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Performance Interpretation of Chinese and Western Clarinet and Piano Works - using Johannes Brahms' *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major,* Op. 120 and Chen Gang's *Sunshines Over Tashkurgan as* Examples

Dissertation

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Introduction

1. Purpose and Significance of the Research

1.1. Purpose of the Research

While chamber music in a broad sense can be traced back to the Medieval period, the modern form of chamber music is generally believed to have emerged in the early eighteenth century.[1] With the decline of vocal dominance and the rise in popularity of instrumental compositions, instrumental chamber music emerged as one of the primary trends for many composers.[2] During the classical period in the mid-seventeenth century, composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and others explored various creative possibilities within this genre, including forms, structures, and instrumentations, thereby standardizing its modern form. Thus, Haydn is often regarded as the pioneer of the modern chamber music genre.[3]

Due to its small ensemble size, chamber music can be performed almost anywhere without big concerns about space limitations or the financial requirements of large orchestras. Eventually, performing chamber music has become a specialization for professional performers. The rapid development of chamber music occurred during the Romantic era of the 19th century. During this time, composers, such as Liszt and Wagner, sought to break free from the constraints of classical order, as the musical conventions of the Classical period imposed relatively strict rules on composers and musicians in terms of form and performance practice. However, there were also composers who attempted to continue composing within the traditional framework, considering themselves as inheritors of the Classical music tradition. Johannes Brahms was a prominent representative among such composers, who was able to continue the German musical tradition and invent new musical elements at the same time. Nevertheless, the chamber music continues to serve as an excellent genre for musicians to blend collaborative ensemble skills while maintaining the individual voices through different musical interpretations.

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[1] Chomiński, J., & Wilkowska-Chomińska. K. (1987). Formy muzyczne.T. II: Wielkie formy instrumentalne. [Musical forms. T. II: Great instrumental forms.] Kraków: *Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne*, p. 167.

[2] Spieth, D.; Hall, D.; Berkeley, K.; & Kamath, L. (2022). *Exploring the Arts: A Brief Introduction to Art, Theatre, Music, and Dance.* LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network, p. 233

[3] Cobbett, W.W., ed. (1929). *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*. London: Oxford University Press.

To this day, chamber music concerts continue to enjoy widespread popularity in the Western world. Chamber music performance has evolved into a highly specialized program in universities and music schools, encompassing training in performing and collaborative techniques tailored to various instrumentations and ensemble settings. Among various ensemble setting, the clarinet and piano duo constitutes one of the quintessential instrumentations in chamber music. The clarinet's vocal-like timbre inherently connects it with human expression, transcending ensemble boundaries and serving as an "expressive conduit of musical styles."[4] Simultaneously, the versatility of the piano allows for the creation of diverse musical expressions.

Despite the popularity of chamber music in the West, the development of chamber music in China remains at a nascent stage. Chinese composers have looked to Western chamber music as a model, seeking to infuse their compositions with a Chinese essence. However, several challenges have impeded the growth and refinement of the Chinese chamber music scene. One significant obstacle is the shortage of accomplished performers versed in both Western and Chinese styles of chamber music performance. Additionally, there exists a lack of understanding and interest in chamber music among Chinese audiences. The traditional role of the piano in chamber music, often relegated to that of an accompaniment instrument, leads to many misconceptions regarding its role and importance. Particularly, the piano, capable of producing a multitude of timbres akin to an entire orchestra in the hands of a single player, may dissuade Chinese piano students from engaging in ensemble playing, thereby contributing to a profound lack of understanding and practice in chamber music.[5]

To make up for the deficiency in information and knowledge necessary for Chinese performers to adeptly engage in chamber music, this paper will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the performance techniques and compositional structures employed in two clarinet and piano duet chamber music pieces. One selection will originate from the Western tradition, while the other will represent a Chinese composition. Additionally, references from

[4] Rainey, L. (2011). *The Clarinet as Extension of the Voice and Expressive Conduit of Musical Styles in Diverse Ensembles.* [Master's Thesis] Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.16993069.v1

[5] Liu, R.S. (2004). *Shìlùn gāngqín yǔ mùguǎn yuèqì zài shìnèiyuè zhōng de hézuò* [Collaboration in chamber music for piano and woodwinds] [Doctoral dissertation], Central Conservatory. p. 3.

two smaller pieces will be incorporated to provide more insight for the research. This analysis is anticipated to provide useful guidelines for Chinese chamber music performances and serve as a valuable contribution to the advancement of the Chinese chamber music scene.

The selected piece for analysis from the Western tradition is Brahms' *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 120 No. 2,* a classic work of chamber music from the late Romantic period. This selection is particularly noteworthy for its treatment of the piano, which assumes a role of equal significance to the clarinet rather than serving merely as accompaniment. The interplay between these two instruments engenders a captivating chemistry that permeates the entire composition. Moreover, while there exists a wealth of literature in Europe elucidating the collaborative dynamic between the clarinet and piano in this sonata, there is a dearth of Chinese literature exploring this subject matter. Hence, exploring this piece offers an opportunity to enrich the understanding of chamber music performance within the Chinese context.

The second chosen piece is "Sunshine over Tashkurgan," composed in 1976 by the Chinese composer Chen Gang. Originally written for violin and piano, it draws inspiration from the melodies of "Beautiful Tashkurgan" by Tursun Karl and "Spring of Pamir" for Chinese flute solo by Liu Furong.[6] Later, it was transcribed for clarinet and piano, broadening its accessibility and appeal. Following its performance, the piece garnered widespread acclaim and has since been adapted for other instruments, including the saxophone. Despite its framing within a Western musical framework, the clarinet rendition of the piece necessitates a Chinese performance approach to fully capture its essence. This unique blend of cultural influences imbues the composition with significant research value in the exploration of performance approaches.[7]

[6] Bi, Q. (2007). *Pàmǐěr de xióngyīng – xiǎotíqín qǔ "Yángguāng zhàoyàozhe Tǎshíkù'ěrgān" yǎnzòu fēnxī* [The eagle of Pamir – performance analysis on the violin work "Sunshine over Tashkurgan"], Guìzhōu Dàxué Xuébào (Yìshù bǎn) [Guizhou University Post (Arts Section)] 21(2), 52–58. https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1671-444X.2007.02.012

[7] Qian, R. P. (2001). Zhōngguó xiǎotíqín yīnyuè [Chinese Violin Music]. Changsha: Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House. p. 178.

Based on the above description, the title of this paper is decided to be “The Performance Interpretations of Western and Chinese Chamber Works for Clarinet and Piano - using Johannes Brahms’ Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120 and Chen Gang’s Sunshine Over Tashkurgan examples”.

This research is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1) Building upon the foundation of these two compositions, summarize the exchange and fusion of Chinese and Western musical cultures, aiming to better understand the development of Chinese and Western instrumental music cultures.
2) Through an analysis of the two compositions, their backgrounds, and brief biographies of the composers, assist readers in comprehending the contributions of Brahms and Chen Gang to the development of instrumental music.
3) By conducting a musical analysis of the two compositions and examining their collaborative performance, aid readers in grasping the musical styles, enhancing performance skills, while also deepening their understanding of chamber music and the role of the piano within it—a recognition that the piano holds an equally significant position as the clarinet and is not merely relegated to an accompaniment role.

1.2. Significance of the Research

Johannes Brahms stands as a towering figure among the esteemed composers of the German Romantic period.[8] Unlike some of his contemporaries in the 1850s who embraced avant-garde tendencies and sought to break away from the traditions of the past, Brahms took a different path. He blended Classical music traditions with the new innovations and the aesthetic of Romanticism, all while maintaining a strict adherence to contrapuntal techniques. His aim was to harmonize these disparate stylistic currents into a cohesive whole. Brahms approached Romantic expression not as a rejection of Classical ideals, but rather as an evolutionary progression of them. Schoenberg, in his celebrated essay, hailed Brahms as

[8] Dziębowska, E. (ed.). (1979). *PWM music encyclopedia. Edition I. Vol. 1: AB biographical part*. Kraków: PWM, pp. 387-402. ISBN 83-224-0113-2. (in Polish).

"Brahms the Progressive," recognizing the innovative nature of his compositional methods.[9] However, Brahms' steadfast commitment to the classical framework often leads him to be viewed more generally as a conservative figure with an innovative spirit at his core. Throughout Brahms career, he showed great interest in chamber music, and until the very end of his life, he continued composing pieces for various chamber music ensembles—such as the Sonata analyzed in this work, which he composed three years before his passing. His unique compositions influenced many later composers, including Antonín Dvořák, one of the prominent representatives of the younger generation of late Romantic composers.[10]

Brahms' Sonata in E-flat major for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120, is the result of the composer's friendship with the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld.[11] Mühlfeld's performances inspired Brahms, prompting the composer to recognize the exquisite timbre and expressive potential of the clarinet.[12] This newfound appreciation inspired Brahms to expand the repertoire of clarinet sonatas, a genre that had been relatively underexplored at the time. In honor of Mühlfeld's influence and friendship, Brahms dedicated two new compositions to the clarinet virtuoso. It is worth noting that prior to these two works, only Mozart had composed sonatas for clarinet and piano among the most famous composers. Therefore, despite being less common in genre during Brahms's time, these pieces have since become classics for clarinetists and representative works of the composer's personal style and the Romantic era.

Chen Gang is widely recognized as one of the leading contemporary composers in China. While he has composed numerous works spanning various genres and instrumentation, he is perhaps best known in the Western world as the co-composer of the violin concerto "The Butterfly Lovers." He is one of the first local Chinese composers who has integrated elements of traditional Chinese music and ideals with Western compositional techniques, making significant contributions to the development of contemporary Chinese music. Having visited

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[9] Schoenberg, A. (2014). Brahms the Progressive. *In Style and Idea*. Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.

[10] Neuzic, S., *Brahms*, (translator: Wang Qingyu), Luo Walter Musician Biography Series, People's Music Publishing House, published in April 2008, page 2.

[11] Musgrave, M. (1985). *The Music of Brahms*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[12] Swafford, J. (1997). *Johannes Brahms: A biography*, Macmillan. p. 572

numerous countries, he has advocated for music with distinct Chinese ethnic characteristics on the global stage. His name has been inscribed in the "World Celebrity Record" and he has been awarded the "International Cultural Honorary Certificate."[13]

Chen Gang's "The Sun Shines in Tashkorgan" opened a window for traditional Chinese music to the world by incorporating elements of Xinjiang folk music into Western compositional techniques.[14] This fusion facilitated the dissemination and popularization of Chinese traditional music abroad, as well as its development domestically, marking a valuable precedent for the Sinicization of Western music. It contributed to bridging cultural exchanges between East and West, serving as a nexus and fusion point for both cultures, thereby allowing a broader understanding of Chinese music worldwide. Similarly, the clarinet version of "The Sun Shines on Tashkorgan" has also promoted the development of Western musical elements and concepts in China. The clarinet, originating from Europe and tracing its roots back to ancient Greece,[15] undoubtedly introduced new means of expression for composers and performers entering the Chinese music world.

China and Europe have established distinct standards in music composition and performance, exhibiting similarities in certain aspects yet presenting stark contrasts in others. Therefore, from a research standpoint, works that intertwine elements from both cultures become particularly fascinating. Through comparative studies of these differing traits, a fresh viewpoint can be offered for comprehending each other's realms, thereby fostering mutual understanding among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This study will compare and analyze Brahms' S*onata in E-flat Major for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120* no.2, and *The Sun Shines on Tashkorgan* by Chen Gang, with the clarinet adaptation by Li Ming. The comparison will encompass aspects such as compositional techniques, musical styles, and performance approaches. It will delve not only into theoretical exploration but also encompass overall analysis of the works and performance versions. Ultimately, the

[13] Ke, L., (2018). *A Short Course in the History of Chinese Music*, Beijing Jiuzhou Publishing House, p. 202.

[14] Yan, X. (2023). *An Analysis of Four Chinese Violin Works Based on Xinjiang Folk Elements (1950s–2000s)*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. p. 1

[15] Śledziński, S. (ed.) (1981). *Mała encyklopedia muzyki*, Warsaw: PWN.

study aims to summarize the characteristics and artistic value of the clarinet and piano compositions created by these two composers.

2. Research Overview

2.1. Overview of Performance Research on Clarinet and Piano Duet

2.1.1. Literature Review on the Clarinet Structure, Music, Performance Approaches, and Pedagogy

In recent years, there has been a growing number of publications exploring various aspects of clarinet music worldwide. In China, scholars have shown particular interest in how Chinese cultural influences shape the development of clarinet music within the country. For instance, in his paper titled "On the Emergence and Development of Chinese Clarinet Music: A Case Study of 'The Voice of Pamir'" published in 2017, Li Junyi analyzed the emergence and development of Chinese clarinet music, using Hu Bijin's composition *The Voice of Pamir*, which utilizes music materials from Xinjiang, as an example.[16] This large-scale concerto played a significant role in the development of Chinese clarinet music, serving as a prime example of the fusion of Eastern and Western elements and providing evidence of the flourishing development of clarinet music in China. Similarly, in 2020, Zhang Mingyi provided an overview of the development of Chinese clarinet music in a paper titled "Overview of Research on the Development of Chinese Clarinet Art."[17] This comprehensive study traced the evolution of the clarinet both within China and on the global stage. It delved into various aspects such as composition, pedagogy, and the broader cultural impact of clarinet music, shedding light on its multifaceted development in China.

Unlike most Chinese scholars who focus solely on clarinet performance without exploring interdisciplinary connections, Western scholars have expanded their research beyond performance styles, techniques, or musical analysis. Instead, they endeavor to link clarinet-related issues with other scientific fields, conducting interdisciplinary studies. For instance,

[16] Li, J. (2017). *Cong "Pamier zhi yin" kan Zhongguo dan huang guan zuo pin de chuangzuo fazhan* [On the Emergence and Development of Chinese Clarinet Music: A Case Study of "The Voice of Pamir"]. Yinyue chuangzuo, 6, 101–102.

[17] Zhang, M. Y. (2020). *Zhōngguó dān huáng guǎn yìshù fāzhǎn yánjiū zōngshù* [Overview of research on the development of the Chinese clarinet art]. Xìjù zhī jiā, 9, 59–60.

V. Chatziioannou, S. Schmutzhard, and M. Pàmies-Vilà conducted research aimed to create a physical time model capable of real-time simulation of various clarinet sound production techniques and synthesizing sounds.[18] Additionally, N. Giordano and J.W. Thacker published an article titled "Navier-Stokes-Based Clarinet Model" that described a quasi-clarinet model similar to the clarinet but slightly smaller and utilized Navier-Stokes equations to calculate airflow through the instrument.[19] A. Slis, K. Wolak, A. Namasivayam, and P. Van Lieshout studied the use of articulation and double-tonguing techniques by four professional clarinetists when playing cross-register, clarinet, and two-part scales in the high register. They described their findings in a paper titled "Lingual Behavior in Clarinet Articulation: A Multiple-Case Study into Single and Double Tonguing."[20]

Nevertheless, academic literature on clarinet from both China and the West has provided valuable insight for this research direction of this paper. The literature that this research draws references from includes (listed according to alphabetical order):

1) **Instrument Construction and Manufacture**: Wang, D., & Zhang, B. "The effectiveness of clarinet tuning rings";[21] Wilson, T. A., & Beavers, G. S. "Operating modes of the clarinet";[22] Xi, W. L., & Jiang, C. F. "Research on clarinet reeds";[23] Zhang, R. F. "The need to strengthen research on clarinet mouthpieces".[24]

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[18] Chatziioannou, V., Schmutzhard, S., Pàmies-Vilà, M., & Hofmann, A. (2019). Investigating Clarinet Articulation Using a Physical Model and an Artificial Blowing Machine. *Acta Acustica United with Acustica*, *105*(4), 682–694. https://doi.org/10.3813/AAA.919348

[19] Giordano, N., & Thacker, J. W. (2020). Navier-Stokes-based model of the clarinet. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *148*(6), 3827–3835. https://doi.org/10.1121/10.0002920

[20] Slis, A., Wolak, K., Namasivayam, A., & van Lieshout, P. (2021). Lingual Behavior in Clarinet Articulation: A Multiple-Case Study into Single and Double Tonguing. *Music & Science*, *4*, 205920432110341. https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043211034117

[21] Wang, D., & Zhang, B. (1985). Dān huáng guǎn diào yīn diàn quān de xiào yòng [The effectiveness of clarinet tuning pads]. *Yuèqì,* (06), 1-3.

[22] Wilson, T. A., & Beavers, G. S. (1974). Operating modes of the clarinet. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *56*(2), 653–658. https://doi.org/10.1121/1.1903304

[23] Xi, W. L., & Jiang, C. F. (1991). *Dān huáng guǎn shào piàn yánjiū* [Research on clarinet reeds]. *Huáng Zhōng: Wǔhàn Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn Xuébào*, (2), 6.

[24] Zhang, R. F. (1985). Yīng jiāqiáng duì dān huáng guǎn zuǐzi de yánjiū [The need to strengthen research on clarinet mouthpieces]. *Yuèqì,* (03), 11-12.

2) **Performance Techniques and Approaches:** Pang, L. "On the application of tonguing techniques in clarinet performance practice";[25] Pino, D. *The clarinet and clarinet playing*;[26] Slis, A., Wolak, K., Namasivayam, A., & van Lieshout, P. "Lingual Behavior in Clarinet Articulation: A Multiple-Case Study into Single and Double Tonguing";[27] Wang, Z. X. "Fingering techniques and notable issues in clarinet fingering";[28] Xiang, Z. L. "On the embouchure of clarinet playing".[29]

3) **Music Analysis:** Lawson, C. *Brahms, Clarinet quintet;*[30] Fay, J. "Brahms' Clarinet Works".[31]

4) **Pedagogy:** Harris, P. "Teaching the clarinet";[32] Wang, D. W. "The enlightenment of historical experience on clarinet teaching";[33] Webster, M. "Teaching Clarinet: The Continuum of Articulation".[34]

2.1.2. Literature Review on Piano Chamber Music

In contrast, articles focusing on piano chamber music as the primary research subject, while addressing aspects such as teaching, performance, and work analysis, tend to concentrate more on pedagogical considerations and performance techniques. These literatures include:

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[25] Pang, L. (2007). Qiāntán tǔyīn jìqiǎo zài dān huáng guǎn yǎnzòu shíjiàn zhōng de yùnyòng [On the application of tonguing techniques in clarinet performance practice]. Yuèfǔ xīnshēng: Shěnyáng Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn Xuébào.

[26] Pino, D. (1980). *The clarinet and clarinet playing*. C. Scribner's Sons.

[27] Slis., Wolak, Namasivayam, & van Lieshout, (2021) Lingual Behavior in Clarinet Articulation.

[28] Wang, Z. X. (1995). Dān huáng guǎn de yùnzhǐ jí yùnzhǐ zhōng zhídé zhùyì de wèntí [Fingering techniques and notable issues in clarinet fingering]. *Nánjīng Yìshù Xuéyuàn Xuébào: Yīnyuè yǔ biǎoyǎn bǎn*, (4), 4.

[29] Xiang, Z. L. (1989). Lùn dān huáng guǎn chuīzòu shí de kǒu xíng [On the embouchure of clarinet playing]. *Yīnyuè tànsuǒ*, (3), 6.

[30] Lawson, C. (1998). *Brahms, Clarinet quintet*. Cambridge University Press.

[31] Fay, J. (1992). Brahms' Clarinet Works. *The Clarinet (Pocatello, Idaho)*, *19*(4), 20–23.

[32] Harris, P. (1995). Teaching the clarinet. In *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet* (pp. 123–133). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521470667.012

[33] Wang, D. W. (1982). Lìshǐ jīngyàn duì dān huáng guǎn jiàoxué de qǐshì [The enlightenment of historical experience on clarinet teaching]. Yīnyuè yìshù: Shànghǎi Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn Xuébào, (4), 6.

[34] Webster, M. (2010). Teaching Clarinet: The Continuum of Articulation. In *The Clarinet* (Vol. 37, Issue 4, pp. 6–12). International Clarinet Association.

1) **Pedagogy in Piano Chamber Music Performance**: Mukhamedjanova, Z. S. "On the specifics of teaching in chamber music";[35] Wang, Z. S., and Wang, L. "The important link in cultivating music literacy - Discussing the significance of learning chamber music";[36] Zhong, G. "Affective and musical understanding in piano chamber music pedagogy at the fundamental level";[37] Zhu, M. "Practice of Chamber Music Teaching in Higher Professional Music Colleges";[38] Zhu, N.P. "A New Perspective on the Cultivation Program and Curriculum Setting of Collaborative Piano".[39]
2) **Techniques in Piano Chamber Music Performance**: Guo, Y. N. "A Study on the Performance Points of the Piano Part in Chamber Music Works",[40] Lei, L. "Basic Piano Chamber Music Performance Techniques";[41] Liu, R. S. "An Essay on the Collaboration of Piano and Woodwind Instruments in Chamber Music";[42] Tang, X.C. "A Music Analysis and Performance Technique Study of the Piano Part in Shostakovich's 'Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano'";[43] "Discussing the

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[35] Mukhamedjanova, Z. S. (2022). *On the specifics of teaching in chamber music*. Iskusstvovedenie, 1-5.

[36] Wang, Z. S., & Wang, L. (1992). *Yīnyuè sùzhì péiyǎng de zhòngyào huánjié——tán xuéxí shìnèi yuè de yìyì* [The important link in cultivating music literacy - Discussing the significance of learning chamber music]. Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music, 4, 24-27.

[37] Zhong, G. (2019). *Affective and musical understanding in piano chamber music pedagogy at the fundamental level*. [Doctoral Dissertation.] Victoria University of Wellington.

[38] Zhu, M. (2013). Gāoděng zhuānyè yīnyuè yuàn xiào shìnèi yuè jiàoxué de shíjiàn—yǐ Xīnghǎi Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn gāngqín xì shìnèi yuè jiàoxué wéi lì. [Practice of Chamber Music Teaching in Higher Professional Music Colleges——Taking the Piano Department of Xinghai Conservatory of Music as an Example.] *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music, 3*, 162-166.

[39] Zhu, N. P. (2015). Duì "gāngqín yìshù zhǐdǎo" péiyǎng fāng'àn yǔ kèchéng shèzhì de xīn sīkǎo——jiānjí Wǔhàn Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn gāngqín yìshù zhǐdǎo zhuānyè xiànzhuàng jí gǎijìn tàntǎo. [A New Perspective on the Cultivation Program and Curriculum Setting of "Piano Art Guidance"—With Discussion on the Current Situation and Improvement of the Piano Art Guidance Major at Wuhan Conservatory of Music] *Huang Zhong (Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music), 2,* 161-168.

[40] Guo, Y. N. (2020). *Shìnèi yuè zuòpǐn zhōng gāngqín shēngbù yǎnzòu yàodiǎn yánjiū——yǐ L.van Bèiduōfēn "F dà diào chūntiān zòumíng qǔ Op.24" wéi lì* [A study on the performance points of the piano part in chamber music works: Taking L. van Beethoven's "Spring Sonata in F Major, Op. 24" as an example]. [Master's thesis] Hebei University.

[41] Lei, L. (2015). Gāngqín shìnèi yuè jīběn yǎnzòu jìqiǎo [Basic piano chamber music performance techniques] *Journal of Minjiang University*, 1, 98-104.

[42] Liu, R. S. (2010). Shìlùn gāngqín yǔ mùguǎn yuèqì shìnèi yuè de hézuò [An essay on the collaboration of piano and woodwind instruments in chamber music]. [Master's thesis] Central Conservatory of Music.

[43] Tang, X. C. (2022). D.D. *xiāo sī tǎ kē wéi qí zhī "wǔ shǒu shuāng xiǎo tígūn yǔ gāngqín xiǎo pǐn" gāngqín bùfen de yīnyuè fēnxī yǔ yǎnzòu jìfǎ yánjiū* [A music analysis and performance technique study of the piano part in D.D. Shostakovich's "Five Pieces for Two Violins and Piano"]. [Master's thesis], Jilin University

Importance of Piano Ensemble";[44] Zhang, Y., "Cooperation Issues in Piano Chamber Music Performance Learning".[45]

3) **Composition Analysis**: Cao, H. "A Study on the Piano Role in Chamber Music Performance: A Case Analysis of Three Chamber Music Works";[46] Davies, H. "Arnold Cooke's Chamber Music with Piano: Contexts, Stylistic Evolution And Performance."[47]

In 2018, Xu Shengchuan published an article titled "Analysis of the Current Development Status of Piano Chamber Music and Training Strategies" in the journal *The Voice of Yellow River*.[48] In this article, he pointed out that the gap between China and European countries in the performing quality of chamber music is attributed to several factors, including a significantly lower audience interest, relatively weak and limited teaching resources, and a scarcity of chamber music teaching literature. More importantly, piano chamber music emerged relatively recently in China, thus a complete theoretical and pedagogical system has not yet been established.

2.2. Literature Review on Brahms' "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E flat major, Op. 11. 120 No. 2"

Brahms' Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet Op. 120 No. 2 stands as a seminal work within the clarinet repertoire, subject to extensive scrutiny by both Chinese and Western scholars across various scholarly disciplines. This piece has been the focal point of analytical inquiry, with scholars examining it through lenses encompassing clarinet and piano performance,

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[44] Wang. *Discussing the importance of piano ensemble*. pp.4-6.

[45] Zhang, Y. (2017, August). *Gāngqín shìnèi yuè yǎnzòu xuéxí zhōng de hézuò wèntí——yǐ Yuēhànnès·Bólāmǔsī "Gāngqín yǔ dàtíqín dì yī zòumíng qǔ" wéi lì* [The issue of cooperation in piano chamber music performance learning——Taking Johannes Brahms's "Piano and Cello Sonata No. 1" as an example]. [Master's thesis], Wuhan Conservatory of Music.

[46] Cao, H. (2016). Shìnèi yuè yǎnzòu zhōng de gāngqín juésè yánjiū——yǐ sān shǒu shìnèi yuè zuòpǐn fēnxī wéi lì [A study on the piano role in chamber music performance: A case analysis of three chamber music works]. *Drama House*, 2016(06), 92-93.

[47] Davies, H. (2022). *Arnold Cooke's Chamber Music with Piano: Contexts, Stylistic Evolution And Performance.* [Doctoral dissertation], The Royal Northern College of Music in collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University.

[48] Xu, S. C. (2018). *Gāngqín shìnèi yuè fāzhǎn xiànzhuàng jí xùnliàn cèlüè fēnxī* [Analysis of the current development and training strategies of piano chamber music]. *Huánghé zhī shēng*, (17), 1.

chamber music collaboration, historical musicology, and compositional structures. Consequently, a substantial body of scholarly literature has emerged, offering a multifaceted exploration of the sonata from diverse perspectives.

Scholarly discourse on Brahms' Op. 120 No. 2 elucidates the classical and romantic elements interwoven within the composition, with analyses delving into its musical structure, harmonic function, and historical context. Researchers endeavor to uncover Brahms' connections to the traditional German music tradition, discerning the influences and innovations that shape his compositional style. Moreover, there exists a body of literature focusing on the technical aspects of the piece, probing the nuances of performance techniques and expressive capabilities inherent in clarinet and piano music. Below, this paper present a curated selection of scholarly articles and papers that offer valuable insights and serve as resources for further research in this area.

In his article titled "On the Importance of Piano Ensemble - The Piano Part in Brahms' Chamber Music," S. Wang emphasizes the significant role of piano ensemble in Brahms' chamber music.[49] The article underscores that piano should not be relegated to a subordinate role of mere accompaniment, elucidating upon strategies for effectively executing the piano parts within the context of chamber music performance.

In "An analysis and comparison of the clarinet and viola versions of the Two sonatas for clarinet (or Viola) and piano Op.120 by Johannes Brahms," Kyungju Lee highlights Johannes Brahms' intentional crafting of two different instrumental versions to achieve varied effects.[50] Each rendition not only differs in timbre or tone quality but also in practical techniques such as vibrato, lip pressure, interval leaps, dynamics, and range.

Kenneth Aoki, in "A Brief History of the Sonata with an Analysis and Comparison of a Brahms' and Hindemith's Clarinet Sonata," underscores the embodiment of Classical music's

[49] Wang, S. (2010). Qiántán gāngqín chóngzòu de zhòngyào xìng——Bólāmǔsī shìnèi yuè zhōng de gāngqín yǎnzòu [On the importance of piano ensemble: Piano performance in Brahms chamber music]. Běifāng yīnyuè, (6), 4-6.

[50] Lee, K. (2004). *An analysis and comparison of the clarinet and viola version of the Two Sonatas for Clarinet (or Viola) and Piano Op. 120 by Johannes Brahms*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

elegance and intricacy in Johannes Brahms' compositions, contrasting with Paul Hindemith's portrayal of the language and innovative harmonic treatment of modern music.[51] For clarinet performers, mastery of the technical demands of both works is paramount. They must possess precise and accurate fingering techniques, as well as complete control over their tone production and instrument. Without mastery of technical skills, musical expression would remain incomplete, as nuances in rhythm, dynamics, and timbre cannot be fully realized.

In "An Application of the Grundgestalt Concept to the First and Second Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120, No. 1 & No. 2, by Johannes Brahms," Devon Burts explores the relationship between Goethe's Grundgestalt concept and Johannes Brahms' compositional techniques.[52] To observe Brahms' motivic development and how these motifs penetrate within the works, Burts selects movements from Brahms' First and Second Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano for further analysis. Brahms' motivic treatment usually entails an initial motif with distinct contours and intervallic content, manipulated through various techniques such as inversion, rhythmic alterations, and rearrangement of fragments, which subsequently evolve into new derivative forms.

However, a significant portion of the literature mentioned predominantly centers on the comprehensive analysis of the musical compositions and the significance of the clarinet part. These discussions typically encompass aspects such as compositional context, musical analysis, and clarinet performance techniques. Conversely, there exists a dearth of studies that specifically address the piano section, resulting in a notable gap in detailed information regarding piano performance. Additionally, discussions pertaining to optimizing collaboration between the piano and clarinet are relatively scarce. Hence, this paper aims to address this imbalance by placing greater emphasis on the examination and discussion of the piano section within Brahms' Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet Op. 120 No. 2.

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[51] Aoki, K. T., (1968). *A Brief History of the Sonata with an Analysis and Comparison of a Brahms' and Hindemith's Clarinet Sonata.* [Master's Theses] Central Washington University. 1077. https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd/1077

[52] Burts, D. (2004). *An Application of the Grundgestalt Concept to the First and Second Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120, No. 1 & No. 2, by Johannes Brahms*. [Doctoral Dissertation] Digital Commons @ University of South Florida.

2.3. Literature Review on Chen Gang' "Sunshine over Tashkurgan"

"Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" is originally a composition for violin and piano by Chen Gang. Inspired by the Pamir flute melodies and drawn from Tajik folk music in Xinjiang, the piece showcases a complex and versatile creative technique, characterized by its lightness and agility. During the adaptation process, Chen Gang not only considered the original themes and artistic characteristics but also employed modern techniques. Particularly, he incorporated Tajik folk music materials, techniques from the European Romantic period, and unique performance techniques of other regional instruments.[53] This amalgamation of elements endowed the piece with a distinct ethnic flavor. Integrating Western musical elements, the composition has garnered widespread acclaim from both local and international audiences. Over time, musicians and composers have adapted this piece for a variety of instruments, including the flute, yangqin (Chinese hammered dulcimer), pipa (Chinese lute), erhu (Chinese two-stringed fiddle), piano solo, clarinet, and saxophone.

Presently, scholarly inquiries into "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" have predominantly revolved around its interpretations for violin, erhu, and pipa, enriching our understanding of both the original composition and its adaptations for Chinese instruments. For example, R.P. Qian's comprehensive examination of the piece's structure in his book *Chinese Violin Music* serves as a foundational resource in this regard..[54] Additionally, the comprehensive analyses conducted by Chinese violinists J.J. Min and J.R. Wang offer valuable insights for performers seeking to navigate the complexities of the composition, enhancing their interpretive capabilities.[55] Moreover, the contributions of British ethnomusicologist Steven Jones shed light on the nuances of playing Chinese folk melodies on traditional instruments, elucidating the techniques required to preserve their distinctive musical characteristics.[56]

[53] Yan. *An Analysis of Four Chinese Violin Works*

[54] Qian, *Chinese violin music*.

[55] Min, J. J., & Wang, J. R. (1997). Qiǎn xī xiǎotíqín qǔ "Yángguāng zhàoyàozhe Tǎshíkù'ěrgān" [A brief analysis of the violin piece "Sunlight Shines on Tashkurghan"]. Yīnyuè xuéxí yǔ yánjiū.

[56] Jones, S. (1995). *Folk music of China: living instrumental traditions*. Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.

Nevertheless, there remains a scarcity of research exploring adaptations of "Sunshine over Tashkurgan" for alternative instruments. These diverse interpretations offer novel auditory experiences, enriching the piece's sonic landscape and warranting thorough investigation and analysis. Furthermore, the author's data collection reveals a prevalent trend wherein studies, whether on Johannes Brahms' "Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120" or Chen Gang's "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" and its adaptations, predominantly focus on individual works. To date, there has been no comprehensive comparative analysis of performance techniques from the perspective of Sino-Western cultural relations. Therefore, this paper serves as a pioneering endeavor, placing particular emphasis on the clarinet rendition of "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" as one of its primary focuses and conducting an analysis of performance techniques through the lens of Sino-Western cultural relations.

3. The Research Content and Methodology

3.1. Research Content

The primary focus of this thesis encompasses the following key areas:

1) Conducting a comprehensive literature review to compare the developmental trajectories of Western and Chinese instrumental music. This includes an exploration of the evolution of clarinet and piano compositions within both cultural contexts, along with an examination of the reciprocal influences and exchanges between Western and Chinese instrumental music.

2) Investigating the compositional landscapes of notable clarinet and piano works from Western and Chinese traditions, with a particular emphasis on Johannes Brahms' "Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120" and Chen Gang's "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan". This exploration will be accompanied by succinct biographies of the respective composers.

3) Utilizing the analysis of these selected works as a springboard to delve into the similarities and disparities between clarinet and piano compositions within the cultural frameworks of the East and the West. This includes a nuanced examination of performance interpretations.

4) Finally, conducting an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the relationship between the clarinet and piano within Western and Chinese cultural milieus. This will entail a detailed examination of various stage performances, elucidating their integration, and presenting the author's insights and perspectives on this evolving relationship.

3.2. Research Methodology

1) Literature Review Methodology:

To achieve the objectives outlined in this research, this paper employed a structured methodology for the literature review. Initially, relevant publications were identified through comprehensive internet searches. These materials were then accessed by downloading them from reputable journal websites or by visiting well-established libraries to consult relevant books. The sources utilized in this study included reputable databases such as Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com), ProQuest (https://www.proquest.com/databases), JSTOR (https://www.jstor.org/), CNKI (https://www.cnki.net), VIP Information (https://www.cqvip.com), and Wanfang Data (https://www.wanfangdata.com.cn), among others. Additionally, physical libraries such as the National Library of China and the Jiangxi Provincial Library were also accessed to gather pertinent literature. A comprehensive collection of literature focusing on clarinet and piano music compositions and performance aspects from both Western and Chinese traditions was compiled. Subsequently, the gathered literature underwent categorization, thorough analysis, and was utilized to provide theoretical underpinnings for the discussions within this research.

2) Comparative Case Study:

To offer a more visually compelling analysis, this article presents two exemplary clarinet pieces from Western and Chinese traditions: Johannes Brahms' "Sonata for Clarinet (or Viola) and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 120" and Chen Gang's "Sunshines Over Tashkurgan." Additionally, two smaller works, Zhang Chao's "Norma May" and Giuseppe Ricotta's "Homage to China", are included for reference. Through a comparative examination of the compositional principles and performance techniques inherent in these compositions, the article aims to delineate their artistic attributes and elucidate the clarinet's significance within the realm of music culture. This approach

facilitates a concrete exploration of the subject matter and enriches the clarity and persuasiveness of the research outcomes.

3) Experiential-based Research:
   All theoretical research is closely linked to practical exploration. To gain a deeper understanding of the clarinet's characteristics, the author engaged in multiple interviews with instrument makers and educators. Furthermore, under their guidance, the author attempted to compose simple pieces for the clarinet and piano. By incorporating personal practical experiences, this research not only enriches the depth of the content but also corroborates the accuracy of theoretical findings.

Chapter 1:
Music in the Context of Cultural Exchange and Fusion between Chinese and Western Instrumental Music

The disparities in music culture ultimately arise from differences in logical thinking and thought processes. As Rimsky-Korsakov once remarked, "Music has least need of national identity among all the arts since… it is the common language of mankind and…has its own form."[57] Throughout the history of music development, accomplished artists have devoted themselves to crafting music that mirrors the distinct characteristics of their own nationality. Their compositions not only depict the historical narratives and realities of their homeland but also exude a strong patriotic spirit and national sentiments.

However, cultural boundaries are not rigid. As Chinese musicologist Y.K. Bao elucidated, "Culture should emphasize the integration of Western and Eastern influences," implying that foreign cultures can contribute to native culture by incorporating "outsider" musical techniques into ethnic music.[58] The amalgamation of Western orchestral music with Chinese folk music preserves the melodic and tonal attributes of each culture. The adaptability in employing compositional and orchestration techniques of this fusion style broadens and enhances the audience's auditory experience.

1.1. The Overview of the Development of Western Instrumental Music

1) Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque (5th-18th Century)

The development of music during the Middle Ages was significantly influenced by the political currents of society, with two of the most prominent entities being the Byzantine Empire from Asia Minor and the Arab Empire from the Middle East.[59] As discussed in "A History of Western Music" edited by the Chinese musicologist R.Y. Yu, many instruments

[57] Campbell, J. S. (1994). *Russians on Russian music, 1830-1880: an anthology*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 44-46

[58] Bao, Y. K. (2015). Zhí gēn mínzú chuántǒng, jīshēn shìjiè yuètán [Rooted in ethnic traditions, entering the world music scene]. In: Creativity Notes of "Yán Huáng Fēngqíng", *Music Space*, 5th edition, pp.14-33.

