

Exploring the Characteristics of the Musical Composition of Guangxi's Modern Piano Work "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn"

Jiajia Lin¹, Nataporn Rattanachaiwong^{1, *} and Jing Li²

¹Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

²Guangxi Arts University, Nanning, Guangxi, China

*corresponding author

Abstract. "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn" is a piano work with Guangxi's national characteristics. The composer, Wu Liyun, is a teacher of the Composition Department of Guangxi Arts University. This work combines the ethnic characteristics of Guangxi Dong tones and modern compositional techniques, fully utilizes modern non-harmonic phonemes in the form of different rhythms and speeds, so that the piano timbre presents the image of different brass drums. This paper discusses the musical creation characteristics of the work as well as the piano playing techniques by analyzing the musical characteristics, compositional techniques and musical structure of the work.

Keywords: Guangxi Piano Works, "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", Modern Music, Compositional Characteristics.

1. Introduction

Guangxi is inhabited by twelve ethnic groups, including Han, Zhuang, Dong, Miao, Yao and Maonan, and is the only autonomous region of ethnic minorities in China that is near the sea. The music of each ethnic group has differences in region, folklore, humanity, environment and aesthetics, and after thousands of years of evolution and development, the music under the influence of different ethnic cultures has its own artistic characteristics. Guangxi composers have created a large number of excellent piano works by exploring the musical characteristics of Guangxi's ethnic groups and digging out the musical and cultural materials of each ethnic group. For example, "The Bamboo Hat", "Liu sanjie Fantasia on a Theme", "The Fragrance of Youcha of the Dong Village", "Donglan bronze-drum dance", "An Impression of the Village", etc. These works combine the musical cultures of Guangxi's various ethnic groups and show the unique musical style of Guangxi.

"The Dance of the Bronze Drumn" is a piano work of Guangxi national characteristics, and the composer is Wu Liyun, a teacher of the Composition Department of Guangxi Arts Institute. This piano work combines the tones of fourth and fifth intervals commonly used by the Dong ethnic group in Guangxi and the non-harmonic acoustic characteristics of modern compositional techniques, and imitates the drumming sound of bronze drums with the special timbre of the piano through the form of different rhythmic types and different speeds. This paper takes it as a research object, both as an inquiry into the characteristics of the compositional technique of fusing elements of Guangxi ethnic music with the piano, and also as an interpretation of the piano playing technique on Guangxi ethnic music from the perspective of piano playing.

Bronze drums are the most representative cultural relics of the ancient southern Chinese ethnic minorities and Southeast Asia, and occupy an important position in the history of ethnic culture. The Zhuang bronze drum is one of the percussive musical instruments of the ethnic minorities in southern China, and it has various cultural functions, such as a heavy weapon, a sacred weapon, a musical instrument, and a ceremonial instrument. The founding period of bronze drums was around the Spring and Autumn Period, the initial form originated from the cooking utensils copper kettle, the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period until the Ming and Qing Dynasties all have bronze drums, and the Han Dynasty made the most exquisite, with the most styles. The distribution of contemporary Zhuang bronze drums is centered on the Hongshui River Basin, concentrating in

