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Exploring a compositional practice through the lens of The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto

Jie Hong Yang

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Exploring a Compositional Practice
Through the Lens of *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
**Bachelor of Music (Honours)**

Jonathon Jie Hong Yang

Research Supervisor: Dr. Stuart James

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Edith Cowan University
2021
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Signed: ___________________________ Date: 4th November, 2020
Acknowledgments

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Dr. Matt Styles also deserves special thanks for mentoring the entire honours cohort through the year. His constant reminders to us to breathe and to stay calm whilst maintaining perspective on the exegesis has certainly helped me stay in control. His guidance has been extremely valuable and I deeply appreciate all that he has done for everyone in the honours cohort.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and my friends who have all been very supportive of this endeavour throughout the year.
Abstract

Asian music was an important influence upon some Western composers such as Claude Debussy, Giacomo Puccini, Maurice Ravel, Henry Cowell, Oliver Messiaen, John Cage and Lou Harrison. Since the 1960s, Australian composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, Anne Boyd, Richard Meale, and Julian Yu have similarly been influenced by music of Asia. In 2007, Chou Wen-chung wrote about today’s commercially oriented ‘world music’ environment, and addressed the need for Chinese composers to provide more meaningful contribution to the musical culture by writing music informed by knowledge drawn from their cultural heritage. As an Australian born Chinese composer, this exegesis was an opportunity for me to connect with my cultural heritage. This exegesis explored a compositional practice by analysing the techniques and devices of the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto and exploring how such techniques can be employed to develop and enrich a compositional practice. The multi-method research involved firstly the analysis of the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto to establish the techniques attributed to a well known work of Chinese music. Secondly, this project involved the autoethnography and reflection over the creation of To Become Wind, a new six movement orchestral work exploring the techniques observed in the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto.
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Composers Influenced by Music of Asia

Asian music was an important influence upon some Western composers as early as the late-Romantic era. Composer Claude Debussy was famously influenced by Indonesian gamelan music. Giacomo Puccini utilised Chinese imperial hymns as well as Chinese and Japanese folk tunes. Maurice Ravel’s music was influenced by the visual imagery of Chinese and Japanese art and calligraphy. In the 20th century, composers such as Henry Cowell, Oliver Messiaen, John Cage and Lou Harrison were also drawing influence from Asian culture into their music. Since the 1960s, Australians in particular have been amongst the leading Western composers to draw influence from music of Asia. For instance, Peter Sculthorpe’s many musical influences included Japanese court-music. Japanese music was also an essential stimulus for Anne Boyd. Richard Meale’s would also draw influence from Japan for his orchestral work Clouds now and then (1969) which was based on a Japanese haiku. Many of the works by Julian Yu, an immigrant Australian composer, draw influence from his Chinese heritage. Like Julian Yu, a number of Chinese composers who studied abroad and then later immigrated (such as Chou Wen-chung, Bright Sheng, Chen Yi, Huang Ruo, Lei Liang, and Gao Ping) were also directly influenced by their upbringing with Chinese music.

1.2 Drawing Upon Cultural Heritage

In 2007, Chou Wen-chung, writes about the revival of the Chinese 文人 (philosopher-artist) concept, specifically in Chinese composers and the need to compose music informed by knowledge drawn from

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Wen-chung argues that given today’s commercially oriented ‘world music’ environment, Chinese composers need to compose music that is more identifiably Chinese in order to provide more meaningful contribution to the musical culture. While this seems antithetical to some Postmodern concepts such as multiculturalism and identity politics, the desire for composers to draw on their heritage is often strong: composers as varied as Steve Reich and John Zorn have explored their musical roots. This statement by Wen-chung partially reflects the motivation behind pursing this research topic. As a composer born in Australia of Chinese background who has become interested in connecting with his own Chinese heritage by way of developing a compositional practice, I can attest to Wen-chung’s statement. However, this exegesis seeks not to explore the creation of music that is more identifiably Chinese, but rather to create music that incorporates aspects of Chinese music to further develop and enrich a compositional practice.

1.3 Aim of this Exegesis

Existing academic sources suggest that there is a reasonable amount of research on musical works influenced by Chinese music. However there is almost no research which compliments the traditional analysis methods with a practical application, that is, new composition informed by the analysis. This exegesis fills in this gap of knowledge as it documents through autoethnographic method, the steps and decisions made to compose a new work influenced by Chinese music.

