Exploring The Nationalization Characteristics of Chinese Style Piano Works--An Example of The Six Piano Adaptations of "Flowing Stream"

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Abstract. "Flowing Stream" is a Chinese folk song from Yunnan province with a high degree of popularity and popularity. It has been widely adapted by Chinese and foreign composers into various forms of musical expression, such as piano, accordion, orchestral music and opera, etc. Therefore, it can be seen that the work has been widely recognized and sung by composers and audiences. Therefore, it can be seen that the work is widely recognized and loved among composers and audiences. In this paper, we will choose different versions of "Flowing Stream" from six composers, namely, Zhao Xingdao, Zhu Jian'er, Ding Shande, Zhu Peibin, Wang Zhenyu, and Zhang Zhao, as the objects of study to analyze their compositional techniques in terms of musical structural features, nationalization features, and so on, so as to provide composers with some new ideas for exploration.

Keywords: Chinese style, Piano Adaptation,"Flowing Stream", Nationalization Characteristics.

1. Introductory

The Yunnan folk song "Flowing Stream" has been put on the stage of Chinese and foreign music by singers for many times, for example, the famous Chinese singer Song Zuying made it one of the repertoires of her solo concert in the United States, and in the closing ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China which attracted the attention of the whole world, "Flowing Stream" was included in the performance program, which are the best way to carry forward the traditional Chinese music culture at home and abroad, and promote the integration and development of the music of the Chinese nationality in the world. These initiatives have contributed to the promotion of Chinese traditional music culture at home and abroad, promoted the integration and development of Chinese national music in the world, and enriched international cultural diversity. In addition, the song has been played more than 100 million times on major online platforms in China, such as B-station, Aqiyi, Youku, QQ Music, Kugou Music, and NetEase Cloud Music, which shows the profound influence of "Flowing Stream" on the Chinese people.

The piano has a distinctive, strong, and colorful tone, so composers prefer to use the piano to adapt their compositions. The piano adaptation studied in this paper is the Han Chinese Mountain song "Flowing Stream", which has been circulating in the Yunnan region of China. Its origin is based on the song "Dada Planting Rice Planting", which was written by the composer Gao Liang in 1943 in the new county of Mengzi, Yunnan, and sung by Gao Liang's pupil Hua Mingbang in 1947 for the record of Yin Yigong [1]. It is a folk song that expresses a sister's longing for her brother while standing by a small river and telling the moon and is known both at home and abroad as the "Oriental Serenade" because of its beautiful and soothing melody.

2. Musical Structure Characteristics of Six Piano Adaptations of the Folk Song "Flowing Stream" on the Same Theme

Western piano music generally adopts the more traditional standardized compositional structure, which has a profound influence on the creation of Chinese-style piano music. For example, Zhu Jian'er Overture No.2 "Flowing Water", composed in 1955, adopts a three-part structure with reproduction. At that time, he was studying in the Soviet Union, so he was influenced by Western music in the composition of his works. In the 1950s and 1960s, this "three-part" structure, with its

emphasis on reproduction, was a popular standard. In the process of nationalization of Chinese piano music, its creators began to break the structure of Western music, mainly in the inheritance and application of traditional Chinese piano music structure.

2.1. The Musical Structure of Zhao Xingdao "Flowing Stream"

Composed by Zhao Xingdao in 1948, "Flowing Stream" is the earliest known solo piano piece based on the Yunnan folk song "Flowing Stream". 29 bars, in d-yu mode, one-part form, in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 mixed meter, the piece consists of two variations with the melody in the high register in the first section, and a repetition of the first section in the low register in the second section, with "pipa chords" as the opening introduction to set a nationalistic tone. The "pipa chord" is used as an introduction to set the tone of ethnicity. a The A section is composed of two contrasting phrases, 2+3, with the theme of the folk song in the high register. a The$_1$ section is also composed of contrasting phrases, 4+4, with the theme of the folk song in the high register. b The$_1$ section is composed of a split repetition of the original text. The phrase is expanded by 1 bar through the compositional technique of split repetition. Then, the introduction and A, A_1 are repeated once. After the repetition of A and A_1 , the folk melody appears in the lower part, and the harmony accompaniment in the upper part is richer and more emotional.