Donglan County, Tian'e County, Nandan County, Bama County, Fengshan County, Dahua County of Hechi City, Guangxi, and the Zhuang-inhabited areas of Tianlin County, Longlin County and Xilin County of Baise City, Guangxi. As a musical instrument, it is difficult to separate the bronze drum from the dance, and when there were bronze drums, there were bronze drum dances. Music and dance were the main contents of people's sacrificial ceremonies in ancient times. In the multi-ethnic integration of Guangxi, the Zhuang, Yao and Miao ethnic groups all have the custom of singing and dancing along with the bronze drums. The way to play the bronze drums is to hang them on a wooden frame or a tree branch and beat them with a special spherical drum whip, in which one person strikes the drum and the other holds a wooden bucket at the bottom of the drum and shakes it, in order to change the volume and timbre. Others put a bucket under the bronze drum, water over half, in order to achieve the effect of pure and pleasant drum sound when struck. If it is a small bronze drum, you can carry it on your back while jumping and beating. The tone and beat of the bronze drums change rapidly, sometimes like mountains and winds, which can uplift people's hearts and make the whole scene lively and magnificent, with high artistic infectious power. There are a lot of piano works about using piano as a medium and bronze drums as a music creation element, such as Lu Pei's "Mountain Song and Bronze Drum Music", Lu Huabai's "Donglan bronze-drum dance", and Dai Lixia's "Eight Tones of Playing Drums" and other piano works using bronze drums as a music creation element. "The Dance of the Bronze Drum" is a piano work that refines the elements of bronze drum percussion, uses modern compositional techniques to simulate the sound and rhythm of the bronze drums, and uses the piano as a medium to show different images of the bronze drums that are solemn, passionate, calm, or dancing against the wind.

2. Music Composition Material for "The Dance of the Bronze Drum"

Most of the professional composers in China came out of the music education system in Europe and America, so the creations of our composers are bound to follow the rules and use of western compositional techniques, which also reflects the situation of blending and blossoming of Chinese and foreign. Bronze drum is a kind of percussion instrument made of copper casted by the Southwest minority in ancient China. Piano is a Western instrument, but in the 20th century music, piano is often regarded as a kind of percussion instrument, and the role of rhythm and strength is more prominent. Therefore, both the piano and the bronze drum belong to the category of percussion instruments, and there are many piano works that use the piano playing technique to imitate the acoustic effect of the drums, and the piano works that use the piano playing technique to imitate the acoustic effect of the drums, and the piano works that use the piano playing technique to imitate the acoustic effect of the drums. For example, "Flute And Drum At Sunset", "Donglan bronze-drum dance", "Flower drums", "Yao nationality long-drum dance", and so on. "The Dance of the Bronze Drum" is a piece that is innovative in that it utilizes the performance of an analog instrument in a piano percussion instrument. This piece quotes, refines and manipulates the sound of the bronze drums in its composition, giving a whole new meaning to the original material. It brings out the atmospheric expression of the Zhuang bronze drums and expands the technique of piano playing and the piano's expression of ethnic culture.

"The Dance of the Bronze Drum" is a piece that draws on modern Western harmonic techniques (see Figure 1). The piece contains a simple melody and a powerful rhythm, and the use of columnar chords to mimic the effect of percussion and the use of multi-tonal or dissonant chords makes the piece seem even more dynamic and modern.



Figure 1. Excerpts from Part I

In the process of music, rhythm can obtain a structural force function, become a group pattern or field pattern that affects the local or even the overall layout, with the characteristics of contrast, penetration, aggregation and rapid instantaneous transformation between different groups, and in addition to rhythm, strength, speed and weaving parameters can be involved in it. For example, in the third section of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", the left hand melody is the rhythmic rhythm of beating bronze drums, and the right hand melody is the rhythm of the dance, the combination of the two juxtapositions and transformations reflects the contrast between the speed of the speed, the sparseness and looseness of the rhythm, and the rhythmic pattern has the polymerization of the sound (see Figure 2).

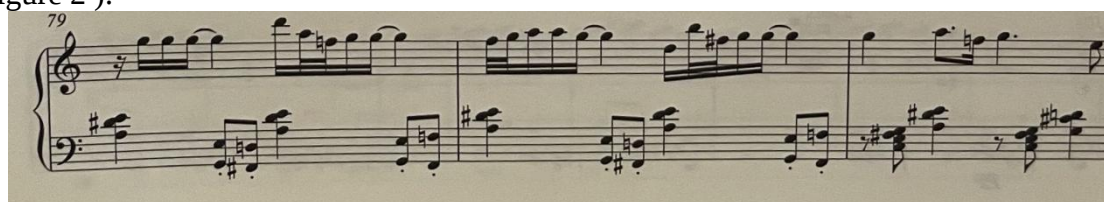


Figure 2. Excerpts from Part III

In the rhythmic beat system, the sequential relationship of beat numbers as a common division of pitch and rhythmic time values is a process of abstracting time, and this isomorphic relationship between pitch and rhythm gives the piece an effective structural meaning, thus maintaining the consistency of musical time and space. For example, "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", the frequent switching of beat counts does not diminish the sense of power of the piece, but rather enhances the acoustic tension, and the growth of rests similarly increases the sense of rhythmic momentum (see Figure 3).