1.4 Rationale

The exegesis was primarily focused around one research aim. The research question for this exegesis was as follows; what are the compositional techniques and devices explored by analysis of the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto, and how can such techniques be explored to develop and enrich a compositional practice? Furthermore, I hoped that through this process that I would gain a greater understanding of Chinese music, and to connect with my cultural heritage as an Australian composer of Chinese background. Due to the time constraints and inherent limitations of an honours exegesis, only

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one multi movement work was chosen for analysis; *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. The decision to analyse *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* ultimately came down to score availability. The work is well known in Chinese orchestral repertoire, as well as being a representative work of a portion of the Chinese musical idiom. Due to time constraints and limitations of an honours exegesis, only movements one, two, and three of the concerto were analysed. The first three movements were chosen out of the available seven because they were varied enough in tempo, structure, instrumentation, and duration to offer a reasonable representation of the work as a whole.

My compositional practice primarily involves writing orchestral music. Over the last four years, I have written over 90 pieces of music and have had my original compositions performed by the Perth Symphony Orchestra, the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts Symphony Orchestra, and the Defying Gravity Percussion Ensemble. As I have had a lot of experience composing for orchestra, it makes experimentation and development of my style for that medium more easily achievable within the limitations of an honours exegesis as I approach this project with pre-existing understanding and knowledge of composing for orchestra. As such, the works that I analysed to draw influence from were naturally Chinese instrumental works, or works that prominently featured instrumental music writing.

### 1.5 Defining Chinese Music

Chinese music is incredibly rich and diverse, and since the country is composed of 56 ethnic groups, it is difficult to define specifically what Chinese music is. The culture and traditions across the ethnic groups can be extremely varied and as such, there is no singular defining musical practice or characteristic when referring to Chinese music. This exegesis analyses the Chinese piece *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* in order to employ it as a source of inspiration for the creation of a new orchestral work. The aim is to create new music inspired and informed by the practices observed in this single piece of Chinese work. This is not to be confused with any attempt to create music that is representative of Chinese music as a whole.

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14 Three works were originally planned to be analysed to offer a slightly more comprehensive survey of Chinese music but because of the limitations of an honours exegesis, the number of works was reduced from three to one.
15 Ideally, all seven movements would have been analysed, however this was not possible due to the word limit.
1.6 Methodology

This multi-method research project involves both systematic music analysis and practice based research.

The analysis of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* was split into the following categories; structural analysis, melodic analysis, harmonic analysis, and identification of recurring compositional techniques. For the melodic analysis, set theory was used as a means of identifying the use of pentatonic scales. Set theory requires first for the pitch class set of any given melody to be identified. The set must then be converted into its prime form so that it can be cross-checked with Allen Forte’s categorisations of prime forms.\(^{16}\) The harmonic analysis employs Roman numeral analysis as documented by Walter Piston in which chords are represented by a Roman numeral.\(^{17}\) For the benefit of the reader, the score of the first three movements of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* is supplied in Appendix A.

The analysis was then used to inform the composition of a new orchestral work, *To Become Wind*. The first step in the composition process was making a rough plan.\(^{18}\) The next step was devising a narrative that the composition would reflect. For this new work, the narrative was loosely inspired by the *Butterfly Lovers* tragedy.\(^{19}\) Next was composing the main thematic material to represent characters in the story. The themes were then expanded, developed, and finally orchestrated. The compositional process was informed by the analysis of the structure, harmony, melody, and compositional techniques in the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. Throughout the composition process, every compositional choice and a rationale was documented. For the benefit of the reader, the full score can be found in Appendix B.

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\(^{18}\) Details of this plan can be found in section 4.2.1.

\(^{19}\) Details of this narrative can be found in section 4.2.2.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Existing academic research suggests that there is a reasonable amount of research analysing musical works that are influenced by Chinese music. For instance, Brenna Weng Han Wee’s masters thesis documents an analysis of the works of Australian Chinese composer Julian Yu that explores the Chinese musical influences from Yu’s heritage. However, there is almost no research which employs an ethnographic methodology to analyse the ways in which a music work was influenced by Chinese music. Presently, the only exception is a 2017 journal article by Maria Grenfell and Deng Shan titled *Recomposing*’ unpublished Chinese folk songs into New Australian compositions for pipa and piano. This journal article documents the collaboration between Australian composer Maria Grenfell, and Chinese pianist Shan Deng and her father Wei Deng (who is a pipa specialist), and their project to compose new Australian work directly informed by Western and Chinese performing traditions. This source is similar to this exegesis in that it is also documenting the creation of a new Australian musical work influenced by Chinese music. While Grenfell and Shan’s research is informed by the collaboration between different performance practices, this exegesis is instead driven by analysis of existing works.

Due to the limited number of sources which employ ethnographic methodology, the following literature review will primarily cover research that only examined the ways in which composers were influenced by Chinese music through analysis.

2.1 Influence of Chinese Music on Western Composers

One of the earlier examples of a composer drawing influence from the music of China can be found in composer Giacomo Puccini’s opera *Turandot*. William Ashbrook and Harold Powers book *Puccini’s* *Turandot*: The End of the Great Tradition. Princeton Studies in Opera is an in depth study of Puccini’s opera. Two chapters of the book analyse the opera and examine his compositional process, and more importantly, the influences that Puccini drew upon, addressing the usage of Chinese ritual and folk

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music. While the work does heavily feature Chinese culture, the book is more focused on examining the work in the larger context of opera, and not a fine analysis into the specific ways in which Chinese music was a major source of influence of the opera.