2.2. The musical structure of Zhu Jian'er OvertureNo. 2 "Flowing Water".

In 1955, Mr. Zhu Jian'er composed the piano work "Overture No. 2 "Flowing Water" based on the Yunnan folk song "Flowing Stream". This work is the only piano work using new material among the six works studied here, with a total of 66 bars, in c-yu mode, single triad with reproduction, and at the tempo of Allegretto. the A section consists of two contrasting phrases, 4+4, with the soprano part playing quarter notes smoothly and slowly, and the bass part adopting the decomposition of arpeggios in sextuplets, just like a small flowing river. The soprano part plays the quarter notes smoothly and slowly, while the bass part uses a six-note broken arpeggio pattern that flows like a stream. The alternation of static and dynamic forms portrays the scene of a young girl standing by the river, looking forward to the return of her lover. After a one-bar transition, the piece moves to the A_1 section in the key of F. This section is the same as the A section. This is the same repetitive section as the A section, with the addition of seventh chords in the soprano part, making the piece more layered, while the bass part maintains the flowing weave of the sextuplets. This is followed by two downward going arpeggiated breakdown chords forming a connection that allows the music to move into part B. Part B consists of three phrases of 5+5+4, with the new material being developed mainly in the form of modal progressions. For example, measure 22 uses measure 21 as the modal progression material, making an upward two-degree modal progression. Measures 28 and 29 use the downward two-degree modulation of measures 26 and 27, and measure 32 uses the upward two-degree modulation of measure 31. This constant modal progression causes the mood of the piece to gradually rise into the connective 3 section. At this time, the music's harmonic weave is dense, the intensity of the changes in the layers, like the waves of the "sea". Eventually, the music returns to the folk song theme of "Flowing Stream", and the piece enters the recapitulation section. At this point, the melody moves to the bass part, expanding to the second note, which is more extended and long, and the triplet accompaniment weave of the right hand accentuates the strong sense of longing. Eventually, the piece ends in such longing.

2.3. Musical Structure of Zhu Peibin's "Flowing Stream"

Adapted by Zhu Peibin in 1991 from Bao Yuankai's orchestral piece "Yanhuang Style", it is the seventh piece in the solo piano work "Yanhuang Style: Twenty-four Chinese Folk Songs on Theme for Piano", "Flowing Stream". The piece has 68 bars, in g-yu mode, with a iambic theme structure, a juxtaposed compound two-part form, and the tempo is Largo (wide plate). The work is composed in a particular way, using the same material for its introduction, linking section, and coda, with similar rhythms, all unfolding in intervals of pure octaves in the plagal key, followed by rapid phased

breakdown chords of fifths to form a florid passage.The A section consists of two contrasting phrases, 7+9, with the melody of the a phrase in the high register, and the melody of the b phrase shifting to the low register, with the addition of triple tessitura adding to the mood of the music. A_1 section is composed of two contrasting phrases 5+7, which is a high-octave repetition of the A section. In the B section, the composer shifts the music from the^{b} B gong to the^{b} D gong by changing the key, and at the same time fully demonstrates the characteristics of the piano's polyphonic musical expression. The score is written in "four-part harmony", with each beat consisting of a combination of right-hand sextuplets, left-hand sustained long tones, and sixteenth notes, an arrangement that vividly depicts the impression of "water"

2.4. Musical Structure of Ding Shande's "Flowing Stream"

In 1992, Mr. Ding Shande adapted and composed Flowing Stream", which is the second of his "Three Chinese National Piano Pieces". It consists of 28 bars,$^{\#}$d-yu mode, one-part form with an introduction, two sections, and Larghetto (small broad) tempo. The piece is introduced by a six-note breakdown chord, which foreshadows the weaving of the whole piece. In the introduction, there is a hidden melody in pentatonic form: A-D-D-C-G-F-A-C-D. The A section of the piece uses material from folk music, with the theme melody hidden in the highest note of the melodic voice, in the same way as the introduction, and with the middle and lower voices in a reflective form. A_1 section also uses material from the second half of the piece, with the same weaving as in the A section. The last two bars are the coda. The last two bars are the coda, which ends on the$^{\#}$d-yu mode.