[59] Burkholder, J. P., Grout, D. J., & Palisca, C. V. (2010). *A history of western music* (8th ed.). W. W. Norton & Company. pp. 68-70

used in Western medieval music were introduced from the East.[60] Consequently, the medieval Church often disapproved of instrumental music associated with non-Christian religions.[61] Instrumental music primarily circulated among the common people and was frequently utilized for singing and dancing accompaniment. During this period, improvisational performance, relying on memory, was a notable characteristic of instrumental music. Commonly used instruments included the harp, lute, psaltery, organs,[62] flutes,[63] shawms, and trumpets.

During the Renaissance period, instrumental music underwent significant advancements spurred by the burgeoning musical scene, the emergence of secular themes, and the advent of music printing technology.[64] This era witnessed a notable evolution in instrumental music, as specialized collections of instrumental compositions began to be published, and instructional books guiding instrumental performance became more prevalent, marking a definitive entry of instrumental music into historical records.

A diverse array of instruments was prominent during this period, including the recorder, shawm (a double-reed instrument), krummhorn (a double-reed instrument with a curved end, known for producing a softer sound than the shawm), transverse flute, cornett, trumpet, sackbut (a precursor to the modern trombone), viol, improved organ, harpsichord (also known as virginal, spinet, clavichord, etc.), and clavichord.

The lute, introduced by the Arabs into Spain and boasting a history of over 500 years, experienced a "golden age" during the Renaissance.[65] It has a plethora of playing techniques developed for vocal accompaniment, solo performances, and ensemble settings. Independent instrumental genres such as ricercare, fantasia, and canzona emerged, distinct from vocal

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[60] Yu, R. Y. (2010). *Xīfāng yīnyuè shǐ [Western music history]*. Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe. p.39

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] The organs most commonly seen in the medieval period include the portable and medium-sized positif organs in addition to the large organ.

[63] The common medieval flutes include both vertical flutes made of wood and blown with a whistle mouthpiece, as well as transverse flutes

[64] Burkholder, Grout, & Palisca. *A history of western music* (8th ed.). p.264

[65] *Ibid.* p.267

forms or dance rhythms. The canzona, in particular, gradually evolved into church sonatas during the 17th century. By the late 16th century, the variation form reached its zenith, exemplified by notable works such as the "Fitzwilliam Virginal Book" collection, showcasing the diverse and innovative compositional techniques of the time.

During the Baroque period, instrumental music surged to prominence, eventually surpassing vocal music in significance. Instruments such as the violin, organ, and harpsichord emerged as leading performers, achieving remarkable artistic feats. Renowned composers of this era include Jean-Philippe Rameau, Domenico Scarlatti, George Frideric Handel, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

The principal genres of instrumental music during this time encompassed the concerto, sonata (in contrast to the cantata), suite, toccata, fugue, and chorale. The concerto, for instance, prominently featured string instruments as the primary voice, with keyboard instruments providing accompaniment and employing the basso continuo technique. Harpsichord music saw significant development, with notable forms including theme and variations and suites comprising movements such as allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Johann Sebastian Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier (BWV 846–893)" from 1722 stands as a pinnacle of the fugue form.

It is worth mentioning that towards the late 17th century, German flute maker Johann Denner (1655–1707) innovated the modern clarinet based on the ancient French chalumeau. Subsequent refinements by various craftsmen, notably German flutist Theobald Boehm, led to the standardization of the clarinet as we know it today.

2) Classical and Romantic Period (late 18th-19th Century)

Classicism, despite its relatively brief duration of about 50 years, left an indelible mark on the evolution of Western music. The transition from the harpsichord to the fortepiano significantly enhanced both music composition and performance, catering to the burgeoning demand for amateur music-making among the middle class. In the pre-Classical period,[66]

[66] The pre-Classical period, also referred to as the late-Baroque period or the Rococo Period, witnessed significant stylistic deviations from the preceding Baroque era. Music of this period embraced a greater sense of freedom and expression, often characterized by rhapsodic elements. Instrumental melodies assumed a more fluid

instrumental music genres such as the sonata, concerto, and chamber music underwent significant development and began to mature, leading to the appearance of two distinctive styles – the galant and the empfindsam – in the mid-eighteenth century.[67]

During the mid to late eighteenth century, Joseph Haydn, often hailed as the "father of the symphony," Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven stand as the triumvirate of musical giants from the Viennese Classical period. Haydn's prolific output of 108 symphonies advanced these forms to unprecedented levels of sophistication, particularly exemplified in his monumental set of 12 London symphonies. These works not only standardized the symphonic suite into a four-movement structure but also established distinct characteristics and common forms for each movement.

Mozart, in his exploration of various instrumental genres popular in the 18th century, demonstrated unparalleled versatility, composing divertimentos, serenades, dances, sonatas, chamber music, concertos, and symphonies. His compositions are renowned for their fluidity, clarity, and vitality, with Mozart achieving mastery in the Classical paradigm of the piano concerto. Notably, Mozart's groundbreaking "Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622" elevated the clarinet from a mere accompanying instrument to a prominent solo voice.

Beethoven, a towering figure in instrumental composition, made significant contributions to the sonata form, a cornerstone of his instrumental repertoire comprising 32 piano sonatas, 10 violin sonatas, 5 cello sonatas, among others. Through these compositions, Beethoven propelled the Viennese Classical tradition of the sonata-symphonic suite form to its zenith, playing a pivotal role in its maturity and development.

During the Romantic Period, composers pursued greater avenues for personal expression, drawing inspiration from folk and ethnic music to infuse their compositions with distinctive melodies, tonalities, harmonies, and rhythms. This era witnessed various phases, with early pioneers such as Weber and Schubert setting the stage for subsequent developments in the 1810s to 1820s. The prime period of Romanticism, spanning the 1830s to 1840s, saw the

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quality, resembling human speech and akin to recitative. Notable composers of this era include Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Christian Bach, and François Couperin.

[67] Burkholder, Grout, & Palisca. *A history of western music* (8th ed.). p.477

emergence of influential figures like Berlioz, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Chopin, who further explored emotional expression and individualistic styles.
In the mid-to-late Romantic period, exemplified by composers such as Liszt, Wagner, and Brahms from the 1840s to the 1880s, there was a continued emphasis on personalized expression and innovation, with Brahms being an exception. These composers integrated elements of folk and national music into their works, evident in the melodies, modes, harmonies, and rhythms they employed. Additionally, the Romantic era witnessed a significant expansion of the orchestral palette, with composers like Berlioz and Wagner pushing the boundaries of orchestration.[68] Richard Strauss, for instance, utilized a diverse array of clarinets in his operas "Salome, Op. 54" and "Elektra, Op. 58," showcasing the instrument's versatility and expressive potential within the Romantic orchestral context.

Furthermore, the piano, with its growing popularity and advancements in range and timbre, emerged as a favored instrument for Romantic composers to convey their musical visions.[69] Its expressive capabilities and versatility allowed composers to explore a wide range of emotions and moods, making it a central component in many Romantic compositions. Overall, the Romantic period was characterized by a quest for individual expression, emotional depth, and exploration of the vast sonic possibilities offered by both orchestral and keyboard instruments.

3) The Twentieth Century

The 20th century witnessed a remarkable diversification of musical styles and languages. Renowned musicologist Leonard B. Meyer astutely observed that our culture, characterized by its cosmopolitan nature, is inherently diverse and pluralistic.[70] This diversity manifests in the co-existence of various musical styles and aesthetics within the same period.[71] This proliferation was driven by a wave of anti-traditionalist sentiments that swept across continental Europe, fueled by internal musical developments and external societal factors.

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[68] Jones, T. (2006). Nineteenth-Century Orchestral and Chamber Music. In *French Music Since Berlioz* (1st ed., pp. 91–116). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315093895-3

[69] Parakilas, J. (1999). *Piano roles: three hundred years of life with the piano*. Yale University Press.

[70] Meyer, L. B. (1994). *Music, the arts, and ideas: Patterns and predictions in twentieth-century culture*. University of Chicago Press. p.208

[71] *Ibid.*

This era saw the emergence of various musical genres and movements, including neoclassicism, French impressionism, expressionism, avant-garde music, electronic music, aleatoric music, serialism, and minimalism, among others. What united these diverse styles was their shared spirit of experimentation and innovation.

Prominent composers of this period, such as Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Darius Milhaud, embraced experimentalism in their compositions. Schoenberg's atonal orchestral suite "Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16" and Berg's string quartet "Lyric Suite, Op. 3" are notable examples of this avant-garde approach. Percussion instruments also gained prominence in instrumental music, with composers like Paul Hindemith exploring unconventional techniques in works such as his piano suite "Suite 1922, Op. 26," which disregarded traditional finger-based playing in favor of percussive approaches.

Furthermore, the development of electronic technology revolutionized music composition, offering composers new tools and possibilities for sonic exploration. Innovative electronic instruments, including the theremin, synthesizers, electric pianos, electric violins, guitars, and turntables, expanded the horizons of modern music. Composers like Pierre Boulez embraced these technologies, integrating electronic devices with traditional instruments in compositions such as "Dialogue de l'ombre double" for clarinet and electronics (1985), thereby blurring the boundaries between acoustic and electronic soundscapes. In general, the 20th century marked a period of unprecedented experimentation and boundary-pushing in the realm of music composition and performance.

1.2. The Overview of the Development of Chinese Instrumental Music

1) Ancient China (21st century BC - 19th century AD)

The discovery of a seven-holed bone flute in 2001 at Jiahu in Wuyang, Henan Province, marked a significant archaeological find. Dating back 8000 years to the Neolithic period, this flute, made from crane bones, is the oldest musical instrument discovered to date. Remarkably, research has revealed that this ancient flute is capable of producing a complete seven-note scale, indicating a sophisticated understanding of musical scales and rudimentary music-making practices among ancient peoples. Subsequent excavations unearthed other

musical artifacts such as bone whistles and clay ocarinas, suggesting that music played a role in fulfilling the cultural and social needs of early human societies. This discovery underscores the universal human impulse to create and engage with music as a form of expression and communication.

Chinese musical instruments, historically categorized using the eight-sound system from the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, can be broadly classified into three categories similar to the Western classification: percussion, winds, and strings.[72] One of the most notable examples of ancient Chinese musical craftsmanship is the Bianzhong bells discovered in the Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, dating back to the Spring and Autumn Period.[73] These bells span a range of five octaves and boast an arrangement of tones identical to that of a modern piano. With a range covering approximately three octaves in the central register, they can produce a complete chromatic scale, enabling modulation across various keys and facilitating performances encompassing harmony, polyphony, and intricate multi-voice compositions.

During the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties periods in China (221 BC - 581 AD), several historical events and cultural developments profoundly influenced the evolution of music. The unification of the Qin Dynasty, establishment of the state institution "Yuefu" during the Han Dynasty,[74] and the opening of trade routes with the Western Regions due to Zhang Qian's missions facilitated the exchange of ideas and cultural practices between different regions. This period also witnessed significant migrations and interactions among various ethnic groups, resulting in a rich fusion of musical traditions.

Musical instruments such as the curved-neck pipa, gancè (a plucked string instrument), fangxiang (a percussion instrument), boge drum (played with sticks), and gong circulated

[72] The Eight Sounds (Ba Yin), as described in ancient Chinese texts like the Zhouli (Rites of Zhou) from the Spring and Autumn Period, categorize musical instruments based on the materials used in their construction. This system serves as a foundational classification for Chinese musical instruments, organizing them into eight categories: silk, bamboo, wood, stone, metal, clay, gourd, and hide. Each category represents instruments crafted from specific materials, reflecting the diverse array of materials employed by ancient Chinese artisans in creating musical instruments.

[73] In 1978, a large set of chime bells dating back to the Warring States period was unearthed in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suixian County, Hubei Province. This set consists of 64 bells, each with over 2800 inscriptions on their bodies, representing a rich musical theory of pre-Qin period.

[74] "Yuefu" refers to a specialized institution established during the Qin Dynasty to manage the teaching, performance, and dissemination of music and dance.

widely during this time. The development of wind and percussion music, known as “guchui yue,” originated initially as court music but later spread to border regions and among officials as a mark of favor. During the Han Dynasty, “guchui yue” was classified into five categories: “Huangmen guchui,” “qichui,” “duan xiao nao ge,” “heng chui,” and “xiaogu,” representing the emergence of a distinct musical form in Chinese history. The guqin, an ancient seven-stringed zither, also flourished during the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties periods, becoming emblematic of Chinese classical music. Notable compositions from this era include “Eighteen Beats of Hu Jia,” “Jieshi Diao You Lan,” “Dongwu Taishan,” and “Guangling San.”

During the prosperous eras of the Sui and Tang Dynasties in ancient China, music played a central role in people’s lives, entertainment, and diplomatic endeavors, reaching its zenith in the country’s history. Innovations in musical instrument craftsmanship during this period led to the development of the pipa, where three types of pipas were ingeniously combined to create a new instrument that retained the sound characteristics of the curved-neck pipa. Performance techniques evolved from horizontal to vertical holding, and playing transitioned from using a pick to finger-plucking. As a result, the pipa emerged as a versatile ethnic instrument capable of solo performances, accompaniments, and ensemble playing. Notable compositions from this era include “The General’s Orders,” “The Tyrant Unarms,” “Ambush on All Sides,” and “Geese Descending on the Sandbank.” Tang poet Bai Juyi vividly depicted the artistry and techniques of pipa playing in his poem “Song of the Pipa Player.”

The Tang Dynasty marked the emergence of diverse regional music styles that flourished through the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Elegant music gained popularity among the populace, leading to a proliferation of instrumental music forms across different regions. Examples of these regional music styles include the Beijing Zhihua Temple music, Shanxi’s Eight Great Suites, Zhejiang’s drumming and gongs, string ensembles, Jiangnan silk and bamboo music, Fujian Nanqu opera, Shandong drum music, Zhejiang Daoqing, Uyghur Mukam, and Han folk Dangyangge, among others. These diverse music styles contributed to the cultural richness and diversity of Chinese music heritage.

2) Modern China (19-20th Century)

In the late 19th century, the Qing government’s mandate to open multiple coastal ports ushered in a wave of Western influence in China. Instruments such as the violin, piano,

clarinet, and accordion were introduced into the mainland, accompanied by the propagation of "Xuetang Yuege" (Westernized School Music.)[75] Over time, Western musical elements became integrated into Chinese folk music, resulting in the emergence of unique hybrid forms that blended both traditions seamlessly.

Renowned musician Liu Tianhua played a pivotal role during this period by refining the erhu, transforming it from an accompanying position to a solo role and establishing it as a subject in higher education institutions.[76] Additionally, folk theatrical music saw the inclusion of new instruments like the suona, erhu, banghu, and qin, enriching its sonic palette.[77]

Many Chinese musicians who had studied abroad returned to their homeland equipped with Western music theory knowledge. Drawing upon their experiences, they began composing pieces that bore distinct Chinese ethnic characteristics. Notable examples include Xiao Youmei's orchestral work "Dirge," Liu Tianhua's "Reciting in Illness," Ma Sicong's "Inner Mongolia Suite," Ding Shande's "Variations on Chinese Folk Song Themes," Chen Gang's "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," and Zhang Wu's clarinet composition "Variations on Su Bei Tune," which marked a pioneering effort in Chinese clarinet compositions.

In 1913, Zhao Yuanren adapted traditional Jiangnan silk and bamboo music and the folk song "Xiangjiang Waves" into "Hua Ba Ban and Xiangjiang Waves," laying the groundwork for Chinese piano adaptations. Ding Shande furthered this fusion of East and West with his 1948 piano pieces composed in Paris, "Three Overtures Op. 3" and "Variations on Chinese Folk Song Themes," imbuing them with a distinctly Chinese style that reflected his longing for his homeland. Of particular note is "Variations on Chinese Folk Song Themes," which drew inspiration from the Sichuan Tibetan string dance melody, marking a significant contribution to modern Chinese piano composition.

3) Contemporary China

[75] "Xuetang Yuege" refers to original songs that were widely sung in the new music curriculum of modern schools across China in the early 20th century.
[76] Koskoff, E. (Ed.). (2008). *The Concise Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (Vol. 2). Routledge. p. 1118.

[77] Wang, Y. H. (2009). *Zhōngguó xiàndài yīnyuè shǐgāng* [Outline of Chinese modern music history]. Beijing: Zhōngyāng Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn Chūbǎnshè. pp.41-42.

Since the 1980s, China has undergone a transformative period of reform and opening up, focusing on economic development. This shift in mindset has led to the influx of cultures from around the world, introducing diverse music elements, compositional techniques, and stylistic ideas that have profoundly impacted China's music landscape. During this period, the principle of "using Western elements for Chinese purposes" became a guiding ethos in the music scene, resulting in a proliferation of styles that blend Chinese and Western elements harmoniously.[78]

Instrumental composition and performance techniques saw significant evolution. Traditional instruments like the yangqin were outfitted with pickups, guzheng strings were plucked with hands, percussion instruments like drums were fitted with rivets on the drum frame, and instruments like the sanxian and erhu were played without traditional fingering techniques. Flutes experimented with double or triple tones, while innovative techniques were explored across various instruments.

In the realm of ethnic instrumental music composition and style, a trend towards diversity emerged. Notable examples include Peng Xiuwen's tone poem "Flowing Water on the Beam," Liu Wenjin's Erhu Concerto "Thoughts on the Great Wall," and Tan Dun's quartet "Mountain Ballad," which featured instruments such as the guanzi, sanxian, suona, and percussion.

In the pursuit of "using Western elements for Chinese purposes," Tan Dun's string quartet "Wind, Elegant, Eulogy" drew inspiration from traditional Chinese guqin music and ancient folk tunes, applying modern compositional techniques to create a fusion of modern emotions and ideals with classical works. Similarly, Wang Lisan's piano suite "Memories of Erhuang" and prelude and fugue collection "Collection from Other Mountains" seamlessly blended Chinese folk melodies, Western traditional polyphony, and modern compositional techniques.

[78] The concept of "using Western elements for Chinese purposes" finds its roots in Mao Zedong's "Comments on the Central Conservatory of Music" in 1964. In this seminal work, Mao articulated his belief that wholesale acceptance or outright rejection of foreign science, literature, and arts are both misguided approaches. Instead, he advocated for the adoption of Western elements in a manner that serves Chinese cultural and societal needs, thus promoting a synthesis of traditions for contemporary relevance.

The development of Chinese instrumental music has been a gradual process marked by periods of stagnation and bursts of progress. The infiltration and surge of Western musical culture in China, despite facing periods of prohibition, ultimately led to a vibrant era of diversity, especially after the reform and opening up, propelling Chinese music to new heights and garnering increased attention from the West.

1.3. The Cultural Differences and Fusion of Western and Chinese Instrumental Music

1.3.1 The Cultural Differences of Western and Chinese Instrumental Music

1) The Differences in the History and Cultural Foundations

Music composition and the musical style of a culture is directly influenced by its historical backgrounds and cultural foundations. In Chinese music, with origins dating back to the Neolithic Age, compositions reflect a rich tapestry of poetic exchange among literati and the evolution of diverse instruments such as the guzheng and guqin. This trajectory spans from solo performances to ensemble playing, marking a progression from imitation to creative expression. Each instrument contributes to a repertoire of elegant and graceful melodies, characterized by adeptly balanced rhythms and melodies.

In contrast, Western music culture finds its roots in ancient Greece, where religious music predominated and the organ emerged as a central instrument. Subsequent periods—including the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras—saw the maturation of a diverse array of instruments, laying the groundwork for modern music culture. Throughout this evolution, compositions in Western music remained relatively independent across various countries, shaped by distinct cultural backgrounds. While influences from foreign music were present, compositions retained a sense of cohesion dating back to ancient Greece.

2) The Contrasts in the Voicing Handling and Musical Texture

In traditional Chinese music composition, the primary focus is on the horizontal development of melodies across different voices, with most musical works featuring predominantly single-line melodies. This emphasis on horizontal melodies is particularly evident in early Chinese piano music, where harmony serves as a secondary element, primarily used to support the

melodic line.[79] As a result, contrapuntal techniques are relatively rare in traditional Chinese music composition. This approach to composition has sometimes led to perceptions of Chinese piano music as lacking in complexity or depth compared to Western classical music traditions. However, it is essential to recognize that the absence of extensive contrapuntal techniques in traditional Chinese music is a deliberate choice that preserves the distinctive characteristics of the genre.

In this sense, contemporary Chinese composers face a dilemma in reconciling the traditional emphasis on horizontal melodies with the desire to incorporate Western compositional techniques. While the adoption of Western contrapuntal techniques could enhance the complexity of Chinese piano music compositions, it risks diluting the unique qualities of traditional Chinese music.[80]

In Western music, polyphony has been a fundamental element since the Middle Ages, with contrapuntal techniques playing a significant role in composition. While later Western compositions often adopted tonal structures, contrapuntal techniques have remained crucial, serving as an essential tool in music composition. Presently, Western composers continue to rely on contrapuntal forms as guiding principles in their compositions.

Musicians meticulously manage the relationships between each voice, arranging them to showcase the innovation of each voice while ensuring a balance between the main melody and accompanying voices. While a performance may feature a single primary melodic line, the harmonic support provided by each voice, along with the rich timbre of instruments and the atmosphere created, collectively contribute to achieving a compelling and cohesive musical effect.

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[79] The early Chinese piano pieces refer to compositions created by Chinese composers in the early twentieth century, a period marked by the introduction of Western music culture into China. During this time, Chinese composers grappled with assimilating Western musical concepts while maintaining their cultural identity. These compositions often reflect a fusion of traditional Chinese melodies and Western harmonic structures, albeit in a somewhat superficial manner, usually through adapting Chinese folk melodies for western instruments. For more information, please see Brace, T. L. (1992). *Modernization and music in contemporary China: Crisis, identity, and the politics of style*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. p.278

[80] Brace, T. L. (1992). *Modernization and music in contemporary China: Crisis, identity, and the politics of style*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. pp.277-297

3) The Difference in Tonality System

Chinese traditional music is rooted in the pentatonic scale, comprised of five relative tones, which forms the tonality of a piece. This scale possesses its own comprehensive theoretical system and can adapt to various modes found in different ethnic music, often referred to as ethnic or Chinese modes.

In contrast, Western music relies on standard scales composed of seven notes within an octave, with variations such as major, minor, and church modes. Western music composition emphasizes precision and meticulousness, evident from the complex system of scales and modes developed from its inception. This system is characterized by its vast and logical structure, reflecting a rigorous attitude that results in meticulously arranged scales and tonality, ensuring overall coherence in compositions.

While the western scale remains prevalent in Western music, the emergence of serialism and other scales, such as the hexatonic scales, has introduced a sense of ambiguity in form and tonality. Nevertheless, recent compositions in China that utilize the pentatonic scale showcase diverse expressions of regional and cultural aesthetics, highlighting the richness of Chinese musical traditions.

4) The Difference in Musical Formal Structure

In Western music composition, principles of mathematical logic, architectural concepts, and geometry are frequently utilized to craft pieces with three-dimensional tonal layouts. Structural forms such as ternary form, sonata form, rondo form, and sonata-allegro form exemplify this approach. These forms allow composers to create compositions with layered complexity and development, resulting in rich and multidimensional musical experiences.

Conversely, Chinese music often features simpler structural forms, placing greater emphasis on the development of melody and employing predominantly monophonic texture. While Chinese compositions excel in crafting beautiful and delicate melodies, they generally lack the complex tonal schemes and multidimensional structures characteristic of Western music. Additionally, the narrower range of traditional Chinese instruments may limit their capacity to produce the grandiose effects achievable in Western music, which often features a broader array of instruments with varied timbres and capabilities.

1.3.2 The Fusion of Western and Chinese Instrumental Music

1) The Chinese Concept of "Using Western Elements for Chinese Purposes"

In the navigation of the relationship between Chinese and Western music cultures, China has taken an active role. The notion of "using Western elements for Chinese purposes "once wielded considerable influence over traditional Chinese music, pushing it to the periphery and precipitating a period of discontinuity. Consequently, Chinese traditional music struggled to cultivate its unique creative methodologies. The strategy of "working in isolation" in music composition impeded the exploration of novel avenues, as regional and cultural distinctions failed to influence and invigorate music development. In that regard, Chinese music may not prominently feature indigenous elements. Instead, it could be more aptly described as "Western music with Chinese characteristics."

Nevertheless, in the late 1950s, the violin concerto "The Butterfly Lovers," co-composed by Chen Gang and He Zhanhao, pioneered the real fusion of Western instruments with traditional Chinese regional operatic arts. By adapting techniques from traditional Chinese plucked string instruments to the violin, they successfully merged traditional Chinese music with Western symphonic music. In 2005, the "Qinhu Research and Performance Concert Series," organized by the Xi'an Conservatory of Music, utilized techniques from Western symphonic music, combined Western and Chinese instruments, and employed harmony and multiple tonalities to achieve remarkable artistic effects, pushing ethnic music to new heights.

The clarinet piece "Variations on a Su Bei Tune" exemplifies this fusion by blending Western musical forms with Chinese musical content. By employing the variation form commonly found in Western music composition and incorporating traditional Chinese folk melodies, the composer explored the wide range of the clarinet's capabilities. This piece is cherished by Chinese performers and recognized by clarinetists worldwide as a representative work of Chinese clarinet music.

Tan Dun's "Map" is a composition that finds its inspiration in Dong ethnic folk songs, blending them with Western techniques. One of its notable features is the bold use of the cello to accompany the original folk melodies, demonstrating a unique and innovative creative approach. Similarly, Zhu Jian'er's "Symphony No. 10 'Jiang Xue'" integrates

elements of traditional Chinese music, such as the guqin and traditional opera, into a Western symphony orchestra setting. Drawing from the ancient tune “Mei Hua San Nong,” the composition incorporates four pentatonic scales and two heptatonic scales from the Chinese Ya music tradition. Despite this infusion of Chinese tonal qualities, the symphony maintains a sense of dissonance characteristic of contemporary Western Avant Garde music, creating a blend of Eastern and Western musical elements.

Both compositions exemplify the fusion of Eastern and Western musical traditions, showcasing how contemporary composers navigate the intersections of diverse cultural influences to create transcendent musical experiences that bridge ancient and modern, Eastern and Western aesthetics.

2) The Concept of “Using Chinese Elements for Western Purposes”

The fusion of Chinese and Western instrumental music cultures represents a natural progression driven by historical exchange and the mutual appreciation of each tradition’s essence, reflecting a common evolutionary trajectory in music culture. As early as the 17th century, Chinese music culture began attracting attention from Western composers and audiences. For instance, Henry Purcell’s opera “The Fairy Queen” featured a Chinese scene, complete with stage designs resembling ancient Chinese gardens, showcasing early instances of Western incorporation of Chinese elements.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Chinese musical influences gained further prominence in Western music composition. Composers such as Tchaikovsky, Johann Strauss Sr., Debussy, and Mahler incorporated Chinese themes and musical idioms into their works. Tchaikovsky’s ballet suite “The Nutcracker” featured a “Chinese Dance,” while Johann Strauss Sr. composed the “Chinese Galop.” Debussy’s piano suite “Estampes” included the piece “Pagodas,” which drew from the Chinese pentatonic scale, and Mahler’s symphony “Das Lied von der Erde” laid a foundational precedent for integrating Chinese musical elements into Western compositions.

In the creation of “Turandot,” Giacomo Puccini demonstrated boldness by incorporating the Chinese folk tune “Mo Li Hua” into Western instrumentation, resulting in a harmonious blend of strength and gentleness, boldness and elegance. This fusion effectively bridged any

perceived gap between cultures, highlighting the universal appeal of music transcending national boundaries. Similarly, Russian composer Anton Arensky's exploration involved integrating Western musical elements and compositional techniques into the original melody of "Mo Li Hua." His piano piece titled "Etude Op.25 No.3 'On a Chinese Theme'" employed a rondo structure, superimposing thematic and developmental sections with a light and rapid melody. This adaptation seamlessly fused Chinese and Western musical elements, evoking a sense of mystery and showcasing the potential for cross-cultural musical expression.

Alexander Tcherepnin, a Russian-born American composer, demonstrated a keen interest in Chinese musical scales and skillfully incorporated them into his compositions.[81] In "Chinese Sketches," he effectively replicated the sound of Chinese drumming. Moreover, in his piano composition "Homage to China Op.52," Tcherepnin employed techniques of striking the piano strings to emulate the timbre of the pipa, the Chinese lute. The fingering techniques used in this piece mimicked the pipa playing techniques such as "brushing" and "sweeping", evoking the sonority of the pipa.

Similarly, Michele Mangani composed numerous works for solo clarinet with a Chinese theme, including pieces like "Beautiful Girl," "Shandan Dan Hua Kai Hongyan Yan," and "Wild Geese," as well as ensemble compositions like "Spirit of Freedom" and "Colors from China." "Colors from China" stands out as a modernist Chinese-style piece that deviates from traditional Chinese folk music composition practices. It incorporates non-traditional rhythmic patterns, modulations between Western major and minor keys, variations, and temporary chromatic alterations. Moreover, it explores variations on the pentatonic and heptatonic scales, presenting a fusion of Western and Chinese musical elements within a framework that combines Western formal structures with the traditional Chinese "four-part" form.

The fusion of Chinese and Western music cultures in composition carries significant implications. To successfully integrate Chinese music culture into Western compositions, it is essential to deeply understand and appreciate Chinese cultural nuances. Through the dissemination of music culture, Chinese ethnic music can gain widespread acceptance

[81] Yang, H., Mikkonen, S., Winzenburg, J. & Lau, F. (2020). *Networking the Russian Diaspora: Russian Musicians and Musical Activities in Interwar Shanghai*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824882693 pp.148-172

globally, fostering the internationalization of ethnic music and enriching the artistic allure and significance of Chinese music works. The amalgamation of Chinese and Western elements represents an inevitable trend in music development, capitalizing on respective strengths and mitigating weaknesses, thereby fostering the inheritance and innovation of cultures worldwide. It underscores the importance of China engaging with the world, while also emphasizing the necessity for global understanding of China, facilitating mutual development and growth.

Chapter 2:
Development and Composition of Clarinet and Piano Music in Chinese and Western Contexts

The clarinet, one of the youngest instruments in the woodwind family, stands out as one of the greatest inventions in the field of music during the 17th century. With its extensive range spanning nearly four octaves, it rightfully earns the title of the "champion of wind instruments" among the diverse array of woodwind instruments. On the other hand, the piano, acclaimed as the "king of instruments," is uniquely capable of performing across the entire spectrum of pitch, from the lowest to the highest registers. In the ever-evolving landscape of music history, the encounter between the "champion of wind instruments" and the "king of instruments" undoubtedly sparks magnificent creativity.

2.1. Development of Clarinet and Piano Music in the West

During the Baroque period, which was primarily dominated by religious music, instrumental compositions relied heavily on instruments like the lute, harpsichord, and viola da gamba. However, as the Classical period emerged, there was a significant shift towards chamber music, characterized by a lighter and more accessible style in both musical form and performance technique.[82] Chamber music ensembles, with their smaller size and more flexible instrumentation, became easier to disseminate compared to larger orchestras. Bach, a prominent figure of the Baroque era, made notable contributions to the realm of concertos, composing nearly 40 solo concertos for various instruments, including keyboard instruments, strings, and woodwinds.

Mozart, a key figure of the Classical period, displayed a particular fondness for the clarinet in his compositions. He extensively employed and showcased the instrument's characteristics in his works, contributing significantly to establishing its prominence within orchestral settings. Compositions such as the "Clarinet Quintet" (K.581), "Quintet for Piano and Winds" (K.542), "Clarinet Concerto in A major" (K.622), and "Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano" (K.498) serve as prime examples of Mozart's contributions to clarinet music. Among these,

[82] Burkholder, Grout, & Palisca. *A history of western music* (8th ed.). pp.506-525

the “Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano” (K.498) is particularly esteemed among clarinetists for its importance. Mozart’s influence on the status of the clarinet as a solo instrument was profound, leading to its increasing acceptance and utilization by other composers.[83] This resulted in the composition of various forms of instrumental music, including concertos and sonatas featuring the clarinet. Even Ludwig van Beethoven, an eminent composer of the Classical and early Romantic periods, composed several chamber music works for clarinet and piano, such as the “Trio for Piano, Clarinet, and Cello” (Op.11 and Op.38) and the “Quintet for Piano and Winds” (Op.16).

During the Romantic period, composers such as M. Weber, Louis Spohr, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, and G. Rossini made significant contributions to the repertoire of clarinet and piano chamber music. Their compositions expanded the scope and depth of this genre, enriching the musical landscape of the time. For instance, M. Weber’s “Grand Duo Concertant” (Op. 48) for clarinet and piano, Louis Spohr’s four clarinet concertos, and Felix Mendelssohn’s “Duet for Clarinet and Piano” (Op. 114) exemplify the versatility and expressive potential of this instrumentation.[84] Similarly, R. Schumann’s “Fairy Tales” trio (Op. 132) for clarinet (or violin), viola, and piano, along with Johannes Brahms’s clarinet sonatas (Op. 120 No. 1, 2), clarinet quintet (Op. 115), and clarinet trio (Op. 114), represent pinnacle achievements in the Romantic repertoire for clarinet and piano.

In his clarinet works, Brahms demonstrated a profound understanding of the instrument’s capabilities and a keen sensitivity to its expressive potential. He infused his works with his own thoughts and emotions, capturing and conveying them throughout his compositional process. Brahms’s music are characterized by a rich palette of expression, ranging from passionate intensity to moments of introspective contemplation. Through his use of tender, mournful, and solitary expressions, Brahms adeptly navigated the terrain of Romanticism.

[83] Kingdon Ward, M. (1947). Mozart and the Clarinet. *Music & Letters*, *28*(2), 126–153. https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/28.2.126

[84] Sirker, U. (1968). *Die Entwicklung des Bläserquintetts in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. [Doctoral dissertation] Bosse.

While the 20th century witnessed a proliferation of various musical styles and genres, compositions for clarinet and piano continued to flourish. Noteworthy examples include Darius Milhaud's "Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano, Op. 157," Francis Poulenc's "Sextet for Piano and Winds, Op. 100," Carlos Guastavino's "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano," Paul Hindemith's "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in B-flat Major," Igor Stravinsky's "Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano ('The Soldier's Tale')," as well as Giuseppe Ricotta's "Hommage à la Chine" and Michele Mangani's "Colors from China," which these two pieces will be briefly discussed later in this paper.

Giuseppe Ricotta's "Homage to China" is a piece for clarinet and piano, composed after the composer's extensive research into Chinese folk melodies and harmonies. Ricotta completed the composition within a month, infusing it with characteristic elements of Chinese folk music, evoking themes of Chinese folk drama and dance. Despite being performed on conventional Western instruments, the composition adeptly captures the essence of Chinese musical traditions.

The examination and study of clarinet and piano music not only deepen appreciation for this genre but also shed light on its significant role within related musical domains. Through such exploration, a richer understanding of musical diversity and cross-cultural exchange is fostered, contributing to the broader appreciation and dissemination of musical heritage.

2.2. Clarinet and Piano Music Composed by Western Composers – Using Brahms' *Clarinet Sonata No.2 in E-Flat Major, Op.120* and Ricotta's *Homage to China* as Examples

2.2.1 Brief Biography of Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms (1833—1897) was a composer of the Romantic era in 19th-century Germany. He revered the works of J.S. Bach, Handel, and Beethoven. He demonstrated the vitality of classical style inherent in the Romantic era through his evocative yet contemplative compositions. Brahms' musical oeuvre is broad, encompassing symphonies, piano pieces, choral music, art songs, and other chamber music.

Brahms, born in 1833 into a modest musical family in Hamburg, Germany, inherited a rich musical environment from his father, a double bass player at the Hamburg City Theater. Despite this, Brahms' father viewed music as a means of livelihood rather than an art form. Brahms faced financial struggles in his youth, often performing in taverns and brothels to support his family.[85] These experiences not only inspired his compositions but also laid the groundwork for the inner conflicts that would shape his artistic journey. Fortunately, Brahms received a thorough education, beginning formal music lessons in 1840 under Otto F.W. Cossel and later under Eduard Marxsen. Under Marxsen's guidance, Brahms not only mastered the piano but also immersed himself in the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Franz Schubert, developing a deep appreciation for classical music forms and styles.[86]

At the age of 15 in 1848, Brahms started giving solo concerts, where he met influential figures such as Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi, orchestra leader Joseph Joachim, Franz Liszt, R. Schumann, and Johann Strauss. Although impressed by Liszt's virtuosic performances, Brahms remained committed to forging his own compositional path, rather than embracing Liszt's ideas of the "New German School."[87]

During the same year, Brahms presented his early composition, the "Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 1," to R. Schumann. Both Robert and Clara Schumann were deeply moved by the work, recognizing Brahms' exceptional talent. Schumann, who had ceased composing for a decade, fervently praised Brahms in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," bringing Brahms significant attention in the music world and setting the stage for his future success and development.[88]

Johannes Brahms had a wide range of creative endeavors, showing a particular penchant for exploring various forms of chamber music. For example, his works include String Sextets (Op. 18, No. 1, 2), Piano Quartets (Op. 25, Op. 26), Piano Quintet (Op. 34), "Piano Sonata in E Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 38," "Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano" (Op. 40),

[85] Avins, S. (2001). The Young Brahms: Biographical Data Reexamined. *19th-Century Music*, 24(3), 276–289. https://doi.org/10.1525/ncm.2001.24.3.276

[86] Swafford. *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*. p.26

[87] *Ibid.* pp.67, 71

[88] Schumann, R. (1988). *Schumann on Music*. tr. and ed. Henry Pleasants. Dover Publications.

"Clarinet (or Viola) Sonata in E-flat Major for Clarinet (or Viola) and Piano" (Op. 120, No. 2), and "Clarinet Quintet in B Minor" (Op. 115), among others. Brahms had a knack for capturing people's inner emotions, using chamber music as a tool for expressing feelings, imbuing his works with the romanticism characteristic of 19th-century music. Giants in music theory such as Phillipp Spitta and Heinrich Schenker also praised Brahms for his achievements in formal structure and melody.[89] Among these, "Clarinet Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2" stands out as a mature work, with an overall musical style that is relatively light-hearted and enjoyable.