Composer Chou Wen-chung offers a more specific look into the influence of Chinese music on composers. An article by Wen-chung in 1971 titled *Asian concepts and twentieth-century Western composers* offers a broad analysis of ways in which 20th century Western composers have been influenced by music from various countries in Asia. Whilst broad and addressing multiple cultural influences, the Wen-chung’s article offers a good starting point into the examination of Chinese music’s influence on composers. Chou Wen-chung is then later the subject of a book written by Peter Chang in 2006. This book, titled *Chou Wen-chung: The life and work of a contemporary Chinese-born American composer* explores the effects and impact that Wen-chung had on 20th century composers as a champion of musical synthesis whom challenged the American music community to find value in integrating Eastern elements into musical works.

Joseph Lam’s musicology report in 1996 titled *Report from Cincinnati: Encountering Chinese-American Music and Culture in Cincinnati* details observations made at a festival of Sino-American music in Cincinnati, America from the 28th to the 31st of March in 1996. Lam specifically reports on the ways in which the festival reflected musical and social dynamics of Asian-American community, and “the integration of Chinese music and culture in a western context”. While not directly speaking of Chinese music’s influence on composers, this source is indicative and supportive of Chou Wen-chung’s findings from his 1971 article as the report notes the undeniable effects that Chinese music has had on Western culture. In a more direct examination of ways in which Chinese music has influenced Western composers, a journal article by Andrew Granade in 2010 titled *Rekindling Ancient Values: The Influence of Chinese Music and Aesthetics on Harry Partch* examines the influence that Chinese music had on the works of composer Harry Partch by surveying and reviewing Partch's published writings, along with unpublished manuscripts, letters, and interviews.

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2.2 Influence of Chinese Music on Composers of Chinese Heritage

According to composer Chou Wen-chung, in recent years there has been an increase in Chinese composers who have looked to their cultural heritage to draw knowledge and inspiration, a movement that he refers to as the the revival of the Chinese 文人 (philosopher-artist). This sentiment is reflected by Australian composer Julian Yu who in an interview with Martin Greet in 1999, addresses inheriting one's cultural background, and his compositional structure and approach as informed by his Chinese heritage. Chou Wen-Chung’s observation is further supported by a doctoral dissertation in 2008. Written by Lei Weng and titled Influences of Chinese Traditional Cultures on Chinese Composers in the United States since the 1980s, as Exemplified in Their Piano Works, the dissertation analyses ways in which Chinese composers such as Bright Sheng, Chen Yi, Huang Ruo, Lei Liang, and Gao Ping, all of whom moved to the United States since the 1980s, and were influenced by traditional Chinese music. The works of composers Bright Sheng and Chen Yi again become the subject of another research conducted by Shelley Smith in 2012. Smith’s treatise similarly analyses select Chinese aesthetics and music traditions evident in three concerto for flute and orchestra (one by Bright Sheng, one by Chen Yi, and another by fellow countryman Zhou Long).

2.3 Summary

Based on the investigation into this topic, it is evident that there is substantial research examining the ways in which composers were influenced by Chinese music, with the research primarily conducted by a third party, analysing the works of composers. With the exception of Maria Grenfell and Deng Shan’s journal article, there almost no research which documents first hand how a composer has specifically been influenced by Chinese music. As such, this exegesis will add to this scarce pool of research.

Chapter Three: Analysis

3.1 Brief Background Information of the Chosen Works

*The Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* (梁祝小提琴协奏曲) was composed by He Zhan-hao (何占豪) and Chen Gang (陈钢) in 1959. The concerto was a six month long collaboration between the two composers while they were still students at Shanghai Conservatory School of Music, and purposefully employed Western instrumentation in a Chinese musical context to allow more Chinese people to experience aspects of Western music. The concerto was premiered in the same year it was composed by the then 18 year old violinist Yu Lina in Shanghai. The performance was part of the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. As suggested by the title, the work is about *The Butterfly Lovers*, which is a Chinese romantic tragedy about the two lovers, Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai. The legend goes that Zhu Yingtai, while disguised as a man in order to pursue academic studies at a time when women were denied scholarly education, falls in love with fellow scholar Liang Shanbo. The latter initially does not realise that Zhu is a lady but eventually discovers the truth, and the two make a vow to be together. However, this discovery happens too late as Zhu is already betrothed to another man, which leaves Liang heartbroken leading to his illness and eventual death. The legend concludes with Zhu joining Liang in his grave on the day of her wedding, with the two emerging as spirits in the form of butterflies.