2.5. The Musical Structure of Zhang Zhao's "Flowing Stream"

Zhang Zhao's adaptation of "Flowing Stream" was composed in 2019 and consists of 26 measures, in the key of a-yu mode, one-part form, at the tempo of Andante (marching plate), and consists of two sections, with the second section being a high-octave repetition of the first.The A' section consists of two contrasting phrases of 2+3, and uses the musical material of the original folk song, with the low-pitched column chords dominated by a minor triad, creating an atmosphere of lingering longing. A_1 section consists of 4+3 phrases, the melody follows the material of the original folk song, the accompaniment is resolved from the subordinate sustained to the dominant sustained, and the quiet mood of longing continues to spread. A' section is a high octave repetition of the A section, and the bass is still using the dominant sustained to do the underpinning until the A'_1 section bass arpeggiated breakup chords, and only then does it bring the mood to a climax! The B section is a high octave repetition of the A section, with the dominant chords continuing until the A' section arpeggiated chords in the bass, which brings the mood to a climax, full of thoughts overflowing in the middle of the score.

2.6. Musical Structure of Wang Zhenyu's "Flowing Stream"

The work consists of 51 bars, in f-yu mode, with an introduction and a coda. In the 7-bar introduction, Mr. Wang Zhenyu marks 6 upward arpeggios, imitating the technique of Chinese plucked instruments, and the final arpeggio rests on arpeggios and chords with Chinese pentatonic folk colors. a consists of two phrases, 13+10, with the b phrase being an incomplete repetition of the a phrase, which is dominated by monophonic and chordal notes, creating a serene atmosphere. The b phrase moves to the c-flat mode, and after a short 4-bar modulation returns to the f-flat mode. Although the melody is the same as in the a phrase, it is accompanied by a break-up arpeggio that expresses the turbulent emotions of the young girl's heart. A_1 section consists of two contrasting phrases, 7+8, with the a phrase continuing to follow the accompaniment of break-up arpeggios, and with an intensity of ff, which brings the whole piece to a close. The a-phrase continues to follow the decomposing arpeggio, with the intensity notation ff, which pushes the emotion of the whole piece to a climax, and then as the accompaniment weaves from sixteenth notes to triplets to eighth notes, the whole notes change to end the a-phrase, and the emotion is gradually stabilized, and the b-phrase goes

back to the quiet atmosphere of the initial, with six upward arpeggio notations. The coda is written using material from the a phrase of the A section.

3. The nationalization characteristics of the piano adaptation of "Flowing Stream".

The materials for the creation of Chinese-style piano music works mainly include four kinds: one is based on the melodies of folk songs; the second is inspired by the playing styles and characteristics of folk musical instruments; the third is based on the rhythms and rhymes of folk-dance music; and the fourth is based on the tunes and expressive methods of Chinese opera music. All of these materials can infuse piano music with strong Chinese cultural elements, making it more unique and artistically valuable. When composers adapt and create this music, they retain the basic form of the original folk music, and recreate the musical works by adding flowers, variations and expansions. The subject of this paper is the direct development of the musical theme of the folk song "Flowing Stream", which is popular in the Yunnan region of China.

