclusion not only reinforces the central themes but also invites the audience into deep reflection, making the work’s message linger long after the final note.

Formal Structure of *March Forward Bravely*



March Forward Bravely adopts a compound ternary form, with a sophisticated musical structure in which each section is tightly interwoven yet possesses its own distinctive character. The piece opens with an introductory passage that immediately states the main theme, articulated through open-positioned octave chords. These powerful, forceful notes erupt with overwhelming momentum, instantly capturing the listener's attention and drawing them eagerly into the musical narrative.

The A section comprises four subsections, each consisting of two parallel phrases. In each subsection, the reprise phrase maintains the same texture and rhythm as its preceding phrase, yet introduces a change in mode or tonality. This compositional technique allows listeners to perceive varied modal colorations within a familiar melodic framework, akin to conveying a multifaceted emotional experience through a consistent narrative line, thereby enriching the musical texture and enhancing its expressive depth.

The B section follows a simple binary form. The “e1” phrase is a one-bar expansion and restatement of “e”, mirroring the repetition technique seen in the A section—where rhythmic and textural consistency is preserved, but the tonality is altered. Similarly, the “d2” phrase is a rhythmically reduced variation of “d”. These subtle transformations maintain a degree of continuity while simultaneously introducing fresh

developmental trajectories, offering listeners a dynamic and engaging auditory experience.

The C section is through-composed, featuring a looser and more fluid structure. The g phrase draws thematic material from the “Women’s Army Theme” using it as a motivic basis for sequential development. This thematic borrowing infuses the music with renewed vitality. A three-bar transition then smoothly leads into the g1 phrase, which fully restates the “Women’s Army Theme” reinforcing the musical identity and invoking a strong sense of familiarity. The final nine bars introduce an accompaniment texture built on octaves and chords, releasing a surge of musical energy that culminates in a majestic and resounding conclusion. The piece ends on a powerful high point, leaving the listener deeply moved and with a lasting impression.

3.3.4 The Application of Traditional Folk Melodies

Traditional folk melodies, commonly referred to as folk music, are musical works that have been passed down orally among the laboring masses over long periods of history. In the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, traditional folk melodies are seamlessly integrated into the music. For example, in *Army and Civilians as One Family*, the primary melody is derived from *The Waters of Wanquan River Are Clear and Pure*, while elements of the Li ethnic group's tune *Song of Wuzhishan* are also incorporated. Through a simple, natural, and slow-moving melody, the piece conveys the Li people's heartfelt admiration and support for Chairman Mao and the Red Army, evoking sincere and touching emotions. Listeners can sense the unique historical and cultural characteristics of the Li ethnic group in Hainan through the music.

While composing the piano suite, Du Mingxin resided on Hainan Island, absorbing numerous features of Hainan's folk music. By creatively arranging and adapting these folk melodies, he deeply intertwined the piano work with traditional Chinese culture. As a result, the piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women* reflects the essence of folk music and serves as a piano music form rooted in the characteristics of traditional melodies (Cao Ning, 2019). This approach not only enhances the emotional

impact of the work but also fosters a strong resonance with audiences, allowing them to connect with the cultural and historical richness it represents.

3.3.5 Imitation of Ethnic Instrument Timbres

China, as a multi-ethnic nation, is rich in unique musical characteristics across its diverse cultures. These traits provide an abundant source of inspiration for Chinese piano music composition. Many piano composers have explored the practice of imitating the tonal qualities of traditional ethnic instruments, such as the ethereal and fluid *guqin*, the melancholic and distant *xiao*, or the bold and resonant *pipa*.

For instance, in Du Mingxin's piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, the piece *Red Guards' Dance with Five-Inch Daggers* demonstrates such efforts. By employing ethnic harmonic intervals, such as minor seconds, the piano imitates the timbre of the *suona* (a traditional Chinese wind instrument). Meanwhile, the chords played by the left and right hands emulate the rhythms of small cymbals and *tanggu* (a small hall drum), vividly conveying an intense and dynamic musical emotion.

Similarly, in the introduction to *Army and Civilians as One Family*, Du Mingxin bases the composition on the *A gong* mode and pentatonic characteristics. The right hand sustains a high-octave tremolo, convincingly mimicking the sound of a bamboo flute. This effectively paints an auditory picture of the serene and clear waters of the Wanquan River, transporting the listener to a tranquil and harmonious setting.

Du Mingxin's effort to simulate the timbres of traditional ethnic instruments on the piano enriches the musical expression of *The Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, making it more vivid and captivating. This innovative technique not only enhances the narrative depth of the music but also deepens its connection to Chinese cultural heritage.

3.4 The Piano Suite *the Red Detachment of Women* and Cultural Memory

Theory

3.4.1 Cultural Memory Theory

Cultural memory is a key concept in the field of cultural studies, first introduced by the German scholar Jan Assmann in the 1980s. The theoretical foundation of cultural memory is derived from Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. Building upon Halbwachs' concept, Assmann categorized memory into two types: communicative memory and cultural memory. In a study, Jin Shoufu pointed out that "Jan Assmann explores the relationship between memory and culture, as well as memory and identity, from the perspective of cultural studies. He divides memory into three dimensions: individual, social, and cultural. In memory theory, these correspond to individual memory, social memory, and cultural memory, respectively. The concept of cultural memory extends the study of memory beyond the individual level to the cultural domain" (Jin Shoufu, 2017).

Chen Guozhan further elaborates on cultural memory, stating that "cultural memory includes essential and repeatedly used texts, images, and rituals within a society over a certain period. At its core, it consists of traditions related to political identity that are shared by all members of the group. Through these traditions, the group defines and establishes its self-image. Based on them, members of the collective recognize their common attributes as well as their distinctiveness." (Chen Guozhan, 2016).

Cultural memory focuses on the interactive relationship between society and culture, consciousness and culture, as well as psychology and culture. It is preserved through language, literature, and education, gradually becoming a shared cognitive framework within a social group and ultimately integrating into national identity. By continuously reproducing specific historical events or values, cultural memory fosters a strong sense of cohesion on both cognitive and emotional levels. This process directly contributes to the construction of national identity and solidifies the spiritual foundation of a nation.