Brahms, renowned for his virtuosic piano skills, frequently drew from his own experiences as a pianist when crafting the piano parts in his chamber music compositions. Infused with his romantic and unconstrained compositional style, the piano sections in Brahms' chamber music are renowned for their considerable technical demands. In Brahms' chamber music oeuvre, the piano and the other instruments share equal prominence, transcending the traditional notion of piano as an accompaniment. These compositions are better described as ensemble pieces, where each instrument plays an integral role. Brahms ensured that each instrument contributes to the ensemble's collective expression, thereby showcasing the full potential of every instrument involved.

2.2.2 Background of *Clarinet Sonata in E-Flat Major, Op.120 No.2*

In Johannes Brahms's chamber music repertoire, compositions featuring wind instruments are relatively sparse, with only the French horn and clarinet making notable appearances. Brahms's "Clarinet Sonata" (Op. 120, No. 1, 2) stands as a prominent example, composed explicitly for the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld.

Richard Mühlfeld, born in Bad Salzungen, Germany, in 1856, displayed remarkable proficiency in piano, violin, and clarinet from a young age. Joining the Meiningen Court Orchestra in 1877, Mühlfeld initially performed as a solo clarinetist, notably performing Carl Maria von Weber's "Clarinet Concerto in E-flat Major" (Op. 26). His exceptional talent led to his formal appointment as the principal clarinetist of the Meiningen Court Orchestra in 1879.

[89] Musgrave, M. (1988). *A Brahms Reader*. Yale University Press. p.238

In 1891, Johannes Brahms attended a performance in Meiningen featuring Richard Mühlfeld's rendition of Weber's "Clarinet Concerto in F Minor" (Op. 73). Brahms was deeply impressed by Mühlfeld's mastery of the clarinet, expressing that no one surpassed Mühlfeld in clarinet performance, thus acknowledging his exceptional skill and artistic prowess.[90] It is worth mentioning that musicologist George Toenes cites an "eyewitness" who characterizes Muehlfeld's playing as musically proficient but not meeting contemporary technical standards.[91] Nevertheless, the performance made a profound impact on Johannes Brahms, who had planned for retirement but found renewed inspiration to compose for Mühlfeld.

Prior to encountering Mühlfeld, Brahms had not ventured into composing chamber music featuring the clarinet. The clarinet's exceptional versatility, stability, and rich tonal palette, spanning three registers, resonated deeply with Brahms' introspective late-life disposition. Consequently, he composed four significant chamber music pieces for clarinet: the Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 114, the Clarinet Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1, the Clarinet Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2, and the Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115.[92] These compositions harness the clarinet's attributes and exploit the distinctive timbres across its range to articulate Brahms' melancholy and emotional depth.

The Clarinet Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2, composed in the summer of 1894, evokes a more serene ambiance compared to the impassioned first clarinet sonata. Here, the clarinet, with its wide-ranging capabilities and subtle dynamics, imbues the composition with a profound expressive quality. Serving as Johannes Brahms' final foray into the sonata form and his ultimate contribution to chamber music, this sonata holds a special significance. Brahms himself performed the piano part in the premiere, while Mühlfeld performed the clarinet part. In echoing the legacy of Weber, this work once again elevated the collaborative interplay between clarinet and piano to unprecedented levels of artistry.

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[90] This statement originates from a letter written by Brahms to Clara Schumann after he attended the concert in 1891. For more information, please see: Forner, J. (2007). *Brahms: ein Sommerkomponist* (2. überarb. Aufl.). Faber & Faber. pp. 255-260

[91] Toenes, G. (1956). Richard Muehlfeld. *Clarinet,* 23, pp.22–23.

[92] Hinson, M., & Roberts, W. (2021). *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble (3rd ed.): An Annotated Guide*. Indiana University Press. p.296

2.2.3 Backgound of Ricotta's *Homage to China*

"Homage to China" is a fairly new composition by Italian composer Giuseppe Ricotta, released in 2022 and dedicated to the composer's friend, the Chinese clarinetist Dong Dejun of Zhejiang Conservatory of Music in China. Prior to composing this piece, Ricotta immersed himself in comprehensive research on the melodies and harmonies of Chinese folk music, enabling him to complete the composition in less than a month.

The introduction of the composition unfolds with a lyrical melody, evoking a tranquil stroll along the serene waterside of Jiangnan, conveying the peace and poetic beauty of the region. Subsequently, the music adopts a vibrant rhythm, portraying the animated scenes of Chinese folk dramas and dances. Emotionally, the piece transitions gradually into tender and restrained passages, unveiling rich layers of emotion. Ultimately, the music concludes with a bright and cheerful atmosphere, reminiscent of sunlight piercing through clouds, instilling hope and joy in the listener.

In this composition, the composer integrates the melodies and harmonies of Chinese folk music into the structures of Western music, thereby forging a cross-cultural musical language. The melodic lines may draw upon the lyrical qualities of Chinese music, while the clarinet performance showcases the allure of Eastern musical traditions. Harmonically, the piece employs the Chinese cycle of fifth, alongside its openness and fluidity, offering the audience a novel auditory experience.

This piece is one of the two shorter pieces used in this research to provide supportive reference for the discussion of the two main pieces.

2.3. Development of Clarinet and Piano Music in China

Reflecting on the evolution of clarinet and piano music in the West, its development and adoption in China span merely over a century. As foreign cultural forms, their introduction, dissemination, and evolution in China are linked to the ongoing exchange between Chinese and Western cultures, influenced by prevailing ideological currents. Today, the clarinet and

piano have become integral instruments in Chinese musical endeavors. However, their "Sinicization" over the past century has been marked by notable challenges.

The clarinet made its debut in China around the seventh year of the Qianlong reign in the Qing Dynasty (1743). Historical records from the Qing imperial archives, particularly the *Qing Dynasty File of Various Crafts and Activities*, reveal that Western missionaries presented Emperor Qianlong with a collection of Western musical instruments, including one identified as the "Western Xiao" (clarinet).[93] Moreover, in his work "An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China," George Staunton, a British envoy, offered evidence of the earliest depiction of the clarinet (referred to as the Western Xiao) in China circa 1793.[94] This portrayal was prompted by a request from a court musician to the British envoy, as documented in Staunton's publication.[95] The process of transforming foreign instruments into national ones, rendering them "Chinese instruments," is a natural progression for foreign imports. Similarly, the clarinet embarked on a path of transformation and adaptation. While its physical appearance remained unchanged, cultural exchanges and interactions between Eastern and Western traditions, as well as interethnic exchanges, led the clarinet to transcend its role in performing solely Western works and began incorporating Chinese performing essences. In the realm of Chinese wind music, mastery of the clarinet is indispensable for developing a distinct wind music lexicon.

In the mid-19th century, the British individual Robert Hart established the "Hart Band," often credited as the first Western band in China, although there are some minor disputes regarding this designation.[96] The band played a vital role in spreading Western music in China and took on educational responsibilities in this regard.[97] Under their guidance, Mu Zhiqing, renowned

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[93] Qing Dynasty Office of Internal Affairs Administration (1742). *Nèiwùfǔ zàobàn chù dàng'àn gè zuòchéng zuò huójì qīng dàng* [Archives of the Office of Internal Affairs Administration: A Clear File of Various Crafts and Activities] (Microfilm Edition, 2000). China First Historical Archives, Beijing, China

[94] Staunton, G. (1799). *An authentic account of an embassy from the king of Great Britain to the emperor of China: including cursory observations made, and information obtained, in travelling through that ancient empire and a small part of Chinese Tartary ...* Printed for R. Campbell by J. Bioren.

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] Robinson, K. (2020). *Sir Robert Hart the Musician*. Lulu.com.

[97] *Ibid.*

as the "first clarinetist in China," received training, thus laying the foundation of the clarinet development in China.[98] Xian Xinghai's composition "Wind," featuring a soprano solo accompanied by a clarinet in B-flat and piano, garnered acclaim from Prokofiev.[99]
During the 1920s, a significant influx of Russian musicians arrived in China due to historical circumstances, injecting vitality into the development of Western music education in the country. Notably, they formed the Harbin Symphony Orchestra, showcasing performances of M. Weber's "Clarinet Concerto," established the Shanghai Bureau of Works Band (the precursor of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra), which recorded clarinet compositions, and contributed to training the first cohort of Chinese brass instructors.

In 1948, Qin Pengzhang assumed the role of principal clarinetist in the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, serving as compelling evidence of the proficiency in Western music of Chinese musicians. This event marked a milestone in Chinese music history. In the ballet "The White-Haired Girl," particularly in the segment "Ten Miles of Wind and Snow," the various co-composers strategically employed the clarinet's lower tones as the primary melody, complemented by harmonies from the strings, thereby evoking a poignant and profound emotional resonance, vividly depicting the plight of an elderly farmer subjected to years of exploitation and impoverishment.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Chinese clarinetists began to explore the creation of Chinese works. As early as 1951, Zhang Wu from the Central Conservatory of Music composed the clarinet solo piece "Variations on Su North Tune" after collecting folk songs in Anhui Province. This piece, based on the folk songs of northern Jiangsu, was a successful exploration of the direction of national works and is still beloved by clarinet enthusiasts today. Later works such as "Rondo" and "Returning to the Pasture" by Xin Huguang, "Distant Hometown" by Zhang Dalong, "Morning Song" by Chen Qigang, and "Song of the Grazing Horses" by Wang Yan all embody the essence of Chinese national culture. By the end of the 20th century, the "Sinicization" of clarinet works had entered a

[98] Zhao, H. (2011). *Zhōngguó dān huáng guǎn yìshù shǐ yánjiū* [China's History of Clarinet Art]. [Doctoral dissertation]. Hebei Normal University.

[99] Xian Xinghai was one of the pioneering composers who integrated Western musical elements with Chinese aesthetics. He was one of the most influential composers in early 20th-century China. Xian's talent garnered international recognition, notably from Sergei Prokofiev, who recommended him to study at the Paris Conservatory under the tutelage of Paul Dukas. For more information Xian, X. H. (1980). *Wǒ xuéxí yīnyuè de jīngguò* [My Experience of Learning Music]. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House.

period of prosperity, with compositions reaching a high level of maturity in terms of genre and content.

The concerto for clarinet and piano, “Spring of Pamir,” was composed by Mr. Hu Bi Jing during his immersive stay at the Hongqirafu Radar Station in the Pamir region of Xinjiang. It was specifically crafted for Huang Yuanfu, a renowned figure in Chinese clarinet education and performance at the Central Conservatory of Music. The piece draws its inspiration from the melodies performed on the “eagle flute” by Tajik shepherds in the Pamir region. It represents a seamless fusion of Western concerto structure with distinctive elements of Chinese classical music. Another notable work is the violin and piano piece “Sunshine over Tashkurgan,” composed by Chen Gang and transcribed into clarinet version by Li Ming. This composition, replete with Chinese stylistic elements, presents a fresh challenge in terms of technique for both clarinet and piano performers, thus emerging as a seminal work in contemporary clarinet and piano repertoire.

Chinese traditional music often exhibits single melody lines or several melodic lines in unison or octaves that may seem monotonous compared to Western compositions for clarinet and piano. In these works, the piano part may appear to take on a less prominent role, often serving as accompaniment. However, in reality, the piano part demands a level of difficulty and musical balance comparable to that of other instruments.

The advancements seen in clarinet and piano artistry today are largely attributed to the efforts of 20th-century musicians. Examining the evolution of clarinet and piano music in China reveals an expansion of artistic dimensions in interpretive forms and performance content. This expansion incorporates a greater diversity of Chinese ethnic musical elements, leading to developments in performance techniques, compositional depth, stylistic expression, and aesthetic principles. Works from this period not only build upon earlier creations but also act as a bridge to the musical compositions of the 21st century, significantly influencing the creation of clarinet music in contemporary times.

2.4. Clarinet and Piano Music Composed by Chinese Composers – Using Chen Gang's *Sunshine Over Tashkurgan* and Zhang Chao's *Norma May* as Examples

2.4.1. Brief Biography of the Composer Chen Geng and the Transcriber Li Ming

Chen Gang is one of the prominent contemporary composers in China, born in 1935 into a family with a rich musical heritage in Shanghai. His father was the esteemed composer Chen Gexin, often hailed as the "Song Immortal." The connection between his family background and Chen Gang's musical compositions is inseparable, as his father's passion for music inadvertently became the catalyst for Chen Gang's musical education.

In 1955, Chen Gang gained admission to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music with outstanding results. He majored in piano under the tutelage of Shi Shenghua and Zhang Bihua, and composition under Ding Shande and Sang Tong. During his studies, Chen Gang extensively practiced renowned piano pieces and delved into various theoretical literature on composition, thus broadening his horizons. Chen Gang's formal analysis teacher, the former Soviet music theorist Arzamanov, emphasized that the internal structure of a musical piece should not be rigidly confined to specific measures but rather delineated according to the development of the music.[100] This perspective on delineating the internal structure of musical works has continued to influence Chen Gang. He gradually delved into the classification of the internal structure of Western works during performance, understanding the interconnections between form, harmony, and tonality, and learned composition techniques and internal composition from textbooks, laying a solid foundation for his future compositions.

Chen Gang is a prolific composer celebrated for his distinctive and profound compositions, many of which hold high regard and recognition in China. Among his notable works are "The Butterfly Lovers," "The Golden Furnace," "Drums and Songs," "Gratitude," "Morning in the Miao Mountains," "Love Song," "I Love My Taiwan," "Knife Dance," "Sunshine Over

[100] Arzamanov, F. G. (1984). *S.I. Taneev--prepodavatel' kursa muzykal'nykh form* [S.I. Taneev - teacher of the course of musical forms] (2-e izd., perer.). "Muzyka"

Tashkorgan," and "Up the Mountain to Fight the Tiger." From a young age, Chen Gang approached music with a unique perspective. He described this approach as "listening music with three ears, one for classical music, one for contemporary music, and one for popular music."[101] It is this mindset and musical philosophy that enabled him to compose the violin concerto "The Butterfly Lovers" while still in his fourth year of university.

"The Butterfly Lovers," based on melodies from Yueju Opera, seamlessly integrates symphonic and Chinese folk opera music techniques. Meticulously structured according to the plot development, it employs a sonata form structure with sections depicting "The Sworn Oath on the Grass Bridge," "Ying Tai Resists Marriage," and "Transforming into Butterflies at the Grave." Premiered by violinist Yu Lina at the Shanghai Lanxin Grand Theater, "The Butterfly Lovers" received unprecedented acclaim from Chinese audiences and embarked on global tours, earning international recognition and heralding a new era of nationalized symphonic music. This success laid a solid foundation for Chen Gang's subsequent compositions of other Chinese works.

Chen Gang's most notable characteristic in composition is his incorporation of foreign cultures on the basis of his own national culture, merging them together to form his own style. This trait is particularly evident in his composition "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," created in 1976. In this piece, Chen Gang blends the unique ethnic melodies and performance techniques of the Tajik ethnic group in Xinjiang with Western compositional techniques, resulting in a piece that is both distinctive and imbued with a "Chinese flavor."

Chen Gang has traveled extensively to countries such as the United States, Canada, France, Singapore, and Japan, promoting music with Chinese ethnic characteristics worldwide through his compositions. He has been honored with inclusion in prestigious records such as the "World Celebrity Records" and the "World Music Celebrity Records" on eighteen occasions and received the "International Cultural Honor Certificate." Currently, Chen Gang serves as a professor in the Composition Department at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

[101] Chen, G. (2007). *Sān zhǐ ěrduo tīng yīnyuè* [Listen to Music with Three Ears]. Beijing, China: Bǎihuā Wényì Chūbǎnshè. pp. 2-6

Additionally, he holds positions as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and a council member of the Chinese Musicians Association (CMA), making significant contributions to the development of China's music industry.[102]

Li Ming, the transcriber of the clarinet version of "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music and obtained a master's degree. He currently serves as the principal clarinetist of the Shenyang Symphony Orchestra and vice president of the Ganzhou Saxophone Association. Having started learning the clarinet from a young age, Li Ming enlisted in the Jiangsu Armed Police Band in December 2000 and was later admitted to the Nanjing Art Institute in 2006. During his time at the institute, he studied under the clarinetist and educator Wang Zhenxian. In 2010, Li Ming was admitted to the Orchestra Academy of the Central Conservatory of Music (EOS Symphony Orchestra) and received instruction from prominent figures such as Andrew Marrine, the principal clarinetist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra; Andrew Michael Simon, the principal clarinetist of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra; Fan Wei, the principal clarinetist of the China Philharmonic Orchestra; and Fan Lei, a clarinetist at the Central Conservatory of Music. Li Ming has collaborated with national-level orchestras such as the China National Symphony Orchestra, the National Ballet of China Symphony Orchestra, and the China Youth Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed alongside renowned conductors such as Thomas Ruislip and Hu Yongyan, as well as esteemed pianists and educators like Gary Graffman and Lang Lang. Additionally, he has shared the stage with prominent saxophonist Yan Qingxian.

2.4.2. Background of Chen Gang's *Sunshine Over Tashkurgan*

"Sunshine Shines on Tashkurgan" is originally a violin solo piece completed by the renowned composer Chen Gang in 1976. It draws inspiration from the Tajik music by Tuerxun Kael and "Spring of Pamir" for Chinese flute solo by Liu Furong.[103] China boasts a rich history of producing remarkable musical compositions. However, in contrast to some other nations, the internationalization of Chinese ethnic music has progressed at a

[102] Qiu, B. (Ed.). (2017, October 12). *Zhōngguó rénmín zhèngzhì xiéshāng huìyì dì jiǔ jiè quánguó wěiyuánhuì wěiyuán míngdān* [The List of Members of the Ninth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference]. Zhōngguó Jīgòu Biānzhì Wǎng. Retrieved from People's Daily Online, "Renmin Ribao" (19980124 Third Edition).
[103] Yan. *An Analysis of Four Chinese Violin Works.*

comparatively slower pace. Chen Gang has emerged as a trailblazer in this regard, dedicating himself to the exploration and innovation of Chinese music compositions. Through his tireless efforts, he has made substantial contributions to the Sinicization and popularization of this genre. Chen Gang's endeavors serve as a splendid example for future generations to emulate and build upon.

During the Cultural Revolution in China, people's musical lives were exceptionally monotonous, with only "eight model operas" dominating cultural activities. However, there was a surge of young people learning Western musical instruments. To expand performance demands, Pan Yinlin, the principal player of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, approached composer Chen Gang and encouraged him to create new violin pieces. [104] This proposal reignited Chen Gang's passion for composition. Starting in 1974, Chen Gang wrote eight or nine violin compositions in quick succession, including his "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" completed in 1976.[105] When adapting this piece, Chen Gang's primary goal was to allow the violin, a Western instrument, to "sing" the aesthetic of the Chinese music. Chen Gang regarded composing the piece as his responsibility as a composer to capture people's universal longing for "sunshine" and hope for life during that period of Cultural Revolution.

Chen Gang directed his focus towards the culturally rich Xinjiang region. In particular, he was drawn to the Tajik music that flourished in the Kashgar region, situated on the northwest border of China. The musical tradition of this area, rooted in the Persian-Arabic musical system, exhibits certain parallels with Western violin music in terms of its melodic and rhythmic elements. Recognizing the compatibility of this musical style with the violin, Chen Gang embarked on a creative endeavor. He ingeniously amalgamated the melodies of "Beautiful Tashkurgan" and the flute composition "Spring in Pamir," both exemplars of Tajik musical tradition, employing a collage-like technique to craft his composition titled "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan."

[104] Wong, K.F. (2011). *Chén gāng yì fùqīn xì shuō chuàngzuò yuan* [Chen Gang recalls his father and talks about the origin of his creation]. Hong Kong Tai Kung Pao, C2.

[105] Wong. (2011) *Chen Gang recalls his father and talks about the origin of his creation*.

In the 1990s, Liu Tianhua undertook the initial transcription of "Sunshine over Tashkurgan" from a violin piece to a solo erhu piece. Building upon this groundwork, Li Ming further developed the composition by adapting the erhu version for clarinet and piano. Drawing from the rich tapestry of Chinese folk instrumental music, Li Ming incorporated various playing techniques, such as the addition of major seconds and embellishments on semitones. He mimicked the plucking of four-note chords on the dombra, infusing emotionally vibrant passages into the composition, thus imbuing it with a distinctive flair.

The section "Sing with All Your Heart" transports listeners to the expansive and breathtaking Tian Shan grassland, portraying the magnificent spectacle of Tajik herdsmen singing with unrestrained fervor while their cattle and sheep roam freely, and countless horses gallop across the landscape. In the "Dance with Fervor" section, the clarinet's versatility and agility are showcased through a dynamic array of performance techniques. This segment captures the joyous atmosphere as Tajik people engage in spirited singing and dancing, exuding a sense of exuberance and celebration.

2.4.3. Background of Zhang Chao's *Numa Ame*

Numa Ame, alongside Ricotta's *Homage to China* mentioned above, serves as another additional piece referenced in this research to support the discussion of the two primary compositions. This piece for piano solo. It is composed by Zhang Chao in 2017 as part of his collection "Tu Feng Ji," embodies a fusion of the diverse cultural influences and rich ethnic musical traditions indigenous to the Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, China. The title itself, derived from the Hani dialect, translates to "origin of the sun," signifying the composer's profound sentimental attachment to his homeland and the enduring recollections it evokes.

Zhang Chao adeptly intertwines elements of Yunnan's ethnic folk music with Western compositional techniques, endeavoring to craft music that resonates with both its ethnic roots and contemporary sensibilities. In his endeavor, he not only preserves the innate allure of ethnic melodies but also elevates them through the lens of modern compositional methodologies. This synthesis not only showcases Zhang Chao's technical prowess as a composer but also underscores his pursuit of an aesthetic ideal that harmonizes with the natural world, lending the composition a distinct artistic resonance.

The composition “Numa Ame” is divided into two parts. The first part is presented in a free slow tempo. In the Rubato Adagio section, Zhang Chao employs changes in musical colors to depict his nostalgic longing for the natural scenery of his hometown and childhood memories, as well as his deep affection for the local customs and sentiments. The subsequent Agitando section reflects the composer’s profound experiences and insights during the Cultural Revolution period through the fluctuation of musical emotions.

The second part unfolds in a fast-paced rhythm, emphasizing the strong rhythmic sense and rich musical expression brought by irregular beats. In this section, Zhang Chao not only reproduces the folk songs and dances from his childhood memories but also integrates these scenes with his inner world. Through music, he portrays the joyful moments of childhood while expressing reflections on past emotions and aspirations for a better future. Overall, the piece seeks to achieve rich auditory effects, demonstrating the composer’s deep emotional attachment to his hometown and his unique understanding of music.

“Numa Ame” embodies Zhang Chao’s respect for and inheritance of Yunnan’s ethnic minority cultures, appreciating the unique beauty of each culture and seeking harmonious coexistence among different cultures.

Chapter 3: Structural Analysis and Performance Approaches

3.1. *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major,* Op. 120

3.1.1 Structural Analysis

While Brahms is widely acknowledged as a leading composer associated with the conservative faction, which emphasized German music traditions and opposed the experimental approaches of the New German School in the mid-late nineteenth century, his music often reveals subtle deviations from conventional German compositional norms.[106] The Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120, is an obvious example of this divergence.

This sonata departs from the conventional four-movement structure, featuring only three movements and omitting the slow second movement found in standard sonatas.[107] While the three movements adhere closely to traditional formats—the first in sonata form, the second in scherzo and trio form, and the final in theme and variation form—the presence of ambiguity in sectional distinction and key areas throughout the piece poses challenges to understanding its structural design. Indeed, Brahms harmonic language is sometimes hard to comprehend when viewed with the lens of Classical style.[108] This chapter aims to conduct a detailed analysis to elucidate the piece's form and structure. This analysis will primarily focus on the architecture of the piece. Brahms' innovations in forms, thematic materials, tonal polarity, and modal shifts will be explored in the subsequent chapter, which delves explicitly into discussing the stylistic features of the composition.

First Movement: Allegro amabile

The first movement of this piece adheres to a typical sonata form, with the home key established in E-flat major. However, in contrast to the principles of eighteenth-century

[106] Lawson, *Clarinet Quintet,* pp.41-42

[107] Aoki. *A Brief History of the Sonata with an Analysis and Comparison of a Brahms' and Hindemith's Clarinet Sonata.*

[108] Beach, D., & McClelland, R. (2012). Sonata Form in the Nineteenth Century. In *Analysis of 18th- and 19th-Century Musical Works in the Classical Tradition* (pp. 247–290). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203121832-13

sonata form, which emphasized the strategic placement of half and perfect authentic cadences to confirm keys and the use of caesura to separate sections, this movement frequently lacks these conventional sectional markers.

Sections	Sub-sections	Bars	Length	Tonality
Exposition	Primary Theme Group			
	Theme 1	1-10	10	E-flat major: I - V
	Transition	11-17 18-21	8 4	E-flat major I – V/V E-flat minor: i – Gr^{+6}
	Secondary Theme Group			
	Theme 2	22-27	6	B-flat major: I - V
	Theme 2 Expansion	28-34	7	B-flat major: I – V
	Augmentation	35-39	5	B-flat major: V
	Closing section			
	Codetta 1	40-43	4	B-flat major: I – V^7
	Codetta 1 Restatement (pno)	44-51	8	B-flat major: I – V^7
	Codetta 2	52-55	4	B-flat major: I – [V^7]
Development	Phrase 1 (based on theme 1)	56-64	9	Modulatory: E-flat major – G minor
	Phrase 2 (based on theme 2)	65-72	7	G minor
	Fragmentations	73-92	20	Modulatory: G major – C minor – B minor – B-flat minor – B-flat major
	Phrase 3	93-102	9	Modulatory: G-flat major – B minor – B-flat major
Recapitulation	Primary Theme Group			
	Theme 1	103-113	11	E-flat major: I – [V]
	Transition	114-119	5	Modulatory
	Secondary Theme Group			
	Theme 2	120-125	6	C-flat major: I – [V]
	Theme 2 Expansion	126-137	12	E-flat major: I – V
	Closing Section			
	Codetta 1	138-141	4	E-flat major: I – V^7
	Codetta 1 Restatement (pno)	142-149	8	E-flat major: I – V^7
	Codetta 2	150-153	4	E-flat major
Coda	Phrase 1	154-161	8	E major: I – V^7
	Phrase 2	162-173	12	E-flat major

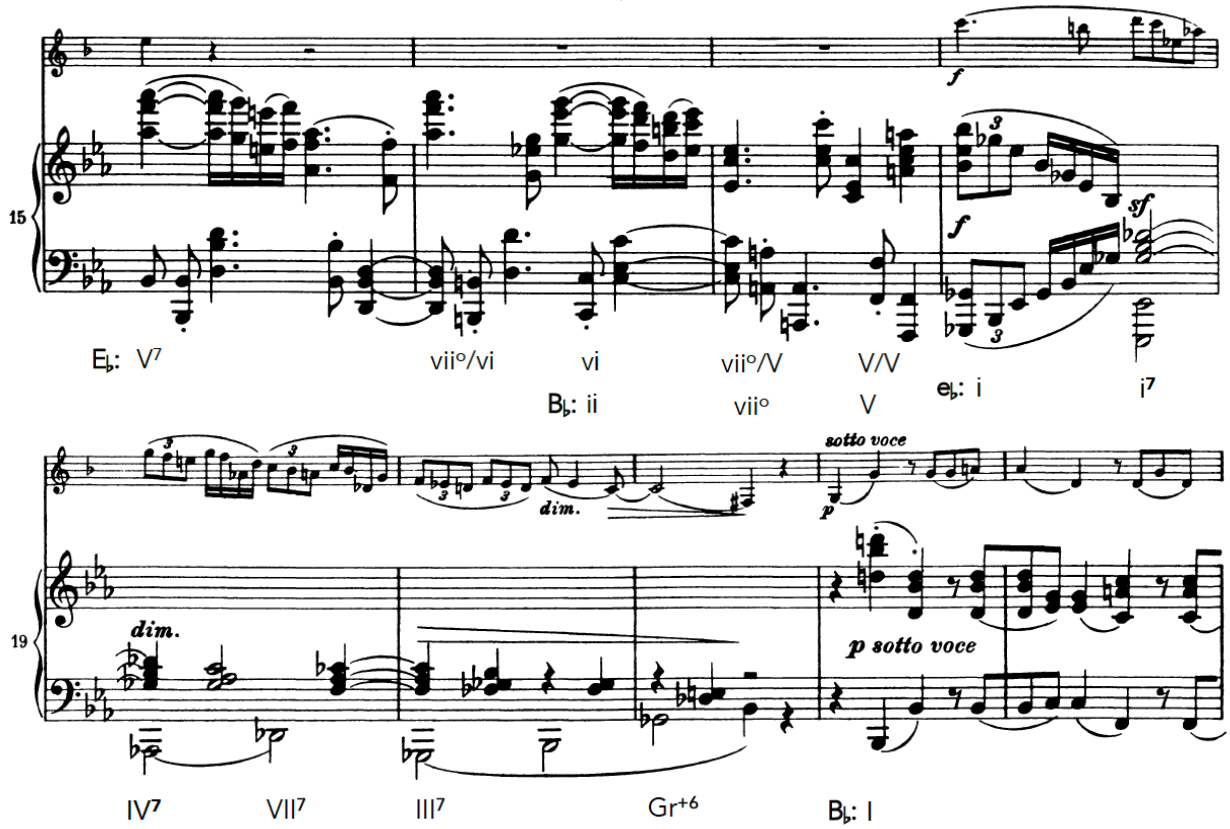
Table 3.1

In fact, the movement only features very few perfect authentic cadences that decisively confirm tonal areas. While this can be interpreted as a demonstration of the fluidity inherent in sonata form, it simultaneously presents challenges in the analysis of the piece due to the scarcity of these expected structural markers. The structural outline and the formal organization of the movement is provided in the table 3.1 above.

The exposition of this movement begins in the home key E-flat major with a one-bar melodic idea introduced by the clarinet. This initial motif rapidly evolves into a lively and amiable primary theme in alignment with the expression “Allegro amabile”. The theme undergoes further development, incorporating embellishments in both melodic and rhythmic dimensions leading up to bar 10. At this juncture, the harmonic progression transitions to a dominant seventh chord.

The transition commences at bar 11, remaining in the tonic but now featuring the piano taking on the melodic idea in a fragmented manner. Up to this point, while the harmony is not entirely static, its primary function has been to prolong the tonic. However, as the transition unfolds from bars 14 to 17, a noticeable alteration in harmony becomes apparent, hinting at the approach of a strong perfect authentic cadence and an impending modulation to the dominant key of B-flat major at bar 18. Unexpectedly, at measure 18, the anticipated B-flat major chord fails to occur. Instead, Brahms replaces it with an E-flat minor chord, creating a deceptive cadence that deviates from the expected resolution to the dominant key and disrupts the anticipation for the introduction of the secondary theme. (Example 3.1)

Indeed, the transition extends for an additional four bars (bars 18-21) following the E-flat minor chord, delaying the arrival of the secondary theme in B-flat major. The clarinet takes the lead in the melodic line, quoting the main melodic idea in a higher register and subsequently presenting a series of fragmented motifs arranged in a descending direction. Simultaneously, the piano contributes to the texture by playing syncopated seventh chords, serving as harmonic support for the melodic line.



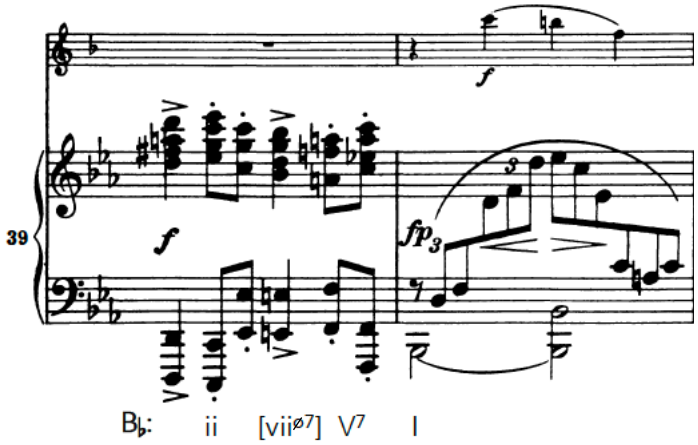
Example 3.1

It is noteworthy that Brahms employs a rather unconventional harmonic treatment in these four bars. Instead of employing a strong cadence to signal the arrival of the dominant key of B-flat major at bar 22, Brahms utilizes a string of passing seventh chords organized into a harmonic sequence using the circle-of-fourths (Example 3.1). This harmonic sequence does not evoke a strong tendency, such as that of a perfect authentic cadence leading to a specific key. It only offers a subtle direction that suggests a gradual shift in tonality.

Due to the absence of a definite harmonic setup, the key of the secondary theme is not firmly established at bar 22. This mitigates the distinction between sections and creates an illusion, prompting consideration of whether the theme has truly arrived or not. Despite the unconventional harmonic elements and the delayed establishment of the key of theme 2, the overall structure of the exposition maintains a traditional two-key polarity with a tonic-dominant relationship, reminiscent of the classical sonata model.

The secondary theme emerges at bar 22 in the key of B-flat major. In a canonic form, the clarinet and the bass part of the piano echo each other, precisely a twelfth apart, with the

piano part intentionally lagging by one beat. Following the initial presentation of the theme, a restatement occurs at bar 28-34, still in B-flat major, featuring rhythmic alterations and melodic embellishments. This is succeeded by a five-bar augmentation starting from bar 35-39. In contrast, the piano alters its texture during the restatement, introducing syncopated chords that serve as harmonic support. Beginning with the tonic at bar 28, the piano transitions to the dominant chord at bar 29. Noteworthy is the persistence of the F-sharp in the bass from bar 29 to 38, which is the dominant of B-flat major. The long sustaining F-sharp implies the harmonic function of this passage can be interpreted as a dominant prolongation. This prolonged dominant finally concludes with a strong cadence at measure 39, signaling a definite landing on the dominant key, B-flat major, at bar 40 (Example 3.2).



Example 3.2

The confirmation of the arrival at the dominant key, signaled at bar 40, marks the initiation of the closing section in the exposition. Bar 40 introduces a new four-bar lyrical theme as the codetta 1, where the piano supports the melodic line by playing broken chords with the tonic in the bass. This tonic prolongation serves to solidify the tonal center, creating a harmonically stable foundation. The codetta 1 is reiterated at bar 44, now taken up by the piano, and is extended with an additional four bars featuring fragments resembling the syncopated chordal texture found in the piano at bars 28-34. Unlike the harmonic progression under the first closing theme at bar 40, which predominantly remains in the tonic, the progression during the restatement varies more dynamically. Nevertheless, it eventually resolves back to the tonic, B-flat major, at bar 52. A codetta 2 using elements of the primary theme emerges at bar 52 and persists for four bars in the B-flat major. The descending direction and gradual diminuendo of this phrase serve as subtle indicators of the impending conclusion of the exposition. The piece enters the development section in bar 56.

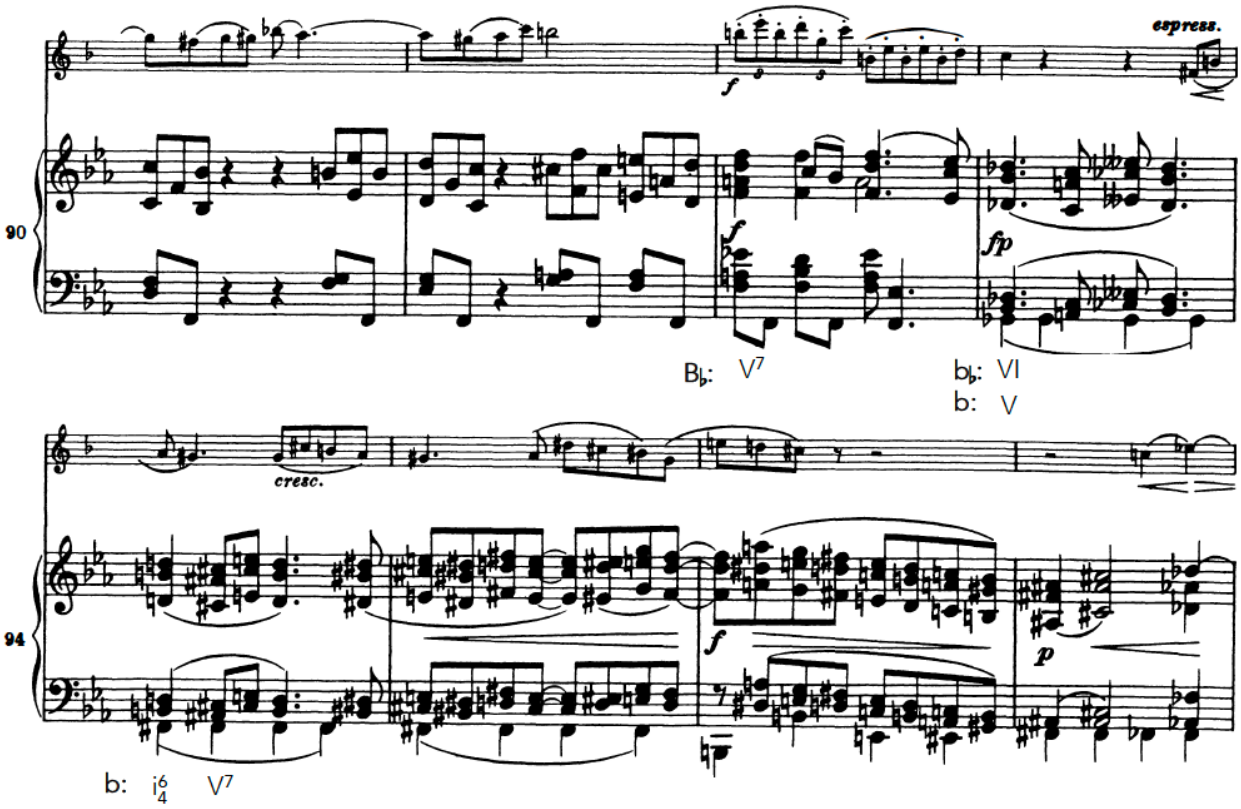
The demarcation between the exposition and the development section in this movement is notably ambiguous, primarily due to the absence of a caesura – a conventional means of articulating discontinuity in late-eighteenth-century musical forms to signal sectional deviation. A new phrase at bar 56 is connected to the closing phrase without any breaks. This absence contributes to a seamless transition, making it challenging to pinpoint the exact entrance of a new section. At bar 56, a new phrase connects to the preceding closing phrase without any breaks. Adding to the ambiguity, the new phrase begins with the same material – elements of the primary theme – as the preceding closing phrase, further complicating the identification of a distinct starting point for a new section. This approach, while potentially disorienting, adds an element of unpredictability to the listening experience. The deduction that the development section begins at bar 56 is based on the analysis of thematic material distribution and the common notion that the harmony in the development section typically moves away from the dominant key.