The folk song is in the a-yu mode, consisting of the upper and lower phrases, which are repeated to form the song, with the addition of a connecting phrase in the middle, "Brother ah, brother ah." In 4/4 and 3/4 mixed meter, the structure is short, the melody is melodious, and the tune is gentle and soothing in tempo. The song begins with four notes, la-do-re-mi, with la as the dominant note, and the beginning and ending notes of each phrase are skillfully placed on la, in the form of a fish biting its tail. (Figure 1)

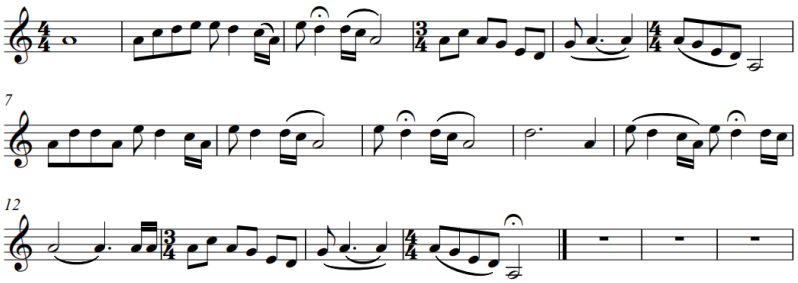


Figure 1: Chen Xi September 2022

Because folk songs are very attractive to Chinese people, composers often use folk melodies as an important means of adapting Chinese piano music. The main melody of "Flowing Stream" is a pentatonic melody with the color of a typical Chinese Yunnan folk tune. For example, in the 10th bar of Mr. Zhu Jian'er "Overture No.2 "Flowing Stream", the tonality is shifted to the f-feather folk tuning, and the tone is listed as F-^{b} A-^{b} B-C-^{b} E. This is the use of the technique of melodic pentatonic with bass pentatonic to strengthen the ethnic color. (Figure 2)

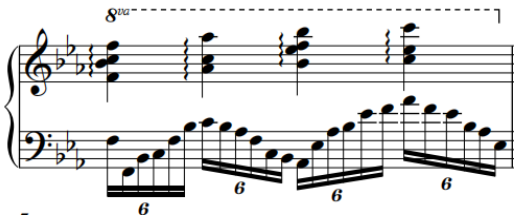


Figure 2: Overture No. 2 "Flowing Stream" from Selected Piano Works in the Yunnan Style in China.

3.1. Nationalization of melodic development

There are many unique ways of melodic development in traditional Chinese music, such as "fish biting the tail", "combining the head and changing the tail", and variations, etc. For example, in "Flowing Stream", the development of "fish biting the tail" is used in many places, making the melody continuous and meandering like a small river. For example, in "Flowing Stream", the "fish bites the

tail" development technique is used in many places, making the melody continuous and meandering like the flowing water of the little river. For example, in bars 6-14 of Ding Shande's "Flowing Stream" the 7th bar bites into the#re of the 6th bar, the 11th bar bites into the# re of the 10th bar, and the 13th bar bites into the# re of the 12th bar, which makes the melody flow more smoothly and makes it seem as though the inner emotions are also rising and falling with the melody. (Figure 3)