3.4.2 The Piano Suite *the Red Detachment of Women* and Cultural Memory

Theory

The Red Detachment of Women is a "red classic" of New China, based on the history of the Qiongya Column in Hainan. (Mao Zedong, 1942) Through various artistic forms such as ballet, film music, and piano suite, it transforms revolutionary history into cultural memory, embodying the collective identity of the people. The story, shaped through survivors' memoirs and films, constructs a shared group memory. *The Red Detachment of Women* primarily consisted of rural women from the peasant militia, who fought bravely and carried out crucial missions such as providing cover during battles. Du Mingxin's piano suite reconstructs their heroic image, focusing on female revolutionaries and highlighting the heroic spirit within collective memory. It reinforces values of gender equality and female emancipation while praising the Party and the nation. More than 40 years after its creation, the piano suite remains historically and culturally significant.

In order to compose a piece rich in the musical elements of the Li ethnic group, Du Mingxin conducted extensive field research in Hainan, immersing himself in the lives of the Li people. Before the era of musical notation, folk songs were primarily transmitted orally. However, with the introduction of written records and notation, folk music transitioned from being preserved through "ritual" to being recorded as "text." In the context of promoting cultural confidence and cultural identity, China has placed great emphasis on the protection and development of ethnic minority music resources. By integrating folk elements into contemporary compositions, composers contribute to the sustainable development of minority music, ensuring the longevity of cultural memory. In *the Red Detachment of Women* piano suite, the theme of *Military and Civilians as One* is based on the song *Wanquan River Water*, which Du Mingxin adapted from *Five Finger Mountain Song*, a traditional Li folk tune. By incorporating Hainanese folk songs, dance rhythms, and other regional cultural elements into his musical language, Du Mingxin forged a link between local culture and national identity.

The transformation from vivid memory to archival record and then to canonization is a process of reframing and recontextualization, in which the continuity of memory relies on the persistence of social relationships and frameworks. These frameworks emphasize the importance of selection. Du Mingxin selected and reconstructed the framework of Li folk songs, ensuring the continuation of the musical memory associated with the work. Recontextualization refers to the transformation of a social practice when placed in a new social context, emphasizing intertextuality—how new contexts influence the content and meaning of social practices. By adapting folk melodies into a piano suite, Du Mingxin gave them a renewed presence, allowing the Li people to continue singing these tunes through changing times, solidifying their place as classics of Li folk music. Passionate about creating music that was accessible and beloved by the people, Du Mingxin composed works with simple yet expressive musical texts, conveying the deep bond between the military and civilians. His music reflects the people's admiration and trust in the army while capturing the essence of the military-civilian relationship in its most authentic and heartfelt form.

3.5 The Cultural, Economic, Theoretical, and Educational Value of Du Mingxin's Musical Creation

3.5.1 Cultural Value

3.5.1.1 Historical Legacy Value

The Red Detachment of Women presents a vivid musical portrayal of the courageous struggles of the Hainan Red Army women during the Second Chinese Revolutionary War. Through its music, it memorializes and passes down this magnificent revolutionary history. It stands as a treasure of red music culture, carrying the ideals, sentiments, and sacrifices of revolutionary ancestors. This work not only spreads red culture domestically, embedding it in the spiritual fabric of the people, but also serves as a medium for international dialogue in the form of dance. Xu Chun pointed out in a study that “when artists engage in artistic creation, they often go through a challenging process of affirmation, negation, and an even more difficult negation of the negation. This is an uneven process of gestation, requiring them to make difficult choices between history, social reality, and personal ideals. The stylistic orientation of an artwork may

change or deviate during a certain period or phase, but its integration with the times is indispensable—it must align with reality and merge with the era” (Xu Chun,2009, p53).

Today, *The Red Detachment of Women* has become a cultural industry phenomenon, flourishing as both a musical and dance form. It has deeply integrated with tourism, ensuring its healthy and sustainable development. The red music culture elements in the work convey progressive social ideologies and values, which elevate China's international status. Therefore, effective strategies should be implemented to promote the dissemination of red music culture, fully leveraging its role in strengthening both national identity and patriotism. The cultural legacy embedded in *The Red Detachment of Women* is pivotal not only in preserving historical memory but also in promoting the collective identity of the Chinese people, making it an invaluable asset for future generations.

3.5.1.2 Artistic Innovation Value

Du Mingxin made outstanding contributions to the field of piano adaptation of ballet music. His works not only showcase the piano's wide range and rich expressive potential but also successfully preserve the essence and style of the original ballet music while endowing it with new artistic appeal and expressive depth. This adaptation process stands as a successful example of Sino-Western musical integration. Du skillfully combined Western piano performance techniques with Chinese folk music elements, particularly incorporating musical motifs from Hainanese folk dance. This fusion resulted in a piano style with distinctive Chinese national characteristics. His innovations not only enriched the expressive forms of Chinese piano music but also paved new paths for its development, serving as a model for cultural exchange and integration between Chinese and Western music.

Beyond its artistic form, Du Mingxin's adaptation carries profound spiritual value. The suite's stirring melodies, powerful rhythms, and grand musical momentum vividly depict the courage, resilience, and revolutionary spirit of the Red Detachment of Women. This musical expression is not only a tribute to history but also serves as an inspiration for contemporary audiences. Listeners can feel a strong sense

of conviction, motivating them to face challenges with unwavering determination, courage, and perseverance. This spiritual strength transcends time and space, becoming a powerful artistic force that continues to inspire generations.

Furthermore, Du Mingxin's works play a crucial role in enhancing national cohesion. Through music, he evokes a shared memory of revolutionary history, fostering an emotional connection among people of different ages and social backgrounds. Whether among the elderly or the younger generation, social elites or ordinary citizens, his works unite audiences by highlighting the power of national unity and collective strength. This emotional resonance not only bridges generational and societal divides but also strengthens the sense of national identity and solidarity. As an art form that transcends language and cultural barriers, music fulfills a unique social function, serving as a link between history and the present, individuals and the collective.

In conclusion, Du Mingxin's piano adaptation of ballet music is not only an artistic innovation but also a profound continuation and elevation of cultural and spiritual heritage. By seamlessly integrating Chinese and Western musical traditions, he created a piano style with distinct national characteristics. At the same time, his compositions inspire contemporary audiences with their passionate melodies and deep emotional impact. These works not only inject new vitality into the development of Chinese piano music but also strengthen national unity through shared historical memory and emotional resonance, demonstrating the far-reaching influence of musical art.