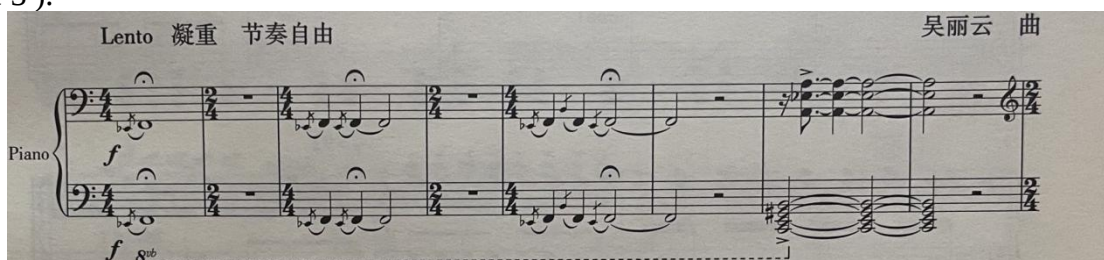


Figure 3. Excerpts from Prelude

This piece extracts the characteristics of Guangxi's national bronze drums as the material for music creation, and utilizes modern compositional techniques to incorporate the sound, melody and rhythm of the bronze drums into the weave of the piano. By showing the musical and cultural characteristics of the bronze drums of Guangxi, the work demonstrates the unique traditional ethnic flavor and spiritual outlook of Guangxi.

3. Analysis of the musical structure of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn"

"The Dance of the Bronze Drumn" vividly simulates the sound of the bronze drums with the rich harmonies and sounds of the piano, rendering the different atmospheres of the bronze drums,

deepening the sensory stimulation, and making the listener feel as if he were in the realm. In this work, the composer demonstrates the different rendering effects of the bronze drums through different registers, tempos and rhythms. I have divided the work into music clip, bars, speed and intensity in the form of a table (see Table 1).

Table 1. Musical Structure of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn

Music clip	Prelude	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV	Part V	Coda
bars	1-13	14-42	43-56	57-113	114-215	216-231	232-244
speed	$\text{♩}=45$	$\text{♩}=70$	$\text{♩}=92$	$\text{♩}=80$	$\text{♩}=140$	$\text{♩}=92$	$\text{♩}=45$
intensity	f	mf	f	mp-f-pp	f	f	f

Prelude (bars 1-13) is a slow movement with a tempo of $\text{♩}=45$. This part of the melody needs to reflect a grave and solemn musical effect. The melody is in the bass register, and the powerful striking of the keyboard brings out the acoustic imitation of the bronze drums and the ethnic rhythmic patterns. For example, the beat wanders between 4/4 and 2/4, especially in bars 1-8, most of the notes need to freely extend the time value, the rhythm is more free and in a controlled random state, the duration of the notes is completely set by the player according to the needs of the emotion, so as to render the acoustic ambience of the sound of the bronze drums reverberating after the drums are struck. 9-13 bars, the melody transitions gradually from monophonic to chordal, the rhythm changes from quarter notes to chords, and the rhythm is changed from quarter notes to chords. In bars 9-13, the melody gradually transitions from single notes to chords, and the rhythm changes from quarter notes to dotted rhythms and triplet rhythms, enriching the rhythm of the bronze drums (see Figure 4).

