

Analysis on Korean National Musical Elements and the Performance of Piano Suite *Combination of Lengths*

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Abstract—Based on the research of Korean culture, through the study of “length” of rhythm in Korean music, this paper focuses on three kinds of performing techniques, “Deng De Kong”, “Jin Yang Zhao” and “En Mao Li” and music angle which are combined with piano. Through playing, consulting literature and watching audio-visual materials, the author has made in-depth research on the performance of the piano suite *Combination of Lengths* from the timbre.

Keywords—*lengths of rhythm; Deng De Kong; Jin Yang Zhao; En Mao Li*

I. INTRODUCTION

Through the analysis of the performance of the piano suite *Combination of Lengths*, the research has been done from touching keys. In the combination of the piano timbre and Korean music style, such research can more clearly express the details and performing techniques of music.

Conclusion: The piano suite *Combination of Lengths* is a very good Korean piano work. Through the love and research of this work, it is intended to bring inspiration on key touching and timbre of piano to more performers, students studying Korean music and music researchers. What is national is also international. Through the performance of our national piano works, we can carry forward our national music and let more people understand Chinese music.

II. KOREAN NATIONALITY AND KOREAN CULTURE

A. Korean Nationality

Korean nationality refers to South Korean and North Korean people distributed on the Korean Peninsula. In South Korea and North Korea, Korean people have different appellations. In South Korea, Koreans call themselves South Koreans. In North Korea, Koreans call themselves North Koreans. In China, the Korean nationality refers to the Korean people who migrated from the Korean Peninsula to the three eastern provinces of China. They are collectively called the Korean nationality, which is the general term for the Korean people living in China.

B. Korean Culture

The Korean people, also known as "Baiyi people", represent cleanness, simplicity and elegance. Korean language is mostly cohesive. Korean people believe in Christianity, Buddhism and Shamanism. Many Korean music activities are also closely related to religion. The Korean people can sing and dance well.

III. KOREAN MUSIC AND KOREAN COMPOSER QUAN JIHAO

A. Korean Music

Traditional Korean music works are seldom circulated in the whole minority nationalities, especially instrumental music works and Korean piano works. Unlike the music of Mongolian and Uygur minorities, Korean music has no prominent melody and regular rhythm, which makes it difficult for people to master and accept.

1) *Lengths of rhythm*: In Korean music, length of rhythm is the most prominent feature, which is closely related to Korean language. The length rhythm here not only refers to the rhythm, but also includes the intonation, strength, speed, mood, style and so on. To play and sing Korean music, it is necessary to understand the Korean language and master more Korean culture.

2) *Classification of "length" of Korean nationality*: The Korean "length" can be divided into two categories: the length of formal music and the length of folk music. The length of folk music is widely used, such as "folk songs", "witchcraft music", "Pan Suo Li", "Agricultural Music" and so on. It is usually used in sacrifices, family gatherings, leisure celebrations and festival celebrations.

The length of folk songs includes "Deng De Kong", "Jin Yang Tune", "Hui Mo Li", "Zhong Mo Li", "Ta Ling", and "An Dang" and so on. Rhythm of "length" generally are repeated and compounded in dance music, instrumental music and vocal music. The number of repetitions determines the nature of music. The repetition time is longer in rhythmic music, and the speed is slower. For example, the length of "Jin Yang Zhao" usually shows a soothing style of music; the repetition time is shorter and faster in rhythmic music, such as the length of "Deng De Kong", which usually shows a happy

style of music. In the aspect of notation, the length of notation mostly uses quaver, with 3 beats as a unit, there are 12/8, 9/8, 6/8 beats, etc. In a piece of music, different "lengths" can be mixed. Various "lengths" can also be named title music.

B. Korean Composer Quan Jihao

Korean composer Quan Jihao, born in Tumen, Jilin Province, was influenced by Korean music when he was young, which made him have unlimited enthusiasm for the music of his own nationality. Quan Jihao graduated from the Composition Department of Yanbian Institute of Art and is currently the director of the Music Form Department of China Conservatory of Music. When he was studying in Shanghai Conservatory of Music, he carried forward the call of internationalization of national music. Under the guidance of Mr. Wang Jianzhong, he combined western composing techniques and created a piano suite with strong Korean music style Combination of Lengths. This work, in 1985, won the first prize in the 4th Chamber Music Award. In 1994, it was selected as the assigned repertoire of Chinese works in China International Piano Competition. Later, he also created a large number of Korean-style instrumental music, national symphony, chamber music and so on. He is a prolific and national composer.