3.5.1.3 International Dissemination and Cultural Exchange Value

The ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*, composed by Du Mingxin, along with its derivative film adaptation, has gained widespread popularity in China and has become a significant medium for cultural exchange between China and the world. Since the 1960s, this work has continuously reached international audiences, fostering artistic interactions between China and various countries across different historical periods.

The 1970s marked the beginning of its international exposure. In 1972, the Shanghai Ballet Company performed *The Red Detachment of Women* in Japan, and in the same year, U.S. President Richard Nixon watched the ballet during his visit to China. In 1973, Japan's Matsuyama Ballet Company performed alongside Chinese ballet troupes in China and later staged the production in Japan, where it gained widespread acclaim. In 1976, the Central Ballet of China toured Austria, becoming the first major Chinese artistic ensemble to perform there after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, further expanding the ballet's international influence.

Following China's reform and opening-up, *The Red Detachment of Women* became a classic repertoire for cultural exchange. During the 2003 "Year of Chinese Culture in France," the ballet received an enthusiastic response in France. It was performed in New York twice, in 2005 and 2008, and in 2009, the Central Ballet of China staged it at the Paris Opera House, once again capturing global attention. From 2017 to 2019, the ballet was performed in Australia, North Korea, and the United Kingdom, with its 2019 London performance featuring iconic excerpts as the grand finale, earning high praise from audiences. In 2024, Canada's Red Sea Peking Opera Troupe presented a full-length modern Peking Opera adaptation of *The Red Detachment of Women*, demonstrating the work's artistic vitality across different performance forms.

As a representative of China's revolutionary artistic classics, *The Red Detachment of Women* has become a crucial medium for cultural diplomacy through its fusion of music and dance. It has not only facilitated the global dissemination of revolutionary music culture but has also contributed to the sustainable development of China's cultural industries by integrating with sectors such as tourism. The values and social ideologies embedded in the work help enhance China's international image and strengthen national identity. Looking ahead, further exploration of its cultural significance and the innovation of dissemination strategies will be essential in expanding its cultural impact on a global scale.



Figure 22 Nixon watched *The Red Detachment of Women* in 1972.

Source: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1564300568262035>



Figure 23 depicts the Central Ballet of China performed the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women* at the Paris Opera House in 2009.

Source: <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/news/2009/01-06/1515247.shtml>



Figure 24 the Red Sea Peking Opera Troupe performed the Peking Opera *The Red Detachment of Women* in Canada in 2024.

Source: <https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1sm421W79s/>

3.5.2 Economic Value

In the process of social transformation, music exists not only as a cultural form but also profoundly influences economic development by expanding the scale and forms of the market economy. According to the theory of dialectical materialism, the economy determines culture, while culture, in turn, influences the economy. As an essential part of culture, music plays a particularly significant role in shaping social and economic development, especially through its social functions.

First, music serves as a means of cultural expression, fulfilling people's spiritual needs and fostering cultural identity and emotional resonance within society. Second, the trend of music commercialization provides artists with opportunities for both creative expression and financial livelihood, promoting the professionalization and specialization of the music industry. Furthermore, as a form of entertainment, music meets the public's leisure demands and enriches people's cultural lives.

More importantly, the social functions of music are also reflected in its role in promoting market economic growth. The diversification and commercialization of musical products have not only expanded the music industry's scale but also accelerated capital circulation, leading to the emergence of new entertainment industries. Through its extensive social influence, music stimulates cultural consumption, which in turn drives social and economic development.

The ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*, composed by Du Mingxin, serves as a prime example of music's impact on the cultural industry. Since its debut in the 1960s, this ballet has been performed more than 50 times annually, becoming a classic repertoire of the National Ballet of China. By 2018, it had been staged over 5,000 times both domestically and internationally, achieving legendary status in Chinese music history. This work not only demonstrates the artistic value of music but also, through its extensive social influence, contributes to the expansion of the cultural industry.

In 2018, Sanya launched a large-scale live-action performance of *The Red Detachment of Women*, with a total investment of 1.224 billion yuan and covering an area of 179 acres. Set against the real mountain landscapes of Sanya, the performance integrates film technology and advanced lighting effects to vividly recreate the revolutionary scenes of the 1930s. This live production successfully combines revolutionary culture with the tourism industry, injecting new vitality into the local economy through ticket sales, dining, shopping, and other related consumer activities. Additionally, many historical sites and memorial halls related to *The Red Detachment of Women* have been incorporated into tourism routes, further boosting local tourism and related industries.



Figure 25 the large-scale *Coconut Sea Youth* live-action performance of *The Red Detachment of Women* in Sanya, Hainan.

Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/218446413_650971

In summary, music not only serves as a vehicle for cultural expression in times of social change but also, through its commercialization and social integration, profoundly influences economic development. It acts as a crucial bridge between culture and the economy. The success of *The Red Detachment of Women* demonstrates the significant role of music in the cultural industry and highlights its ability to drive economic progress.



Figure 26 Hainan Red Detachment of Women Memorial Hall

Source: Photo taken by author

3.5.3 Theoretical Legacy of Compositional Philosophy

Through an analysis of Du Mingxin's reflections on the national form of music, scholars have summarized the characteristics of Chinese national music form in two key aspects: first, the principle of composing in a style rooted in Chinese national music; second, the goal of creating music that meets the needs of the people. The development of new musical forms necessitates both the inheritance of traditional musical resources and the incorporation of Western compositional techniques and theories.

Du Mingxin's student, Liu Sola, remarked that his music cannot be classified solely by era or school. Composing within a style that blends realism and romanticism, Du's music bears the imprint of a turbulent life yet remains pure, without distortion or rigidity. His melodies flow naturally, driven by an unwavering childlike sincerity, independent of literary language, forming a unique beauty of their own. (Liu Suola, 2011) Therefore, the creation of new national music forms must be grounded in the

existing musical heritage, drawing from tradition while integrating Western compositional techniques, in pursuit of a distinctive modern musical culture.

3.5.4 The Educational Value of Ideological Instruction

3.5.4.1 The Educational Value of Du Mingxin's Compositions

Du Mingxin's works are deeply infused with national musical elements and revolutionary cultural spirit, profoundly reflecting the characteristics of Chinese national music. By studying his music, students can develop an understanding of the national identity and uniqueness of Chinese music, appreciate its historical and cultural evolution, and strengthen their recognition and comprehension of traditional culture, thereby enhancing their confidence in Chinese cultural heritage.