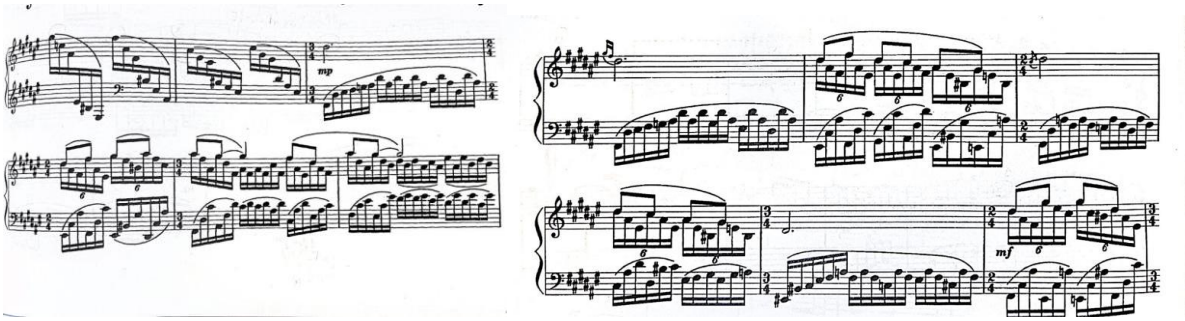


Figure 3: The Piano Works of Ding Shande

In the alternation of two different voices, there is also the form of "fish biting the tail", for example, in the 4th and 5th measures of Zhang Zhao's "Flowing Stream", the melody of the high voice, "la-sol-mi-re-la", finally stops at the fourth beat of the la note, and the melody of the low voice, "mi-re-do-la", continues to develop with the theme motive of the piece, "mi-re-do-la", on the tail note la of the high voice. The melody for the lower voices uses the motif "mi-re-do-la," which is the theme of the piece, and bites into the high voice's coda la (Figure 4).

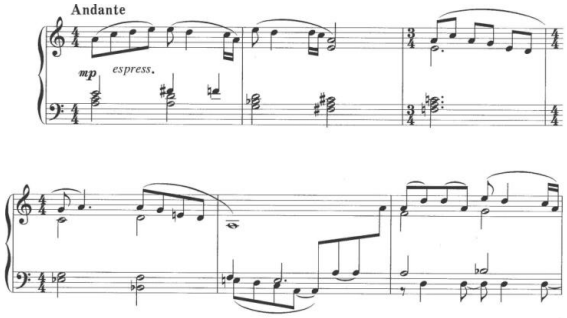


Figure 4: "20 Chinese Melodies" - "Flowing Stream".

For example, the 1st and 2nd bars of Zhang Zhao's "Flowing Stream" consist of two consecutive syncopated rhythms that form the thematic motif, and the 6th and 7th bars are the varied repetitions of the 1st and 2nd bars, and similarly, the 8th and 9th bars are the varied repetitions of the 1st and 2nd bars, and this form of having a different beginning and the same ending is known as the "combined end and change of the head" structure. The theme motif keeps pushing the piece forward, flowing gently like a small river. (Figure 5)

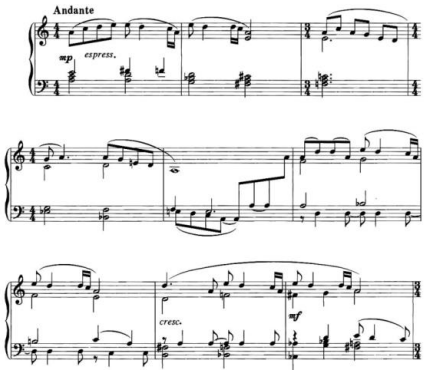


Figure 5: "20 Chinese Melodies", "Flowing Stream"

3.2. Harmonic nationalization

Composers have been trying to explore the road of nationalized harmony, striving to incorporate Chinese national tuning on the basis of absorbing western compositional techniques, as a way to weaken the color of western functional harmony, so that the harmonic color of pentatonic tuning will be richer than that of western traditional music. Harmony is one of the most important means of expression for the nationalization of Chinese piano music. In terms of the six pieces of "Flowing Stream", this paper will elaborate on the use of national chord structure and the linear structure of harmony.

3.2.1. The use of national chord structure.

The harmony of Chinese pentatonic modes includes two-dimensional structure, three-dimensional structure, four-dimensional and five-dimensional structure, and also the pentatonic or melodic longitudinal structure, etc. In order to better fit the pentatonic melodic style of the work, the composer will use a large number of non-triadic superimposed chords, pentatonic longitudinal chords, etc. This technique is very common, which usually breaks the three-dimensional superimposed structure and makes the chords appear in a free and variable form, thus enhancing the national characteristics of the work. This technique is very common, and it is one of the most common techniques used by composers to break up the chord triad structure and make the chords appear in a free and varied form, thus enhancing the national character of the work.