The development section, as outlined in Table 3.1, unfolds in four distinct parts: two phrases derived from the primary and secondary themes, an extended passage featuring various melodic fragments, and a third phrase serving a transitory function. In a departure from convention, the first phrase does not commence in the dominant key but instead starts in E-flat major with a restatement of the primary theme. This theme undergoes fragmentation and expansion, spanning six bars. The main melodic idea resurfaces at bar 63, embellished with a brief string of running notes, initiating a modulation to a new key area—G minor—and setting the stage for the subsequent phrase at bar 65. The second phrase is developed based on the contour of the secondary theme. The melody initiates in the piano part and continues for four bars, after which the clarinet takes over, elaborating on the contour for an additional four bars. This phrase remains entirely in G minor without modulating, underscoring the significance of G minor in the broader tonal scheme of the movement.

The fragmentation passage begins at bar 73 with a recurrence of the melodic idea from the primary theme, now presented in the piano, but interestingly not in G minor; rather, it appears in its parallel key, G major. This music undergoes modulation to C minor at bar 77. Notably, the melodic idea itself is not the primary focus in this passage, receiving minimal elaboration. Brahms strategically emphasizes the triplet figures as the central element in this section instead. From bar 78 to 92, these triplet figures become prominent in both the piano and

clarinet parts, manifesting as lilting broken chord fragments. These triplets are exchanged between the piano and clarinet, creating a lively and dynamic interplay between the two instruments. Throughout this passage, there is vigorous and chromatic modulation, initially starting in C minor, then progressing to B minor, followed by B-flat minor, and ultimately landing in B-flat major at bar 87. The phrase remains in B-flat major until bar 92, highlighting this tonal center as a point of stability in the midst of the chromatic modulation.

Following the fragmentation passage, the third phrase emerges at bar 93 with an unexpected G-flat major chord. A cadential progression at bar 92 initially anticipates the landing of the tonic chord, B-flat major. However, Brahms deviates from the expected resolution, transforming the cadence into a deceptive cadence by substituting the anticipated tonic chord with a G-flat major chord, which is the VI of B-flat major's the parallel key, B-flat minor. This G-flat major chord is treated as its enharmonic equivalent, an F-sharp major chord – the dominant of B minor – and is re-notated as such at bar 94 (see Example 3.3). Theoretically, this implies a shift to B minor, but the highly chromatic piano passage makes it challenging to definitively discern the mode. Through intricate chromaticism, the music eventually returns to B-flat major at bar 99.



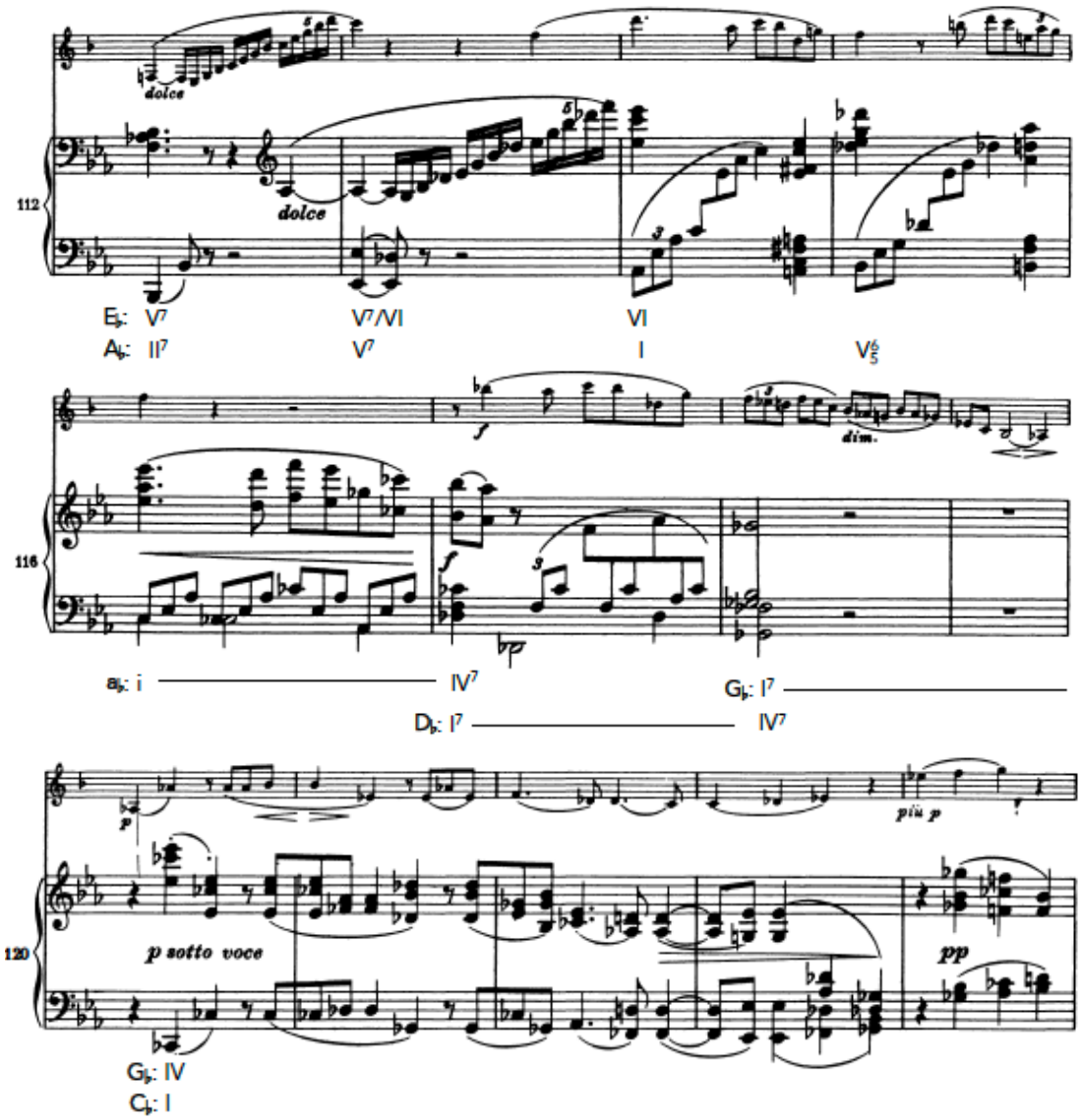
Example 3.3

At this point, the piano's intensity diminishes, providing support for a calm clarinet melodic phrase from bar 99-102, with B-flat acting as a pedal point. This B-flat serves as a tonic prolongation within the context of B-flat major and a dominant prolongation in terms of the home key, E-flat major. At bar 102, another strong perfect authentic cadence occurs, setting the stage for the return to the home key at the recapitulation at bar 103.

The recapitulation opens by restating the primary theme group in the home key of E-flat major. Theme 1 in the clarinet part remains consistent with its exposition presentation. However, an alteration is observed in the piano part during the first four bars (103-106) of the theme, now presented as triplets. The subsequent portion (bar 106-112) remains unchanged from the exposition. At bar 113, an imitation of the quick arpeggios heard in the clarinet emerges in the piano part, serving as an additional extension. The harmonic progression underlying bars 112-113 forms a cadential progression that leads into A-flat major at the beginning of the transition (see Example 3.4).

In contrast to the more extended transition observed in the exposition, the transition in the recapitulation has been condensed to six bars (bar 114-119). This shorter transition restates the main melodic idea while navigating through a series of modulations facilitated by a harmonic sequence in fourths (A-flat, D-flat, G-flat, and C-flat). The sequence culminates in an unexpected shift to the key of C-flat major at bar 120, which marks the beginning of the secondary theme.

The secondary theme from bar 120 to 137 closely mirrors its exposition counterpart, featuring only minor rhythmic and melodic alterations. At bar 125, a cadential progression emerges, serving to modulate the tonal center from C-flat major back to E-flat major. It is noteworthy that, from bars 127 to 136, B-flat assumes the role of a pedal point. This sustaining presence of B-flat in the base hints at its function as a dominant prolongation, preparing for another strong perfect authentic cadence at bar 137 that leads the music back to E-flat major.

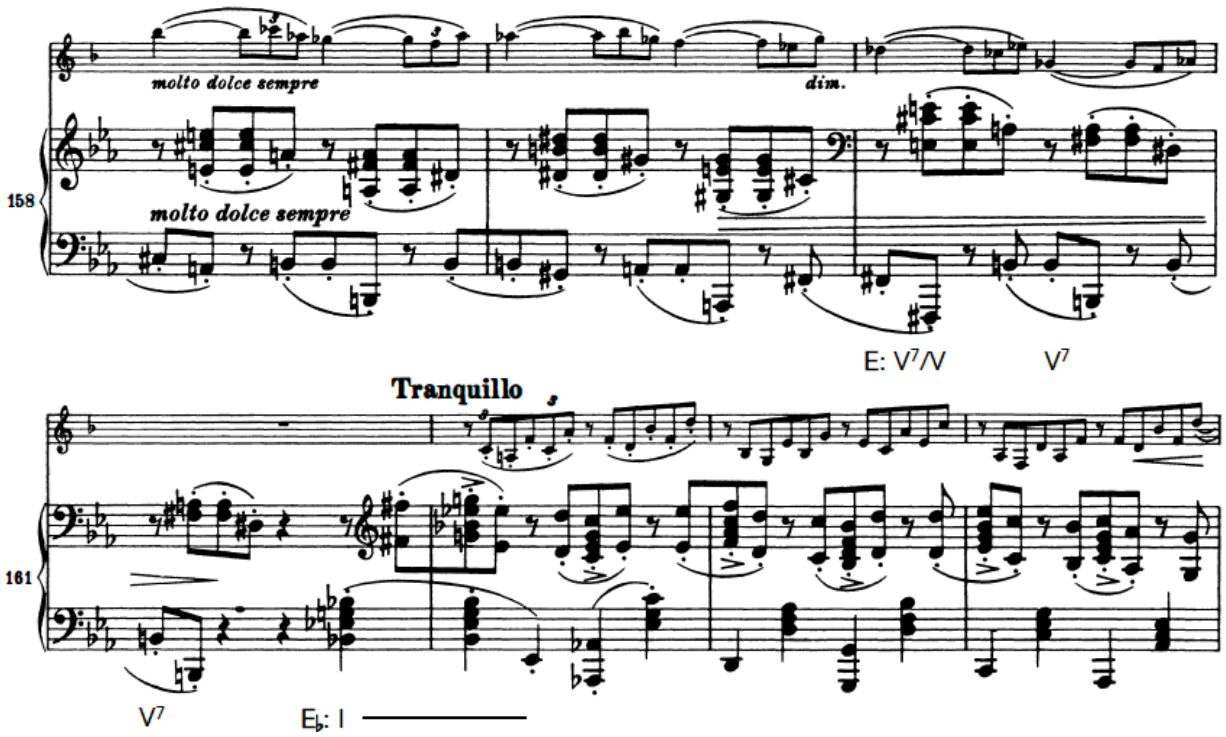


Example 3.4

The cadence occurring at bars 137-138 marks the entrance of the closing section, which unfolds entirely in E-flat major, solidifying the sense of the home key. The general structure and melodic materials of this closing section closely resemble their counterparts in the exposition. It begins with a 4-bar codetta 1, followed by an 8-bar restatement and elaboration in the piano part, and concludes with a four-bar codetta 2 derived from the primary theme. An authentic cadential progression in placed in bar 152 to set up the expectation for the re-confirmation of E-flat major as the home key. However, Brahms introduces an unexpected twist at bar 153 by concluding the cadence with an E-flat dominant seventh chord. This deceptive resolution creates a false sense of arrival at the home key, strategically preparing for the establishment of the coda at bar 154.

The coda of the piece comprises two distinct passages. In a surprising turn, the first passage of the coda commences in the distant key of E major, featuring unexpected musical materials from bars 11-12 in the transition of the exposition. Strikingly, these materials are not revisited in the recapitulation, suggesting that Brahms intentionally reserved them for the coda.

These musical elements are developed for an additional four bars, leading to a four-bar lyrical melody from bars 158 to 161. This melody is built on the triplet figures observed in bars 30-32 of the secondary theme and is set in E major throughout. A cadential progression at bars 160-161 creates a strong anticipation for the E major chord (see Example 3.5). The deliberate cutoff of the clarinet at bar 160 and the piano at bar 161, just before the expected appearance of the E major chord, intensify the listener's expectation of this harmonic resolution. However, Brahms takes an unexpected turn at this juncture. Instead of delivering the anticipated E major chord, he substitutes it with an E-flat major chord, abruptly disrupting the cadential progression (see Example 3.5). This unexpected harmonic shift jolts the tonal area back to E-flat major, diverging from the listener's anticipations and introducing an element of surprise to the coda.



Example 3.5

The sudden return to E-flat major at bar 161 marks the initiation of the second passage, labeled "Tranquillo," within the coda. This passage serves as the final sub-section of the movement. Characterized by bouncing triplet patterns reminiscent of those from bar 78 in the development's fragmentation passage, the clarinet takes the lead in playing these patterns for four bars (162-165). The piano then assumes the patterns for the subsequent four bars (166-169). At bar 170, the clarinet reintroduces the pattern, followed by a downward arpeggiated pattern in straight rhythm at bar 171. The piano supports the clarinet at bar 171 with bouncing triplet figures. Both instruments converge towards the concluding gesture at bars 172-173, featuring three final chords in E-flat major.

Throughout this passage, the tonal area is established in E-flat major, and the underlying harmony primarily serves as a tonic prolongation. This harmonic choice enhances the stability of the home key, providing a sense of resolution and closure to the movement.

Second Movement: Allegro appassionato

The second movement takes the form of a scherzo and trio, a structure typically associated with the third movement in a standard four-movement sonata from the eighteenth century. Given Brahms' decision to omit the traditional slow second movement, the scherzo and trio assume its place as the second movement in this piece. It serves as a transition between the engaging first movement and the calmer final movement.[109] The overarching structure of this scherzo and trio follows a conventional pattern. It is in a standard ternary form, with the scherzo constituting the A section and the slower trio serving as the B section. In detail, both the scherzo and the trio adhere to traditional binary forms. The structural distinction between the two lies in the fact that the scherzo is in a rounded binary form with a coda, while the trio is in a standard binary form.

In contrast to the first movement, where the lack of distinct sectional markers obscured the division between sections, the second movement exhibits a clear sectional layout. The strategic use of strong cadences and caesura marks points of discernable change in tonal area, musical materials, and tempo. This straightforward employment of sectional markers facilitates the identification of sections and subsections, offering a more transparent portrayal

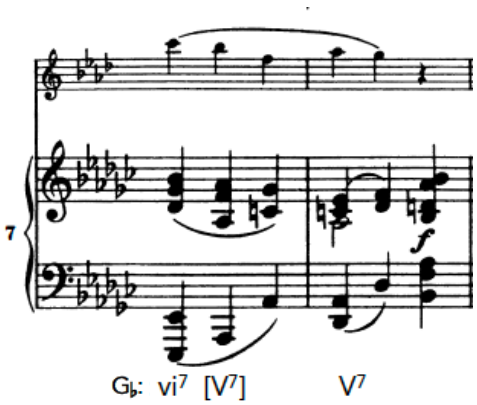
[109] Keys, I. (1974). *Brahms chamber music*. British Broadcasting Corporation. pp.115-116

of the structural organization of the movement. The organization of the movement is detailed in Table 3.2 below.

Sections	Sub-sections	Bars	Length	Tonality
Scherzo (A) (Rounded Binary)	Part 1 (A)			
	Theme 1	1-8	16	E-flat minor: i – V^7/III
	Restatement (pno)	9-16		E-flat minor: i – V^7/III
	Bridge (B)			
	Phrase 1	17-27	20	Modulatory – E-flat minor: i
	Phrase 2	28-34		B ("C-flat") minor: $V\,{}^{4}_{2}$ – $V\,{}^{6}_{5}$
	Fragment	35-36		E-flat minor: VI – V^7
	Part 1 (A')	37-48	12	E-flat minor: i – V^4_3
	Coda			
	Closing theme 1	49-65	32	E-flat minor: i – Passing ^{o7}
	Closing theme 2	66-80		E-flat minor: Passing ^{o7} – i
Trio (B) (Binary)	Part 1 (A)			
	Theme 1	81-94	28	B major: I – V/iii
	Restatement (cl)	95-108		B major: I – V/iii
	Part 2 (B)			
	Phrase 1 (based on theme 1)	109-120	30	C-sharp major: V/V – I
	Phrase 2 (based on theme 1)	121-138		B major: iii - I
Scherzo (A) (Rounded Binary)	Part 1 (A)			
	Fragment + Theme 1	139-148	16	E-flat minor: i – V^7/III
	Restatement (pno)	149-156		E-flat minor: i – V^7/III
	Bridge (B)			
	Phrase 1	157-167	20	Modulatory – E-flat minor: i
	Phrase 2	168-174		B ("C-flat") minor: $V\,{}^{4}_{2}$ – $V\,{}^{6}_{5}$
	Fragment	175-176		E-flat minor: VI – V^7
	Part 1 (A')	177-188	12	E-flat minor: i – V^4_3
	Coda			
	Closing theme 1	189-205	35	E-flat minor: i – Passing ^{o7}
	Closing theme 2	206-223		E-flat minor: Passing ^{o7} – i

Table 3.2

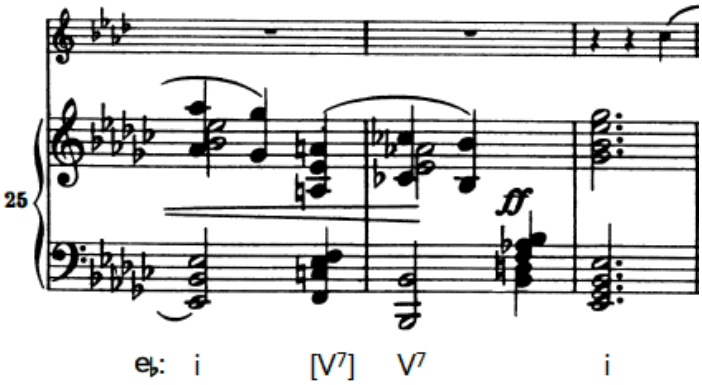
The scherzo begins with an upbeat in the clarinet, leading to an eight-bar theme in E-flat minor characterized by its vivid but tragic character. This theme gradually hints at a movement to the relative key, G-flat major, around bar 4, culminating in the dominant of G-flat major in bar 8 with a secondary dominant chord at bar 7 (refer to Example 3.6). Throughout the theme, the clarinet is accompanied by sweeping arpeggios in the piano initially and later with chords.



Example 3.6

The expected G-flat major chord does not materialize after the strong half cadence. Instead, it is substituted by a dominant seventh chord of the home key, and the entire theme is reiterated with the same harmonic setting, this time without the clarinet. Together, the initial presentation of the theme and its subsequent reiteration form part 1, or section A, of the scherzo.

The bridge, constituting the second part or section B, follows part 1 immediately at bar 17. The first phrase of this section begins as the clarinet enters, playing a four-bar fragment comprised of four three-note figures before temporarily receding. The piano takes the lead, echoing the contour of the fragment with an extension utilizing the three-note figure, concluding at bar 27. The harmony underlying this phrase is notably less stable than in the first part. Dissonant chords support the melodic contour from bar 17 to 24. While the tonal direction is vaguely suggestive of D-flat major around bar 17-20, the key remains unconfirmed until bar 24. At this point, the tonal area of the music begins to crystallize into E-flat minor. The first phrase finally solidifies the E-flat minor key with an imperfect authentic cadence at bar 27 (Example 3.7).



Example 3.7

Bar 28 signals the beginning of another phrase (bar 28-34), consisting of two similar fragments performed by the clarinet, reminding of the main gesture of the theme in the first part. This phrase exudes a softer and calmer character in contrast to the preceding section. The tonal area shifts to B minor, initiated by an arpeggiated dominant seventh chord beneath the first fragment. It is noteworthy that Brahms notated the dominant seventh chord in its enharmonic equivalence as if in "C-flat" minor. This particular choice may stem from the idea that "C-flat" minor appears less distant than B minor in relation to the home key of E-flat minor. The second part concludes with a highly agitated two-bar fragment in the piano, derived from the main idea of the theme. The tonality returns to E-flat minor during this segment, establishing the key for the subsequent reappearance of the main theme.

The main theme makes a return at bar 37 with slight alterations and an extension in the latter part of the melody. The piano part features a more rigorous accompanying pattern compared to the first part. The underlying harmony remains relatively unchanged, following a similar harmonic pattern. The theme concludes with a dominant seventh chord in the third inversion in bar 48, creating an expectation for new materials that will lead to the conclusion of the entire scherzo. Given that the return of the material in part 1 consists of only one theme, this section lacks sufficient material to function as a complete section. Therefore, rather than classifying the scherzo as an ABA (ternary) form, it is more fitting to identify it as a rounded binary form.

Following the recapitulation of thematic material, the coda starts at bar 49, comprising two closing themes. The first theme unfolds from bar 49 to 65, while the second extends from bar

66 to 80. The first theme is characterized by fragments of a four-descending-quaver figure derived from the main thematic idea and the three-note figure from the bridge. The tonal area of this phrase is somewhat ambiguous. It begins in E-flat minor but later appears to briefly touch upon B minor (notated as “C-flat” minor) around bar 57-58 and subsequently A-flat minor at bar 61. The phrase concludes with an arpeggiated, highly unstable full diminish chord in the piano, followed by a one-bar pause before transitioning to the next phrase.

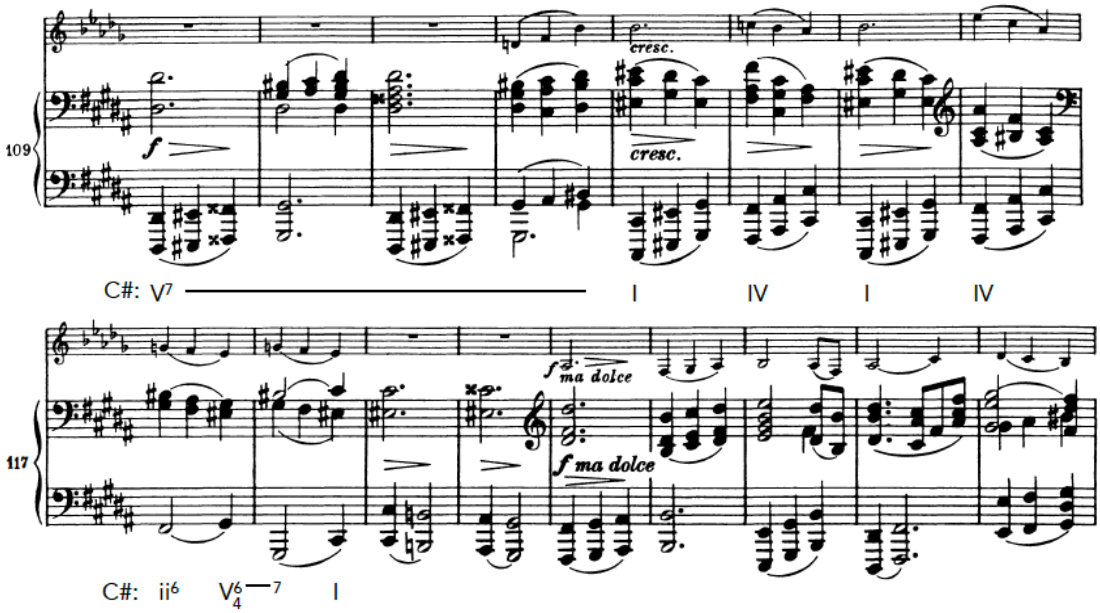
The second phrase begins at bars 66-70 with an elongated imitation of the main thematic material, played by the clarinet. The melody is then extended with materials derived from the four-descending-quaver figures, spanning bars 71-76, constructing a descending melodic line leading to a sustained concert B-flat at bar 77. It eventually progresses to the prolongation of E-flat, the tonic, at bars 78-80. The piano accompanies the clarinet with a chordal texture from bar 66, transitioning to arpeggiated chords at bars 77-78, and concluding with a full tonic chord at bars 79-80. The tonal area of the second phrase returns to the home key, E-flat minor, but it begins with a full diminished seventh chord extended from the previous phrase, functioning as a passing seventh chord. It is succeeded by a tonic chord in the third inversion, also serving as a passing chord. The harmonic progression unfolds in a straightforward manner, leading to a perfect authentic cadence at bar 76-77. The coda section, and consequently the entire scherzo, concludes with the final tonic chord at bars 79-80.

The trio section starts at bar 81 in B major and is marked with “Sostenuto.” This section exhibits a calmer character and adopts a slower tempo compared to the preceding scherzo. The rhythmic patterns are comparatively more straightforward in the trio. Structurally, the trio follows a simple binary form, comprising two parts with distinct harmonic settings. Both parts share a common motivic idea characterized by three notes in stepwise motion.

The first part of the trio consists of two phrases: the introduction of the main theme (bars 81-94) by the piano and the subsequent restatement of the theme (bars 95-108) by the clarinet. In the initial phrase, the theme is accompanied by richly harmonized chords and supported by gently moving octaves in the bass. The key predominantly resides in B major, shifting to D sharp minor, the mediant of B major, around bar 91, and concluding with a dominant chord of D sharp minor at bar 94. The harmonic scheme of this theme, commencing with the tonic and concluding with the dominant of the mediant key, mirrors that of the theme in the

scherzo, establishing a sense of unification in terms of harmonic layout. The restatement of the theme closely mirrors the setting of the first phrase, with the primary difference being that the melody is now played by the clarinet. Notably, the clarinet does not perform the entire theme. At bar 103, the piano reassumes the role of playing the theme again. Throughout this section, the harmonic setting remains consistent with the previous phrase.

The second section of the trio starts with a two-bar melodic idea at bars 109-110, recalling the theme's outset but with the B transformed into B sharp. This idea extends through additional fragments of the three-stepwise-note figure, forming an elongated phrase that extends until bar 120. The B sharp signals a sudden key shift to the unexpected key of C sharp major. The underlying harmony in bar 109-112 can be interpreted as a dominant prolongation of C sharp major. The key is finally confirmed with a perfect authentic cadence at bars 118-119 (See Example 3.8). However, the presence of C double-sharp at bar 120 suggests an immediate tonal shift with a chromatic passing chord, introducing another key in the second phrase.



Example 3.8

The main theme in B major makes a return at bar 121 as the second phrase, continuing for four bars before introducing new materials. The piano plays the theme an octave higher than its initial presentation, while the clarinet contributes a melodic line with a similar contour in a supportive role. The tonal area briefly shifts to A major at bar 126 before returning to B

major at bar 129 with a perfect authentic cadence. From bar 129 onwards, both the piano and clarinet settle down, and the music gradually softens. The composition remains entirely in B major until the end of the trio section at bar 135. The B descends to B-flat at bar 136 and is then sustained for two bars, with B flat serving as the dominant of E-flat minor, foreshadowing the return to the home key.

A highly agitated two-bar fragment, previously observed in bars 35-36, reemerges at bar 139 in the key of E-flat minor. This signals the departure of the trio and initiates a return to the scherzo, completing the overarching ternary form. The structural and harmonic layout of this section closely mirrors the first section, with only very minor alterations in a few places that do not induce any structural changes. One notable alteration occurs at the end of the first theme, where the clarinet melody is modified slightly and extended into the subsequent phrase. Another change appears in the final phrase of the coda at bars 206-233. The note durations of the piano arpeggios in the latter part of the phrase (bars 217-220) are doubled, and the final tonic chord is extended to three bars, fostering a sense of conclusiveness.

Third Movement: Andante con moto

The finale movement adopts the theme and variations form, a common structure for the concluding movement of a sonata. Comprising seven sections, it includes one theme, various variations, and a coda. The formal arrangement of the variations closely aligns with that of the theme. All variations feature two sections: the first includes a presentation and a varied repetition of the theme, while the second consists of a closing phrase derived from the thematic materials.

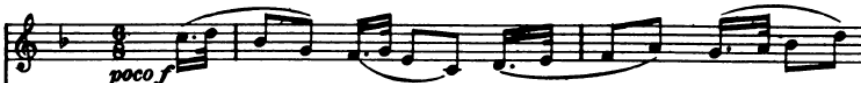
The theme and the initial four variations maintain the same structural proportion. They are all composed in compound time (6/8) and feature an identical number of bars. Variation 5 deviates from this pattern, being written in simple time (2/4) and adopting a much quicker tempo, necessitating more bars to accommodate additional musical materials compared to other variations. The coda encompasses the most bars, providing sufficient space to reintroduce earlier musical materials, introduce new elements, and establish a conclusive sense for the movement. In fact, the variation 5 and the coda have such strong deviation from the previous variations in terms of meter, tempo, and music materials that they are sometimes considered as a separate movement. The movement predominantly resides in E-flat major,

establishing harmonic connections to the first movement and fostering a sense of tonal return. The structural organization of the movement is delineated in detail in Table 3.3 below.

Sections	Sub-sections	Bars	Length	Tonality
Theme (in 6/8)	Section 1			
	Theme	1-4	8	E-flat major: V
	Varied repetition	5-8		E-flat major: V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	9-14	6	E-flat major: I – I
Variation 1 (in 6/8)	Section 1			
	Theme	15-18	8	E-flat major: V
	Varied repetition	19-22		E-flat major: V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	23-28	6	E-flat major: vi – I
Variation 2 (in 6/8)	Section 1			
	Theme	29-32	8	E-flat major: V
	Varied repetition	33-36		E-flat major: V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	27-42	6	E-flat major: vi – I
Variation 3 (in 6/8)	Section 1			
	Theme	43-46	8	E-flat major: V
	Varied repetition	47-50		E-flat major: V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	51-56	6	E-flat major: vi – I
Variation 4 (In 6/8)	Section 1			
	Theme	57-60	8	E-flat major: I – V
	Varied repetition	61-64		E-flat major: I – V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	65-70	6	E-flat major: vi – I
Variation 5 (in 2/4)	Section 1			
	Theme	71-78	16	E-flat minor: V – I – V
	Varied repetition	79-86		E-flat minor V – I – V
	Section 2 Closing Phrase	87-97	10	E-flat minor: i – i
Coda	Part 1			
	Phrase 1 (pno.)	98-107	21	E major: I – V
	Varied restatement (cl.)	108-118		E major: I – V
	Transitional phrase	119-135	7	Transitional
	Part 2 Closing phrase	136-153	18	E major: Passing ^{o7}– I

Table 3.3

The first statement of the theme section introduces the main theme of the entire movement through the clarinet. It starts with an upbeat and spans four bars. It is characterized by a dotted rhythmic pattern (refer to Example 3.9), and the melody progresses at a leisurely pace. However, the closing gesture of the theme deviates from the dotted pattern, featuring four notes with a leap of a sixth followed by a descent to the fifth, imparting a sense of curiosity and inquiry (see Example 3.10). The underlying harmony of the theme exhibits an intriguing quality, predominantly residing in the dominant of E-flat major, with a brief touch of A-flat major around bar 2. While the music subtly hints at E-flat major as the home key, it refrains from firmly establishing it through cadences. The theme exudes a modal quality throughout.



Example 3.9

Example 3.10

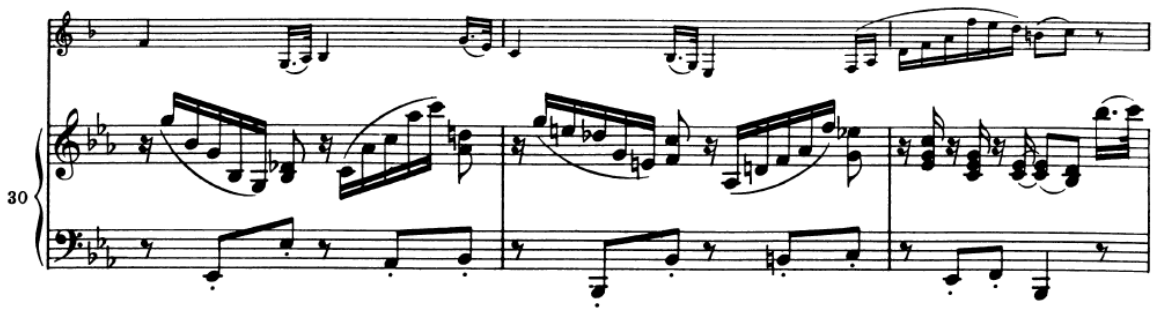
The theme is restated from bars 5 to 8, with the piano assuming the melody for the initial two bars, followed by the clarinet's return at bar 7. The underlying harmony remains consistent with that of the initial statement, primarily sustaining on the dominant of E-flat major.

The closing phrase (bars 9-14) immediately follows the restatement and maintains the characteristic dotted rhythmic pattern observed in the theme. Initiated by a two-bar fragment played solely by the piano, the clarinet rejoins at bar 11, introducing a melody reminiscent of the theme's material. The melody concludes at bar 14, interestingly with the "inquiring" gesture that ends on a dominant note rather than a tonic, creating a sense of incompleteness. The phrase briefly touches G minor at bar 10-11, shifts to A-flat major at bar 12, then sustains on the dominant of E-flat major again, and finally concludes with the tonic chord in bar 14. Notably, this section eschews a perfect authentic cadence as a final cadence to confirm a home key, opting instead for a much weaker plagal cadence, which mitigates the sense of finality.

In comparison to the theme section where the melody is accompanied by fully harmonized chords, Variation 1 begins with a much thinner texture. From bars 15 to 18, the clarinet presents only the basic outline of the main theme as the main melody of this variation. The dotted rhythm observed in the previous section does not persist as the main characteristic. Accompanying the clarinet, the piano introduces a highly syncopated and unharmonized line that is a semiquaver behind the clarinet melody. At bar 19-22, the piano takes over, playing alone and adopting the melody previously played by the clarinet. The syncopated elements have been removed, and the melody is now fully harmonized again. Similar to the harmonic setting of the theme section, the first part of the variation mostly stays in the dominant of E-flat major.

In the second part of Variation 1, the highly syncopated line returns in the piano from bars 23-24, now being fully harmonized. The clarinet plays a melody with a similar contour to the theme and drops out at bar 24. The piano plays a series of seventh chords, shifting the tonal area to G minor briefly at bar 27. The clarinet joins back with two closing gestures of a similar downward contour at bars 27-28. Unlike the ending of the theme section at bar 14, this variation concludes with a full cadence at bar 28.

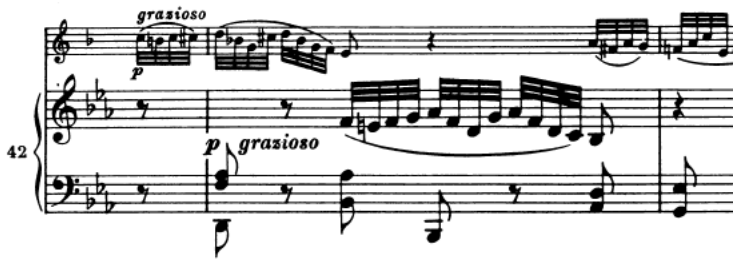
Variation 2 commences at bar 29 with a four-bar presentation of the melody. The clarinet reintroduces the dotted rhythm in a distinct pattern from the main theme (see Example 3.11). Accompanying the clarinet, the piano uses slurred arpeggiating triplet patterns on the right hand and staccato eighth notes in the bass. The closing gesture at bar 32 in the clarinet now adopts a six-semiquaver pattern followed by two quavers. The restatement of the melody begins at bar 33, with a role reversal between the clarinet and the piano. The piano now delivers a varied version of the melody, while the clarinet plays the arpeggiating accompaniment. The closing gesture at bar 36 descends in a leap, reversing its direction compared to that at bar 33. As in the preceding sections, the underlying harmony during the melody presentation and restatement sustains the dominant of E-flat major.



Example 3.11

The closing section of variation 2 reintroduces the dotted rhythm into the music. At the opening at bar 37, the clarinet plays a melody with dotted rhythmic pattern and long sustained notes while the piano plays the arpeggiating triplets. At bar 38, the two instruments switch roles again, with the clarinet playing the triplets and the piano playing more static chordal accompaniment. From bar 39-42, the last four bars of the closing section, the clarinet revisits the melodic figures from the initial part of this variation, while the piano delivers triplet arpeggios. Similar to variation 1, the closing section starts in G minor. It then briefly moves to A-flat major at bar 40 and back to E-flat major with a perfect authentic cadence at bar 42.

Variation 3 is distinguished by lively melodic fragments composed of strings of notes with very short values (see Example 3.12). Throughout the theme presentation, these animated figures are exchanged between the clarinet and the piano's right hand, forming the melody. The piano's left hand provides support with short chords. At bar 46, the instruments converge, and the piano's right hand reintroduces the dotted rhythm, concluding this phrase on the dominant chord. The restatement of the theme begins with the lively melodic fragment in the clarinet, an octave higher. The melodic setting of this restatement is akin to that of the presentation, where the fragments are passed between the two instruments. However, Brahms alters the octaves and the moving direction of each melodic fragment. At bar 49, both instruments play even shorter fragments, accelerating the exchange rate of the musical materials and leading to a closing phrase at bar 50 where the two instruments come together again. As anticipated, the harmonic structure of the entire first section sustains the dominant of E-flat major.