His compositional style, which skillfully integrates Chinese and Western elements, serves as an outstanding model for students' creative practice. Through analyzing his works in terms of melody, orchestration, and harmonic treatment, students can learn how to balance national identity with modernity, broadening their compositional perspectives. Moreover, works such as *The Red Detachment of Women*, with their strong narrative and emotional intensity, help students understand how music serves storytelling through the development, transformation, and contrast of thematic motifs. This enhances their grasp of musical expression and dramatic tension. Additionally, Du Mingxin's cross-disciplinary work spanning ballet, symphonic music, and other artistic forms enables students to explore the interactive relationships between music, dance, and theater, fostering their interdisciplinary artistic understanding and creative abilities.

3.5.4.2 The Role and Application of Du Mingxin's Works in Higher Education

Du Mingxin's compositions play a significant role in university music education. His works enrich the content of Chinese music analysis courses, allowing students to explore key elements such as melody, harmony, orchestration, and formal structure, thereby deepening their understanding of modern Chinese music composition. In form analysis courses, classic excerpts from *The Red Detachment of Women*, such as the *March of the Women's Army*, can be used to study the thematic

development and national musical characteristics. In orchestration courses, students can analyze his symphonic orchestration techniques and learn how large-scale compositions can be developed based on folk music.

His piano works, including *Dance of the Waterweeds* and *Weaving Fishing Nets*, are well-suited for piano instruction. By performing these pieces, students can refine their finger independence, sense of rhythm, and tone control, while also experiencing the integration of folk musical idioms with piano techniques. Furthermore, they can learn how to express the emotions and imagery of national music through piano performance.

Du Mingxin's revolutionary-themed compositions, such as *The Red Detachment of Women*, represent an essential part of China's red music culture and can serve as core material for courses on revolutionary music. These works offer valuable insight into how musical language conveys revolutionary spirit and historical context, strengthening students' understanding of red culture. In classroom discussions, analyzing the interaction between musical narratives and stage performance provides students with a multi-perspective experience of music and culture.

With his profound artistic achievements and distinctive national characteristics, Du Mingxin's compositions have become an indispensable resource in university music education. His works not only contribute to theoretical instruction and technical training but also play a crucial role in fostering students' national cultural identity, artistic creativity, and comprehensive skills. Through the study and practice of Du Mingxin's compositions, university students can gain a deeper understanding of the national, revolutionary, and modern aspects of Chinese music, ultimately contributing to the inheritance and development of Chinese music education.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study focuses on Du Mingxin's piano suite *The Red Detachment of Women*, exploring aspects such as his biography and creative background, the incorporation of Li ethnic cultural elements and identity, and the musical analysis of the suite. The research has achieved its predefined objectives and yielded the following results:

1.The Research Objective 1 is to study the musical context of Du Mingxin.The findings indicate that Du Mingxin's musical creations were profoundly influenced by both the historical context of modern China and his personal artistic pursuits. His life experiences—such as early musical education, his study abroad, and his creative practices during political movements—shaped his unique "nationalized" compositional philosophy. Du Mingxin integrated Western compositional techniques with traditional Chinese musical elements, thus developing a style that is both internationally oriented and deeply rooted in local culture. His works not only reflect the cultural demands of their time but also laid an important foundation for the "nationalization" of Chinese piano music.

2.The Research Objective 2 is to analyze the construction of Li ethnic identity.The findings indicate that through an in-depth analysis of the cultural symbols of Li ethnic costumes, music, and dance, their core role in the construction of ethnic identity is revealed. Li ethnic costumes, as intuitive visual symbols, carry the ethnic history and cultural memory through unique patterns, materials, and craftsmanship, making them a distinctive mark for group identity. Li ethnic music, through the oral tradition passed down through generations, transforms the unique melodic trajectories, modal systems, and rhythmic patterns of folk songs into an important carrier of ethnic cultural genes. Its dual function in emotional resonance and cultural transmission makes it a central medium for consolidating a sense of ethnic identity. Dance art, through

bodily practice and collective rituals, elevates individual actions into a shared memory of the group, further strengthening internal cohesion within the ethnic community.

In the creation of *The Red Detachment of Women*, composer Du Mingxin keenly captured and distilled elements of Li ethnic music, including the pentatonic scale, folk song themes, and the timbral characteristics of ethnic instruments. He then modernized these elements through piano art, enabling these cultural symbols to undergo a creative transformation within the revolutionary narrative. This not only continues the cultural memory of the Li people but also participates in the modern construction of ethnic identity through artistic expression. These cultural symbols collectively form a multidimensional path for constructing Li ethnic identity, enhancing the expression of ethnic identity and promoting both internal cultural recognition and intergenerational transmission through the coordinated effects of visual presentation, auditory transmission, and bodily practice.

3.The Research Objective 3 is to analyze Du Mingxin's musical interpretation of national identity through the composition of the Red Detachment of Women suite. The findings indicate that *the Red Detachment of Women* achieves a profound expression of national identity through diverse musical strategies. In terms of theme construction, the work organically integrates Li ethnic music elements with revolutionary themes, using musical scenes such as "Women Militia Training" and "Red Army's Five-Inch Dagger Dance" as carriers. This not only highlights the cultural features of ethnic minorities but also serves the national narrative of "red memory," achieving a unity of ethnic and revolutionary characteristics.

In the symbolic presentation of cultural memory, the suite uses musical images like "The Army and the People Are One Family" and "Marching Forward with Courage" to awaken collective historical memories, reinforce the awareness of the "Chinese national community," and become a cultural symbol that carries national identity. From the perspective of artistic innovation, the suite breaks through traditional musical vocabulary by combining piano techniques with ethnic music elements. Through the use of the pentatonic scale, traditional folk song melodies, and imitations of

ethnic instrumental timbres, the work not only enhances the ethnic style and cultural depth but also provides an innovative model for expressing Chinese musical identity on the international stage. This fusion of multiple values makes the *Red Detachment of Women* piano suite an important cultural asset, while also showcasing multiple meanings in terms of economic value, theoretical research, and ideological education. It promotes cultural dissemination and international exchange, offering a new practical example for the development of composition theory and patriotic education.

Summary:

Du Mingxin's compositions represent not only the achievements of his personal artistic exploration but also an important practice in the modernization of Chinese ethnic music and the construction of national identity. This study provides theoretical support for understanding the function of music in expressing cultural identity and offers a reference for the creation and educational practices in Chinese piano music. Du Mingxin's *the Red Detachment of Women* successfully integrates ethnic music with piano art, accumulating valuable experience for the "nationalization" of Chinese piano music. Future research can further expand on this foundation to explore the potential of music in cultural expression and transmission.