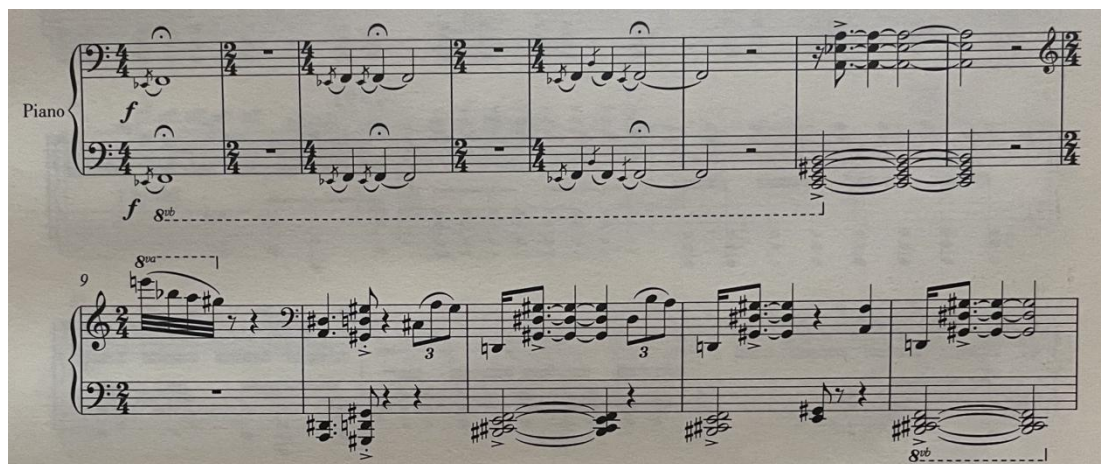


Figure 4. Excerpts from Prelude

In the Part I (bars 14-42), the tempo begins to change, from $\text{♩}=45$ to $\text{♩}=70$. The melody alternates between left-hand octave chords and right-hand intervals of fourths. For example, the entire melody is in the bass clef, imitating the sound of the drums with the tonal range, and the dominant rhythmic type is the quarter-note and dotted rhythms. The image of the clapping bronze drums is portrayed in an exquisite and lifelike manner. At the end, the tempo gradually increases, transitioning into the next section, where the atmosphere of the music begins to change (see Figure 5).

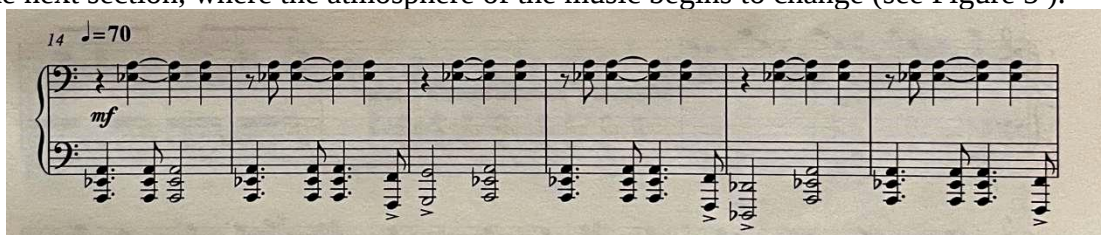


Figure 5. Excerpts from Part I

The Part II (bars 43-56) changes from $\text{♩} = 70$ to $\text{♩} = 92$, and the rhythmic type changes to fast sixteenth notes throughout, using the musical material from the first section as a development, changing the rhythmic type, and returning the register from the bass region to the upper-midrange range. The sense of the melody becomes more urgent, and the image of the bronze drums shifts from staidness to enthusiasm (see Figure 6).