3.2 Analysis of *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*

The following analysis is divided into four sections; structural analysis, melodic analysis, harmonic analysis, and compositional techniques.

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
3.2.1 Structural Analysis

The *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* employ a multi-movement structure, with a variety of forms applied across the individual movements. The *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* departs from the traditional three movement concerto structure by splitting the work into seven movements as evident in the score. The movements of the concerto are shown in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Key signature</th>
<th>Time Signature</th>
<th>Time Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adagio Cantabile</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 50 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>E Major, A Major, D Major</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 152 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio assai doloroso</td>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 88 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesante - Più mosso - Duramente</td>
<td>C# minor, D Major, Bb Major, F Major, G Major, C Major</td>
<td>2/4, 3/4, 4/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 60, \text{#} = 104, \text{#} = 138, \text{#} = 142, \text{#} = 126, \text{#} = 132, )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagrimoso</td>
<td>Eb Major</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 48 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presto resoluto</td>
<td>Eb Major, A Major, E Major, G Major</td>
<td>2/4, 1/4, 4/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 160, \text{#} = 54, \text{#} = 50 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio Cantabile</td>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>4/4, 2/4</td>
<td>( \text{#} = 48, \text{#} = 56, \text{#} = 72 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section of the analysis will document the structure of two movements from the *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* that acted as a source of inspiration for the new orchestral work. Adagio Cantabile (first movement) is loosely based on the traditional sonata form structure which is the customary form used for the first movement of a concerto. The movement begins with an introduction prior to the violin solo entry which quickly establishes the main theme of the work. This main theme can be interpreted as the first subject which is a characteristic of the sonata form. The movement also makes use of a cadenza for the solo violin, which is a common characteristic of the first movement of violin concertos. However, the similarities stop here. The movement does not establish a second subject, nor does it modulate to the dominant key at any point during the movement. Furthermore, the cadenza is placed at the end of the movement, rather than the after the development section. Incidentally the first

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does not have a development section. However there is a recapitulation section before the cadenza which sees the return of the first subject.

The second movement, an Allegro, is structured loosely around the rondo form. The movement can be divided into the following sections;

Introduction | A1 | A2 | B | A | C | A | coda

• The introduction is from bar 51 at rehearsal mark 2 (page 9 of the score) and ends at bar 60.
• Section A1 is from bars 60 to 72, with A2 from bars 73 to 84.
• Section B is from bar 85 at rehearsal mark 3 and ends at 108.
• Section A returns at bar 109 and ends at bar 120.
• Section C, which is significantly longer than all the other sections, is from bar 121 to 207.
• Section A returns for the final time from bars 208 to 231.
• The coda is from 232 to the end of the movement to bar 243.

This particular layout was a key source of inspiration when composing the third movement of the new orchestral work discussed in the following chapter.

3.2.2 Melodic Analysis

An analysis of the melodic content in the *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* reveals that it is predominantly pentatonic in nature, with occasional uses of notes outside of this scale. The pentatonic scale is a well known characteristic of Chinese music, and the melodies found in the concerto are a testament to this. A lesser known aspect of the Chinese pentatonic system is that the scale has modes, each labeled with their own name. According to Han Kuo-huang’s translation of Ho Lu-Ying’s journal article *On Chinese Scales and National Modes*, the modes of the pentatonic scale were established by Li Yinhai.\(^{37}\) Assuming that the first mode is the notes C-D-E-G-A, the next mode would then begin on D, and so on and so forth. There are a total of five modes and they are named; Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zhi, and Yu respectively.\(^{38}\) Table 2 outlines these five pentatonic modes and contextualises them using set theory.

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.
The following three examples are of pentatonic melodies taken from the each of the first three movements of the concerto that have been analysed to determine which pentatonic mode is being used.

Figure 1 below is an excerpt from the first movement of the concerto when the violin solo enters with the main theme at bar 12. The melody in Figure 1 of *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* utilises the pitch class set {2, 4, 7, 9, 11}. This particular set in its prime form can be understood as T((0, 2, 4, 7, 9), 2) = [02479]. Allen Forte categorises this particular prime form as a set-class of cardinality 5 (pentachord) (5-35). There is one instance of F# that appears that extends this pitch class to {2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11} of set cardinality 6 and categorised as (6-35). However, the F# in context appears only once, and may be understood as outlier, possibly ornamental or used as a neighbour note to the former pitch or the following. This melody is categorically understood as using the third Jiao pentatonic mode.