Example 3.12

The closing section of variation 3 commences at bar 51, with the two instruments playing together in fast thirty-second-note melodic fragments, resembling the texture in bar 50. It initiates in G minor, as in previous variations. The clarinet, piano right hand, and left hand have independent lines composed of thirty-second-note fragments of various lengths, contributing to a complex texture and creating a music that sounds like a three-part counterpoint. This contrapuntal texture halts at bar 53, and the interchange of musical materials between the instruments is reintroduced. However, in bar 54, the piano right hand completely takes over the fast-running thirty-second-note motion for two bars. The clarinet plays brief figures in contrary direction with the piano and reiterates the dotted rhythm in the next bar. The piano imitates the dotted rhythm in the final bar (bar 56) of the variation, settling down in E-flat major with a perfect authentic cadence.

Variation 4 presents a contrasting mood to the previous variation. It is calm and rather static, with a straightforward rhythm. The piano introduces the syncopated melody in the upper register with chordal accompaniment from bar 57-60, while the clarinet plays the bass line, providing support to the melody above. In the restatement (bar 61-64), the clarinet switches roles with the piano, taking over the syncopated melody an octave lower. The piano accompanies the clarinet in low register, and the left hand plays the bass line that was previously performed by the clarinet. The harmonic structure of the first part of Variation 4 finally displays some changes compared to the previous sections. Both the theme and the restatement are supported by tonic prolongation, evident in the sustaining E-flat in the bass. Both phrases also end with a half cadence, making this variation the first section to confirm the home key of E-flat major in this movement.

In the second section (bar 65-70), the closing phrase starts with the piano playing the syncopated melody in chords in the high register once again, while the clarinet plays the bass

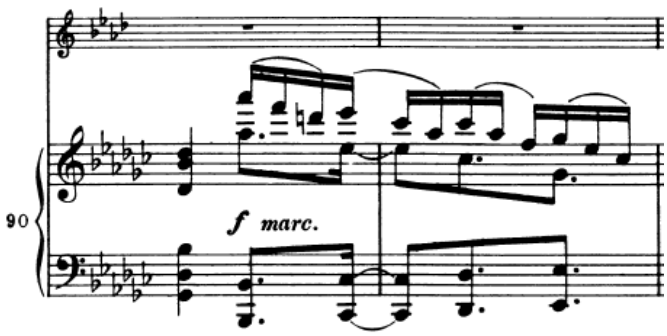
line. As the section progresses, the roles reverse, with the clarinet and the piano right hand alternating the melodic role, and the piano left hand playing the low bass. In the last two bars, the clarinet and the piano right hand move to a lower register, signaling the conclusion of the section. This closing phrase begins in G minor, but it gradually becomes more chromatic from bar 67-69. The music finally returns to E-flat major with an imperfect authentic cadence at bar 70.

Variation 5 deviates significantly from the preceding variations. The meter shifts from compound time (6/8) to simple time (2/4), and the tempo accelerates to Allegro, introducing a rigorous and agitated character. The tonal center undergoes a notable change, shifting from E-flat major to its parallel key, E-flat minor. These abrupt and substantial contrasts tighten the tension within the formal structure, propelling the music towards its climax.

The dotted rhythmic pattern re-emerges as the main feature in Variation 5. The melodic contour of the original theme from the theme section is reintroduced in the piano from bar 71-78, albeit in the minor mode. Despite the substantial deviations in this variation, the main melody remains the least altered compared to other variations, and he essence of the original theme is clearly discernible. The piano provides lively accompaniment to the melody, with the clarinet briefly entering with two broken octave fragments to ornament the piano line. Similar to the previous variation, the roles of the clarinet and piano switch during the restatement (bar 79-86). Now, the clarinet assumes the melodic line while the piano continues its skittering accompaniment. The harmonic structure of both phrases remains consistent, beginning with the dominant of E-flat minor and concluding with a clear half cadence, solidifying the tonal center in E-flat minor.

The clarinet drops out again in the second section, leaving the only piano to present musical materials. However, unlike the second parts in previous variations, which elaborated on the materials of those variations, this second section expands upon the “inquiring” closing gesture observed in the theme section, starting from bar 87-90. These closing gestures are supported with syncopated lines, and the tonal area briefly shifts to G-flat major. At bar 90-91, the key abruptly returns to E-flat minor. The piano introduces a distinctive rhythmic pattern made up of twelve descending semiquavers in four groups of three notes (see Example 3.13). The bass line also moves in the same three-note grouping. After this

intriguing pattern, the music returns to materials mirroring the character of the first section, leading to the “inquiring” closing gesture at bar 96-97. The clarinet finally rejoins in these two bars, playing two groups of four descending quavers, which also serve as the leading material to the coda section. It is worth mentioning that at bar 97, this variation concludes with a plagal cadential progression that extends into the coda at bar 98.

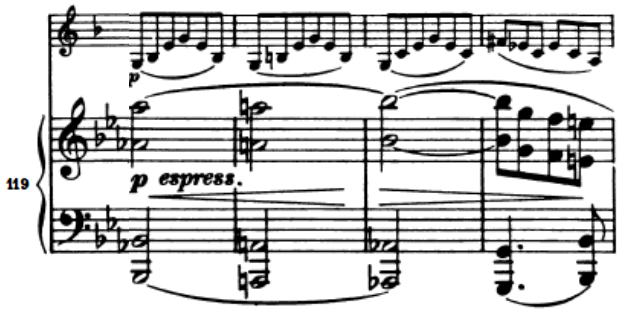


Example 3.13

The coda begins with the final chord of the plagal cadence at bar 98, bringing the tonality back to E-flat major. It unfolds in three distinct parts: the initial statement and restatement of the melodic phrase as the first part, a transitional phrase as the second part, and the closing phrase as the third part. In the first part, the piano continues to elaborate the “inquiring” closing gesture over four bars from bar 98, while the clarinet accompanies with broken chords in triplets. Subsequently, the clarinet introduces dotted rhythmic fragments derived from the main theme in the theme section, followed by two long notes at bars 105-106 and a downward leap of a sixth at bar 107, serving as the conclusion of this phase. The piano, in turn, assumes the role of playing triplet accompaniment. The harmony under this statement of the melody is set on the tonic initially, and later moves to the dominant at bar 107.

The restatement of the melodic phrase begins at bar 108, with its later part being varied. The clarinet now performs the “inquiring” closing gestures from bars 108-111, accompanied by the piano with a more straightforward rhythm. At bar 112, the piano takes on the fragments derived from the main theme, while the clarinet contributes short ascending arpeggiated fragments. The section concludes with a new music material – a four-bar long descending chromatic scale in triplets – at bars 115-118 played by both instrument a third apart, leading the music into the second part, the transitional phrase. The underlying harmony in the restatement is primarily a dominant prolongation, evident in the sustaining B-flat in the bass.

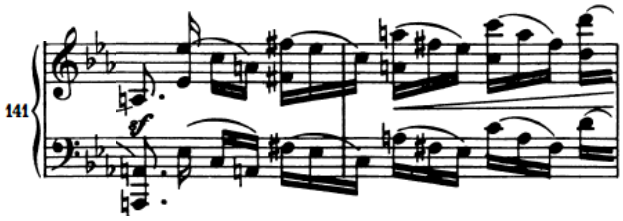
In the transitional phrase (bar 119-135), the piano begins the section with ascending chromatic octaves in the right hand, followed by a concise descending fragment (see Example 3.14). The piano's left hand engages in contrary motion, producing descending chromatic figures with a slight leap at the conclusion. The clarinet complements this with arpeggiated triplets. These patterns persist throughout the transitional phrase, with progressively shorter note values in both instrumental lines. By bar 127, the clarinet transitions to arpeggiated chords in semiquavers, leading to an arpeggiated full-diminished seventh chord in sextuplets. The piano, reinforcing with robust chords in crotchets, arrives at a potent full-diminished seventh chord at bar 130, providing a foundation for the sextuplets in the clarinet. Subsequently, the piano executes a rapid sweeping arpeggio of the same chord, spanning four octaves from the left hand to the right hand. The clarinet repeats its sextuplet diminished arpeggio an octave higher, followed by the piano's repetition of the sweeping figure an octave lower. The transitional phrase concludes with the same diminished chord sustained for two bars, spanning from bar 134-135. Due to the highly chromatic nature of this passage and the presence of dissonant chords, the tonality remains unanchored to any specific key.



Example 3.14

The closing section of the coda starts with a spirited variation of the main theme in the piano at bar 136, omitting the characteristic dotted rhythm. The clarinet joins in at bar 138, echoing the same melodic variation as a canon to the piano right hand. At bar 141, the piano introduces a fragment of a broken diminished chord in four groups of three-semiquaver patterns, resembling the pattern in bar 90 of variation 5 (see Example 3.15). This segment leads to the re-emergence of the "inquiring" closing gesture in the clarinet at bar 143, executed in a joyous manner. The gesture repeats in the following bar, and the clarinet proceeds to play an arpeggiated diminished chord over the next two bars. Simultaneously, the

piano supports the clarinet with highly animated octaves in both hands, with the right hand a half-beat behind the left hand throughout these four bars. Subsequently, the clarinet performs a phrase consisting of three rising leaps of a sixth from bar 148-150, with each leap spanning one bar. The piano complements the clarinet with broken octaves in the left hand and full chords in the right hand. The two instruments converge at bar 151, culminating in four final chords on E-flat major.



Example 3.15

The harmonic progression in the closing phrase serves to connect the passing diminished chord from the transitional phrase and guide the music back to the home key of E-flat major. A feature of this movement is the final cadence at bar 150-151 concludes with a plagal cadence, deviating from the standard perfect authentic cadence in conventional sonata form.

3.1.2 Performance Approaches

Introduction

The preceding discussion on Brahms's compositional approach and style underscores the composer's keen focus on the musical elements rooted in the German tradition. While Brahms also introduced musical innovations, which will be further explored in the upcoming chapter, it is essential to acknowledge that these innovations were built upon traditional compositional principles. Consequently, despite sometimes being characterized as both a traditionalist and a modernist, this paper places emphasis on Brahms's traditionality.

The ensuing discussion will delve into the performance approach of the piece with this premise in mind, highlighting ways to produce a delicate romantic sonority rather than dramatic dynamic contrast and tempo alteration commonly seen in the music of the same period. However, this is not to say that strong dynamic contrast and rubato is forbidden in this piece. In fact, subtle rubato and dynamic changes are allowed to make the music flow more smoothly, emphasizing the horizontal movement of the melody. It is essential to point out

that the degree of rubato and dynamic changes in all Brahms pieces is relatively less pronounced compared to the works of his contemporaries, such as Liszt and Mahler.

First Movement (Sonata Form)

The primary theme in the exposition within the initial eight bars manifests as sinuous and lyrical, commencing with a pianissimo dynamic. The "fluent rises and dips" in the melody suit the clarinet well.[110] The clarinet incorporates a technique termed "soft staccato" to enhance the interpretative nuances at the onset of the sound production.[111] This technique involves the upper part of the tongue engaging the reed in a lick-like motion, mitigating the refraction issues arising from the heightened amplitude of traditional staccato, thereby cultivating a more subdued auditory quality.[112]

The piano segment assumes a pivotal role as it complements and reinforces the lyrical clarinet melody. The subdued sonority in the lower register necessitates a profound depression of the keys to establish ample stability during accented measures. Noteworthy is the arrangement of the four rising quaver figures within bars 3-4. There exists no imperative to construe each figure with a crescendo; rather, a crescendo executed solely on the four bass notes suffices. It is important to observe the trajectory of the bass line: E-flat-F-G-A-flat-B-flat-C. The ascending bass line imparts a distinctive temperament to the thematic material.

Beyond accentuating the bass tones, the prescribed timbral quality is characterized by haziness, necessitating a gentle key touch. Coordination between the clarinet's breath control and melody execution is paramount. Both performers are advised to synchronize their breathing patterns with the accented and unaccented measures in accordance with the phrasing direction.

In the bass segment initiating at bar 11, there is a delicate delineation of the principal theme. The eight-bar phrases, starting at bar 11, serve as both a responsive and developmental extension of the piano part in relation to the primary theme played by the clarinet. In

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[110] Mason, D. G. (1933). The Chamber Music of Brahms. In *The Musical Times* (Vol. 74, Issue 1085, pp. 609–609). Novello & Company, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.2307/918787

[111] Lawson, *Brahms Clarinet Quintet*. pp. 92-93

[112] *Ibid.*

underscoring the pivotal role of the piano, strategic emphasis is placed on the forceful figures within the span of bars 15-21. This intentional concentration of force ensures that the thematic development and variations unfold in a symmetrical and methodical fashion. Such structural coherence is manifest in the piano part, where the weightiness of execution is to be accentuated with a marked sense of excitement.

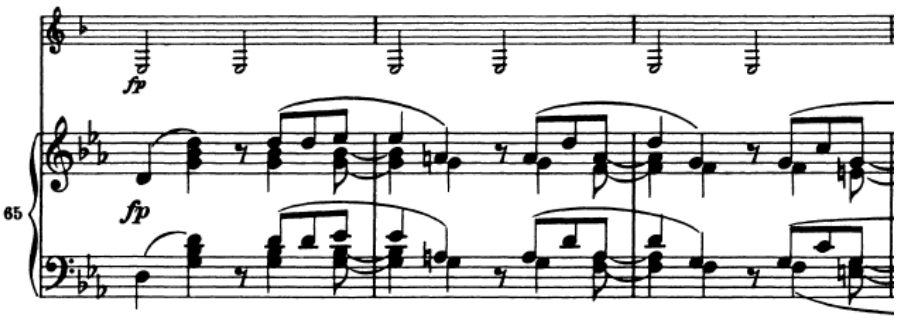
In bars 22-36, a preference for very light key touches is recommended. This nuanced approach serves as a prelude to an impending contrast within the composition. The prevailing syncopated rhythmic motif adopts a continuous variation from the thematic material. The use of pedals and keys must ensure that pauses are of sufficient duration to reveal the clarinet on the accented beat. As the music progresses into bars 34-39, the syncopated rhythmic pattern in the piano right hand is accompanied by the un-syncopated left-hand chords to avoid excessive heaviness in execution. In bar 34, the marking of “dolce” calls for a soft and sweet rendition. It is crucial, however, to steer clear of any static impression, ensuring that the inherent strength of the musical expansion is perceptible. This dynamic contrast becomes paramount as it builds towards the climax of the secondary section.

From bar 40 onward, the undulating triplets evoke the imagery of a flowing current of water. A steadfast commitment to the pianissimo dynamics is paramount, eschewing any inclination towards violent sounds to effectively craft the desired atmospheric ambiance. As the composition progresses into bar 44, the clarinet triplet figures are imitated by the piano left hand. The dynamic indication of forte pertains to the piano right-hand, highlighting its role as the Hauptstimme until bar 51. In the soft accompaniment figurations found in bars 52-53, a heightened sensitivity to natural pitch undulations is advised, while refraining from introducing dynamic changes. Moving into bars 54-55, it is important to maintain complete consistency in both breath control and dynamics, aligning seamlessly with the clarinet part to forge a unified and cohesive musical expression.

In bars 56-59, the beginning of the development section, the bass part in the left hand of the piano, represented by the sequential notes E-F-G-A, encapsulates a hidden line within the motif. As an integral component of the main thematic material, this line demands a connected and delicately rendered performance. It should be expressed softly and gently, ensuring that its presence is subtle yet discernible in the overall musical texture. Moving into bar 60-62,

\the chords in the right-hand part assume a pivotal role as the primary structural elements of the music. Their dynamics, therefore, serve as the cornerstone of the musical expression. It is vital to infuse these chords with sonorous power throughout.[113]

Commencing from bar 65, the introduction of the secondary melody introduces a distinctive feature in the form of a syncopated motif. It is crucial to note that while this motif is present, emphasis should not be placed on the syncopation. Instead, the focus should be on perceiving the direction of the descending leap at the end of the syncopated motif. This entails an awareness of the musical narrative's flow, prompting a responsive adjustment of pedals. It is also important to adhere meticulously to the eighth-note pauses, ensuring a precise and observant execution that contributes to the overall rhythmic integrity of the passage. (Example 3.21)



Example 3.21

In bars 73-77, it is necessary to execute the triplets with exceptional evenness, allowing them to undulate in accordance with the melodic direction. However, it is essential to avoid perceptible divisions into distinct groups of three notes. Given that the piano and clarinet breaths do not synchronize in this passage, meticulous coordination is paramount. Maintaining a clear sense of hierarchy between the instruments is necessary to ensure a harmonious and unified musical presentation.

Moving to bars 79 and 87, a staccato articulation is prescribed. It is crucial to adhere to this directive by playing with a consistent breath, ensuring that the staccato notes are not

[113] Dong, L. C. (2010). *Bólāmǔsī "Jiàng E dà diào dì èr dān huáng guǎn zòumíng qǔ" op.120 yīnyuè fēnxī yǔ bǎnběn bǐjiào.* [Music Analysis and Version Comparison of Brahms' "Sonata for Clarinet in E-flat Major, Op. 120, No. 2"]. [Doctoral dissertation] Tianjin Conservatory of Music.

excessively short. Additionally, it is advisable to keep the fingers in contact with the keys during these staccato passages, facilitating control and precision in the execution of the musical phrases. This approach contributes to a well-defined and articulate rendition of the specified sections. In the bars 93 to 102, leading into the recapitulation, the piano part adopts an almost chordal texture. Despite this, it is necessary to interpret and execute the part as a horizontal melodic line, emphasizing a smooth and soft melodic continuity.

The introduction of triplets in the recapitulation enhances the musical composition by infusing it with fluidity and lyricism, thereby elevating the collaborative demands on the two performers. Achieving perfect synchronization in the eighth-note rhythm is imperative to maintain a seamless and cohesive performance. In bars 103-106, particular attention should be given to playing the triplets very quietly, allowing the music to flow uniformly without a perceptible sense of "grouping." It is within this uniformity that the beauty of the free undulation of the melody is revealed. The performers should focus on delicately rendering the triplets to ensure a continuous and graceful musical expression. The subsequent interpretation of the movement aligns with that of the exposition. As the lyricism at the end of bar 154 gradually diminishes, there is a shift in emphasis towards conveying the mental state and atmosphere. This nuanced approach contributes to a heightened sense of depth and emotional resonance in the overall performance.[114]

Second Movement (Scherzo and Trio)

At the beginning of the movement, which is a scherzo, a palpable sense of agitated emotions permeates the musical landscape. The clarinet and piano parts engage in a continuous forward surge within a three-meter framework, almost appearing as if they are vying to surpass each other.[115] The clarinet's execution should be characterized by smoothness and excitement, aligning harmoniously with the emotional currents conveyed by the piano. However, the breathing patterns of the two instruments do not entirely conform to a shared framework. This disparity is particularly apparent in the initial four bars, where both the clarinet and piano melodies feature syncopated elements, a topic that will be explored further in Chapter

[114] Zhang, Z., (2017). *Brahms' "Sonata No. 2 for Clarinet and Piano in E flat major", a study on performance techniques of Op. 120*, Tianjin Conservatory of Music. pp. 15-16.

[115] Lee. *An analysis and comparison of the clarinet and viola versions of the Two sonatas*.

4. This syncopated set up creates rhythmic tension and meter ambiguity between two instrumental lines.

In bars 9-16, while the piano part introduces a significantly richer harmony, it is crucial to prioritize highlighting the horizontal line. This emphasis serves to maintain a connection with the earlier coherence and tunefulness exhibited by the clarinet. The objective is to convey a sense that both performers are collaboratively striving to express a shared mood, showcasing a unified musical expression despite the inherent differences in their respective expressions. Moving to bars 20-26, a specific emphasis is suggested for the piano, directing attention to the clash of the major seconds within the middle voices. This highlighting of dissonance contributes to the expressive quality of the music during this section. As the theme resurfaces at bar 37, the performance approach for this recurrence should mirror that of its initial presentation at the beginning of the movement. The same interpretative elements, such as the agitated emotions, dynamic interplay between clarinet and piano, and the smooth and exciting execution of the clarinet part, should be revisited.[116]

The trio section is crafted in a style reminiscent of a German chorale, infused with the ambiance of classicism. The clarinet part features extensive phrases characterized by prolonged durations and multiple lines, requiring a performance approach that is both consistent and calm, while also soft and cantabile. For the piano part, when executing the finger work on the keys, it is essential to prioritize continuity, striving for tunefulness and avoiding excessive force or pounding. Despite the apparent isolation of long notes, it is crucial to recognize that none of the notes in this section stand alone; rather, their connections should be diligently reflected in the performance. While the structural phrases possess a symmetrical organization and feature small connecting lines as marked in the score, a subtle use of rubato is permissible in the timing. The goal is to maintain a continuous flow, eliminating any noticeable breaks between connecting lines. With a single breath, it is recommended to connect at least four bars, thereby forming extended phrases that contribute to the creation of a seamless and expressive musical narrative.

[116] Aleksander, E. R. (2008). *Gustav Jenner's Clarinet Sonata in G major, opus 5: An analysis and performance guide with stylistic comparison to the Clarinet Sonatas, opus 120 of his teacher, Johannes Brahms*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

In the third section of the movement, which constitutes an exact repetition of the scherzo, there is room for a slightly more liberated emotional expression. During the execution of staccato notes in the piano part from bar 217, it is crucial for the fingers not to pull away abruptly from the keys. This technique ensures a controlled and precise articulation of the staccato passages. The cadence at the end can be slightly extended, allowing for a deliberate and nuanced conclusion. The clarinet should synchronize the release of its long-held notes with the corresponding piano chords to maintain a cohesive and well-coordinated finale.

Third Movement (Theme and Variation)

The theme part features a pick-up, requiring the performer to accentuate the strong beat of the first measure. As the clarinet takes on the theme from the initial eight bars, a dynamic interpretation can be employed, incorporating a crescendo during upward melodic movements and a diminuendo in downward passages. This nuanced approach enhances the smoothness of the music, effectively conveying the fullness and richness inherent in the theme.[117] The melody of the theme in this passage is characterized by its lyrical and melodic qualities rather than profound depth. Given the relatively wide range of the piano, it is advisable to avoid overly dense playing to maintain a smooth and cantabile quality. When the melody transitions to higher registers, aim for a warm, harmonious, and bright timbre, emphasizing the clarity of the upper parts while ensuring that the lower part of the left hand remains appropriately subdued to preserve the overall balance.

In the first variation, a particular emphasis must be placed on the rhythm of the clarinet, as it serves as the fulcrum around which the rhythm of the piano part revolves. Although the piano part assumes its own independent and melodic character, it is crucial to view it as intertwined with the clarinet, creating a harmonious interplay rather than a forceful imposition of one over the other. Despite their independence, the two parts are interlocked, and performers should strive to sense this delicate balance. This variation is characterized by its lightness and transparency, distinguishing it from the subsequent variations.

In the second variation, there is an exchange of motifs between the clarinet and piano, necessitating a keen sense of interaction from the performers. The musical dialogue between

[117] Zhang. *Brahms' "Sonata No. 2 for Clarinet and Piano in E flat major", a study on performance techniques of Op. 120.*

the two parts should be felt and articulated with precision. The sextuplets in the piano's right hand require equal dynamics, ensuring a soft and even touch on the keys. The left hand's not-so-short staccato adds a rocking quality to the variation. In the first four bars (bar 30-33), the melody in the clarinet serves as a cue for the piano part. Performers should listen attentively to ensure a synchronized and cohesive rendition. As the varied triplets in the piano emerge, they must not overshadow the melody in the clarinet.

In the third variation, the demi-semiquaver motifs pass between the two instruments. It is essential that there are no pauses throughout this variation, emphasizing the continuous connection between the beginning and end of each motif. Achieving a very soft and flexible sound is paramount to convey the intended aesthetic impression, allowing the motifs to gracefully unfold. The piano's left hand, operating in a lower range, should be played at half volume to preserve the elegance of the music. Exceptions to this guideline can be made when a forte-piano (fp) marking is encountered, at which point the dynamics can be appropriately heightened for expressive emphasis.

The fourth variation introduces two intriguing features. Firstly, the clarinet sustains longer phrases in this variation, with the longest breath holding lasting for nine measures. Secondly, the volume is notably softer compared to other variations. In the right-hand part of the piano, the harmonies serve more to describe mood and atmosphere than to assertively delineate melodic content. It is essential to exercise careful control over the volume, allowing it to ebb and flow in response to the undulation and direction of the chords. Any crescendo should be executed within the softest dynamic range, maintaining the overall subdued quality specified for this variation.

In the fifth variation, a notable shift occurs as the tempo accelerates to Allegro, the time signature changes to 2/4, and the overall character becomes more agitated. Performers are required to play with strength and decisiveness. In the clarinet part, a powerful and full breath is essential before executing an explosion in sound. However, this explosion must be controlled, especially considering that the note E3 lies outside the best range for the clarinet. Excessive force can compromise the beauty of the timbre and negatively impact the overall musical expression. In contrast, the piano part, while complementing the clarinet's harmony in the right hand, is relatively more straightforward. It commences with a dynamic marking

of forte, and the emphasis should be placed on the melody. Performers should highlight the sound by applying force with the fingertips, ensuring clarity and projection.[118]

The coda introduces a strong dramatic contrast, where feelings of restlessness are concealed within moments of silence. The clarinet enters with triplets serving as accompaniment for from bar 98-101. During this segment, a crescendo lasting for four bars can be effectively applied, leading into the thematic materials that follow. When playing, it is essential to emphasize the contrast between the swaying dotted rhythm and the steady 2/4 rhythm, which can evoke a subtle feeling of anxiety. Simultaneously, in the piano part, attention should be devoted to emphasizing the changing sonority between chords. This dynamic shift contributes to the overall intensity and mood of the coda. As the music progresses, reaching the end of bar 137, there should be a shift to a more majestic and decisive interpretation. The power of the melody at this juncture serves to bring the piece to a climactic conclusion, amplifying the emotional impact of the concluding moments of the composition.[119]

3.1.3 Collaboration between Instruments

In Brahms' chamber music, particularly evident in the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano in E-flat Major No. 2, Op. 120, the piano plays a role that goes beyond mere accompaniment. Brahms often imbues the piano part with depth and refinement, allowing it to present thematic material and contribute significantly to the harmonic layer of the composition. This elevated role of the piano, filled with complex chords and musical elements, is intentional on the part of the composer. It results in a balanced interplay between the piano and the clarinet, where both instruments hold equal importance.

The clarinet part in this sonata has a poetic character that resemble a fine singing voice in a soprano range. Carl Baermann, a clarinetist in Brahms's era, noted that "the finer the clarinet tone is, the more poetic the effect will be."[120] He also describes that the clarinet "is so

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[118] Finson, J. W. (1984). Performing practice in the late nineteenth century, with special reference to the music of Brahms. *The Musical Quarterly*, 70(4), 465.

[119] Zeng, J. J. (2011). *Bólāmǔsī jiàng E dà diào dì èr dān huáng guǎn yǔ gāngqín zòumíng qǔ yánjiū* [A study of Brahms' Sonata for Clarinet in E-flat Major, Op. 120]. Central Conservatory of Music.

[120] Baermann, C. (1864-1875). Vollständige Clarinet-Schule. Offenbach. Quoted by Lawson, C. (1998). Brahms: Clarinet Quintet. Cambridge University Press, 14-15.

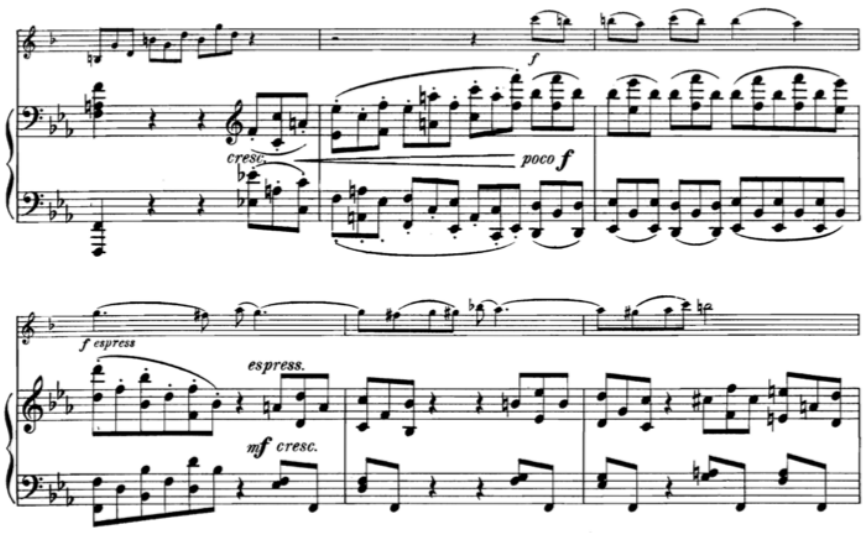
expressive and flexible that it can perform all the notes lightly and smoothly … when it resembles a superlatively fine and full soprano voice".[121] The piano part is also exceptionally colorful and lively, sharing the spotlight with the clarinet. The complex chords and thematic contributions from the piano ensure that it is not relegated to a mere supporting role. Instead, the two instruments complement each other, creating a symbiotic relationship in the overall musical fabric. While the clarinet boasts beautiful color and melodic possibilities, it operates within a limited register and is a monophonic instrument. The expansive range of the piano effectively compensates for the clarinet's limitations.

The two instruments take on different roles as the music progresses. The collaboration between the two instruments showcases Brahms' craftsmanship, highlighting the strengths of each instrument and achieving a balance in the sonata. The following content will provide an overview of how the two instruments interact, showcasing the intricacies of their collaboration and the musical synergy achieved in this work.

The Supporting Role

Throughout the Sonata, the piano part frequently functions as a robust support for the clarinet melody. The below excerpt from the first movement (Example 3.31) serves as an illustration of this conceptualization, demonstrating the effect of the interplay between the clarinet and piano in shaping the expressive quality of the composition. The clarinet line is underpinned by an accompaniment that, with its rhythmic impetus, imparts a distinctive character to the melody when compared to a solo rendition. If performed solo, the clarinet line might exhibit delicacy and subtlety; however, within the duet framework, the music acquires a heightened sense of drama.

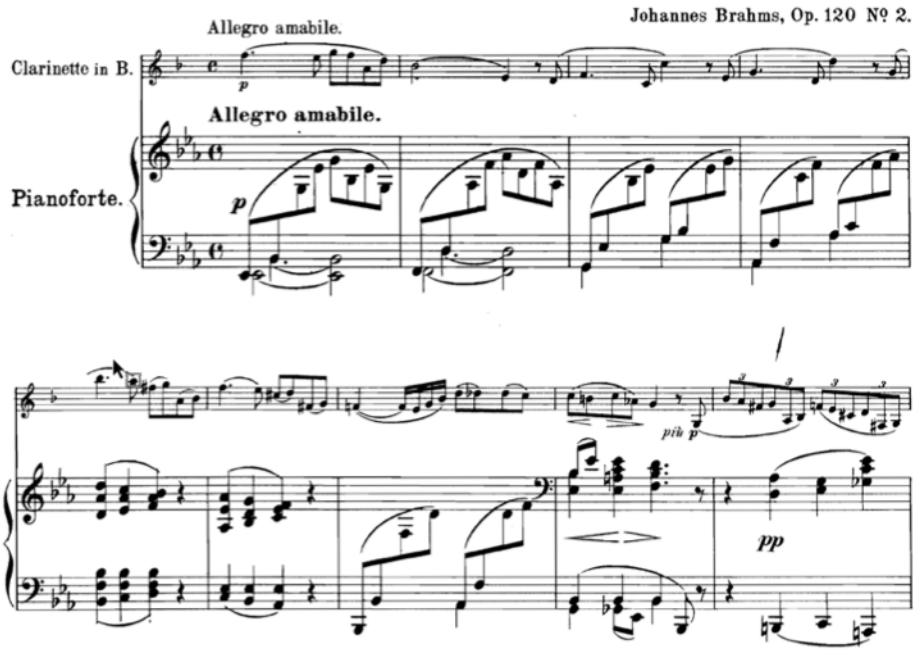
[121] Ibid. 14-15



Example 3.31

Resonating and Complementing Each Other

In certain part in the piece, the two instruments play contrasting musical patterns to enhance the rhythmic complexity and richness of the music. These contrasting figures sometimes works together so well that they resonate to enrich the musical expressiveness. Example 3.32, provided below, serves as an illustrative demonstration of this concept. In this instance, the clarinet is characterized by lyrical melodic phrases, smoothly transitioning from one sound to the next. In contrast, the piano part assumes a typical alberti bass but in romantic style, which its vivid activities inject energy into the piece despite the dynamic markings. Notably, the two instruments present entirely different rhythmic patterns. The clarinet, adopting a cantilena-like approach, mirrors the irregular rhythmic nature of vocal textures. Conversely, the piano maintains an even rhythmic execution, further contributing to the nuanced interplay between the two instruments.

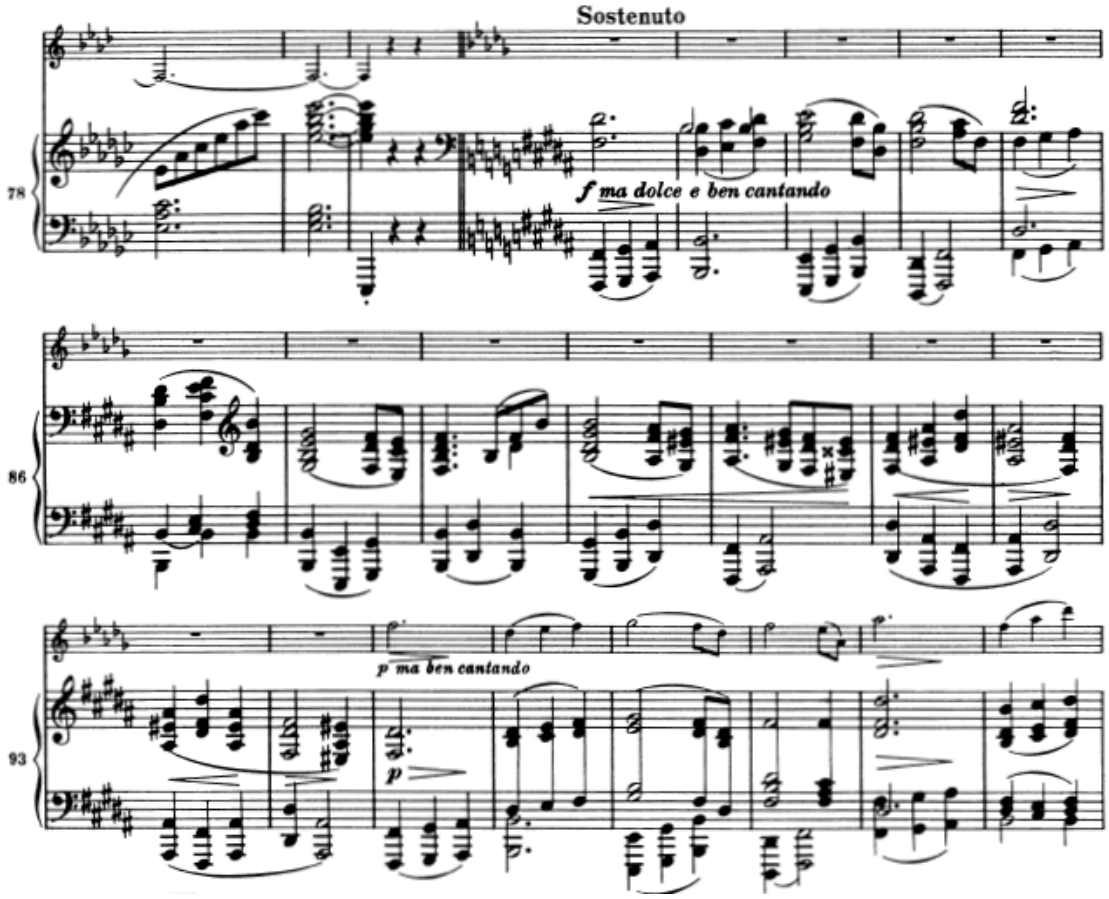


Example 3.32

Piano Taking the Solo Role

When performing chamber music, an understanding of the interplay between individual parts is paramount. The central objective extends beyond showcasing individual prowess; instead, it revolves around presenting the audience with an optimal rendition of the piece at hand. In this collaborative setting, musicians are not engaged in a competition but rather operate as integral members of the same team. The synergy and cohesion achieved through a shared understanding of each other's parts contribute to the collective goal of delivering a compelling and harmonious musical performance.

In this sonata, Brahms frequently assigns a soloistic role to the piano. The composition reflects an intentional design where the piano transcends its conventional accompaniment function. Instead, it intermittently assumes a leading role, introducing new musical motifs and materials. The condition is especially evident in the Trio section in the second movement, where the piano serves to introduce new thematic materials (see Example 3.33). Consequently, the significance of both the piano and the clarinet is equitable. It is crucial for performers to recognize that neither instrument should overshadow the other; rather, they should provide each other with the necessary space to showcase their strengths at opportune moments.



Example 3.33

Dynamics Balance and Tempo Control

The key to a successful performance lies in the nuanced control of dynamics and tempo, particularly in relation to fellow performers. While the Romantic period emphasized showcasing individual artistry, the essence of ensemble music lies in the ability to operate cohesively within a group, adapting to its collective requirements. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully select the appropriate tempo for each moment in a piece and establish a calibrated understanding of the relative dynamics among musicians before delving into rehearsals.

Choosing the right tempo ensures that the musical expression aligns with the intended character of each section, fostering a cohesive ensemble interpretation. Similarly, understanding and harmonizing the dynamics levels among musicians is crucial, recognizing that the forte of one performer may differ significantly from that of another. This collaborative approach not only ensures a unified performance but also allows for the individuality of each musician to shine within the context of the ensemble.