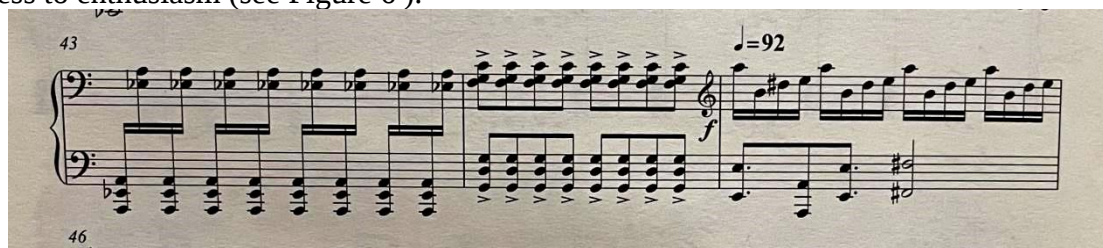


Figure 6. Excerpts from Part II

The Part III (bars 57-113) changes from $\text{♩} = 92$ to $\text{♩} = 80$, introducing new material, such as in Score Example 4, where the accompaniment weave in the first half is arpeggiated chords of two-quarter notes, the right-hand melody is mainly in minor appoggiaturas, and the image of bronze drums shifts from passionate back to solemn. In the second half, the rhythmic type is changed, making the overall tempo change from slow to rapid. The main melody of measures 71-78 is in the left hand, the right hand sixteenth note or sixteenth note and thirty-second note combination of the rhythmic type of rapid running (see Figure 7). Measures 89-92 the left hand is doubled, enriching the main melody of the left hand single note of measures 71-78, with a fuller sense of melody and acoustics. 93-102 measures will be 71-82, the left hand is doubled, enriching the main melody of the left hand single note of measures 71-78, the sense of melody and acoustics are more full. 102 bars apply the technique of inversion to bars 71-82, inverting the left- and right-hand melodies. The timbre of the struck bronze drum shifts from the soprano region to the bass region, with a much thicker tone, bringing the music to a crescendo (see Figure 8). bars 103-113 cite the initial musical material in the third section, with the overall timbre region changing to the soprano region, and the intensity of the music changing from strong to very weak, demonstrating the mood of silence.

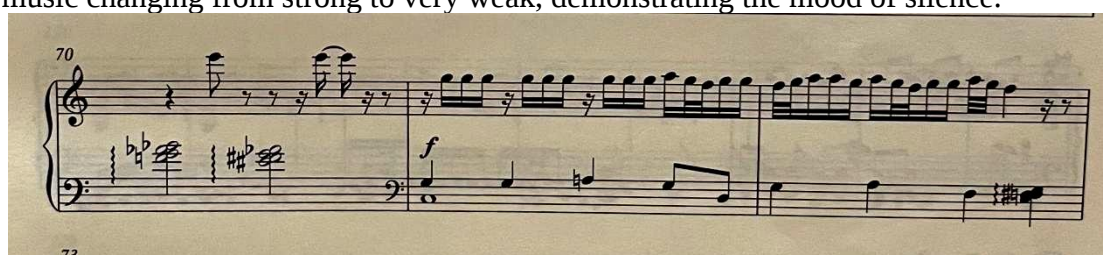


Figure 7. Excerpts from Part III



Figure 8. Excerpts from Part III

In the Part IV (bars 114-215), the tempo goes from $\text{♩} = 80$ to $\text{♩} = 140$, and the beat number is changed from 4/4 to 2/4, which speeds up the tempo a lot, and the left hand mainly applies the octave intervals, and the bass area shows the low and full tone, imitating the sound of the bronze drums which are struck hard to show the solemn image of the bronze drums. 148 bars later, the right hand is shifted from the bass area to the treble, and the music gradually becomes more enthusiastic from the solemnity, and at the same time, the major and minor second intervals appear frequently, showing the lively scene when people dance with the bronze drums. After bar 148, the right hand shifts from the

bass to the treble, and the music gradually becomes more passionate from solemnity, and at the same time, the intervals of major and minor second appear frequently, showing the lively scene when people dance with the bronze drums, and the music is smooth and passionate, which makes the whole piece richer and more wonderful. The tempo changes to sixteenth notes at the end of this section, making the music more tense and intense, and the rapid beating of the bronze drums shows the lively scene, quoting some of the musical material from the second section, and at the same time foreshadowing the imminent recapitulation of the piece. The music ends with a free extension of the rests, which have a sense of abruptness, and the growth of the rests likewise increases the sense of rhythmic momentum.