Discussion:

This study focuses on Du Mingxin's piano suite *The Red Women's Army* and explores its role in the construction of Li ethnic identity, as well as how music, through the integration of cultural elements, serves to express national narratives and identity. Compared to other related studies, this research addresses several key questions:

1. The uniqueness of Du Mingxin's musical composition: How does Du Mingxin combine Li ethnic musical elements with Western piano techniques to form a distinctive style of ethnic music?
2. The deep connection between music and ethnic identity: How does music contribute to the construction of Li ethnic identity through the transmission of cultural memory, using elements such as melody, rhythm, and dance?

3. The multiple meanings of *The Red Detachment of Women*: This work is not only an artistic creation but also a symbol of politics and culture. What historical context and social functions are reflected behind this composition?

Interpretation of Research Findings and Theoretical Connections

1. Du Mingxin's Musical Style: Integration of the Personal and the Era

This study reveals that Du Mingxin's compositional style blends both ethnic and modern elements. His refinement of Li folk song melodies (such as the use of the pentatonic scale) and imitation of ethnic instrument timbres (such as the piano's recreation of the sound of the Li bamboo flute) reflect his deep understanding of traditional culture. This style is not only a personal artistic choice for Du Mingxin but also mirrors the collective pursuit of "ethnicization" in 20th-century Chinese music. Similar to composers such as Xian Xinghai and He Luting, Du Mingxin uses Western forms to express Chinese content, but his focused exploration of Li ethnic culture distinguishes him. This finding aligns with existing theories on the "Ethnicization of Chinese piano music", but this study further highlights the specific role of regional culture in the process of ethnicization.

2. Music as a Medium for Identity Construction

The research shows that Li ethnic music, attire, and dance are symbolized in *The Red Detachment of Women*, becoming carriers of ethnic identity. For example, the movement "Training of the Female Militia" enhances the sense of "revolutionary spirit" through its bold rhythmic structure, while *The People and the Army Are One Family* expresses collective sentiment through the gentle melodies of folk songs. This approach is closely aligned with cultural memory theory, where music, through repetition and ritualized performance, integrates Li culture from the periphery into the national narrative. However, in contrast to other studies, this paper argues that Du Mingxin's creation does not merely use ethnic elements but reconstructs them artistically, preserving their original characteristics while serving political discourse.

3. The Symbolic Function of *The Red Detachment of Women*: The Tension between Art and Politics.

The tragic expressions in movements like *Eternal Youth Sacrifice* transcend simple political propaganda, reflecting Du Mingxin's concern for individual fate. This contrasts with some critiques of "revolutionary model operas," which are often seen as fully governed by ideological agendas. This study shows that, even within a political framework, Du Mingxin maintained artistic autonomy. The value of his work lies not only in the "revolutionary narrative" but also in its creative transformation of ethnic cultural genes.

Similarities, Differences, and Innovations in Relation to Other Studies

This study offers unique value and perspective within the field of "ethnicization of Chinese music." In terms of alignment, the conclusions are consistent with macro-level research on the "ethnicization of Chinese music," while it fills a gap in the study of the application of Li ethnic music in piano works through a specific case analysis. On the point of divergence, this research distinguishes itself from studies that view *The Red Detachment of Women* solely as a political product by focusing on its intrinsic artistic value, particularly the innovations in its formal structure. In terms of new discoveries, the study uncovers Du Mingxin's abstraction of Li ethnic dance rhythms, such as the use of syncopation in the *Red Army Five-Inch Knife Dance*, exploring a path of "non-verbal cultural transmission." This finding is a significant contribution to existing theories and provides a fresh direction for related research.

In conclusion, Du Mingxin's compositions reflect not only his personal artistic vision but also serve as a microcosm of the cultural strategies during China's modernization process. Their value lies not only in the fusion of techniques but also in providing a classic example of "how to tell China's story using a global language."

Recommendations

Educational Value

As a landmark work of Chinese national music, *The Red Detachment of Women* plays a significant role in music education by inspiring students to understand and inherit traditional music culture. Its educational impact extends beyond technical training to instilling patriotism and national spirit through music. Du Mingxin's works are incorporated into music education curricula, serving as essential study materials for students learning about national music composition. They also cultivate a sense of cultural identity and responsibility in the next generation of musicians.

Overall, *The Red Detachment of Women* is not only a representative work of Chinese national music but also a driving force for social progress and development across cultural, economic, theoretical, and educational dimensions. It lays a solid foundation for the modernization and nationalization of Chinese music, ensuring its continued relevance in both academic and practical contexts.

I. Theoretical Recommendations

1. Deepening the Study of the Cultural Value of *Red Music*: This research advocates for the construction of a theoretical framework that links Red Music to national cultural narratives, emphasizing its role in ideological dissemination and cultural memory formation. A multidisciplinary approach—integrating musicology, cultural studies, and history—should be adopted to enrich the theoretical discourse.

2. Promoting Policy Support for Red Classics and National Music Education: The works of composers such as Du Mingxin should be incorporated into higher education curricula. Additionally, efforts should be made to encourage performances, exhibitions, and academic discussions, fostering the integration of Red Classics and national music education at both foundational and advanced levels.

II. Practical Recommendations

1. Interdisciplinary Research on Du Mingxin's Works: A cross-disciplinary perspective should be adopted to analyze his compositions, incorporating historical studies to explore their reflection of social transformations and applying

psychological approaches to examine how his musical language influences listeners' emotions and cultural identity.

2. Expanding Practical Applications of His Works: Digital technologies should be leveraged to adapt his compositions into multimedia concerts, enhancing their presence in international cultural exchanges. The fusion of Chinese and Western musical elements in his works can be further explored to strengthen the global impact of Chinese national music.

By integrating theoretical and practical approaches, this study provides direction for the expansion and application of research on Du Mingxin, highlighting the cultural value and practical significance of his musical compositions.



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APPENDIX

The Red Detachment of Women

Composer: Du Mingxin

Arranger: Zhen Wang



1. 娘子军操练

雄健有力地

ff

快速

mf

f

2

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of staves. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, and *cresc.*. The right hand features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, while the left hand provides a simpler accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes. The score is numbered '2' in the upper left corner.