IV. COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS OF PIANO SUITE COMBINATION OF LENGTHS AND THE EXPRESSIVE STYLES OF DIFFERENT LENGTHS

A. The Combination of Korean Music and Internationalization in Combination of Lengths

Piano suite Combination of Lengths, a work full of Korean music elements, the composer used the most prominent Korean rhythm. At the same time, the composer also combines modern harmony: second interval, seventh interval, grape chord and so on. Combination of Lengths is a three-part style of Western music. The third movement is a gymnasium. The three movements are named after different "length" respectively. This work has strong Korean national music elements, western music elements, Western music style characteristics, the integration of piano elegant tone color, is a very excellent piano work combining Chinese and international.

B. The Musical Characteristics of the Three Movements in Combination of Lengths

The three movements are named after "Deng De Kong", "Jin Yang Zhao" and "En Mao Li", which also show the corresponding musical image of lengths of rhythm. Each movement, in addition to the length of the title, also appeared changes in length, and other types of "length".

In terms of instrumental music, the first movement imitates the tone of Korean long drums, and the second movement imitates the tone of Korean musical instrument gayageum. In vocal music, the second movement uses Korean folk melody; at the same time, it imitates human voice with piano. In terms of speed, the three movements respectively are fast, slow and fast, showing different scene pictures, Korean dance scenes, banquets, sacrifices and so on.

1) *"Deng De Kong"*: "Deng De Kong" is a kind of fast length, usually showing a strong dance scene, which belongs to a kind of witchcraft. The combination of witch's dance rhythm and incantation songs fills the whole scene with solemnity and humour. In this movement, the attachment of the prototype in the length of Deng De Kong is not obvious, and there are more changes in the length. Composers used seven-degree intervals and grape chords to form the starting theme. The changing rhythm of length and the melodic characteristics of Western musical forms make music rich in appeal. The "length" after the changes in performance puts forward higher requirements for the performers. They should have a deep understanding of the changes in the works and use correct performing techniques to make the performance more dynamic.

2) *"Jin Yang Zhao"*: "Jin Yang Zhao" is a slow length of music, and usually is a king of music with slow speed and long breath. This movement is like an old man singing an ancient melody with the accompaniment of gayageum in the moonlight. In this movement, there is a melody of a Korean folk song "Ode to the Moon", as well as the imitation of the Korean musical instrument gayageum, which describes a warm scene of family banquet.

3) *"En Mao Li"*: The third movement is based on the length of "En Mao Li" and describes a lively and happy dance scene. The whole song also includes the length of "Gu Ge Li" and "Saer Pu Li", which is a convoluted musical structure. The whole song uses 5/8, 3/8 and 6/8 beats respectively. The rhythm expresses freely and flexibly, showing the whole scene interestingly.

V. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMING SKILLS

A. "Deng De Kong"

1) *Performing technicality*: The whole song starts the dance scene by introducing the left-handed seven-degree interval, right-handed column-typed chord, which is like a witch dancing with joy. Although it is a chord-linked introduction, it is also melodic. At the same time, the singing of music should be paid attention to. Right-hand chord links need to be played by sticking keys. According to the performance characteristics of the length of "Deng De Kong", stress should be made on the third beat. The introduction part should not be dragged by the chord-linked melody. It should have rhythm and dance flexibility. The seventh interval of the left hand should be played and pushed by the big arm force to the bottom of the keys so that the end of each bar is not stiff. The main melody enters from the last two beats of section 6. The melody is in the left hand. The music of the continuum should be played by the method of shifting the center of gravity of the sticking wrist. The right-hand method of playing is the same as before, expressing the fluidity of music. The rhythmic stressed part should be played with a quick key down, and the stressed part should be slightly highlighted. The skipping melody starting from bar 12, because of the connection, should adopt the non-consecutive playing method

to ensure the continuous breathing of the skipping within each sentence line. One phase line has one force, and uses the skipping playing method of finger sticking keys and rebounding, and completes the skipping within a phase line with a wrist action, so as to ensure the coherence of the non-consecutive music. The key-sticking and rebounding skipping could give a light and flexible tone, in line with the dance scene. Beginning with bar 20, it is a good idea to use the method of playing skips with both hands. It is also applicable to the method of sticking keys and bouncing back with both hands. The most difficult point is that the two tones should be neat and the front and back tones should not appear.