The Part V (bars 216-231) has a tempo from $\text{♩}140$ to $\text{♩} = 92$, and the beat signature returns from 2/4 to 4/4, recreating the melody of the second section and ending on a heavy bass note to set the stage for the coda.

The coda (bars 232-244) reproduces the musical material of the introduction, and this section acts as a counterpoint to the introduction. The closing section repeats the same musical material to enhance the sense of musical closure (see Figure 9).

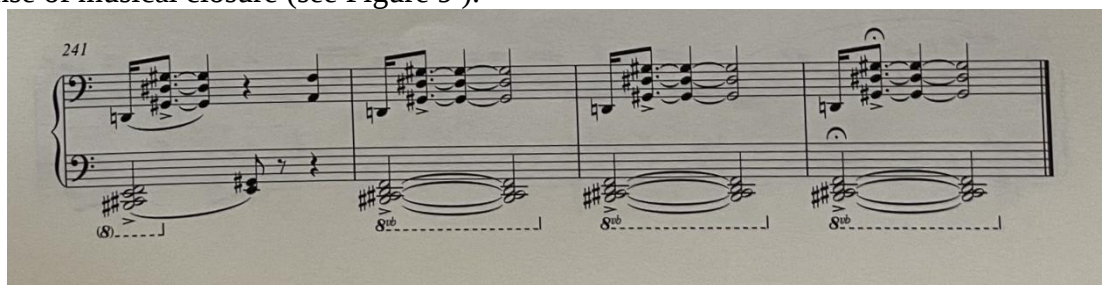


Figure 9. Excerpts from Coda

4. Piano Technique for "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn "

By analyzing the compositional material and musical structure of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", the work shows the sound picture of the people of various ethnic groups living in Guangxi dancing along with the bronze drums during their festivals, which also provides a certain basis for the design of the performance technique of the work. Franz Liszt once said that it is important to catch the soul of the work, and only the power of musical imagination can guide us on the road of seeking technology and point out the right direction. Therefore, the control of the tone of the bronze drum, the direction of the melodic line, the breathing method of the phrase, the construction of the vocal hierarchy, the acoustic touch of the harmonic block, and the use of the pedals in the work all have specific directionality. This article mainly focuses on the difficulties in playing the piece.

"The Dance of the Bronze Drumn" is a piece that, as the title suggests, is characterized by the terms "drum" and "dance". "Drum" refers to the bronze drum, a characteristic instrument of the Guangxi Zhuang people, and "dance" refers to two meanings, one is that the drummer dances along with the bronze drum, and the other is that the bronze drum shows the rhythm of the dance. The important verb in the title is also the core of the piece's musical expression - "dance", meaning to dance. The work uses the piano as a medium to simulate the percussion sound effects of the bronze drums to depict the image of different bronze drums, and to show the rhythm of the dance with different speeds and rhythms. This characteristic is not only evident in the title text, but also in the artwork.

In order to play the different images of the bronze drums, it is necessary to pay attention to the tempo requirements of each section, from the quarter note as a beat, each section of the tempo are 45-70-92-80-140-92-45, play to memorize the tempo of each section, in order to accurately understand each section of the bronze drums to show the image of the dance.

In the middle of the work, it is important to look carefully at the position of each accent mark as you play. In music scores, the first beat of each bar is the accent, but the rhythm of the bronze drums in the piece is constantly changing, and the accent points will re-divide the rhythmic groupings and

will no longer be regular accent patterns, where the drums must be accurately placed in the rhythmic points of the drums (see Figure 10).