For example, in the harmonization of bars 2 and 3 of Zhao Xingdao's "Flowing Stream", we can see that the minor triad structure is dominant, and because it is difficult to find a persuasive logical relationship from the root tones, we can't apply Western harmonic functions to explain the chord progressions made up of superimposed thirds in Chinese music.

"Pipa chords" are chord structures consisting of two pure fourth intervals or two pure fifth intervals superimposed on top of each other, with diatonic intervals appearing in the middle two tones. But in the "pipa chord", it can appear, and this kind of nationalized chord is actually an imitation of the Chinese instrument pipa. For example, the "pipa chords" in the first measure of Zhao Xingdao's "Flowing Stream" and in the seventh measure of Wang Zhenyu's "Flowing Stream", both of these pieces have a national color. It is also worth mentioning that in Wang Zhenyu's "Flowing Stream," there are a total of 22 upward arpeggios in the 51 short bars of the piece, which imitates the playing techniques of Chinese plucked instruments, and is precisely a way for composers to express their nationalized musical works.

The harmony of pentatonic verticalization was firstly proposed by Mr. Sang Tong [2], who made vertical combination of tones in the Chinese pentatonic scale to form a chord structure, i.e. pentatonic verticalization harmony structure. The horizontal progression is a pentatonic melody, and the vertical combination is a pentatonic chord, both vertical and horizontal relationships are based on the same pentatonic scale. The application of pentatonic harmony is an important step for composers to practice the nationalized harmonic language.

In the process of creating these six pieces of "Flowing Stream" the composers made extensive use of the harmonic development technique of pentatonic vertical integration. For example, Wang Zhenyu's "Flowing Stream"is built on the f-feather modulation, and the piece forms a decomposed chord with the F-feather-^{b}A-gong-^{b}B-shang-C-jue-^{b}E-zhi within the modulation, and its melody is in pentatonic melody horizontally, while vertically, it is a pentatonic chord.

3.2.2. Linear structure of harmonic progression.

This is a harmonic method that emphasizes lateral part relationships, focusing on the direction and form of part movement, and based on logicalized movement of part lines, creating a way of thinking that is different from traditional functional harmony. In this type of harmonic progression, the intervallic relationships are seen as a secondary factor, and more importance is placed on the continuity and fluidity between individual parts. This approach creates a unique and expressive harmonic effect, making the music more personalized and artistically infectious.

For example, Zhu Jian'er "Flowing Stream" is centered on the c-yu mode, with the bass first going down and then up, i.e., C-B-A-G-A-B-C, which constitutes a reverse progression with the melodic line, i.e., C-E-F-G-F-E-C, forming an "arch-form" harmonic progression around the central chord of the tonic. In the first four measures, there is a sustained F, and this additional tone is a natural tone in the pentatonic scale, so the pentatonic arpeggio form is consistent with the pentatonic progression of the melody, which strengthens the characteristics of the national pentatonic nature. This mass of tonalized weaving forms not only transforms the pentatonic longitudinal chords into horizontal movement patterns, but also serves as an independent weaving level of the music, as well as a harmonic backing section for the melody. (Figure 6)

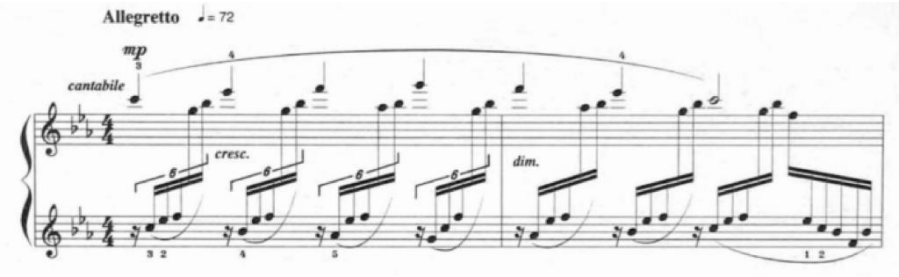


Figure 6: Selected Pieces for Yunnan Folk Piano, Zhu Jian'er, "Overture No. 2 Flowing Water

3.2.3. Nationalization of polyphonic counterpoints

In the Chinese style of piano music composition, we find that polytonality is a very common writing technique, and usually, the Western classical counterpoint is usually closely combined with the Chinese national modes.