2) *Performing musicality*: The length of "Deng De Kong" is a kind of strong emotional length. The rhythm is marked 8/12 on the score, with 12 beats for each bar and quaver for one beat. In the performance of the whole song, the music should flow. In some places, there is a quarter note and a quaver note. To put it more plainly, a beat is divided into three consecutive tones, requiring it to play a quarter note as a dotted quarter note, followed by a short eighth note. The first tone needs to be raised, flexible and lively. It is very dancing. It should not be too fast or too rigid. It should highlight the flexibility and characteristics of rhythm itself. The excessive rigidity of playing will lose the charm of musical works and the freedom and flexibility of Korean music.

B. "Jin Yang Zhao"

1) *Performing technicality*: The length of "Jin Yang Zhao" is an old, slow and free "length" with deep and narrative music. Playing this movement requires accurate expression of breath and musical image between the phases. In terms of rhythm and speed, the length of "Jin Yang Zhao" is adagio. Each phrase includes 4/4, 5/4 and 3/4; 12 beats per phase, the first and fifth beats are stressed. The two stressed beats should cooperate and promote each other. At the same time, the composing technique of fixed bass type accurately shows the basso. Throughout the treble and basso, the timbre is soft and deep. Here, stress is played by sticking keys, and "the weight of the arm quickly reaches the fingertips". To show the coherence and softness of the melody, we should play it with a continuum, touch the keys with fingertips, and slow down the keys with expressions.

There are obvious differences in the speed between the second movement and the first and third movements. The first and third movements of the works are faster, expressing cheerfulness, intensity and roughness. The second movement is a slow movement, and the type of length rhythm is to show a very deep, narrative music characteristic.

2) *Performing musicality*: In this movement, attention should be paid to playing "Qi Yun" of Chinese works. "Yun" refers to the expressive force of music presented by the song, and "Qi" is an inherent expression that runs through every phrase and every period, which is out of sight in the whole work but can make the music full of singing and coherence. Through the understanding of music, there are different

keystrokes and different musical emotions to play each tone. But it's better to not look at each tone in isolation. We should process each work with inner musical emotions, and pay attention to the integrity of the whole work, each phase and period, so as to imitate the picture of the accompaniment of the gayageum and the singing of human voice under the moonlight. If this movement lacks "Qi", the phase will not be smooth and there will be no coherence in music. If there is no "Yun", there will be a lack of resonance between the performers and the works, and the isolation completion of the music score is the biggest taboo in Chinese works.

C. "En Mao Li"

1) *Performing technicality*: The length of "En Mao Li" is same as the length of the first movement "Deng De Kong". It is also a strong and rugged length. The whole third movement runs through the asymmetry of 5 beats and stresses, which makes people sound a little lame, which is the characteristic of this period. In the performance, it should be very flexible. It's essential to pay attention to the rhythm of the internal rhythm, in order to show a dance scene with rhythmic characteristic. In addition, it is recommended to lay stresses with the application of pedals. What's more, only fast pedals are on stresses. In the third movement, there are a large number of skips, which need to be broken and continuous in expressive force. It's right to play fingertip rebound and skips, followed by big movements of arms and wrists accompanied by grasping with fingertip. It's important to express several tones with orientation, finally stopping on stress. It is emphasized that full time value of stress shall be achieved. At the same time, the player should give a phrase for a breath. In the performance of chromatic scales, speed should be achieved at one go. With fingertips sticking keys, it's advisory to minimize the finger movements and drive the whole direction with big arm. The performance of two-tone links is also a key point of this movement. It's necessary to pay attention to the arrangement of several groups of two-tone links, which should conform to the musical expression of big phases.

2) *Performing musicality*: From the beginning of the music, "En Mao Li" shows a cheerful and enthusiastic dance scene. Korean's unique stress characteristic is to make music interesting. Melody bass belongs to the fourth degree, and constitutes a minor second degree with the theme melody. "En Mao Li" is a whirling musical form. But the speed of the middle period is relatively slow. The whole movement runs fast, slowly and then fast.

VI. CONCLUSION

Mr. Quan Jihao, the composer of the piano suite *Combination of Lengths*, has made a good integration of Korean music elements and internationality. What is national is also international. It is an important feature of Chinese composers' creation nowadays. It is our common aspiration of our musicians in this generation to promote our national culture and national music. As a performer, he has inherent

enthusiasm for playing his country's piano works. Through the pursuit of the performance cause in our generation, we can inherit and carry forward our national music culture and make our national music occupy a broader world.

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