4

8va 8va

渐慢 原速

f *ff*

cresc. 渐慢

2. 赤卫队员五寸刀舞

火热、富有朝气地
慢速

快速

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time. It begins with a tempo marking '火热、富有朝气地 慢速' (Fervent, full of vigor, slow). The first system consists of two staves. The second system also has two staves, with a tempo change to '快速' (Allegro) indicated above the right staff. The third system continues with two staves. The fourth system has two staves. The fifth system has two staves. The score concludes with a final chord in the right hand of the fifth system.

6

3

8

8

p

f

mf

稍慢 节奏自由

7



再稍慢



8

稍慢

稍快

6

原速

10

8

f

渐慢

3

8

军民一家亲

杜鸣心(1975)

Ad lib. *tr* *tr* *m.s.* *m.d.* *dim.*

Moderato

This page contains five systems of musical notation for a piano piece in G major (one sharp). The notation is arranged in two columns, with the right column containing the first three systems and the left column containing the last two. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The music is characterized by flowing sixteenth-note passages, often grouped in pairs or fours, and is frequently tied across bar lines. Fingering numbers (1-4) are indicated throughout. The key signature is G major, indicated by a single sharp (F#) on the treble staff. The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4 based on the phrasing.

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 133 to 144. It is written in treble and bass staves with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked *Andante*. The score features a variety of musical techniques, including triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and dynamic markings such as *rit.* (ritardando) and *f* (forte). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1 through 5. The piece concludes with a final chord in measure 144.

133

145

134

3. 清 华 参 军

慢速

mp *mf*

反抗、愤怒地
中速

f *mf*

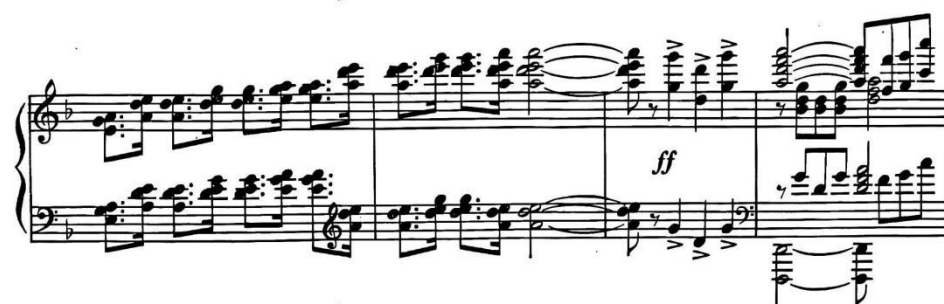
11



12

This page contains five systems of musical notation for piano. The notation is written on grand staves, with the right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) parts clearly delineated. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. Dynamic markings such as *cresc.* (crescendo) and *f* (forte) are used to indicate changes in volume. The notation includes many slurs and ties, suggesting a continuous and flowing musical texture. The page is numbered 12 in the upper left corner.

13



14



高昂、庄严 宽广

15

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of staves. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking of *ff*. The music features complex arpeggiated patterns in both the treble and bass staves, with some notes marked with a '6' indicating a sixteenth note. The second and third systems continue this arpeggiated texture. The fourth system introduces a section marked '渐慢' (Ritardando) in the treble staff, while the bass staff continues with arpeggios. The fifth system is marked '原速' (Allegretto) and features a more complex, dense texture with many beamed notes. The sixth system concludes the piece with a final chordal structure in both staves.

4. 军民一家亲

自由地

8- tr

8- tr

8- 左

8- 左

右

右

dim.

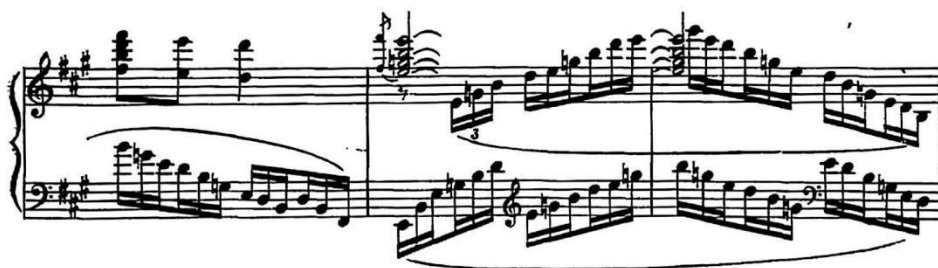
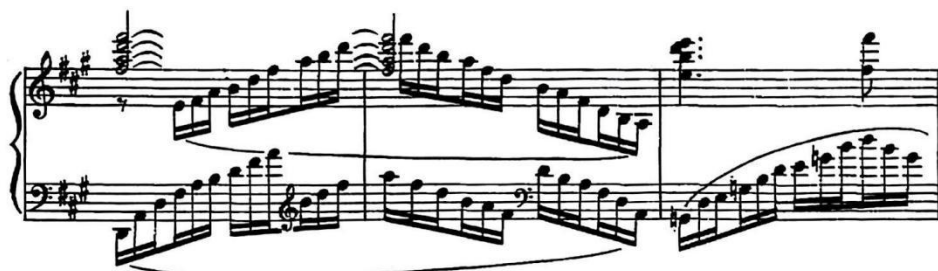
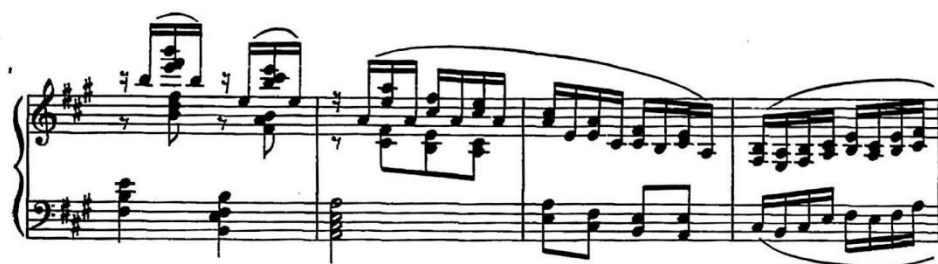
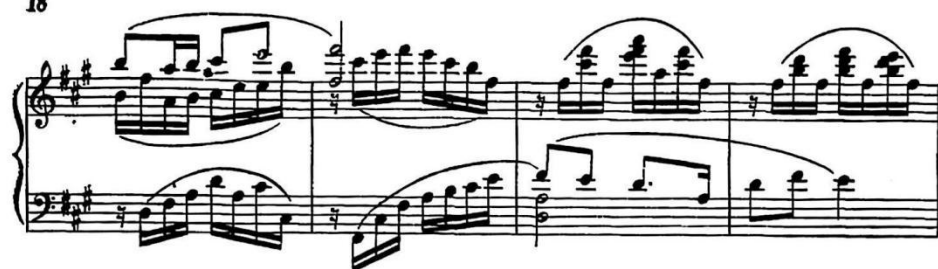
亲切、如歌地
中速

mf

17

This musical score consists of five systems of piano notation, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and chords, often grouped by slurs. Measure 17 is marked with a '17' in the top right corner. The score shows a progression of musical ideas across the five systems, with some measures containing rests or specific articulation marks.