In Zhu Peibin's adaptation of "Flowing Stream", the polyphonic technique of folk music's branching polyphony is utilized and combined with the transposition technique of the intrinsic connection of pentatonic modes. This transposition technique shifts from the g-feather mode to the bb-yu mode, resulting in a strong contrast in the sound quality of the lower register, producing a distinct and unique artistic effect. This technique not only enhances the expressive and infectious power of the music, but also reflects the colorful ways of expression and creative thinking in traditional Chinese music culture.

"Nationalization", or ethnicity, refers to the way in which composers and artists express the thoughts and feelings of their own people and display their own spiritual outlook through the use of their own unique artistic thinking, forms and means of expression. This way of creation can make the musical works have a strong national flavor and unique national style, so as to better inherit and promote the cultural heritage of the nation. In the piano work of "Flowing Stream", we can see that the composers have skillfully integrated the traditional Chinese folk music into the piano performance, so as to present a unique flavor and style.

4. The "feminine beauty" of the piano adaptation of "Flowing Stream".

Zhou Yi, one of the sources of Chinese science, thought and culture, reveals the aesthetic thinking of "feminine beauty" in its interpretation of Kun Gua. In the concept of "Zhouyi", Kun represents the earth, which is characterized by pure yin and softness, so the beauty of Kun is the most consistent with the concentration of "feminine beauty". Maternal beauty, implicit beauty, static beauty, etc. are the basic characteristics of "feminine beauty"[3].

"Subtle beauty" is one of the most representative features of female beauty, reflecting the aesthetic thinking of "feminine beauty". This kind of beauty refers to the introverted but inspiring personality, and even simple words contain profound meanings. In Chinese piano music, there are many outstanding works with subtle beauty, such as Variations on a Theme of Two Flying Butterflies, which expresses love, and Si Lian, which expresses longing, etc. At the same time,"Flowing Stream"is also a traditional masterpiece of subtle beauty in love.

Yunnan folk song "Flowing Stream": "Ai! The moon comes out brightly, brightly, brightly, remembering that my sister is deep in the mountains. My sister is like the moon, walking in the sky. Lang ah! Lang Lang! Just like the clear water of the small river below the mountain. Ai! The moon shines halfway up the mountain, halfway up the mountain. When I look at the moon, I think of my Lang. A fresh breeze blows up the mountain. Lang! Lang Lang! Do you hear my sister calling me Lang?[4]" The lyrics of this folk song are very concise, but it is able to show a subtle beauty through the song. It depicts a man and woman in love sending their feelings towards the moon when they miss each other. The music is melodious and soft and expresses women's introverted and subtle feelings to the fullest. In traditional Chinese humanistic society, the pursuit of subtle beauty is the highest pursuit of the aesthetic realm.

5. Summary

The core of Chinese piano music creation is "nationalization", which means that composers use the piano as a carrier to show the musical styles of different regions and nationalities by digging out and using traditional music materials. This way of creation combines the linear thinking of Chinese music and the polyphonic thinking of the piano, giving Chinese piano music a unique musical color. In the process of adaptation and composition, the composers retained the basic form of the original folk songs and used techniques such as variation, addition of flowers and expansion to unfold the music, in order to adapt to the development of the melodic characteristics of the Chinese style and to create a style in line with the piano music works. The polyphonic harmonic arrangement blends perfectly with the single melodic line of the folk song, so that the folk song melody does not lose its linear character due to the polyphonic expressiveness of the piano. This way of creation not only can fully reflect the mood and style characteristics of Chinese piano music, but also is the inheritance and promotion of traditional cultural heritage.

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