![Figure 1](image-url)

**FIGURE 1**
He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*, first movement, bars 12-15. Excerpt from original score: example of a pentatonic melody in the main theme as played by the solo violin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Interval series</th>
<th>Pitch Class set</th>
<th>Prime Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gong</td>
<td>M2, M2, m3, M2, m3</td>
<td>(0, 2, 4, 7, 9)</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shang</td>
<td>M2, m3, M2, M2</td>
<td>(2, 4, 7, 9, 0) = T((0, 2, 5, 7, 10), 2)</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiao</td>
<td>m3, M2, M2, M2</td>
<td>(4, 7, 9, 0, 2) = T((0, 3, 5, 8, 10), 4)</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi</td>
<td>M2, M2, m3</td>
<td>(7, 9, 0, 2, 4) = T((0, 2, 5, 7, 9), 7)</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu</td>
<td>m3, M2, M2, M2</td>
<td>(9, 0, 2, 4, 7) = T((0, 3, 5, 7, 10), 9)</td>
<td>[02479]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following three examples are of pentatonic melodies taken from the each of the first three movements of the concerto that have been analysed to determine which pentatonic mode is being used.

Figure 2 is another example of the usage of the pentatonic scale is from the second movement of the concerto, again in the solo violin part. The melody uses the pitch class set A = {1, 4, 6, 8, 11}. As
the harmonic texture underpinning this excerpt is based around a key centre of E, and we can recognise
the melody is in the Gong pentatonic mode (0, 2, 4, 7, 9), where this is equivalent to the pitch class set A
within the key centre of E. That is (0, 2, 4, 7, 9) = T(A, -4). The prime form of A outlines the pentatonic

[Diagram of musical notes]

FIGURE 2
He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto, second movement, bars 59-70. Excerpt from original score: example of a pentatonic melody as played by the solo violin.

scale [02479] and is classified by Forte as (5-35) with a set cardinality of 5 (pentachord). The use of two
single instances of the notes A and D# extend the pitch class set to (1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11) which in its prime
form is understood as [013568A], classified as (7-35) with a set cardinality of 7.

The last example of the usage of the pentatonic scale in the concerto is from the third movement.
Played by the solo violin part, the excerpt shown in Figure 3 below uses the pitch class set (0, 3, 5, 7,
10) which in its prime form is also [02479], which is categorised once again as set-class of cardinality 5
(pentachord) (5-35). The use of F and D extends this pitch class to (0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9) of set cardinality 7
and categorised as (7-27). This melody is in the fifth Yu pentatonic mode.

[Diagram of musical notes]

FIGURE 3
He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto, third movement, bars 244-252. Excerpt from original score: example of a pentatonic melody as played by violin solo.
3.2.3. Harmonic Analysis

The harmonies presented in the *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* were of particular interest from a compositional perspective when analysing this work. Whilst listening through the composition, a number of moments in the work caught my attention and upon further inspection, I found that the harmonic structure was the sources of the peculiarities. This section of the analysis will only analyse harmonic progressions from the first and third movements of the violin concerto.

The first movement of the *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* employs a particular chord progression during the introduction section that is harmonically ambiguous. In the context of the concerto, this chord progression functions as a way for the work to build up tension before the entry of the violin solo. Beginning in bar six and ending at bar eleven, the chord progression is as follows:

\[
\text{I} \ | \ V \ | \ II_7 \ | \ vii_7 \ | \ iii \ | \ V \ | \ I \ | \ vi \ | \ \text{Vc} \ | \ II \ | \ V \ | \ I
\]

The segment of the score that was analysed has been shown in Figure 4. The scores have been annotated with the chord progression. This chord progression was analysed and documented based on the assumption that there were no modulations during the section. However the same chord progression can be interpreted as possessing a number of key changes when analysed from an alternative point of view, which can be used to explain how this chord progression creates harmonic ambiguity. This segment establishes the tonal centre as G major, but modulates to D major in the second bar. It then returns to G major as a transient tonal centre in the fifth bar, before setting up D major as a perceived tonal at the end of section. This series of key changes has been mapped below.

\[
\text{G Major: } \frac{I}{V} | \frac{II_7}{V} | \frac{vii_7}{iii} | \frac{V}{I} | \frac{vi}{Vc} | \frac{II}{I} | \frac{V}{I} | \frac{I}{|} \\
\text{D Major: } \frac{I}{V} | \frac{V7}{vii_7} | \frac{iii}{vi} | \frac{I}{I} | \frac{vi}{Vc} | \frac{le}{I} | \frac{V}{I} | \frac{I}{|}
\]

The quick switches between G major and D major in a short span of time create harmonic ambiguity. This ambiguity is achieved through the insertion of a ‘false’ perfect cadence that lands on the second last chord of the progression (putting the perfect cadence in D Major). This perfect cadence is labeled as ‘false’ because the real perfect cadence occurs directly afterwards. The ‘false’ cadence creates the false

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sensation that the phrase has finished on D major, however the real perfect cadence afterwards upsets that ending and reveals that the music is actually back in G major. This key change is masked by the melody because the melody makes it sound like the tonic is G despite the chord progression. This is achieved by having the melody emphasise or gravitate towards G and setting it up as the tonic.