Figure 10 . Excerpts from Part I

In the first section of the work, the polyphonic technique appears (see Figure 11). For example, in music score example 11, the first voices to be emphasized are the top melodic soprano voice in the right hand, which is marked with an accent mark, and the lower voice in the left hand. The next voice is the middle voice, which is sandwiched in the middle of the same intervallic repetition. The middle voice needs to be controlled at an even and weaker strength compared to the accented octaves of the high and low voices, so that the high and low voices have a distinct melodic line.

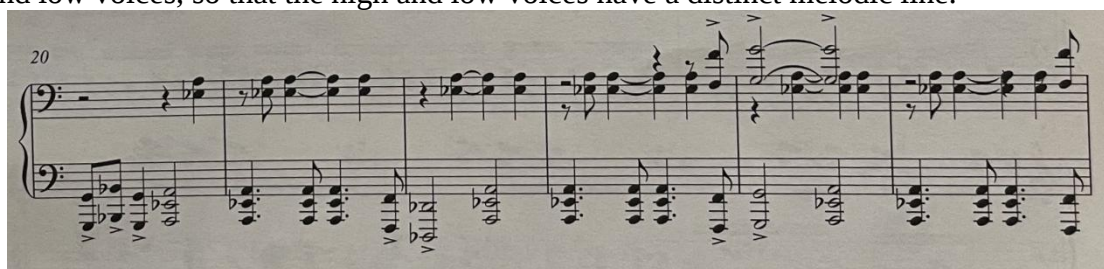


Figure 11. Excerpts from Part I

The dissonant chords in the second section are more complex (see Figure 12). These two bars are fast and have a lot of positional changes, so they need to be practiced to achieve fast and accurate chord pitches and rhythms.



Figure 12. Excerpts from Part II

The "percussive" harmony is the main part of the piece. The "percussive" touch technique is not just about hitting the piano, but it is about relaxing the arms, using the natural weight of the arms to naturally transfer it to the tips of the fingers, and then using the palm of the hand as a support, each finger needs to strike the keys explosively, with quick and violent force, imagining that the fingers are hitting like a hammerhead, and then quickly relaxing and moving the fingers away from the keys. Imagine your fingers striking like a hammerhead, and then quickly relaxing and taking your fingers off the keys after striking. The sound played in this way ensures the graininess and fullness of the tone, and also enables the player to improve the accuracy of the tone in a more relaxed situation, so that the piano appears to be a kind of "crisp metal" acoustic effect.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, the study of the piano work "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", I through the review of relevant literature and the analysis of the performance practice, more in-depth feeling rich in

Guangxi cultural characteristics of folk music features and ethnic cultural connotations. The work "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn" is full of Guangxi's ethnic flavor in terms of both musical composition technique and performance form. I analyze the score of the piece to find out the unique presentation of the ethnic music elements in the piece. The author analyzes the score of the work to find out the unique presentation of the ethnic music elements in the work. He looks for the use of the ethnic music elements of Guangxi in the work, observes how the composer combines the two music elements with modern compositional techniques, and expresses them through the unique sound of the piano. This paper analyzes the music composition elements and music structure of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", and explores the interpretation of Guangxi ethnic music elements in piano sound. In this paper, I analyze from the perspective of performance, the composer uses the piano to simulate the sound of national instruments, and shows the different vivid images of Guangxi bronze drums through unique rhythm, melody, sound, speed, etc. The work restores the national style of dancing with bronze drums to the maximum extent through the rich expression of the piano, and shows the people of Guangxi's love for life and music, and the lively scene of national life.

Analyze a piece of work need to master and analyze the following aspects, for example, in the thought should understand the characteristics of the national culture and master the national style in the work, the performer in the interpretation process to establish the correct auditory experience, so as to enhance the inner more and more rich musical language, in order to accurately show the work implies the musical mood, the Guangxi national piano works better interpretation to the audience, so that more human body to feel the Guangxi national piano music charm. The research in this paper provides certain references for the performers of "The Dance of the Bronze Drumn", and we believe that through more people's performance and exploration, Guangxi folk piano music can be more widely promoted and circulated.

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