3.2. Sunshine Over Tashkurgan

3.2.1 Structural Analysis

"Sunshine over Tashkurgan" is characterized by robust expressive character. The interweaving of melodies with varied emotional tones imparts a sense of free and variable structural form similar to a rhapsody. Despite the fluidity in its expression, the composer adhered rigorously to the foundational source material during the creative process. This adherence ensures a composition that is both rich in contrasts and structurally coherent, striking a balance between emotive freedom and a well-defined structural framework.[122]

"Sunshine over Tashkurgan" draws its inspiration from the melody and musical elements found in the folk song "Beautiful Tashkurgan" and the solo flute piece "Spring in Pamir." This composition masterfully rearranges and adapts the unique dance rhythm and unmistakable ethnic minority melody present in these sources. The work offers a vibrant portrayal of the joyful and celebratory life of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, expressing their happiness through singing and dancing following the establishment of "New China". The piece not only pays homage to the rich cultural heritage of the region but also infuses it with a fresh and celebratory energy, reflecting the optimism and vitality of the community it represents.

This piece consists of two main sections: "Sing with All Your Heart" and "Dance with Fervor". The general formal structure is shown in the following table:[123]

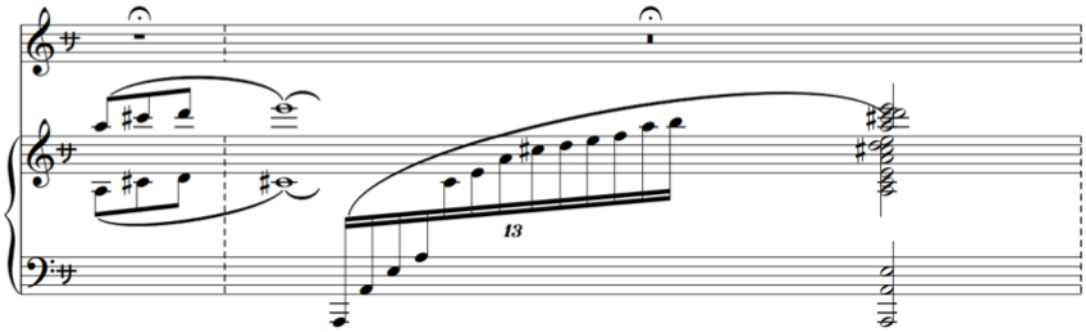
Section	Sub-section	Bars	Length	Tonality
Section 1 "Sing with All Your Heart" (Three-part form)	Prologue	1-10	10	Key of E Jiao
	‖: A :‖	11-46	36	Key of E Jiao
	B	47-62	16	Key of E Jiao
	A'	63-72	10	Key of E Jaio

[122] Tan, Y., Gou, Y., Xu, B. (2010). Fusion of Tajik music and East and West - on the example of the erhu piece "Sunshine over Tashkurgan", *Music Exploration,* 01, pp. 37-38.
[123] Liang, J. (2008). "Yangguang Zhaoyaozhe Tashikuergan" de yinyue jiegou yu tese [The Music Structure and Characteristics of "Sunshine over Tashkurgan"]. *Putian Xueyuan Xuebao*, 2008(06), pp.81-83.

Cadenza		73-85	13	Unclear
Section 2 “Dance with Fervor” (Three-part form)	A	86-104	19	Key of D Jiao - A Jiao
	B	105-120	16	Key of D Yu - G Yu
	‖: C+D :‖	121-224	104	Key of D Jiao
Coda		225-306	82	Key of D Yu

Table 3.4

The piece is in a binary form with a cadenza in the middle and a coda at the end. Both sections are in three-part form as listed in the above table. The first section of the piece begins with a prologue. It is characterized by a melodic flair, marked by a sense of panache and freedom. The composer has chosen to notate this section with dashed bar lines rather than solid ones, a choice that accentuates the freedom and rubato inherent in the music. The prologue aims to immerse the listener in the enigmatic landscapes of Western China, evoking the imagery of snow-capped mountain peaks. The melody itself is an adaptation from the prologue of the flute piece “Spring in the Pamir.” When performed on the piano, the expansive register employed underscores the vastness and grandeur of the Pamir mountains. This approach is exemplified in Example 3.34, where the piano’s rendition captures the majestic and expansive quality of the Pamir mountainous scenery. (See Example 3.1)



Example 3.34

The prologue commences with a distinctive four-note series—A-C#-D-E, expressed in solfege as *la-do#-re-mi*—which, in describing Chinese folk tunes, is more effectively conveyed through the solfege system than traditional Western letter names. This series

represents a characteristic element drawn from Tajik folk music. As the composition progresses, the composer refines and integrates this motif, establishing an organic unity across the entire piece through continuous variations. In subsequent prologue, the music unfolds with free-running notes and arpeggios, building towards the main melody in the clarinet at bar 11.

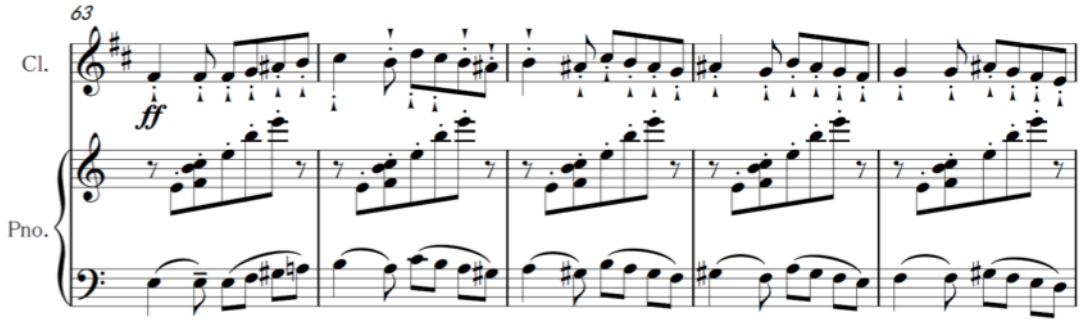
The main melody, constituting the first part of the three-part form, is set in 7/8 and is drawn from the folk song "Beautiful Tashkurgan." Executed with a Tajik musical style, the clarinet takes the lead in the high registers. This melody, based on a four-note series (la-do#-re-mi) as previously mentioned, incorporates a "ti-flat" between the first and second notes, resulting in a minor second and a subsequent augmented second in the series (la-ti-flat-do#-re-mi). Following the initial presentation of the melody, the clarinet revisits it in a lower register at bar 29, thereby establishing a substantial thematic passage. This repetition contributes to the thematic development and reinforces the prominence of the main melody within the composition.

The subsequent sub-section, commencing at bar 47, introduces new materials organized into two distinct phrases: bars 47-54 and bars 54-62. The second phrase closely mimics the structure of the first. Both instruments extend their melodic range, covering a broader register. The tempo of the music accelerates, and the emotional tone becomes more enthusiastic, imbuing the composition with a heightened sense of energy and fervor. This change in musical elements contributes to the overall dynamic development and variety within the piece.

In the final subsection spanning bars 63 to 72, there is a recapitulation of the main melodic idea, albeit with new articulations. The clarinet takes charge of the melody, executing it with a robust marcato technique that emulates the timbre of the Dombra instrument.[124] (See

[124] The dombira, alternatively referred to as the two-stringed qin, stands as a traditional plucked string instrument originating from Central Asia, particularly esteemed among the Kazakh communities dwelling across regions encompassing Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China's Xinjiang province. Its design typically features a slender neck and two distinct shapes for the soundbox: either an oval resembling a "ladle" or a flat structure. Constructed primarily from materials such as pine or mulberry wood, the instrument traditionally integrated the neck and fingerboard into a single component, often carved from a singular piece of wood. Perforations adorn the soundboard, while the dombira boasts two strings crafted from sheep gut. For more information, please see: "Revitalising the Tambura." The Express Tribune. (2022, March 25). Retrieved 2023, January 22, from https://tribune.com.pk/story/2349636/revitalising-the-tambura.

Example 3.35) Simultaneously, the piano's baseline undertakes the responsibility of playing the melody, while the right hand contributes accompaniment through ascending arpeggios. The first section ends with a full E major chord. The fermata after the chord is a clear sectional marker.



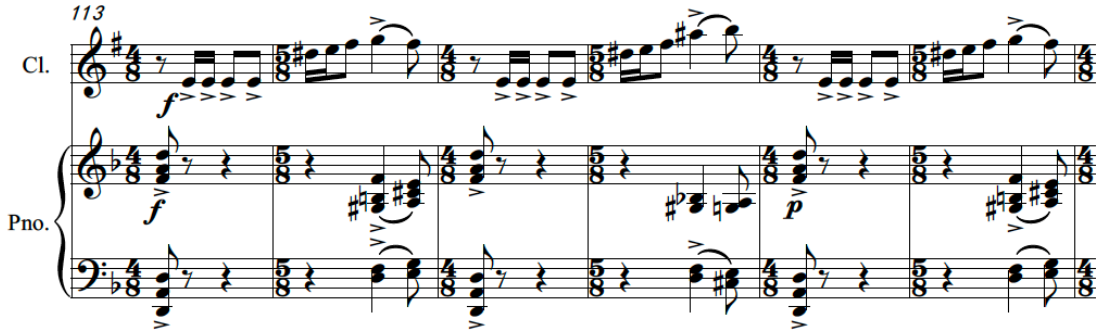
Example 3.35

Following the fermata, the composition introduces a clarinet solo cadenza that features material from the prologue. This cadenza, characterized by its virtuosic nature, serves a dual purpose: showcasing the skill of the performer while conveying a high degree of expressiveness. Simultaneously, the cadenza acts as a transition from the first section to the second.[125] The upcoming movement is energetic, joyful, and dance-like, suggesting a shift in mood and tempo.

The second section is also in a three-part form. The first sub-part initiates at bar 86 with a brief piano introduction lasting for two measures. Characterized by an exceptionally brisk tempo, the music exudes a vivid and dynamic quality. The main theme makes its entrance at bar 88, drawing inspiration from the flute melody "Spring in Pamir." This adaptation involves alterations in both musical structure and expressive techniques, aimed at maximizing the clarinet's playing capabilities and acoustic potential. The main theme unfolds over eight measures, then followed by a subsequent repetition featuring slight variations in another key. A characteristic of folk music, the meters exhibit a fair degree of irregularity, frequently transitioning between 7/8, 5/8, 4/8, and 3/8, contributing to the lively and unpredictable rhythmic character of the section.[126]

[125] Zhang, X. F. (2006). Duì yú xiǎotíqín dúzòu qǔ "Yángguāng zhàoyào zài Tǎshíkùěrgān" de yīnyuè fēnxī [Music Analysis of the Violin Solo "Sunshine over Tashkurgan"]. *Shāndōng Jiàoyù Xuéyuàn Xuébào*, 2006(02), 127-128.
[126] Church, M. (2015). *The Other Classical Musics: Fifteen Great Traditions* (NED-New edition). Boydell & Brewer. pp. 340-360

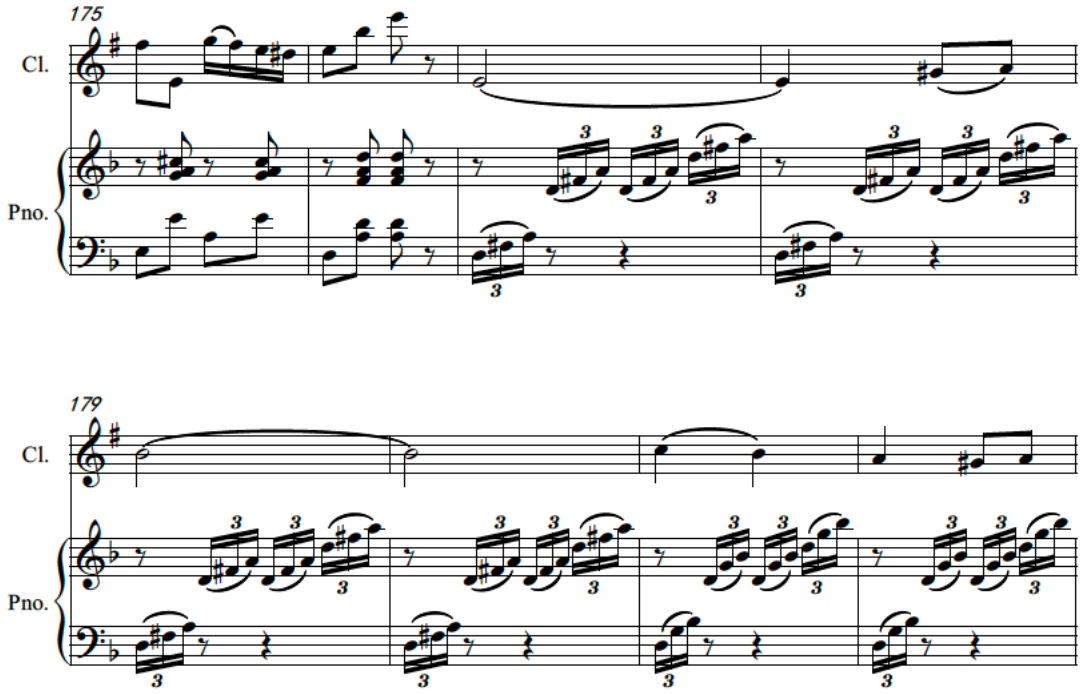
The second sub-part, spanning bars 105 to 120, introduces fresh materials that exhibit notable distinctions from those in the preceding subsection. While maintaining a similar mood and dance-like character, the articulations, groupings, and rhythmic patterns diverge significantly. A conspicuous difference is the alteration of meters in a substantial portion of this sub-section, transitioning between 5/8, 4/8, and 3/8. (See Example 3.36). The previously featured meter of 7/8 is no longer prominent in this section. This variation in meter introducing new rhythmic complexities and further enriching the overall texture of the piece.



Example 3.36

The third sub-part, encompassing bars 121 to 224, exhibits an intriguing structure. It comprises two smaller sub-sections (C and D, as denoted in table 12.1) that irregularly repeat. Subsection C begins with a recurring four-bar phrase, alternating systematically between 4/8 and 7/8 meters. It is then followed by a substantial passage in 2/4 (bars 125-140) featuring new melodic material and a slower tempo. Following Subsection C immediately, Subsection D (bars 141-156) offers a stark contrast. In this segment, the clarinet introduces sustained long notes in a high register, assuming the role of a lyrical melody. The piano's left-hand predominantly adopts a chordal approach, while the right hand executes fast-running notes, contributing to the overall dance-like character of the piece.

During the repetition of Subsections C and D in the passage from bars 157 to 192, Subsection C remains relatively unchanged. In contrast, Subsection D undergoes noticeable modifications. The clarinet, while retaining the lyrical melody, shifts to a lower register, introducing variations in the specific notes played. Simultaneously, the piano part undergoes a change, transitioning to arpeggiated sextuplets instead of the fast-running notes present in the preceding section (see Example 3.37).



Example 3.37

A particularly intriguing aspect of the structure in this third sub-section is the repetition of the D part after the reiteration at bar 193. However, in this instance, the repetition occurs exclusively in the piano. The piano's right hand now assumes the role of playing the lyrical clarinet melody with full chord embellishment, while the left hand provides accompaniment through broken chords. As the passage unfolds, triplets and sextuplets are reintroduced into the music starting at bar 201. This progression leads to a gradual acceleration in tempo, evolving into a virtuosic passage that serves akin to a cadenza for the piano. This virtuosic development ultimately culminates in the climax at the coda at bar 225.

The coda serves as an intensely fast-paced passage, injecting heightened energy into the climax. This section introduces new musical materials for both the clarinet and piano. The clarinet line demands virtuosic techniques, featuring substantial passages with significant leaps and another segment with rapid, continuous running notes (bars 267-301), leaving minimal room for breath. In contrast, the piano line is relatively less virtuosic, primarily providing accompaniment with broken octaves and occasional chords. The culmination of the coda is marked by a dramatic glissando in the clarinet at bar 304, followed by a powerful and

resolute D major chord in the final bar. This dramatic conclusion solidifies the energetic and climactic resolution of the composition.

3.2.2 Performance Approach

The annotations at the commencement of the musical score, indicating "elegant and proud," underscore the expressive intention for the performance. In Western music, the clarinet is revered for its distinctive singing qualities. The instrument is capable of producing a broad and bright sound, and it also exhibits delicacy and softness when required.

The composition appears to be crafted with the intention of highlighting the virtuosic capabilities of the clarinetist. The incorporation of various advanced playing techniques, including prechorus, frullato, portamento, and double staccato, elevates the level of difficulty in performing this piece. Consequently, the clarinetist should approach the performance with meticulous attention to preserving the tunefulness of the melody, adhering to the rhythmic nuances within the 7/8 meter, utilizing the staccato playing technique, and showcasing adept breath control, particularly during the execution of long notes which may require circular breathing. The demanding strings of sixteenth notes towards the conclusion necessitate exceptional breath control to ensure their seamless and well-executed delivery.[127]

Examining the piano part, the initial segment of the prologue conjures the imagery of a vast steppe. The rhythm introduces elements of rubato, and the piano, through rising or falling arpeggios and sustained chords across various registers, articulates the main melodic contour. Consequently, it becomes crucial to emphasize the contrast between the extended, sustained chords and the intricate rhetorical figures, ensuring a consistent and smooth delivery. Additionally, it is imperative to convey the rubato character, capturing the essence of the expansive steppe and the warm rays of the sun. These elements are intrinsic to the music from the Xinjiang region and contribute significantly to the overall mood.

Following the prologue, the composition transitions into the first section, titled "Sing with All Your Heart," characterized by a lyrical melody. The initial two bars of the piano introduction

[127] Wang, X. Z. (2018). Xīyáng guǎn yuè dān huáng guǎn de "Zhōngguó huà" yǔ "Zhōngguó huà"—xī dān huáng guǎn yìshù mínzúhuà jìnchéng [The "Chinese Characteristics" and "Sinicization" of Western Clarinet Music: An Analysis of the Ethnicization Process of Clarinet Art]. *Yīnyuè Chuàngzuò*, 2018(04), 161.

demand a solid and clear execution, accurately capturing the rhythm and setting the stage for the clarinet's entrance. Throughout this section, the piano's accompaniment predominantly consists of broken chords. Maintaining a fluid and continuous broken chordal texture is essential. Notably, the meter of 7/8 imparts an exotic feeling to the music, contributing to the overall experience for listeners. Achieving a consistent tempo with the clarinet part is paramount, necessitating collaborative efforts from both performers to ensure accurate measures and rhythm.

As the clarinet assumes the melody, the piano texture undergoes a slight transformation from simple broken chords to a blend of arpeggios of varying lengths, accompanied by an increase in tempo. In addition to attending to the timbre of these diverse textures, it is crucial to recognize that the overall impression should be warm, pleasant, smooth, and relaxed. These qualities should be reflected in the musical lines. Upon reaching bar 63, where the clarinet mimics the Dombra, the piano right-hand part adopts a pizzicato-like timbre akin to the sound of the Dombra. Key touches should be brief, and careful attention must be given to the timbre and tunefulness of the main melody in the low register, necessitating distinct approaches for the left and right hand.

The subsequent clarinet cadenza should be performed with rubato, as indicated by the dashed bar lines. The piano part is introduced only in the final three and a half measures, with the tremolo setting the stage for the entry into the second section, "Dance with Fervor."[128]

The second section adopts a three-part form. In the first and second parts, rapid meter changes prevail. The piano part incorporates broken chords in the left hand intermittently, but predominantly features syncopated block chords. When played, these chords should emphasize their lulling, dance-like character.

In the third part, consisting the alternation between sub-sections C and D as previously discussed, the piano part undergoes a shift from block chords to rapidly moving scales or arpeggios. The lyrical clarinet line in sub-section D provides an opportunity for the pianist to

[128] Wang, Y. F. (1994). Mínzú qìyuè bànzòu jìfǎ kǒujué [Mnemonic for Accompaniment Techniques in Ethnic Instrumental Music]. *Tiānjīn Yīnyuè Xuéyuàn Xuébào*, 1994(02), 11-14.

demonstrate clear and precise touch during the fast-paced passage. The final repetition of sub-section D, a solo piano passage, introduces swift and wide arpeggios in sextuplets in the left hand, while the right hand maintains a clear projection of the melodic contour. Achieving this requires the pianist's precise control to articulate the accompaniment smoothly without overpowering the melody.

The final coda stands out as the most vital part of the entire composition, providing an opportunity for the performer to showcase comprehensive and virtuosic skills. In the piano part, while seemingly repeating previous material, variations in rhythm and key intensify the complexity of the performance.[129] The coda navigates through dense variations using established material. Both the clarinet and piano increase the tempo, yet with the clarinet executing a rapid stream of sixteenth notes in the melody, the accompaniment employs a mix of block chords, broken chords, and arpeggios. Successfully navigating between chords demands technical proficiency and a high level of concentration. Serving as the climax of the entire piece, this section captures the exuberance and zest for life inherent in the Tajik culture.[130]

3.2.3 Collaboration between Instruments

The composition "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" showcases a diverse array of roles for both instruments. While the clarinet predominantly takes on the main leading role, the piano serves as a clear accompaniment, complementing the clarinet's melody. However, it's noteworthy that the piano part exhibits significant technical difficulty in certain sections, demanding virtuosic skills. This complexity lends an impression of the piano assuming a solo virtuosic role at times.

The Textures of the Piano part

The piano, as an accompanying instrument in "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," employs various chordal techniques to complement the clarinet melody, adding depth and expression to

[129] Zhi, X. Y. (2015). *Dānhuáng guǎn Zhōngguó zuòpǐn yǎnzòu jìfǎ* [Performance Techniques of Chinese Works for Clarinet]. Taiyuan, Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe.

[130] Lu, Y. Y. (2008). Tāshān zhī shí kěyǐ gōngyù——bùtóng yuèqì yǎnyì xià de "Yángguāng zhàoyào zhe Tǎshíkùěrgān" [Stones from Other Hills Can Be Used for Grinding Jade—Interpretation of "Sunshine over Tashkurgan" with Different Instruments]. *Yīnyuè*, 2008(12), 138-139.

different affects within the composition. There are three distinct characters of chords utilized in the piece: block chords, broken chords, and semi-broken chords.

Block Chords are played by simultaneously striking all the notes of a chord, block chords convey strength and brevity. They are often employed in energetic situations, particularly in the second section of the piece. Broken Chords involve the spreading out of the notes of a chord within a phrase, broken chords are used in lyrical or joyful moments. They contribute to a sense of fluidity and expression. Semi-Broken Chords combining broken chords in one hand with held chord tones in the other. Semi-broken chords feature a clear rhythm and lively character. They provide a fuller sonority compared to simple broken chords.

These various chordal techniques showcase the piano's versatility in conveying different moods and textures throughout the composition.

Piano Fingerings

The structure of "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" consists of two main sections, each following a three-part form. Throughout the composition, a diverse range of emotions and narratives is expressed through the music. Achieving the desired musical textures demands a subtle approach to finger strength and technique on the piano keys. The pianist must adapt their playing style to convey the various feelings and stories embedded in the piece, showcasing both technical proficiency and interpretative skill.

In the first section of "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," the overall mood is characterized by positive emotions, and the rhythmic melodic contour played by the clarinet takes center stage. The piano's role is predominantly an accompaniment, featuring broken chords and semi-broken chords. The left-hand accompaniment involves arpeggios, while the right hand contributes quasi-arpeggiated chords. To execute the arpeggios effectively, the pianist should maintain a natural wrist position, ensuring active and independent finger movement. Additionally, the right hand should provide a steady and rhythmically clear performance, especially when navigating rapidly across the keys on a keyboard.

In the second part of "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," the mood becomes more passionate and inspired, introducing heightened tension. The piano part undergoes a shift, incorporating

robust block chords. Executing this section effectively requires the pianist to deliver powerful and dynamic transitions between the notes, intensifying the emotional charge of the music.

Dynamic Balance

Maintaining proper dynamics is crucial, especially when the piano serves as the accompanying instrument in a piece. Each instrument possesses unique acoustic characteristics, and different instruments resonate in distinct ways. The clarinet, with its delicate sound and moderate volume, contrasts with the piano, which has the capacity for both extremely soft and loud playing. When performing together, it is essential to carefully adjust the volume of both instruments to achieve a harmonious blend. The piano's expansive dynamic range demands precise control to avoid overshadowing the clarinet, especially during moments when the wind instrument assumes the primary role in carrying the melody.

Mutual Understanding Between Performers About the Piece

Achieving a satisfactory rendition of the piece hinges not only on individual comprehension of the work and technical proficiency in challenging passages but also on effective communication and collaborative learning. Musicians are advised to embark on a comprehensive exploration of the cultural and historical context surrounding the piece, enhancing their ability to interpret the composer's intentions before actively engaging in the collaborative process.

During rehearsals, particular attention should be devoted to refining non-obvious elements of the work, such as passages featuring pauses, transitions between meters and keys, or climactic moments. Given the virtuosic nature of "Sunshine over Tashkurgan," special emphasis should be placed on ensuring that technically demanding sections are not only mastered individually but are also seamlessly executable when performed with accompaniment.

3.3. Comparative Analysis on the Performance Approaches in Both Chinese and Western Clarinet and Piano Compositions

As illustrated in the preceding discussions, the performance techniques required to execute Chinese and Western clarinet and piano compositions diverge significantly due to their

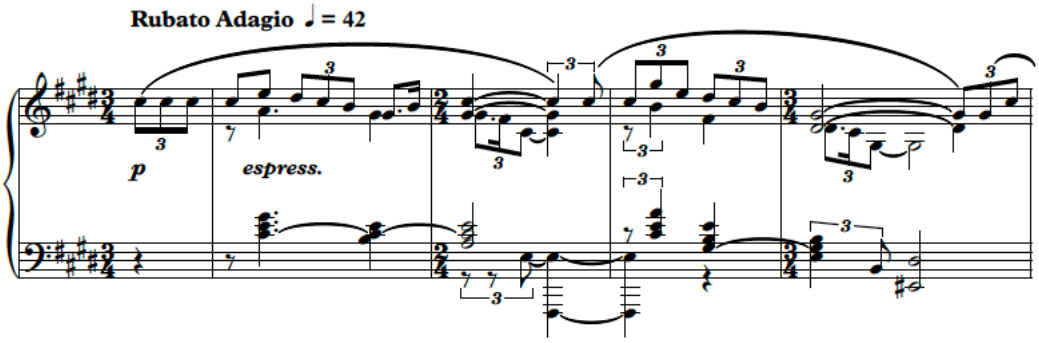
distinct sonic and expressive aims. These disparities extend beyond the two major works examined in this dissertation—Brahms' Clarinet Sonata Op. 120 No. 2 and Chen Gang's Sunshine Over Tashkurgan—and are evident in other pieces, such as "Numa Ame" and "Homage to China," which were briefly explored in Chapter 2. However, it is essential to avoid rigid application of the aforementioned techniques across every piece of the same category. Clear disparities in musical aspects between works within the same category can also exist. The performance approaches for performing Chinese and Western compositions outlined in previous context serve merely as general guidelines.

For instance, within the category of Chinese clarinet and piano music, Chen Gang's "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" and Zhang Chao's "Numa Ame" exhibit distinctions not only in performance techniques but also in musical expression. Sunshine Over Tashkurgan aims to portray the picturesque grassland landscapes and the vibrant spirit of its inhabitants, whereas Numa Ame draws inspiration from the composer's nostalgic reflections on childhood memories in his southwestern homeland, characterized by a spectrum of rich emotional nuances. Despite both pieces incorporating elements of Chinese ethnic music, they demand distinct performance approaches to effectively convey their respective artistic intents.

"Numa Ame" incorporates an abundance of onomatopoeic elements, intending to evoke a serene utopia nestled in the southwestern China region, far removed from the urban commotion. It portrays static elements and organic life found in nature through sonic representation. In section A (bar 1-36), the theme played by the right hand necessitates a performance imbued with elasticity, symbolizing not only a sense of fluidity between notes but also imbuing the music with vivacity and dynamism. While striking the keys, precise control and appropriate force are essential to maintain the clarity and flow of the melodic lines, all the while maintaining a delicate touch. To interpret this musical passage effectively, the fingertips should retain firmness and vigor, yet refrain from overly forceful key presses, ensuring each keystroke is controlled and gentle.

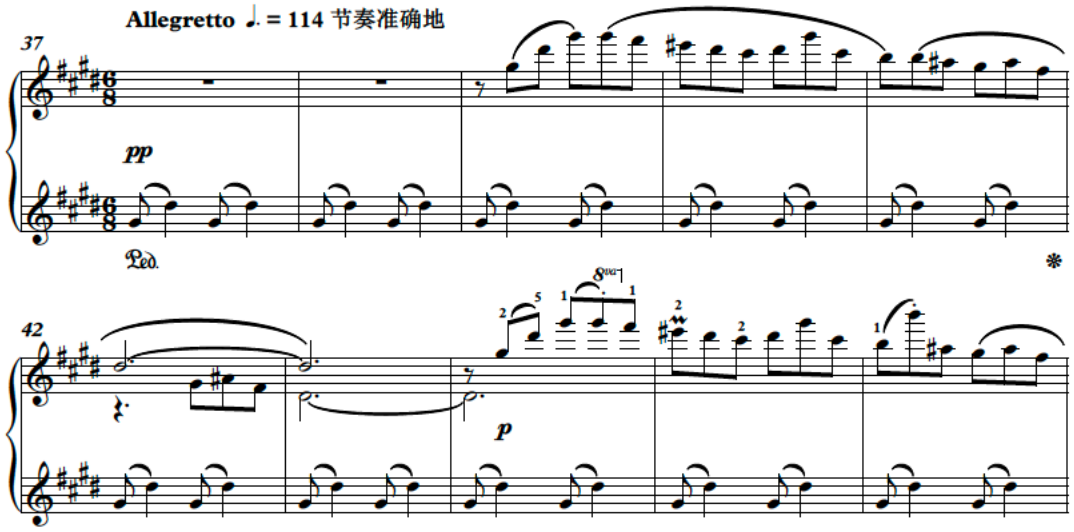
The repeated notes in the right hand should be handled with subtle crescendos, imparting a sensation of sound gradually approaching and enhancing the musical depth. The fingers of the right hand should maintain minimal movements, with emphasis on employing fingering alternation technique to achieve this musical expression. (See Example 3.38). Emphasizing

intervals in the left hand through deliberate use of the thumb on the keys results in a deeper and more resonant sound, imparting each interval with a distinct sense of hierarchy, thus depicting the profound valleys and mist-covered landscapes.



Example 3.38

In the subsequent passage (section B, bar 37-211), meticulous attention and precise execution are imperative, particularly regarding the sustained notes in the left hand. It is essential to introduce variation within similar musical phrases while adhering to the rhythmic concept of "long-strong-weak-short" (see Example 3.39). Specifically, the sustained notes played by the thumb in the left hand should be rendered slightly louder than those played by the pinky. Moreover, the thumb's keystroke velocity should be marginally faster than that of the pinky, thereby engendering a sense of musical impetus and dynamic diversity. Such nuanced handling not only prevents musical monotony but also effectively conveys the transition from an obscured to a clear natural landscape as envisioned by the composer.

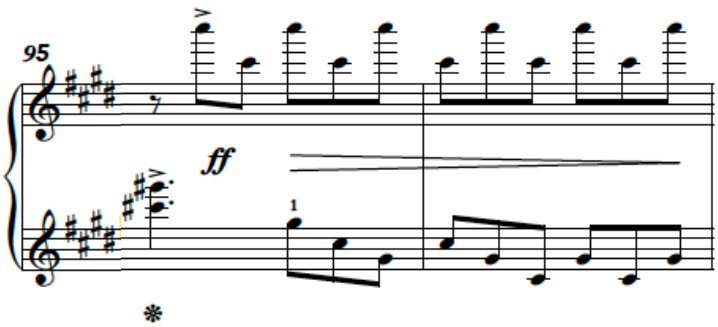


Example 3.39

Although the right-hand segment does not feature syncopated motifs, it nonetheless necessitates the creation of a syncopated sensation in accordance with the phrasing. (See Example 3.39). This enhances the expressiveness and conversational quality of the musical phrases. Through such interpretation, the music becomes more evocative, capable of simulating bird calls with greater authenticity. This addition of natural ambiance and vitality contributes to the overall richness of the musical tableau.

In this middle passage, it is essential to create a refreshing and lively sound, which requires precise control over the fingertip techniques. Particularly for the right-hand pinky finger, it is crucial to minimize the contact area of the fingertip during keystrokes. This facilitates swift and precise key-depressing motions, resulting in the production of bright tones.

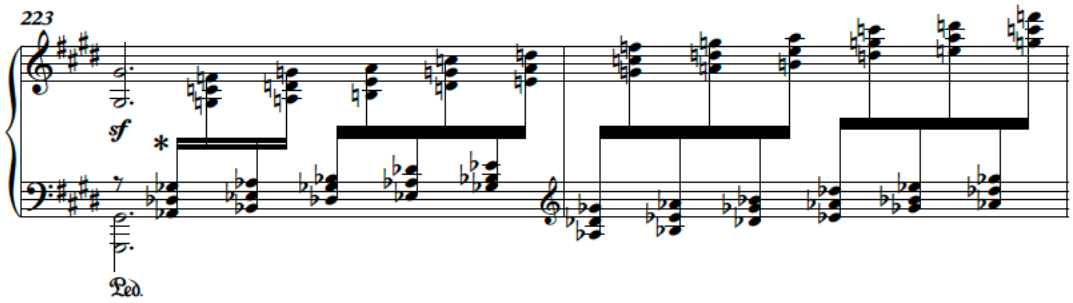
Throughout the performance, adequate pressure should be exerted on the first joint of the pinky finger to ensure the precise execution of each note, especially when playing broken octaves from bar 95 and onwards (see Example 3.40). Conscious control over the force of keystrokes should be exercised by the right-hand thumb when playing in the lower register. The fingertip of the thumb should be slightly angled during keystrokes, avoiding full contact with the keyboard to accommodate the need for intense volume (e.g., ff markings). Given that the thumb's register is naturally one octave lower than that of the pinky finger, the sound produced will inherently be deeper. In such circumstances, coordinated wrist movement becomes particularly crucial, facilitating the performance of the right-hand pinky and thumb through horizontal wrist motions to maintain the continuity and directionality of the sound.



Example 3.40

In the concluding passages of the piece (bars 212-246), relying solely on finger strength is insufficient; instead, it is imperative for the palm to provide firm support for the chord structures. Maintaining a relaxed wrist facilitates the smooth lateral transfer of power across the keyboard, while consistent force from the arms must be transmitted to the fingertips. Additionally, engaging the strength from the waist and back can serve as additional support, facilitating the transfer of power to the fingertips. These keystroke techniques enhance the power and explosiveness of the chords and harmonic combinations played.

Given that these passages feature rapid ascending gestures of sixteenth-note chords, they evoke the musical imagery of howling winds in the mountain valleys or terraced fields of the southwestern borderlands (see Example 3.41). Through employing this keystroke technique, the dynamic essence of the wind in the natural world can be vividly personified, resulting in expressive and evocative musical imagery.



Example 3.41

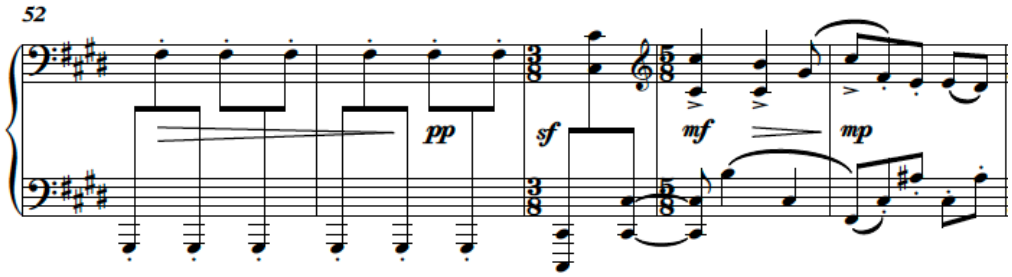
This piece is renowned for its rich emotional variations and dynamic contrasts, with particular emphasis on the A section. In measures 1-17, the dynamic range spans from piano to mezzo-forte, gradually progressing from soft to strong. Measures 18-36 extend this dynamic variation further, ranging from pianissimo to fortississimo, showcasing more pronounced emotional fluctuations. The transition from measure 17 to 18, marked by a ritardando in measure 17, creates anticipation for the pianissimo opening in measure 18, eliminating the need for a gradual decrescendo.

The second phrase features six distinct dynamic variations within 16 measures, introducing rapid dynamic changes that contribute to a strong contrasting effect across the phrase. Measures 27-33 mark the climax of the A section, with dynamic changes from forte to

fortississimo. Negotiating these dynamics necessitates not only finger strength but also coordination of wrist, arm, and even torso muscles to propel the music forward in layers, thereby creating a climactic atmosphere for the A section.

As the music transitions into the B section, it adopts a rondo-style character, characterized by delicate and colorful harmonies. This section features the most varied dynamic contrasts in the entire piece, with frequent and rapid emotional changes necessitating performers to concentrate force at their fingertips while carefully moderating dynamic shifts to avoid excessive crescendos or decrescendos. Performers must strategically plan the amplitude of dynamic changes, ensuring that crescendo and decrescendo markings are handled appropriately, which is particularly crucial during the interpretation of this section.

Many phrases in this section go directly from piano to forte without a gradual crescendo, as seen in measures 52-54 (see Example 3.42). Such sudden dynamic changes demand performers to possess acute musical perception and precise dynamic control techniques to convey the expressive and emotional qualities of the music effectively.



Example 3.42

However, in certain passages, performers may employ progressive dynamic handling, transitioning from pianissimo to piano and then to mezzo-piano, enveloping the entire musical atmosphere in a mysterious and ethereal beauty. For example, in measures 95-97, there is a heightened demand for fingertip control as the music transitions from fortissimo to piano dynamics through fewer notes, requiring swift and accurate key strikes and smooth transitions in dynamics.