The third movement of the *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto* similarly makes use of an interesting chord progression at the very beginning of the movement. This particular chord progression is of interest because it is being used to re-harmonise the main thematic material (played in the solo violin) to similarly create harmonic ambiguity and unrest. Beginning in bar 244 and ending at bar 251 the chord progression is as follows:

\[
i7d \mid vii7d \ i \mid VII \ ii7 \ V \|
\]
The segment of the score that was analysed has been shown in Figure 5 below. The score has been annotated with the chord progression. The sense of unrest is achieved by harmonic ambiguity of the chord progression which floats between major and minor tonalities. As shown in the chord progression, two of the chords are in 1st inversion. The voicing of these inverted chords create an instability due to their resemblance to other chords. For example, the first chord of the progression i7d (in C# minor) shares almost the same notes as chord Ic (A major), with only one note difference. This creates ambiguity because the chord resembles both a major and minor sounding chord. Furthermore, these inverted chords are harmonised in this way to allow for the bass line to follow a descending stepwise motion which conflicts with the harmonisation of the chord. As shown in the score of Figure 5 the bass line moves from E to D, and then C# to B. This descending bass line also adds to the harmonic ambiguity as it resembles a descending A major scale yet is harmonised with chords from C# minor.

![Chord Progression](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**FIGURE 5**
He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s *Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*, third movement, bars 244-251. Piano reduction of original score: the beginning of the movement which uses a harmonically ambiguous chord progression to create unrest.

### 3.2.4 Compositional Devices

This section will cover two recurring techniques observed across the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. These particular techniques are; imitation and octave doubling. Imitation is when a melodic phrase is
repeated by a different voice following the initial statement of that phrase. Octave doubling is when a melody is repeated simultaneously on a different voice typically an octave above or below the original melody. These techniques appeared prominently throughout the concerto and were utilised during the composition of the new orchestral work.

Imitation appears prominently throughout *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* and is a notable characteristic of this work. One example of imitation from each of the first three movements of the concerto are documented below. The first example from the first movement is found from bar 29 to 31. As shown in Figure 6 below, the melody played by the oboes is imitated by the flutes in the next bar.

![Figure 6](image)

**FIGURE 6**
*He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*, first movement, bars 29-31. Excerpt from original score: example of imitation.

The second example is from the second movement and is located from bar 232 to 234. The flutes play the melody in bar 232 and are imitated by the clarinets one bar later in 234, which is shown in Figure 7.

![Figure 7](image)

**FIGURE 7**
*He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*, second movement, bars 230-235. Excerpt from original score: example of imitation.

The third and final example comes from the third movement and is found from bar 264 to 267. The melody is first played by the oboes, and then imitated by the clarinets as shown in Figure 8.

![Figure 8](image)

**FIGURE 8**
*He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto*, third movement, bars 263-267. Excerpt from original score: example of imitation.

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Octave doubling is another notable characteristic of *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* and appears through the work on various occasions. One example of octave doubling from each of the first three movements of the concerto is documented below. An example of octave doubling in the first movement is in the string section from bar 43 to 45. As shown in Figure 9, violin 1 and 2 are playing a melody at the same octave whilst the violas and the cello double it at 1 and 2 octaves below respectively.

An example of octave doubling in the second movement is found from bar 93 to 98. As shown in Figure 10 below, the string section is once again playing this instance of octave doubling, with the violins and violas playing the same melody whilst cello doubles it one octave below.
The third example of octave doubling is located in the third movement from bars 255 to 258. As shown in Figure 11, violin 1 and 2 are doubling the violin solo one octave below. Simultaneously, viola is playing a separate melody which is doubled by cello an octave lower.

FIGURE 11
He Zhan-hao & Chen Gang’s Butterfly Lover’s Violin Concerto, second movement, bars 255-258. Excerpt from original score: example of octave doubling.
4.1 Overview of the New Work

A new orchestral work was composed as a direct result of this practice based research. Titled To Become Wind, this orchestral suite is a six movement orchestral work composed with composition decisions informed directly from the analysis conducted on the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto. The work is quasi-programatic and tells a story that is loosely inspired by the Butterfly Lovers tragedy⁴¹. The plot of the story will be elaborated on later in this exegesis.

4.2 Analysing the New Orchestral Work

The following section of the exegesis will cover the various steps of the composition process for my new orchestral work To Become Wind, explaining and analysing my compositional choices and revealing how it has incorporated aspects of Chinese music. The analysis is divided into: planning, movement breakdown and plot synopsis, thematic material, development of themes, and compositional techniques.