18



This page contains five systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a complex texture with many notes in both hands. The second system features a more melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left. The third system has a prominent melodic line in the right hand with a dashed line indicating a continuation or a specific phrasing. The fourth system shows a more active right hand with many notes and a steady left hand. The fifth system concludes with a final cadence, marked with a double bar line and a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte).

快乐的女战士

Ad lib.

mp

p

f

Allegretto

tr

gliss.

mp

This page of musical notation consists of six systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical elements such as chords, scales, and fingerings. The first system shows a series of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line. The second system introduces more complex chordal textures and a more active bass line. The third system features a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line with some grace notes. The fourth system shows a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line with some grace notes. The fifth system features a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line with some grace notes. The sixth system shows a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line with some grace notes. The notation is clear and well-organized, with various musical symbols and fingerings indicated throughout.

This page contains six systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical elements such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Some measures feature slurs or ties. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth system.

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 138 to 143. It is written for both hands on a grand staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various musical elements such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

- Measure 138:** The right hand features a half-note chord (F#4, C#5) tied to the next measure. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2). A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present.
- Measure 139:** The right hand continues the half-note chord. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2). A dynamic marking of *m.d.* (mezzo-forte) is present.
- Measure 140:** The right hand features a half-note chord (F#4, C#5) tied to the next measure. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2).
- Measure 141:** The right hand continues the half-note chord. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2).
- Measure 142:** The right hand features a half-note chord (F#4, C#5) tied to the next measure. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2).
- Measure 143:** The right hand continues the half-note chord. The left hand plays a sixteenth-note triplet (F#2, A2, C3) followed by a half-note (F#2). A dynamic marking of *rit.* (ritardando) is present.

The image displays a page of musical notation, likely for piano, consisting of six systems of staves. Each system contains a treble staff and a bass staff, both with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical elements such as chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. The first system is marked with *mf* and *a tempo*. The second system is marked with *mf*. The third system features a complex arpeggiated figure in the right hand. The fourth system continues the arpeggiated figure. The fifth system shows a more rhythmic pattern in the right hand. The sixth system concludes with a final cadence. The page number 139 is visible at the bottom right.

6. 常 青 就 义

豪情澎湃地
慢速

The piano score for 'Changqing Jiuyi' is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a crescendo leading to a forte (f) dynamic in the fourth system. The fifth system concludes with a series of rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands, marked with fingerings 10, 11, and 10. The overall mood is heroic and grand, as indicated by the tempo and performance instructions.

26

26

11 10

11 10

11 10

dim.

dim.

dim.

回忆地
稍快

pp

p

27



This page contains six systems of musical notation for piano. The notation is written in a standard staff format with a treble and bass clef. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. Dynamic markings, such as the fortissimo 'f' symbol, are present. The notation is arranged in a clear, organized manner, with each system consisting of a single staff. The page number '28' is located in the upper left corner, and the page number '164' is in the upper right corner.



30 气势磅礴地

The musical score is divided into four systems, each containing a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is G major (one sharp). The tempo/mood is indicated as '气势磅礴地' (Majestic, Powerful). The dynamics are marked 'ff' (fortissimo) at the beginning of the first system and 'f' (forte) in the second system. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and dynamic markings. Measure numbers 8, 9, 10, 15, and 18 are indicated.

大義凜然、英勇就義

mf

cresc. ***fff***

奋勇前进

Allegro vivo

ff

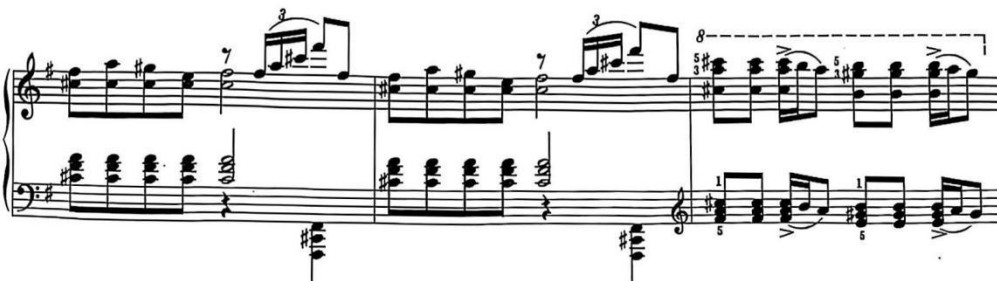
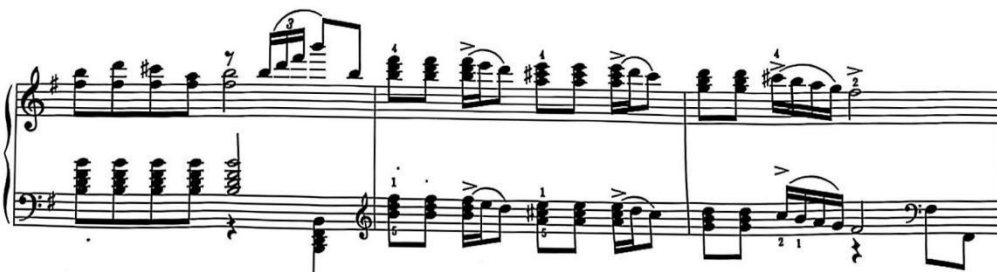
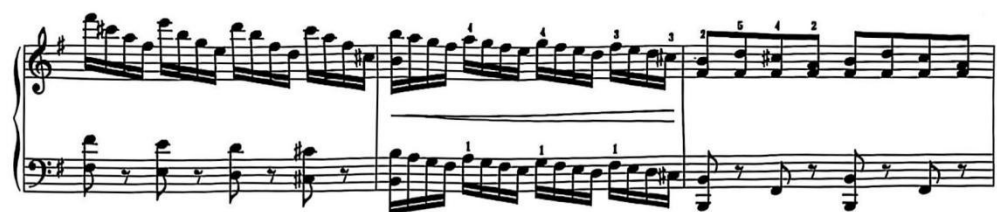
p

cresc.