The concluding passage (measures 212-246) represents the climax of the music, particularly the section beginning at measure 230 marked fff, demanding the performer to exhibit the most intense dynamic level throughout the entire piece. In this segment, both hands are

marked with dynamic indications of fff and sf for chords or octaves, indicating the performer's need to exert tremendous force in their playing.

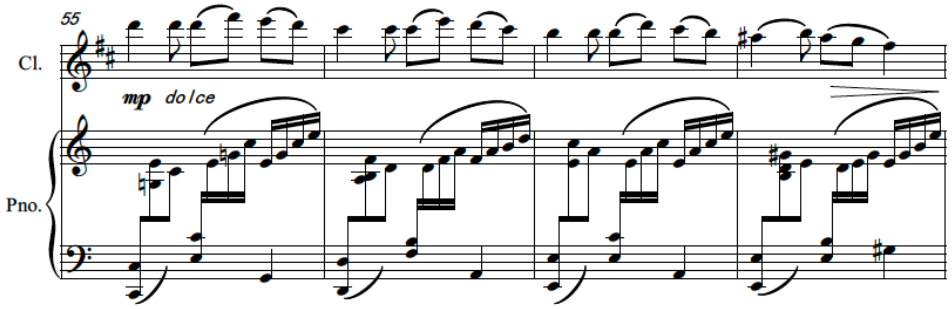
To produce such powerful sound effects, performers should engage force from their waist, transferring the energy through the upper arms to the fingertips. This application of force should be controlled and organized, rather than simply brute force applied to the keyboard. Hand posture should remain stable, with the wrists relaxed to ensure the fingertips can produce both resonant and full-bodied sounds, ensuring the quality of the chords is both focused and forceful. In the final measure, four consecutive chords marked with sf emphasize the music's conclusion with a lively and spirited mood.

Throughout the piece, there is a wide range of dynamic changes, spanning from the softest pp to the loudest fff, covering seven different dynamic levels. During the performance, the speed of dynamic changes is very rapid, sometimes requiring transitions between five dynamic levels within just two measures. In such dynamic variations, performers need to pay special attention to their key touch, avoiding blindly striking the keys. Each keystroke should consider the trend of dynamic changes and contrast with the dynamics of the preceding and subsequent phrases. Such nuanced handling is crucial for portraying the emotional fluctuations and dynamic changes of the music accurately.

In contrast to "Numa Ame," when performing the piano part of "Sunshine Shines on Tashkorgan," several key aspects should be considered. Firstly, attention must be paid to the continuity of sustained notes and the clarity of densely packed passages, aiming to create contrast between smooth sustained notes and crisp, articulated passages. Secondly, when playing notes spaced fifteen degrees apart between the hands, it is crucial to evoke a sense of "distance" and "vastness," reflecting the expansive grasslands and broad skies. During rubato passages, performers should aim to capture the free-flowing nature of the rhythm, simulating the warm sensation of sunlight on the grasslands, characteristic of Xinjiang music.

In rapid arpeggio passages, such as measures 47-58, maintaining clarity in each note is essential for ensuring the coherence of musical phrases (see Example 3.43). Dynamic control plays a crucial role, requiring precise transitions between strong and weak accents and maintaining dynamic variations throughout sustained passages to add depth and layers to the

music. The crispiness in performing staccato phrases is also important. Performers should control the speed and force of finger keystrokes to achieve clear beginnings and swift endings, resulting in a lively and bouncing effect.



Example 3.43

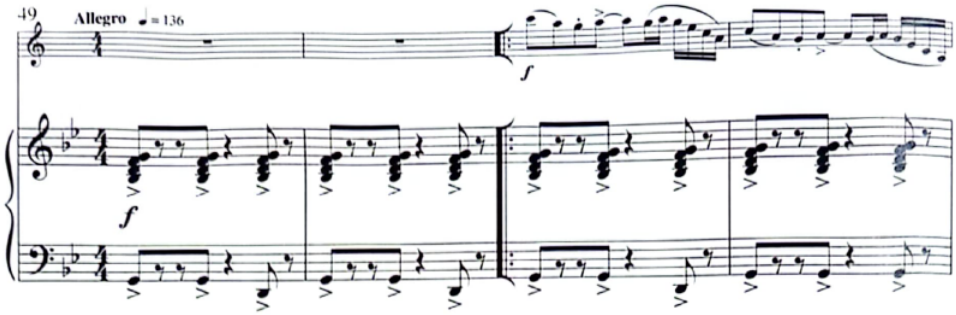
Accurate handling of rests is essential to provide necessary space for dynamic changes in the music, ensuring its fluidity and rhythmic sense. In mixed meters, the arrangement of accents plays a crucial role as they influence the rhythm and ethnic character of the music. This requires performers to possess a deep understanding of the musical structure. In fast passages, performers must adapt to rhythmic contrasts and alternations, particularly in the execution of triplets, where dynamics typically begin from medium-soft and gradually increase.

When dealing with legato passages in the piano's upper register, maintaining consistency in tone color is vital, while the left-hand part should engage in counterpoint, facilitating a harmonious dialogue. In the execution of intervals and chords, aside from focusing on intonation, unity in harmonic color is essential to enrich the emotional expression of the music, adding depth and dimension to the piece. Through the integrated application of these keystroke techniques, piano performance can fully showcase the emotional depth and artistic allure of the work, providing audiences with a rich musical experience.

Within the category of Western clarinet and piano music, Giuseppe Ricotta's "Homage to China" and Johannes Brahms' "Clarinet Sonata No.2 in E-Flat Major, Op.120" present a stark contrast in performance approach. These pieces demand distinct sets of performance technique requirements due to their contrasting styles and musical elements. "Homage to China" incorporates a significant amount of Chinese folk melodies and harmonies, while Brahms' Clarinet Sonata No.2 adheres to the classic Western Romantic musical style.

In “Homage to China,” the piano introduces a slow and smooth accompaniment at the outset, providing a harmonic foundation for the expressive clarinet melody. The pianist must execute broken chords in the left hand with steady precision, emphasizing finger independence to maintain clarity in each note. Simultaneously, the right hand must sustain the melody with fluidity and continuity, delicately executing embellishments. As the clarinet introduces scale-like passages, the pianist subtly accentuates the harmonic effects, employing decisive finger strikes with appropriate force. During the subsequent piano-dominated section, the pianist should deliver a fluid performance in the right hand, executing keystrokes from the palm to the fingertips and releasing with precision to complement the clarinet’s expression.

In contrast, the piano’s introduction of rhythmic chordal passages in the second section (bar 49- 119) requires to be played with staccato to reflect the lively character of the music without overpowering the clarinet (see Example 3.44). To achieve a light and elastic sound, the pianist must maintain finger flexibility and independence, ensuring clarity in each note with swift and powerful keystrokes while keeping the wrist relaxed and flexible. Subtle inward movements of the fingers upon key contact and slight wrist bouncing aid in controlling dynamics and rhythm, enhancing the liveliness of the chordal passages.



Example 3.44

At the moment of keystrokes, pianists should also pay attention to the distribution of finger pressure, striving to evenly transfer force to each key to ensure balanced sound production in every note of the chord. Simultaneously, the fingers should swiftly leave the keys after striking to avoid excessive lingering, which may result in muddled sound, thereby ensuring that the chord maintains both volume and clarity. The recapitulation section (bar 120-129) employs similar performance techniques.

In “Homage to China,” the harmony is characterized by its richness and vibrancy, blending strong Chinese elements with modern harmonic effects. When interpreting chords, performers must adapt their keystroke techniques to suit the harmonic complexity and emotional nuances of the music. For instance, to evoke warm and tranquil emotions, performers should utilize lighter keystrokes, producing soft and resonant sounds by gently pressing and quickly releasing the keys with their fingers. Conversely, for portraying passionate and vigorous emotions, stronger keystrokes and firm control are necessary to achieve intense and full harmonic effects.

Regarding rhythm, the piano assumes a pivotal role in establishing the rhythmic foundation and variations within “Homage to China.” Performers must adjust their playing technique in accordance with the tempo, dynamics, and stylistic characteristics of the rhythm. In faster sections, maintaining agility and precision in finger movements is paramount to ensure the accuracy and liveliness of the rhythm, necessitating rapid and clear keystrokes. Conversely, in slower passages, performers must employ more delicate and profound keystrokes to convey the depth and expansiveness of the music.

When performing “Homage to China,” performers must carefully adhere to the musical dynamics and expression markings present in the score. The piece incorporates a wide range of dynamic changes, necessitating precise control of dynamics and keystroke techniques to effectively convey the dynamic contrasts and emotional nuances inherent in the music. Additionally, the expression markings provided by the composer play a crucial role in shaping the musical interpretation. Performers should skillfully utilize these markings in accordance with the composer’s intentions and their own musical interpretation, thereby enhancing the expressive depth of the music.

Furthermore, pianists must also prioritize collaboration with the clarinetist throughout the performance. While the piano holds a significant role in this piece, it functions as a partner to the clarinet in the creation of the overall musical texture. Performers should maintain clear communication and synchronization with the clarinetist, ensuring precise rhythmic alignment and cohesive musical expression to collectively deliver a compelling performance. Particularly during climactic and pivotal moments within the music, the coordination between the piano and clarinet becomes paramount. Both instrumentalists must support and

complement each other, working collaboratively to evoke the climactic intensity and emotional depth of the music.

In contrast, performing Brahms's Clarinet Sonata No. 2 requires a different approach. This composition not only showcases Brahms's profound grasp of classical music forms but also highlights his skills and innovative spirit in piano performance. The piano part demands a high degree of control and sensitivity in keystroke techniques to achieve the formal rigidity inherent in Brahms' compositional style. Performers must strive to strike a delicate balance in dynamics control, timbral variations, rhythmic precision, and musical expression. In fast-paced passages, emphasis is placed on agility in finger movements and crisp keystrokes to ensure the fluidity and accuracy of the music. Conversely, in slower passages, a deeper engagement in keystrokes and detailed emotional interpretation is necessary to unveil the music's profound depth and essence.

In the first movement, it is essential for the performer to recognize that the piano's role extends beyond mere accompaniment; rather, it interweaves with the clarinet's melodic lines, jointly shaping the structure and emotional landscape of the music. Emphasis should be placed on maintaining the coherence and fluidity of the themes, while also highlighting the shifts in harmonic progressions. Through precise keystrokes and fingerings, performers should ensure the clear articulation of the themes, facilitating stable musical development.

In the second movement, there is a heightened focus on lyrical and expressive qualities. The performer enhances the resonance and depth of the music by skillfully controlling dynamics and pedal usage, resulting in a more vibrant and colorful rendition. Through delicate keystrokes, the piano creates a warm and emotive musical ambiance that harmonizes with the clarinet's melody, adding richness to the overall performance.

The third movement, structured as a theme and variations, introduces greater complexity and variability in performance. While adhering to the thematic outline, the performers should distinguish each variation by employing diverse keystroke techniques and timbral changes. This requires not only precise technical proficiency but also a vivid imagination and creative flair to achieve personalized musical expression throughout the movement.

Indeed, Brahms' approach to the piano part in this work underscores his dedication to musical structure and his focus on detail. The piano accompaniment is woven with inventive harmonic progressions, which will be discussed in the next chapter, melodic motifs, and rhythmic figures. When interpreting this piece, performers are tasked not only with rendering these musical components but also with infusing the music with vitality and emotion through their individual interpretation and expression. It is through this combination of technical precision and artistic sensitivity that Brahms' musical vision comes to life in performance.

Chapter 4: Stylistic Analysis

4.1. Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120

4.1.1 Brief Historical Overview and Introduction on Brahms' Stylistic Features

During the Classical period, instrumental Western music experienced a significant development, marked by the emergence of composers such as Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven. This era not only saw the rise of these masters but also witnessed the establishment of a music theory system aligned with the Enlightenment ideas of the eighteenth century, providing a foundation for subsequent generations to expand their musical knowledge. The resultant classical style was defined by aesthetic canons emphasizing order, rationality, and balance, underpinned by a technical system that imparted a sense of symmetry and logic.[131]

The nineteenth century witnessed a transformative shift with the advent of Romanticism in response to economic and societal developments. Romanticism, in contrast to the classical period, sought to liberate musical expression from formal constraints, encouraging the unrestrained portrayal of emotions. In Germany and Austria during the mid-nineteenth century, a notable stylistic trend emerged wherein literary and musical elements were combined. Exemplifying this trend were renowned figures such as Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt, who were collectively identified by Franz Brendel, the editor-in-chief of "New Music Magazine," as the representatives of the "New German School."[132] Although the definition of the New German School is rather ambiguous, this nomenclature suggested that Wagner and Liszt epitomized the musical ethos of the post-Beethoven era. Consequently, the formulas and norms of the music from the classical period were viewed as restrictive shackles hindering the emotional expression of artists. In response to this constraint, many musicians of the era sought innovative approaches to musical composition and expression.

Johannes Brahms, however, stands out as a composer who diverged from the predominant trends of his time. Amidst the Romantic period, Brahms remained dedicated to the creative

[131] Rosen, C. (1997). *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (pp. 47-48). WW Norton & Company.

[132] Brendel, F. (1859). "Zur Anbahnung einer Verständigung." *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 50 p.265.

traditions and stylistic elements of the Classical period, albeit with some adaptations.[133] He continued the legacy of symphonies and absolute music. A distinctive feature of his works is the absence of extreme emotional intensity often found in the works of his contemporaries. Rather than embracing extremes, Brahms imbued his compositions with a sense of equilibrium and introspection inherited from classical aesthetics. As musicologist Burnett James noted, "(f)or Brahms, unlike Beethoven and after him the headier Romantics, freedom lay in the recognition of limitation".[134]

Musicologist P.H. Lang describes the sense of equilibrium and introspection inherited in Brahms' music as "the tragedy, pessimism and resignation of a no longer young man".[135] This depiction effectively captures Brahms' general compositional direction. While contemporaries such as Wagner and Liszt garnered widespread acclaim or pioneering new musical genres such as Gesamtkunstwerk operas and symphonic poems, Brahms did not share their forward-looking perspectives. Instead, he harbored a nostalgic longing for the past, similar to Mendelssohn, embracing the concept of absolute music and adhering to the canons of classical aesthetics.

Brahms, in reference to the classical tradition, articulated his musical ideas through a carefully chosen language of "great simplicity and precision."[136] His approach to composition was characterized by rationality, with deep consideration given to both form and content. Contrary to viewing the rules and principles of classical music as constraints, Brahms perceived them as means of emotional expression. His objective was to infuse the "old bottle" of classicism with the "young wine" of romanticism, integrating the best elements from both musical realms to achieve a more nuanced and enriched mode of expression.

Brahms' Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120 serves as a compelling illustration of the composer's integration of the German music tradition and the new musical innovations that emerged during the Romantic period.

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[133] Burts. *An Application of the Grundgestalt Concept*.

[134] James, B. (1972) *Brahms; a Critical Study*. New York: Praeger.

[135] Lang, P. H. (1997) *Music in western civilization*. WW Norton & Company, p.896.

[136] Landormy, P., & Martens, F. H. (1934). *A history of music*. C. Scribner's sons. 264.

4.1.2 Absolute Music versus Programme Music

Programme music gained prominence in the Romantic era, particularly after Ludwig van Beethoven named his Symphony No. 6 "Pastoral". Many Romantic composers, including Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner, followed suit by creating a substantial number of programmatic pieces. These titles were seen by many musicians as aids to guide listeners in comprehending the content and style of a composition.

In contrast to this prevailing trend, Brahms held a distinctive perspective. He maintained that the emotions conveyed in musical works are abstract, having been carefully processed and refined by the composer. Brahms believed that real-life prototypes for these emotions could not be found, and as such, programmatic pieces inherently failed to accurately reflect reality. In light of this viewpoint, Brahms was skeptical of translating works into explicit programs, considering it misleading and counterproductive to the genuine reception of music. Instead, he advocated for allowing the audience the autonomy to interpret and experience the music on their own.

Brahms, in contrast to his contemporaries, predominantly opted for absolute music, the practice of not naming his works with titles – a rarity during his time. This choice showcased his belief in the abstract nature of music, devoid of explicit programs. This approach also endowed his works with an implication of the classical period.

4.1.3 Traditions and Innovations in the Form and Structure

In the context of the Romantic period, where new music genres were burgeoning, Johannes Brahms exhibited a clear affinity for classical forms. However, this allegiance to classical structures should not be misconstrued as a disregard for the creative trends prevailing in his time. Indeed, Brahms was keenly aware of his historical position and did not blindly adhere to the tradition.[137] While conforming closely to conventions, Brahms incorporated innovations into traditional structures, allowing his compositions to reflect the evolving aesthetics of the mid to late Romantic period. The Sonata for Clarinet and Piano No. 2 in E-

[137] Hines, J. (2015) *Reinventing Tradition: Brahms, Progress, and Basso Ostinato*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

flat Major, Op. 120 showcases his capacity for innovation within the classical structural framework.

The conventional scheme of a classical sonata consists of four movements, the first movement must unfold in sonata form, usually in allegro. The second movement assumes a slower tempo, often designated as adagio or largo. The third movement traditionally introduces a minuet or scherzo and trio, while the fourth movement, marked by a faster tempo, can take various forms, such as rondo, theme and variations, or sonata rondo. This structured and orderly format allows for the systematic development of musical content and emotion. The relationships between musical materials across each movement and the tonal centers within the general key scheme inform the structural logic of the entire piece.

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, Brahms departed from the conventional four-movement structure in his Clarinet Sonata Op.120, opting for a three-movement configuration. It is noteworthy that, although a four-movement sonata was deemed standard during the Romantic period, three-movement sonatas were not uncommon. Brahms' predecessors, including Haydn and Mozart, and even Beethoven, whom Brahms greatly admired, had previously composed sonatas with three movements. Mozart, in particular, predominantly structured his sonatas with three movements. Moreover, during the time of Haydn and Mozart, the definition of a sonata was not yet firmly established, leading to the existence of two-movement sonatas, as exemplified by Haydn's Piano Sonata in G minor Hob. XVI:44.

While the three-movement configuration in Brahms' Clarinet Sonata Op.120 might not appear unusual on the surface given historical precedents, a more in-depth examination reveals a departure from typical three-movement sonatas. In the sonatas of composers such as Haydn and Mozart, the movements in their three-movement sonatas were often arranged in the sequence of "Fast – Slow – Fast" or "Fast – Moderate – Fast".[138] This order facilitated an observable contrast between movements, enabling the audience to experience varying moods. Additionally, this tempo arrangement established a sense of homecoming – starting with a

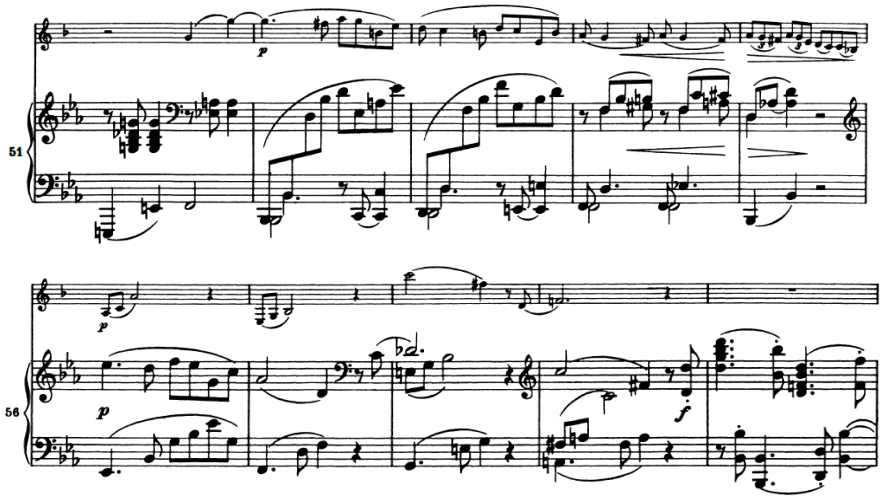
[138] Hepokoski, J., & Darcy, W. (2006). The Three- and Four-Movement Sonata Cycle. In *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (pp. 318-342). New York: Oxford Academic. (Online edition published October 3, 2011).

fast tempo, transitioning to a slower tempo in the second movement, and ultimately returning "home" with a fast tempo in the third movement, contributing to a feeling of completeness for the entire piece.
However, Brahms structured the three movements in his Clarinet Sonata Op.120 as "Fast – Fast – Slow". This deviates from the typical pattern and potentially suggests a departure rather than a return. The absence of a slow movement between two consecutive fast movements eliminates the usual sense of relief, allowing emotional intensity to accumulate continuously across movements. This choice by Brahms illustrates that, while he may not have adopted the highly chromatic harmonic languages employed by some of his contemporaries to evoke extreme emotions, he found his own path to achieving a similar goal by reconfiguring the traditional formal structure. Nonetheless, the second movement of this clarinet sonata, a Scherzo and Trio, does provide the audience with an opportunity for respite from the rapid tempo, as the trio section unfolds in a much slower tempo and a calmer mood.

The Scherzo and Trio, the second movement in Brahms' Clarinet Sonata Op.120, exhibits an interesting stylistic feature in its structural organization – the clear sectional separation between the scherzo and trio is emphasized through the presence of a caesura. This structural device, commonly observed in classical sonatas, aligns with the aesthetic principles of the classical period that prioritize form and structure. The caesura functions as a crucial sectional marker, effectively signaling the shift in section, mood, and musical materials.
In the context of the Romantic period, the prevalence of caesuras diminished compared to the classical era, where they were more commonly employed. While Romantic compositions still adhered to basic sectional schemes, the reliance on caesuras to indicate shifts between sections became less frequent. For instance, in the Scherzo and Trio movements of all three of Schumann's piano sonatas, the absence of caesuras can be observed. Regardless of whether the Scherzo transitions into the Trio or vice versa, these musical shifts occur seamlessly without the introduction of pauses. Brahms deliberation in following the most conventional, classical format in the Scherzo and Trio movement in his clarinet sonata Op. 120 reflects his commitment and strong affinity for German musical conventions.

In contrast to the more clearly defined structure in the second movement, Brahms' approach in the first movement is indeed surprising for abstaining from the use of caesura. As mentioned in chapter 3, Brahms appears to intentionally blur the lines between sections by

employing various means. One significant strategy is the reuse of musical materials, creating a challenge for the audience to clearly identify the introduction of new sections. An example can be found in bars 51-57, where the music transitions from the exposition to the development at bar 56 (see Example 4.1). The clarinet introduces a melodic passage in bars 52-55 derived from the materials of the primary motif, seemingly indicating the conclusion of the exposition. However, the beginning of the development section at bar 56 reintroduces the primary motif again, contributing to the ambiguity in the audience's perception regarding the definitive conclusion of the exposition.



Example 4.1

Musicologist M. Musgrave suggested that Brahms' innovative approach to formal variation can be considered as drawing inspiration from the works of Beethoven. Beethoven, renowned for his sonatas, departed from fixed musical structures, opting instead for a fluid approach that aligned with his aesthetic vision, introducing numerous innovations. The traditional rigidity in sonata formal structure, as seen in earlier compositions, gave way to Beethoven's dynamic and ever-changing structures. Brahms' adoption of a similar fluidity in the structure of his sonatas reflects a similar degree of departure from established norms, bringing his compositions closer to Beethoven's aesthetic concept. This adjustment can be viewed as a testament to Brahms' profound admiration for Beethoven.[139]

[139] Musgrave, M. (1999). *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*. Cambridge University Press. pp.139-145

4.1.4 Innovations in Formal Key Scheme, Tonality, and Harmonies

While it holds true that Brahms frequently adheres to the rules of classical counterpoint in his harmonic language, characterizing him as lacking innovation would be a misjudgment. In comparison to his contemporaries, Brahms' music may not be deemed highly chromatic. Nevertheless, the intricate harmonies underlying much of his work reveal a significant degree of complexity owing to Brahms' innovative and skillful utilization of modulating devices. These include modal shifts, tonicization facilitated by chromatic passing chords, dominant prolongation, and modulation through sequences. As a result, the harmonic analysis of Brahms' compositions often proves challenging.

Beyond this, Brahms exhibits innovation on a broader scale by designing unconventional formal key schemes across different movements of a piece. Departing from the standard tonic-dominant-tonic (I-V-I) relationship, many of Brahms' compositions feature atypical tonal schemes, such as the trending tonic-mediant-tonic (I-III-I) setting prevalent in the Romantic period. In his Clarinet Sonata Op.120, Brahms takes tonal innovation further by presenting a I-i-I setting, where the music primarily resides in the tonic key but varies between major and minor modes.

Brahms' innovations in form, tonal structures, and harmonies are highly recognized by Schoenberg. In his essay "Brahms the Progressive," Schoenberg praised Brahms for employing compositional methods akin to those used by Mozart and Haydn to liberate music from tedium. [140] The subsequent section will delve into the specific innovations related to tonal settings within the framework of the clarinet sonata Op.120.

Innovation in the General Formal Key Scheme

In the typical sonata structure, each movement is traditionally linked to others through related keys. During the Classical period, composers such as Mozart and Haydn often employed a key scheme based on I-V-I or I-IV-I relationships. Theoretically, the dominant (V) and subdominant (IV) keys are the furthest away from the tonic. Aligning the key relationships of each movement with the tonic-dominant-tonic and tonic-subdominant-tonic progressions creates a perceptible sense of departing from and returning to the home key. This approach

[140] Schoenberg. Brahms the Progressive. In *Style and Idea*.

ensures the establishment of heightened tension and the sense of moving forward in terms of harmonic relationships.

In the Romantic period, composers such as Beethoven and Schubert began to explore alternative tonal relationships. One notable departure from the Classical norm was the adoption of the tonic-mediant-tonic (I-III-I) progression, which later became a staple choice alongside the established I-V-I and I-IV-I progressions for composers of the same period. The I and III are relative keys, sharing the same set of notes. While moving between I and III may not induce the same level of tension as I-V and I-IV, the relationship between I and III is still regarded as strong and provides a distinctive tonal palette for composers to explore.

Brahms exhibited further innovation in his Clarinet Sonata Op.120 by adopting a distinctive tonal approach. The key centers of the three movements in this sonata are E-flat major, E-flat minor, and E-flat major, respectively (as illustrated in Chapter 3), forming a I-i-I relationship. In this configuration, the music predominantly resides in the tonic key, with an alternation between major and minor modes. The relationship between I (major) and i (minor) signifies parallel keys. However, unlike the I-III-I, I-V-I, and I-IV-I relationships that evoke a sense of forward motion through their departure and return to the home key, the I-i-I relationship lacks this distinct sense of progression as both keys share the same tonic. This characteristic contributes to the perception that the piece "unfolds as a single, continuous design rather than as a composite of three individual movements."[141]

Innovations in the Key Scheme within a Movement

While Brahms embraced the I-i-I relationship in the overall tonality layout of his Clarinet Sonata, he chose to incorporate the more conventional I-III and I-V relationships when designing the sectional structure of each movement, particularly evident in the first and second movements. However, it's worth noting that the third movement, the theme and variation, diverges from this trend, since key changes are not considered as significant sectional indicators in this form. Nevertheless, the incorporation of I-III and I-V illustrated that Brahms sought for a balance between tradition and innovations. For a detailed

[141] Marston, N., (2015). Program notes to Brahms, *Clarinet Sonatas,* performed by Michael Collins, clarinet, Michael McHale, piano. Chandos, CHAN10844, CD.

breakdown of the tonality design of each movement, reference can be made to Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 in Chapter 3.

The first movement of the sonata adheres to the conventional sonata form, featuring a primary theme in E-flat major. The modulation to B-flat major in the secondary theme is achieved through a harmonic sequence, maintaining the key of B-flat major until the exposition's conclusion. The relationship between E-flat and B-flat major reflects the tonic-dominant association commonly found in the exposition of traditional sonata forms.

The development section introduces a more intricate tonal setting. The music initiates in E-flat major and modulates to G minor within the first phrase of this section. Given that the preceding section (the exposition) concludes in B-flat major, the anticipated starting key for the development would be the same. The choice to start in E-flat major is rather unconventional. The substantial stay in G minor after the modulation indicates that the key significant position within this section. G minor is a third above the home key E-flat major and a third below the dominant key B-flat major. The tonal relationship between E-flat and G and G and B-flat are the I-III relationship. Indeed, the music modulates to B-flat major at the end of the development section. This tonal setting showcases Brahms' adept manipulation of the I-V and I-III, allowing him to experiment with and shape tonal relationships in a manner that adds depth and complexity to the harmonic structure of the composition.

The tonal setting in the recapitulation of the first movement also introduces an intriguing deviation from conventional expectations. Typically, the secondary theme in this section would remain in the home key. However, in this instance, the theme starts in C-flat major, a third below the home key of E-flat major, forming a distinctive I-III relationship with the tonic. This departure from the expected tonal setting underscores Brahms' willingness to break with conventional rules and experiment with tonal relationships.

The tonal setting in the second movement, Scherzo and Trio, presents an even more intriguing aspect. The Scherzo initiates in E-flat minor and transitions to B major in the Trio section. On the surface, B major might seem a distant key from E-flat major, being an augmented fifth apart. However, an alternative perspective arises when considering B major in its enharmonic equivalence as "C-flat" major. In this light, the relationship between E-flat

and C-flat major falls into the I-III relationship. This reinterpretation of B major as C-flat major exemplifies Brahms' creative use of enharmonic equivalents to establish tonal connections that might not be immediately apparent. The I-III relationship between E-flat and C-flat major adds a layer of harmonic complexity and cohesion to the Scherzo and Trio.

The tonal setting in the third movement does not exhibit the same level of complexity found in the first two movements. Given that this movement is structured in a theme and variation form, a more intricate tonal setting where each variation is written in a new key would be acceptable. However, Brahms opted for a more straightforward approach. Almost all variations and the coda remain in the home key of E-flat major, with the exception of variation 5, which is in E-flat minor. The relationship between E-flat major and E-flat minor is that of parallel keys. This tonal setting in the third movement mirrors the general key scheme I-i-I established in the overall formal structure.

Innovations in the Tonality, Harmonies and Modulations

Brahms' Clarinet Sonata Op.120 stands out not only for its key scheme but also for its frequent use of unusual harmonic progressions and tonal ambiguity. These unconventional moments often present challenges in harmonic analysis but contribute to the distinctive characteristics of Brahms' music. Music theorist Ryan McClelland has indeed identified six compositional methods, which will not be extensively discussed in this paper, that Brahms employed to create tonal ambiguity. McClelland categorizes these methods as tonal destabilization.[142]

One of the harmonic devices Brahms frequently employed involves sudden modal shifts to distant keys. An example occurs in the coda section (bars 154-173) of the first movement of the clarinet sonata. Traditionally, the coda is expected to continue in the home key, in this case, E-flat major, or a closely related key, such as the dominant. However, in this movement, the coda starts unexpectedly in E major, a minor second apart from the home key, without any preparation. Subsequently, the music swiftly returns to E-flat major at bar 162. This abrupt modulation poses challenges for analysis, as it deviates from conventional harmonic expectations.

[142] McClelland, R. (2009). Brahms and the Principle of Destabilised Beginnings. *Music Analysis, 28(1),* 3–61. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40606809.

Another notable instance highlighting Brahms' use of sudden modal shifts occurs at bar 109 in the Trio section of the second movement. As previously mentioned, the Trio section is primarily in B major. However, when the Trio transitions to part 2 (refer to Table 3.2), it unexpectedly starts in C-sharp major, a major second above the initial key of B major. This harmonic situation challenges traditional harmonic rules, making it difficult to account for within conventional tonal expectations.

Tonal ambiguity is a notable feature in Brahms' Clarinet Sonata Op.120, particularly evident in the third movement. As briefly discussed in Chapter 3, both the theme and variations 1-3 exhibit a modal quality rather than a distinct major or minor tonality. Brahms achieves this effect through deliberately prolongating the dominant, avoiding a definitive establishment of the key with a strong cadence.

In the theme section, the underlying harmony throughout the presentation and repetition of the theme revolves around the extension of the B-flat major chord, the dominant of E-flat major. It is only towards the end that Brahms employs a cadence to confirm the key as E-flat major. However, even in this resolution, Brahms opts for a plagal cadence, a much weaker cadential choice compared to the more conclusive perfect authentic cadence. This deliberate use of a less forceful cadence contributes to mitigating the definitiveness of the home key, maintaining a sense of tonal ambiguity throughout the movement. As noted by musicologist Margaret Notley, "the plagal harmony has to do above all with its ability to suggest something other than, outside of, or prior to tonal music. It does not suggest orientation toward a goal but rather calls to mind something along the lines of … long-gone centuries and distant realms."[143]

4.1.5 Approaches in using Expressions

The distinction in the use of expressions between classical and romantic music constitutes a fundamental difference. In the classical period, emphasis was placed on the overall structure of music, prioritizing form to align with the aesthetic preferences of royal families and the

[143] Notley, M. (2005). Plagal Harmony as Other: Asymmetrical Dualism and Instrumental Music by Brahms. *The Journal of Musicology, 22(1),* 90–130. https://doi.org/10.1525/jm.2005.22.1.90.

aristocracy. Composers rarely delved into the expression of personal emotions and experiences during this era. Conversely, the Romantic period prioritized human feelings and their expressive manifestation, leading to a shift where basic creative techniques served primarily for emotional expression. This era not only enriched musical forms but also expanded the role of emotional markers in scores.

The Romantic period introduced highly detailed markers such as rit, animando, cantando, stringendo, rigoroso, or rubato in addition to the basic markers, such as mp, p, mf, f, dim, cresc, dolce, which were already presented in the classical period. With the advancement of piano pedal technique, specific explanations for its usage also include in some music.

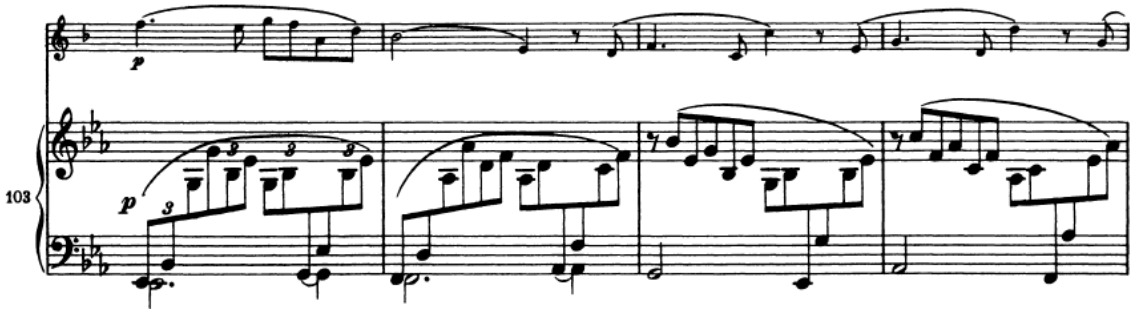
In Brahms' creative philosophy, he consistently adhered to rational thinking and the concept of the classical absolute music. Brahms inclined towards expressing himself according the principles of Classical period rather than the Romantic conventions. When performing his works, one rarely encounters elaborate and detailed expressive markers. The concise style of his scores, comparable to Mozart's classical works, further attests to the classical nature of Brahms' music. This is clearly demonstrated in the score of his clarinet sonata.

4.1.6 The Use of Syncopations, Unusual Rhythmic Patterns, and Juxtaposition of Different Rhythmic Cells

One distinctive characteristic that contributes to the complexity of Brahms' music is his sophisticated manipulation of various rhythmic devices. While Romantic period composers commonly used syncopation and rhythmic cells, such as triplets, abundantly, Brahms took this practice to a new level. Rather than explicitly employing rhythmic devices, he often subtly embedded them into his music. Audiences might not easily recognize the precise techniques used, but the effects of these rhythmic devices are distinctly present. Brahms demonstrates this sophisticated approach in the Clarinet Sonata Op.120, where numerous examples showcase his adept use of rhythmic intricacies. This section will delve into a selection of examples, ranging from the overt to the more subtle in this sonata.

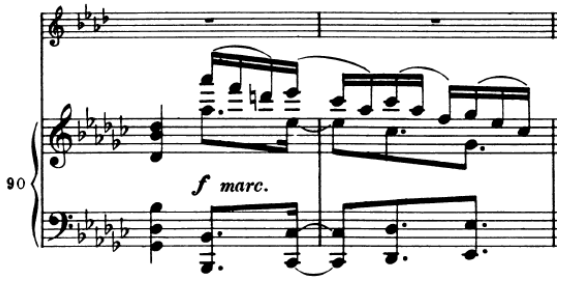
A prevalent device in this sonata involves the juxtaposition of triplets with regular rhythmic patterns, such as groups of quavers and semiquavers. The excerpt below (Example 4.2) from the first movement illustrates a melodic phrase where this juxtaposition occurs. These

instances create a sense of "unalignment," introducing contrast with the regular rhythmic patterns. Notably, these juxtapositions feature prominently in the recapitulation section of the first movement. Their application imparts a playful quality to the recurring musical material, distinguishing it from the exposition. This contrast adds a layer of freshness to the listener's ear. The increased pace of the triplets elevates the intensity of the recapitulation, setting up for a more satisfying conclusion.



Example 4.2

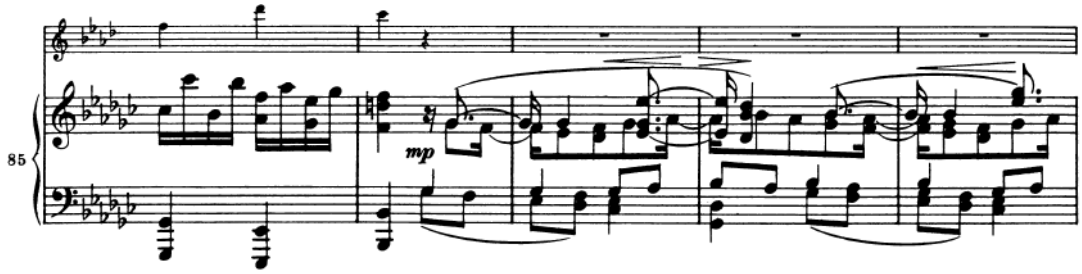
Another intriguing rhythmic device involves the formation of unusual groupings of notes that result in off-beat rhythmic patterns. The example below (Example 4.3), extracted from the fifth variation in the third movement, demonstrates Brahms dividing twelve semiquavers into four groups of three notes each. This grouping imparts a sense of syncopation but with added metric dissonance. Four accents are compressed within three beats, creating a sudden thrust of accent with uneven beat division. This rhythmic device introduces a crispness to the regular musical content in terms of rhythm, enhancing the overall interest of the music and providing delightful surprises for the audience.