4.2.1 Planning

Prior to the commencement of the composition process, a brief plan was created which documented some of the intentions for this work. The plan was not meant to be elaborate or thought out in great detail, as my composition process is often spontaneous and an overly elaborate plan would leave no flexibility for spontaneity. As such, the planning of the composition is as follows:

(a) Time signature: 4/4 (may included some changing time signature to 3/4 or 5/4)

(b) Duration: between 5 to 7 min

(c) Structure: Slow gradual opening, exciting middle, big grand ending

(d) Plans for the sections:
   • Slow section should feature a erhu⁴² melody which is either doubled or imitated by other instruments

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⁴¹ The Butterfly Lovers tragedy is summarised in 3.1 Brief Background Information of the Chosen Works
⁴² Erhu is a traditional Chinese stringed instrument that has two strings and is played with a bow. For more information see Huehns, Colin. "The 'Early Music' Erhu." The Galpin Society Journal 54 (2001): 56-61.
• Make use of *dizi*\(^{43}\) and *guzheng*\(^{44}\) in a non-soloist role

• *Pipa*\(^{45}\) used as main melodic instrument during exciting middle section

• Grand ending to feature full orchestra

For the most part the plan was adhered to during the composition of the new work. The significant change of the plan was that rather than write a through-composed work with three sections, it become a six movement work, and the instrumentation of *dizi* and *guzheng* in a non-soloist role was changed to *pipa*.

### 4.2.2 Movement Breakdown and Plot Synopsis

The composition was originally meant to be a through-composed work that was divided into three sections. The sections were not intended to be discrete and separate, but rather sections that flowed into one another. The decision to change the work to a multi-movement composition occurred towards the end of the composition when I found that it was becoming quite difficult to join up each of the sections in a smooth and organic fashion. Furthermore, the work was also beginning to feel stretched and needlessly bloated. Upon review of the material, I felt that it would be appropriate and fitting to imitate *The Butterfly Lovers Concerto* and similarly separate the composition into distinct movements.

*To Become Wind* is divided into six movements. Each movement represents different moments of the story in a chronological fashion. Table 2 on the following page documents the programme note and plot synopses of each of the movements, detailing what each movement is about and its function. Almost all of the material was composed by the time I decided to split the work into six movements, so it was only a matter of reorganising the sections.

The original opening of the composition remained as the first movement because it contained the most completed iteration of the main theme. This section needed to be placed at the beginning to ensure that when the main theme returned in different movements later, listeners would be able to identify the thematic material.

The second movement was originally part of the first section, however is was separated and re-purposed as the second movement due to it containing a new melodic idea. This second movement was used to clearly establish this new melody as a new theme. The second movement was originally

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\(^{43}\) *Dizi* is a traditional Chinese flute.

\(^{44}\) *Guzheng* is a traditional Chinese zither.

\(^{45}\) *Pipa* is a traditional Chinese lute.
The Introduction sets up the scene and tone of the composition going forward. *Call to the Wind* is representative of the male protagonist. The erhu melody is the man’s theme and is the tune that he plays on his erhu atop a mountain overlooking the valley. The tune is full of yearning and is meant to represent him calling out across the valley in hopes of connecting with someone.

The erhu melody is heard by a wind spirit referred to as the Lady Feng. (*Feng* or 風, is wind in Chinese). *Call to the Wind* is meant to be the man calling to her, the Lady ‘Wind’. This section introduces and establishes the second theme representing the lady.

This movement is quick and upbeat to represent the excitement of the dance, and makes use of both themes, alternating between the two to represent the man and the lady interacting with one another.

This movement employs a stripped back instrumentation to reflect the loneliness of the man. The Lady Feng has passed on and returned to being a wind spirit. The flute solo is meant to capture the sorrow and sadness of the man, with dissonance in the harmony representing the turmoil in his heart.

This section is meant to describe the man coming to the decision to let go and leave behind all his earthly desires, and to join the lady as a wind spirit himself. The section features the themes and develops them to reflect the change and transformation that the man goes through.

This section is a representation of the man and the lady reunited together as wind. The main theme returns in full as a reprise of the first movement. The thicker orchestration is to capture the grandeur of the wind whisking through the grand valley.

The third movement was composed separately from the whole work and was intended to be integrated into the composition. I encountered significant issues with the integration of this section as I