8

1 5 6

8



This page contains five systems of musical notation for piano, written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The notation includes complex melodic lines with numerous fingerings, slurs, and articulation marks. Dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) are indicated. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained bass line in the left hand.

System 1: The right hand begins with a rapid sixteenth-note scale. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. A dynamic of *f* is marked at the end of the system.

System 2: The right hand continues with intricate melodic patterns, including triplets and slurs. The left hand maintains a steady accompaniment.

System 3: The right hand features a series of slurs and fingerings. The left hand has a more active role with eighth-note patterns.

System 4: The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic of *mp* is marked.

System 5: The final system shows the right hand playing a series of chords and the left hand with a continuous eighth-note pattern.

This page of musical notation consists of five systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical elements such as chords, arpeggios, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a treble staff with a series of chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note pattern. The third system includes a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note pattern, with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The fourth system shows a treble staff with a series of chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note pattern. The fifth system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note pattern, with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). The notation is clear and well-organized, with various musical symbols and markings used throughout.

8

rit.

a tempo

ff *p*²

mp

8

8

* 自此处始,乐曲主题为黄准作曲的电影歌曲《红色娘子军连歌》。

This image shows a page of musical notation for a piano piece. The score is written for piano (p) and includes various musical elements:

- Staff 1:** Features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand, marked with an '8' and a bracket, indicating an eighth-note figure. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment.
- Staff 2:** Continues the rhythmic complexity in the right hand, with a '3' marking indicating a triplet. The left hand has a more active role with eighth notes.
- Staff 3:** The right hand has a section marked 'cresc.' (crescendo) and '8'. The left hand has a section marked '8' and a 'C' (crescendo) marking.
- Staff 4:** The right hand has a section marked 'poco rit.' (ritardando) and '8'. The left hand has a section marked '8' and 'mf' (mezzo-forte).
- Staff 5:** The right hand has a section marked 'f a tempo' (fuerza a tempo) and '8'. The left hand has a section marked '8' and 'f' (forte).
- Staff 6:** The right hand has a section marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and '8'. The left hand has a section marked '8' and 'f'.

The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, triplets, and dynamic markings. The overall style is characteristic of 20th-century piano music, with a focus on rhythmic complexity and dynamic contrast.



Photo 1: The Red Detachment of Women Sculpture in Hainan



Photo2: Hainan Red Culture Study Base



Photo 3: Roster of Women Soldiers

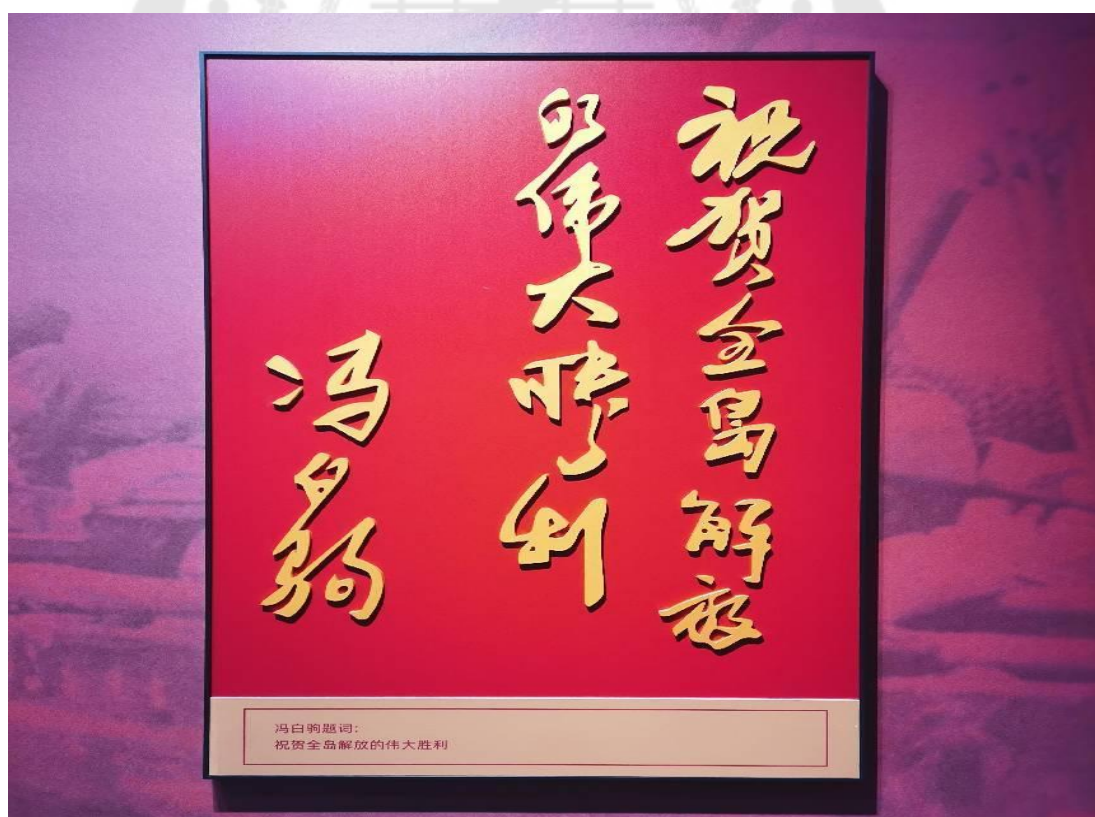


Photo 4: Feng Baiju, Secretary of the CPC Qiongya Special Committee, once led the people of Qiongya in continuing the revolutionary struggle.



Photo 5: Roster of Commanders and Fighters



Photo 6: Inside the Red Detachment of Women Memorial Hall



Photo 7:Wanquan River Scenic Area



Photo 8:By the Wanquan River in Hainan



Photo 9: The author is teaching students about the performance style of Du Mingxin's piano works.



Photo10: Interview with Professor Ruan Zhi, the chairman of the Hebei Musicians Association, Du Mingxin's student.



Photo 11: Interview with Professor Sun Lingyang, a Dean of the University Music
Department

VITA