Example 4.3

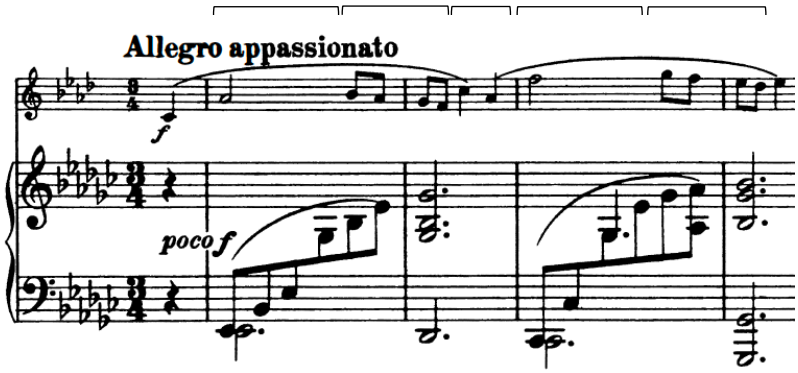
Syncopations are among the most prevalent rhythmic devices in the sonata, appearing in all three movements and often employed for extended periods to create an offbeat feeling. Brahms appears to utilize syncopation in two ways: explicit syncopation and subtle

syncopation. Explicit syncopation is used to disrupt audience expectations for a “correct” beat pattern. Example 4.4 below, taken from a phrase in the third movement, illustrates an instance of explicit syncopation. Starting from bar 87, the music enters a prolonged, syncopated passage. Both the accompaniment and the main melody in the piano’s right hand follow the syncopated rhythm. This melody often lands on weak beats, heightening tension as the audience anticipates the resolution to the “correct” beat. The longer the syncopated passage persists, the greater the tension, making the eventual resolution more satisfying once it occurs.



Example 4.4

Subtle syncopation, in contrast, does not deliberately disrupt audience expectations but is often used to build metrical ambiguity. An illustration of this technique is evident in Example 4.4, which is the beginning phrase of the second movement. Despite the marked meter being 3/4, Brahms introduces a subtle rhythmic complexity by phrasing the clarinet’s melody as if it were in 3/2. The clarinet appears to emphasize beats in a manner more aligned with a 3/2 meter. Meanwhile, the piano part adheres to the grouping of 3/4, maintaining a steady rhythmic pattern on beats. This juxtaposition creates a clash between the rhythmic elements of the two instruments. The accented beats in the 3/2 and 3/4 meters occur at different times, leading to a metrical ambiguity within the passage. This subtle syncopation introduces an element of tension and complexity, as the listener’s expectations of a straightforward 3/4 meter are challenged by the interplay of conflicting rhythmic patterns.



Example 4.4

4.1.7 Approach to Pedaling

Pedal work in piano playing serves several crucial functions that influence both the sound and expressive quality of a performance. The primary roles of using pedals include sustaining sound, which allows notes to resonate longer and creates a smoother transition between chords and notes, resulting in a fuller, more spacious sound. Additionally, pedals facilitate the linking of notes (legato), enable control over articulation by emphasizing contrasts between staccato and legato passages, enrich the overall sound with a more intense harmonic background, and enhance the control of timbre.

4.2 Sunshine Over Tashkurgan

4.2.1 Application of Chinese Compositional Approach

Exploring ways to incorporate Chinese music styles into new compositions has been a recurring theme for contemporary Chinese composers aiming to create pieces with a distinct "Chinese style." The concept of "Chinese style" encompasses a wide and intricate range of aesthetic considerations, blending elements of national characteristics, regional nuances, genre-specific styles, and even influences from specific historical eras.[144]

[144] Hua, G. (2012). Some issues concerning the nationalization of clarinet music. *Big Stage* (05), pp.64-65.

In the early 20th century, Chinese composers sought to infuse a "Chinese style" into their compositions, particularly in piano music, by employing the pentatonic scale as a significant tool.[145] This approach aimed to "Sinicize" melodies, influenced by the philosophical concept of "taking the essence and rejecting the dross" from traditional Chinese culture. The methods employed included incorporating ancient forms of folk music, blending them with contemporary Western elements, nationalizing musical language and forms to enhance popular creativity, and utilizing Western music patterns to create new nationalistic structures, imbuing piano music with distinctive Chinese characteristics. While the term "national" is open to interpretation, this paper does not delve deeply into the philosophical intricacies of this aesthetic concept, acknowledging that a comprehensive exploration of this idea would require separate discussions.

During the 1950s, folk music became a fundamental source for composition, where folk melodies were directly incorporated into new works. This material underwent further development through the lens of Western compositional styles and techniques. Chinese composers, drawing from European classicism, Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Chinese national music schools, consciously explored the fusion of polyphonic techniques with Chinese folk melodies and tonalities. This approach primarily emphasized melody writing, focusing on the purity, fluidity, national style, and accessibility of the melodies.[146] The resulting piano works showcased distinct national melodies and harmonies, reflecting the broader aesthetic consciousness of the Chinese national style during that period.

Since the late 1970s, marked by the implementation of national reform policies, the opening-up, ideological emancipation, and increased cultural exchanges with foreign countries, China's music industry has experienced a shift away from rigid ideological constraints. The concept of a "national musical style" has begun to diversify during this period. While some composers continued to explore innovation and experiment with national harmony, drawing from traditional Chinese tonalities, many embarked on bold experiments with modern

[145] Wang, Y. H. (2009). *History of Modern Chinese Music*. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House. pp. 112-124

[146] Wang, Z. (2004). *Evolution of Chinese Compositional Techniques*. Central Conservatory Publishing House. pp.133-134.

creative techniques. These included the use of the twelve-tone scale or modified versions, and some composers even developed their own tonal systems.

A prevailing trend emerged, where various modern techniques were combined with Chinese national tonalities. This approach aimed to create works that, while employing modern techniques, still embodied national aesthetics. In this evolving landscape, Chinese piano works entered a period of true flourishing. Composers moved beyond the traditional "folk tunes plus harmony" formula, departing from mere adaptations of existing pieces. Instead, they delved into more personalized, original, and diverse compositions, reflecting a newfound creativity and artistic exploration.[147]

The evolution of Chinese piano compositions can be characterized by three distinct trajectories. Some composers adhered to the foundational concept of "joint creativity," wherein they continued to incorporate folk melodies, tones, and motifs — elements they deemed quintessential to the "Chinese style." However, their harmonic techniques evolved, taking on a more audacious and innovative character. Others diverged from prioritizing the Chinese style as their primary creative goal. Instead, they engaged in experimental approaches, exploring a diverse range of techniques and emphasizing their individual creative concepts. Simultaneously, there were those who infused the Chinese style into their works in a personalized manner. Their compositions extended beyond reliance on national tones and melodies as the primary expressive tools, aiming to convey the beauty of Chinese music and traditional culture through the development of musical themes and innovative compositional techniques.

This piece, "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," composed by Chen Gang, aligns with the first category. It is characterized by the incorporation of distinct Chinese folk melodies and musical styles. The piano part showcases intricate harmonies that diverge from the more prevalent patterns found in traditional Chinese music.

[147] Liu, Z. S. (2006). *Zhōngguó yīnyuè shǐ jiǎnmíng jiàochéng* [Concise Tutorial on the History of Chinese Music]. Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press. pp. 99-105.

4.2.2 The Use of Chinese Chords

The infusion of Chinese harmonic elements into the conventional Western tonality system serves to dilute the rigidity of Western harmony. This adaptation allows the music to resonate with Chinese aesthetic standards and melodic conventions. These harmonic elements encompass pentatonic vertical chords, the stacking of chords with intervals beyond thirds, and the utilization of parallel harmonic progressions, typically eschewed in Western musical traditions.

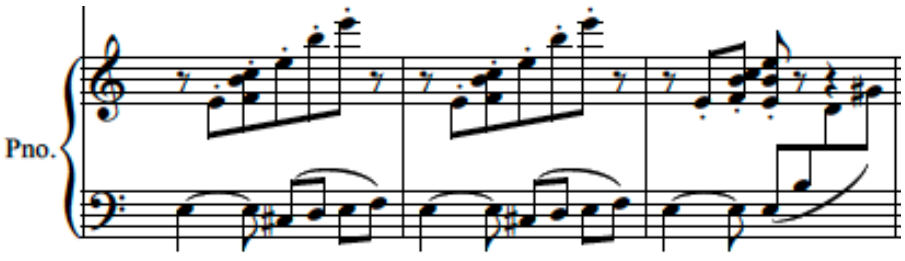
Chinese pentatonic harmony and Western tonality systems exhibit numerous similarities in terms of structure and expressiveness, yet they diverge significantly in stylistic features. Chinese composers have strived to comprehend these commonalities and differences meticulously, aiming to utilize them judiciously in their compositions. The relationship between harmonic functions and timbre can be explained by referring to the popular saying: "Harmonic functions are the skeleton, while timbre is the body and blood." Both aspects are inseparable. Focusing solely on functionality leads to the formalization and trivialization of harmonic language, making it unclear and unattractive. Conversely, concentrating exclusively on timbre results in an excessive loosening of harmonic structure and a lack of a clear tonal center. Only the combination of these two elements can provide a solid harmonic structure with the desired expressive strength. In harmonic interpretation, we can therefore adopt the following principle: while taking care of harmonic functions, one must not forget about timbre, and vice versa. [148]

Chen Gang's compositional approach is deeply rooted in this principle, enabling Western instruments to effectively convey the unique national allure of Chinese music. The majority of his compositional material is drawn from traditional opera, folk songs, and mass songs, which were originally crafted in pentatonic scales and later subjected to artistic transformations. This process yields melodies with unmistakable Chinese characteristics. In his compositions, Chen Gang embraces adaptation and innovation, blending Western harmonic concepts with pentatonic tonality and the distinctive tunes of ethnic minorities. This approach encapsulates the notion of harmoniously merging the timbre and harmonic functionality of traditional Chinese music with Western musical traditions.

[148] Tong, S. (1980). Discussion of horizontal harmonic structure in pentatonics. *Music Art,* Journal of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 1980(1), 20-44.

Chen Gang's approach to chord construction is particularly noteworthy. He employs various techniques to structure chords that align Western harmonic ideas with Chinese conventions found in the melody. One method involves omitting specific notes in a tertian chord to accommodate the pentatonic tonality. The omitted tone—whether the third, fifth, seventh, or ninth—depends on which note might introduce dissonance within the pentatonic key. However, at times, Chen incorporates additional notes from outside the chord into the tertian structure to intentionally create dissonance. These additional tones are often drawn directly from the pentatonic scale, typically a major seventh or major second. The purpose of incorporating these extra tones is to mitigate dissonance by enriching the harmonic timbre and softening the overall dynamics.

Chen Gang also incorporates chords with structures different from the conventional tertian chord, notably favoring chords with a quartal and quintal structure. These chords rely on harmonic intervals of fourths and fifths, deviating from the traditional Western approach to chord construction. This departure allows for the formation of chords that are exceptionally free, rich, and complex. The chords are crafted by stacking fourths or fifths, employing various techniques such as superimposing a fifth and a quarter interval, or a combination of both. (See Example 4.5) Another type of chord Chen often incorporates known as the lute chord or pipa chord. This chord is comprised of two superimposed intervals of a perfect fifth, connected in the middle by an interval of a major second. The interval structure resembles that of the open strings on a traditional Chinese musical instrument called a "pipa," leading to its alternative name as the "pipa chord."



Example 4.5

4.2.3 The Use of Folk Materials

Imparting folk characteristics to the melody stands as a paramount method for expressing the Chinese style in piano music. Chen Gang demonstrates remarkable skills in either directly incorporating folk melodies or crafting new melodies infused with folk elements. Recognizing the melody as the essence of a musical work, Chen Gang identifies phrases from traditional and folk music, integrating them into his compositions.[149] Through the lens of modern compositional techniques, he imparts these melodies with distinct folk characteristics, contributing to the rich tapestry of Chinese musical expression in his piano compositions.

"Sunshine Over Tashkurgan" stands out as one of the few works originating from the "Cultural Revolution" period. Its primary melody draws inspiration from the folk song "Beautiful Tashkurgan." The expressive folk style of the Tajik minority is vividly portrayed in the middle and high registers of the clarinet. Residing in Tashkurgan, situated in the eastern part of the Pamir Plateau, the Tajiks are renowned for their strength and boldness. Their distinctive traditional instrument, the "Eagle Flute," crafted from the bones of a mountain eagle's wings, emits a high and clear sound. This essence resonates in the main motif of the first section, "Sing with All Your Heart", imbuing the composition with elements deeply rooted in Tajik folklore.

Chen Gang widely employed the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale in this piece. This scale is a musical tradition that traces its origins to the "Guanzi - Diyuan Pian" treatise from the 7th century BC, recognized as one of the most representative elements of Chinese music. Another noteworthy characteristic in Chen Gang's works is the deliberate use of dissonances, serving to enhance the tonal quality and underscore the Chinese identity of the piece.

The pentatonic scale holds a significant position in traditional Chinese music, distinguished by its simplicity. Comprising only five notes, this scale is easy to memorize and play. Another distinctive feature is the absence of semitones, setting it apart from the scales commonly found in Western music.

[149] Yan. *An Analysis of Four Chinese Violin Works.*

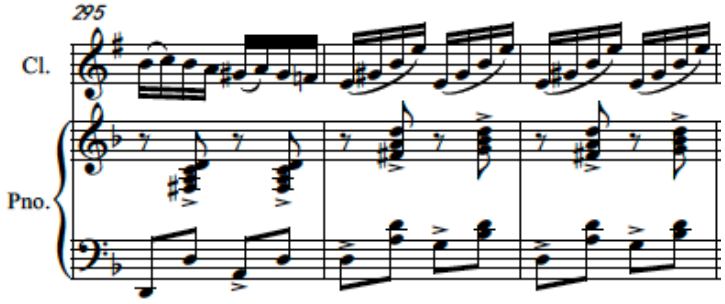
To better capture the essence of traditional Chinese music on Western instruments, composer Chen Gang incorporated performance techniques from Chinese folk instruments. The clarinet part in this piece is an evident of clever imitation of performance techniques from traditional musical instruments. In this context, the clarinet mimics the plucked strings of the Dombra, providing a reflection of the musical style of the ethnic minority.[150]

4.2.4 Tempo Layout in Traditional Chinese Music

Chen Gang frequently employs the "slow-fast-slow" tempo structure in his compositions, reflecting a characteristic element of Chinese tradition. This pattern is evident in the discussed piece, where an alternating arrangement of rubato - allegretto - rubato - allegro - prestissimo contributes to the composition's contrasting and dynamic character, marked by variable tempos.

4.2.5 Chinese Rhythmic Patterns

Chinese composers frequently incorporate distinctive national and dance rhythmic patterns in their music, enhancing the portrayal of musical imagery. For instance, the use of enthusiastic syncopated rhythms, triplets, and lively figurations inspired by the Uyghur nationality style evokes scenes of dancing people and a lively atmosphere. This piece has also incorporated some of these rhythmic devices into the music. (See Example 4.6) These devices deliberate transformation and juxtaposition of various rhythms and measures are significant techniques for creating music with a unique regional or national character.



Example 4.6

[150] Sun, D. (2005). Synthesis of technique and music in the history of clarinet playing. *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music, 2005(09),* pp.110-112.

In the musical composition, each emotional shift within the same theme or between different themes is intricately connected by rhythm and meter. This connection is particularly evident in the second section of the piece titled “Dance with Fervor,” where the composer frequently alters the meters, introducing variations like 7/8, 5/8, 4/8, 3/8, 2/4. While notes form the fundamental musical material, rhythm serves as a framework that embellishes the stylistic elements of the composition.

The extensive use of asymmetrical measures, such as 7/8 and 5/8, is a distinctive feature rarely found in other folk music genres. The 7/8 meter, being a combination of 3/8 and 4/8, can take two forms: one with four beats followed by three, and the other with three beats followed by four, with the latter being more common. In actual performance, the initial three beats are slightly slower, while the last four are slightly faster. The meter 5/8, having two accents, results from the combination of 3/8 and 2/8. Since accented beats occur more frequently in 5/8 than in 7/8, it is well-suited for music with lively and enthusiastic emotions.

Both 7/8 and 5/8 bars involve two accented beats, creating an asymmetrical rhythm characterized by the unequal time intervals between the appearance of two accents, lending the rhythm of Tajik folk music a unique liveliness. As the second section progresses, the alternation of meters not only occurs between 7/8 and 5/8 but also between 4/8 and 5/8, 4/8 and 7/8, showcasing the rhythmic characteristics of Tajik music in a more comprehensive and varied manner.[151]

4.2.6 The Imposition of Chinese Music Tonal System

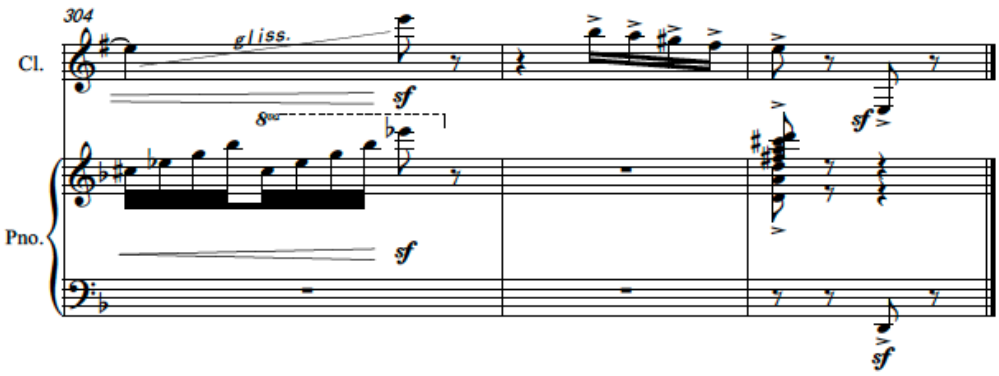
Chinese music tonality is primarily composed of the pentatonic system, which includes the fundamental tones Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, and Yu. Additionally, there are variations that extend to six or seven tones based on these fundamental pitches. It’s important to note that the five fundamental tones represent fixed interval relationships rather than fixed pitches. This system is akin to the solfege system in Western music but with only five tones, resembling the do, re, mi, sol, and la. Some proponents prefer to refer to them as “scales” based on the fundamental tone, similar to the naming of modes in Western music theory.

[151] Yan. *An Analysis of Four Chinese Violin Works.*

In Chinese national music theory, the fundamental tones Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, and Yu are collectively referred to as “zhengyin.” Each of these fundamental tones has specific intervals and characteristics. A note that is a semitone higher than “zhengyin” is called “qing,” which is equivalent to a sharp. Conversely, a note a semitone lower than “zhengyin” is called “bian,” corresponding to a flat. A sound that is a whole tone lower than “zhengyin” is called “run,” equivalent to a double flat. Tones that have been altered with “qing,” “bian,” and “run” are collectively termed “pianyin.” In ancient times, only four “pianyin” were commonly used, namely “Qing-jiao,” “Bian-zheng,” “Bian-gong,” and “Run.” These correspond to chromatic alterations in the major-minor system.

In “Sunshine Over Tashkurgan,” the Chinese tonality is employed in a systematic manner. The first section is in the key of E-Jiao, and despite the presence of characteristic Tajik chromatic notes, the overall tonality remains in E-Jiao. The final E minor chord utilized at the end of the section is borrowed from the Western tonal system.

The tonal arrangement in the second movement is more diverse, reflecting the varied overall structure and intensified emotional changes. Initially, the music oscillates between the tonalities of D Jiao and A Jiao in the first sub-section. Subsequently, the tonalities of D Yu and G Yu alternate in the next sub-section, followed by a return to the tonality of D Jiao, but with the tonal center shifted to D. The movement concludes in the tonality of D Yu. As both the Jiao and Yu tonalities share similarities with Western minor keys, the composer incorporates the tonic chord of the minor key freely in some sub-sections. Only towards the end does the D major seventh chord make an appearance. The unresolved seventh leaves room for the listener’s imagination. The bright major chords in the final bars further enhance the joyful mood of the music. (See Example 4.7)



Example 4.7

4.2.7 Pedaling that Emphasizes the Chinese Musical Character of the Piece

Despite the fact that the piano is not a traditional Chinese instrument, the use of pedaling often proves indispensable in the interpretation of musical works from this region. Chinese music is characterized by distinct tonal colors, which requires pianists to carefully adjust their pedaling techniques to convey the folk elements of the piece and to highlight their richness and artistic intent. In the work "The Sun Shines Over Tashkurgan," the pedal should not be pressed continuously; it should be used selectively. Pedaling should serve merely as a complement to the Chinese characteristics of the piece, rather than overshadowing them.

At the beginning of the piece, particularly in the solo piano section, pedaling is essential. Its absence would disrupt the impression of fluidity in the music, interfering with the interpretation of the elevated mood and melodic lines. Starting from measure 63, where the piece imitates the sounds of Chinese plucked instruments known for their distinctive strong accents and short sustaining phases, the conscious omission of the pedal aims to create and maintain a percussive sound effect that reflects the timbre of traditional Chinese instruments.

In measures 141 to 148, skillful use of the pedals, fully aligned with the clarinet part, makes the music softer and more melodic, allowing the sustained notes of the piano to blend with the elongated phrases of the clarinet. In measures 177 to 192, frequent use of the pedals serves to highlight smaller musical fragments in contrast to the legato of the clarinet. This enhances the musical effect of the elaborated clarinet passages, amplifying the joyful atmosphere of the piece.

Conclusion

During the Romantic era, Brahms distinguished himself with a unique musical style that bore the marks of his passion for and study of Classical period music. While his contemporaries often indulged in extravagant emotional expressions typical of Romanticism, Brahms displayed a remarkable restraint and refinement in his compositions. This characteristic moderation imbued his music with a sense of balance and classical elegance, setting him apart as a conservative traditionalist within the prevailing musical landscape. However, Schoenberg challenged this perception in a radio speech commemorating Brahms's centenary in 1933, portraying him as a "progressive" composer rather than a mere adherent to tradition.[152] Schoenberg's remarks prompted scholars to reassess Brahms's contributions to music history, recognizing his innovations as comparably significant to the groundbreaking achievements of Wagner in the latter half of the 19th century.

Despite this reevaluation, it is crucial to recognize that Brahms's innovations were firmly rooted in traditional compositional principles. While he may have pushed the boundaries of musical expression, his works remained anchored in classical forms and structures. In comparison to the more avant-garde approaches of Liszt and Wagner, Brahms's adherence to tradition often positioned him as a traditionalist composer rather than a revolutionary one.

Facing the contradiction between the brevity of thematic content and the largeness of formal structure, a common challenge among composers in the mid-19th century, Brahms, like the "New German School" composers such as Wagner and Liszt, found a distinctive solution. Despite not delving into dramatic or programmatic music, Brahms carved his own path mainly within traditional instrumental music genres, such as symphonies, piano works, art songs, and chamber music.

The evaluations of Brahms by music theorists like Phillipp Spitta and Heinrich Schenker also reflect his achievements in formal structure and melody. Schenker, in particular, expressed confidence in the enduring significance of Brahms's chamber music, likening its perpetual appeal to that of Beethoven's compositions. He praised Brahms's works for their splendid

[152] Schoenberg. *Brahms the Progressive*.

melodies and noted the purity and simplicity in his music, underscoring their substantial influence on the evolution of musical art.[153]

The piano assumes a multifaceted and pivotal role in chamber music compositions. As a keyboard instrument, it provides a solid harmonic foundation for chamber music works, drawing upon its extensive harmonic palette to articulate intricate chords and nuanced tonal shadings, thereby enriching the overall ensemble texture. The piano often alternates with other instruments to articulate thematic material, assuming different roles within a composition, thereby showcasing its distinctive expressive capabilities. Renowned for its collaborative prowess, the piano emerges as a vital contributor to the collective performance dynamic inherent in chamber music.

The Clarinet Sonata No. 2 in E-Flat Major, Op. 120, as examined in this study, is best understood as a duet for piano and clarinet. Piano performers, in particular, must demonstrate acute sensitivity to tempo fluctuations during the performance, maintaining precise synchronization with the clarinet while judiciously adjusting the tempo in accordance with the emotional indicators delineated in the score to convey the work's profound emotional depth. While prioritizing musical fluidity and expressiveness, piano performers must also uphold rhythmic stability to ensure clarity in the musical rendering. Skillfully managing crescendos and diminuendos, they heighten dynamic contrasts through nuanced tempo variations, while remaining attentive to the seamless tempo transitions between movements in multi-movement compositions to uphold structural coherence. Throughout this process, piano performers must also attend to the coordination of tone and dynamics to align with the timbral characteristics of the clarinet, collectively engendering auditory effects that resonate with the emotive essence of the composition. By employing these nuanced considerations and techniques, piano performers can fully realize their artistic expression in duets, collaborating synergistically with the clarinet to craft a cohesive and expressive musical narrative.

Secondly, in such duet performances, the piano plays a crucial role in expressing dynamics. Piano performers need to closely collaborate with the instrumentalists, creating balanced and layered music together. Handling dynamics not only involves reflecting the indications on the score, such as crescendos, diminuendos, and other dynamic markings, but also considering

[153] Musgrave. *A Brahms Reader*. p.238

the interplay between instruments to ensure that the piano's sound neither overwhelms nor gets overshadowed by the collaborating instrument. In certain passages, the piano may need to provide support for the main melody, while in others, it may need to highlight its own melodic line. Additionally, piano performers should use delicate touch and pedal techniques to mimic or complement the timbre of the collaborating instrument, collectively creating a musical atmosphere that meets the emotional requirements of the work. Through such discerning and precise manipulation of dynamics, pianists can realize the full expressive potential of Brahms's musical compositions in tandem with their collaborative counterparts.

Moreover, within duet performances, the timbral articulation of the piano constitutes a key artistic dimension. Pianists must adeptly modulate and align their instrument's timbre with that of the collaborating counterpart, employing precise keystroke techniques and pedal usage to achieve consonance and cohesion in the musical rendering. Throughout the performance, the piano assumes the dual responsibility of conveying the emotional nuances stipulated within the musical score, while also adjusting the brightness, resonance, and textural depth of its timbre in accordance with the structural contours and affective transitions of the composition.

For instance, the piano may be tasked with emulating the lyrical phrasing or rhythmic pulse of the partnering instrument, or providing harmonic scaffolding in select passages to augment the overall musical expressivity. Furthermore, pianists must prioritize effective communication and synchronicity with the collaborating instrument, molding the timbral palette to resonate with the prevailing emotional ethos of the piece. Through such meticulous timbral modulation, the piano in duet settings transcends its conventional role as mere accompaniment, emerging as a vital participant in the musical discourse, engaging with the partnering instrument to engender a kaleidoscopic and immersive auditory experience.

In certain contexts, the piano assumes the role of an artistic coach when collaborating with other instruments, serving as a conduit that connects performers and the musical composition itself. Beyond mere technical proficiency, piano performance in such scenarios necessitates a profound understanding of the playing techniques and expressive characteristic of their collaborators. This understanding empowers pianists to play a key role in shaping both the composition and its performance. Through detailed study and comprehension, pianists

collaborate with their counterparts to craft a cohesive and emotive musical narrative. In practical execution, the piano acts as a linchpin in amalgamating elements from instrumental, vocal, and even choreographic domains into the fabric of the piece. Through precise interpretive choices, they elucidate the underlying significance of the composition and infuse it with vibrancy. Thus, in this capacity, piano performance emerges as the guiding impetus behind the musical work, steering its trajectory towards a compelling and unified artistic expression.

In the context of the discussed piece "Sunshine Over Tashkurgan," piano accompaniment must intricately weave in the characteristic of ethnic instruments, thereby infusing the composition with a distinctive regional essence. This amalgamation necessitates not only a profound comprehension of the musical intricacies but also the establishment of a robust collaborative rapport between pianists and their counterparts, as they collectively navigate the challenges posed by the composition.

Examining the evolution of contemporary Chinese "new music," Brahms's compositions are notable for their steadfast adherence to classical conventions coupled with an exploration of profound emotional depths. The hallmark attributes of Brahms's works, such as their structural precision, harmonic sophistication, and melodic eloquence, have exerted a profound impact on the trajectory of contemporary Chinese new music composition.

Brahms's innovative musical approach primarily revolves around his techniques for thematic development. He initiates with concise musical material and progressively introduces new elements to shape themes and advance entire movements while upholding internal coherence within the composition. During the common practice period, thematic development held significant importance in music composition. Brahms carefully evolves motifs, enabling themes to organically progress within a framework of unity and contrast, thereby establishing the groundwork for subsequent musical elaborations. This compositional strategy serves as a valuable model for Chinese composers when crafting expansive musical compositions. His reverence for tradition and innovative approaches in music structures inspires Chinese composers to uphold traditional frameworks while venturing into novel musical expressions.

Furthermore, Brahms exhibits creative utilization of traditional harmonies and counterpoint, juxtaposing and sometimes subverting them to introduce fresh perspectives. His rhythmic innovations disrupt conventional accent patterns and introduce novel rhythmic structures, enhancing musical fluidity and establishing a distinct musical lexicon. This innovative spirit serves as a source of inspiration for Chinese composers exploring harmonic innovations and orchestration techniques. The complexity of Brahms's harmonic palette and the timbral variations contribute to heightened emotional expression in his music. This harmonic approach serves as a significant reference point for Chinese composers seeking to explore new harmonic possibilities.

Brahms's melodic writings are, in Heinrich Schenker's words, pure and expressive, capable of evoking profound emotional responses from listeners. This lyrical and emotive quality has exerted a positive influence on the development of melodic construction in contemporary Chinese new music compositions. Chinese composers, in their creative endeavors, prioritize the cultivation of lyrical and expressive melodies while integrating elements of traditional folk music to establish a melodic language imbued with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Additionally, Brahms's pursuit of striking a s balance between tradition and innovation in musical aesthetics serves as a source of inspiration for contemporary Chinese new music composition. Throughout the creative process, Chinese composers uphold the essence of traditional musical forms while continuously exploring novel musical idioms and expressive techniques, aiming to discover a new equilibrium between tradition and modernity.

Despite Brahms's compositions being deeply rooted in tradition, 20th-century composers began to acknowledge the independent significance of his contributions. Leveraging his historical knowledge and creative ingenuity, Brahms addressed issues of structural integrity in purely instrumental music, challenged traditional genres, unearthed their latent potential, and grappled with common challenges encountered in music composition during his era. Collectively, Brahms's musical oeuvre, distinguished by its structural sophistication, harmonic richness, melodiousness, and aesthetic sensibility, serves as a vast reservoir of resources and inspiration for contemporary Chinese new music composition.

In the early 20th century, Chinese composers initially engaged in the imitation of European compositional techniques and styles, primarily driven by educational purposes. By the mid-

20th century, this trend evolved as composers began to adopt the compositional methodologies of European Romanticism and Classicism, crafting artistic songs and instrumental pieces infused with distinct Chinese sensibilities. However, it was from the latter half of the 20th century onwards that Chinese composition witnessed its most vibrant and innovative phase.

During this period, composers asserted their individual artistic voices with greater emphasis, moving beyond mere imitation of Western paradigms to explore and devise novel musical forms rooted in both Western tradition and Chinese heritage. They integrated elements of Chinese folk music—such as melody, rhythm, mode, and traditional instrument timbres—into their compositions, thereby imbuing their works with a cultural resonance. Moreover, composers boldly embarked on cross-cultural experiments, blending Chinese and Western instrumentation and drawing inspiration from ethnic themes.

The emergence of new pedagogical institutions and the dissemination of Western music theory provided composers with invaluable opportunities for study and emulation, offering a theoretical framework for synthesizing ethnic elements into their creative output. Despite the inherent challenge of preserving ethnic authenticity amidst the assimilation of foreign musical influences, their endeavors have yielded compositions of profound significance within the annals of music history. These works not only diversify the expressive palette of Chinese music but also contribute to the global tapestry of musical innovation and creativity.

The analysis of Brahms' "Clarinet Sonata No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 120" and Chen Gang's "Sunshine Over Tashkurghan" in this research highlights significant differences in the musical composition methods employed by European and Chinese composers, despite both utilizing the same instruments – clarinet and piano. Brahms' Sonata embodies the classical sonata form, comprising three movements characterized by key modulations and thematic development. It represents a pinnacle of absolute music, where the pursuit of sonic beauty is the primary objective, detached from any explicit reference to worldly subjects or narratives.

"Sunshine Over Tashkurghan" by Chen Gang presents a programmatic approach from its inception, intertwining folk melodies and thematic sections to evoke vivid imagery of natural landscapes. This contrasts with Western compositions, such as Brahms' Sonata, which adhere

to the equal temperament system and prioritize harmonic progressions within the major-minor tonal framework.

The differences between these compositional approaches are expected, considering the distinct musical traditions and cultural backgrounds of China and the West. Chinese music, with its millennia-old tradition, places emphasis on horizontal melodies and the use of the pentatonic scale, reflecting a nuanced understanding of timbre and expressive ornamentation. In contrast, Western music, rooted in a relatively younger major-minor tonal system, tends to prioritize harmonic complexity and structural development, often employing a more mathematical approach to composition.

The differentiation between Western and Eastern compositions is further manifested in two other smaller works analyzed in this paper. In Giuseppe Ricotta's "Homage to China," the piano's role is intertwined with the clarinet melody, jointly constructing the musical framework of the piece. The piano's harmonic foundation provides a rich backdrop for the clarinet's melodic lines, while its rhythmic flexibility and dynamic variations contribute to the composition's dynamism and emotional depth. During performance, the interaction between the piano and clarinet extends beyond mere melodic echoes, encompassing the blending of timbres and the exchange of emotions.

Pianists tackling this piece must navigate technical challenges with finesse, particularly in executing rapid scales and arpeggios, to ensure the music's fluency and expressiveness. Overall, the piano's performance requirements in "Homage to China" demand a comprehensive artistic expression, calling upon pianists to possess not only exquisite technical prowess but also a profound understanding of musical details and emotional depth. Successfully interpreting this composition, which merges elements of both Eastern and Western music, necessitates a delicate approach that captures the essence of the piece's cultural homage and artistic fusion.

In another smaller work, Zhang Chao's piano composition "Norma May," the composer demonstrates a deep understanding of Chinese folk music while exploring modern musical language. This piece transcends mere technical virtuosity, serving as a fusion of cultural heritage and artistic innovation. Interpreting "Norma May" requires mastery of keyboard

touch, essential for conveying the piece's emotional depth and ethnic style. Zhang Chao employs a performance style that mimics natural phenomena like echoes in valleys, the howling of wind, bird songs, and flowing water, enriching the music's expressiveness. Performers must adeptly adjust finger pressure, wrist movement, and finger articulation to evoke these natural sounds. This demands not only technical proficiency but also a profound musical understanding to capture the essence of the composition.

Rhythmic control is paramount due to the piece's diverse and expressive rhythmic variations. Performers must execute rhythms with precision, employing various rhythmic patterns to convey the composer's emotions and establish a musical atmosphere. This necessitates a keen understanding of rhythmic dynamics and the ability to maintain stability during rapid rhythmic changes. Additionally, articulation plays a crucial role, particularly in lively passages where precise articulation enhances the music's liveliness and joyfulness. Performers must carefully regulate finger movements and pressure to produce focused timbre and impactful sound while ensuring melodic clarity.

In the climactic passages, the use of octaves and block chords produces a grandiose sonic effect. Performers must maintain stable hand positioning and employ coordinated wrist and arm movements to execute these sections. Gradually increasing force ensures clarity in the melody and richness in tone color. Precise pedal usage is equally crucial. The sustain pedal deepens the music's resonance and alters the perception of tone color. Performers should judiciously apply the sustain and soft pedals in response to emotional shifts, creating a soft, clear, and well-layered musical texture.

Interpreting "Norma May" demands more than rhythm accuracy, dynamic control, and pedal technique. It requires profound musical understanding and emotional expression. Diligent preparation and dedicated performance are essential to convey the essence of the piece authentically, allowing its ethnic characteristics and contemporary spirit to shine through.

Indeed, it appears that Western composers often prioritize the expression of their inner emotions in their works, while Chinese composers focus on depicting the beauty of the external world. Both approaches harness the power of music to convey complex human emotions and the wonders of nature, which are often challenging to articulate through words

alone. Music serves as an ideal medium for capturing these abstract concepts, transcending cultural boundaries and resonating with audiences worldwide.

Regardless of geographical location, artists across cultures utilize sound to evoke emotions, paint vivid imagery, and communicate with listeners. While cultural backgrounds and individual perspectives may influence interpretations, music remains a universal language that fosters connection and understanding among people from diverse backgrounds. Through music, composers bridge the gap between inner sentiments and external landscapes, inviting audiences to embark on a journey of exploration and reflection.

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Appendix I: Information About the CD

Zhiyuan Lu PhD recital

1. Johannes Brahms - *Sonata No. 2 in E-flat major Op. 120 for clarinet and piano*

   I. Allegro amabile 08:09’

   Il. Allegro appassionato 05:46’

   III. Andante con moto - Allegro 07:04’

2. Giuseppe Ricotta - *Homage to China* 06:37’

3. Chen Gang - *Sun Shines over Tashkurgan* 07:25’

4. Zhang Zhao - *Numa Ame* 06:45’

Pianist: Zhiyuan LU

Clarinetist: Piotr Thieu Quang

Sound Enginer: Marcin Studniarz

Recording Location: Witold Lutostawski Concert Studio of Polish Radio