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**TABLE 3: Movement Breakdown and Plot Synopsis of To Become Wind**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement Number</th>
<th>Movement Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 1</strong></td>
<td>Introduction / Call to the Wind</td>
<td><em>The Introduction</em> sets up the scene and tone of the composition going forward. <em>Call to the Wind</em> is representative of the male protagonist. The erhu melody is the man’s theme and is the tune that he plays on his erhu atop a mountain overlooking the valley. The tune is full of yearning and is meant to represent him calling out across the valley in hopes of connecting with someone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 2</strong></td>
<td>The Lady Feng</td>
<td>The erhu melody is heard by a wind spirit referred to as the Lady Feng. (<em>Feng</em> or 風, is wind in Chinese). <em>Call to the Wind</em> is meant to be the man calling to her, the Lady ‘Wind’. This section introduces and establishes the second theme representing the lady.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 3</strong></td>
<td>Dancing with the Wind</td>
<td>This movement is quick and upbeat to represent the excitement of the dance, and makes use of both themes, alternating between the two to represent the man and the lady interacting with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 4</strong></td>
<td>Windless Nights</td>
<td>This movement employs a stripped back instrumentation to reflect the loneliness of the man. The Lady Feng has passed on and returned to being a wind spirit. The flute solo is meant to capture the sorrow and sadness of the man, with dissonance in the harmony representing the turmoil in his heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 5</strong></td>
<td>Shedding your Earthly Tether</td>
<td>This section is meant to describe the man coming to the decision to let go and leave behind all his earthly desires, and to join the lady as a wind spirit himself. The section features the themes and develops them to reflect the change and transformation that the man goes through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement 6</strong></td>
<td>To Become Wind</td>
<td>This section is a representation of the man and the lady reunited together as wind. The main theme returns in full as a reprise of the first movement. The thicker orchestration is to capture the grandeur of the wind whisking through the grand valley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
felt that this was too distinct from the others. This was resolved once it was decided that the sections would instead be discrete movements. The third movement was placed after the establishment of the two themes because it features both themes, which would only be recognisable after they were established.

The fourth movement was an entirely new section that was added after the decision to change the work to a multi-movement composition. It was added to serve as contrast against the other more instrumentally dense sections of the adjacent movements through a reduced instrumentation.

The fifth movement was originally placed right after the second movement, however I felt that an another slow section right after a comparatively slow section was making the work feel too slow. Moving this slow section towards the end and including some contrasting movements in between (the third and fourth movement) were successful in rectifying this issue.

The sixth and final movement was lifted from the end of the second movement and expanded upon so that it would function as a finale to the composition.

4.2.3 Thematic Material

As previously mentioned in section 4.3.2, To Become Wind uses thematic material to represent each of the two characters in the story; one theme for the man, and one theme for the Lady Feng. The use of thematic material as a musical means to represent a character or idea is called a leitmotif, and is a technique employed regularly in the compositions of Romantic period composers of the likes of Richard Strauss, Richard Wagner, and Franz Liszt. To Become Wind honours that tradition by similarly using leitmotifs to represent the two main characters.

The main theme representing the character of the man (see Figure 12) is first played in full on the erhu in the first movement after the introduction section from bar 9 to the end of the movement at bar 18. The instrument of the erhu was used to represent the man’s theme because I felt that the uniquely shrill timbre of the erhu was equipped for conveying the sense of yearning. The prominent use of 5/4 in this instance of the theme is used to convey the feeling of being alone, and is achieved by relying on the 5/4 time signature to create an irregular sense of phrasing. This irregularity in the phrasing is because the bars are not an even length, making it disrupted or extended and creating a sensation of space. This

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48 Ibid.
theme is composed in the fifth Yu pentatonic mode, an example of which can be found in Figure 3. Similar to that example, the melody in Figure 12 utilises the pitch class set (1, 4, 6, 9, 11). This particular set in its prime form can be understood as [02479]. Allen Forte categorises this particular prime form as a set-class of cardinality 5 (pentachord) (5-35). There are two instance of G# that appears that extends this pitch class to (0, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9) of set cardinality 6 and categorised as (6-32). This particular pentatonic mode was used for the man’s theme because it is also the minor pentatonic scale, which gives the melody a darker, sadder tonality to reflect the internal pain and loneliness felt by the man.

The Lady Feng’s theme is introduced in the second movement. The theme is divided amongst the woodwind section, with one instrument playing part of the theme at a time. Throughout the movement, the theme is played by these instruments in the following order; flute, bassoon, and oboe. The decision to divided the theme between three instruments was to create a sense of flexibility by having the material move between instruments in order to reflect the elegant and graceful nature of the lady. Having the theme played predominantly by woodwind instruments was to reflect the Lady Feng’s name, as well as her identity as a wind spirit (see Table 1: …To Become Wind). Only a portion of the thematic material is annotated and shown below in Figure 13 as this is the most recurring and notable part of the theme. Figure 13 below is the opening phrase of the theme, and is first played by the flute.
The remainder of the theme appears very infrequently throughout the composition and will be referred to on a case by case basis. The melody in Figure 13 also utilises the pitch class set (1, 4, 6, 9, 11), making its prime form [02479] which is categorised as a set-class of cardinality 5 (pentachord) (5-35). This melody is composed in the first Gong pentatonic mode (more commonly known as the major pentatonic scale) and is employed for the Lady Feng’s theme to reflect her more cheery and bright personality.

4.2.4 Development of Themes

This section of the exegesis will cover all the instances that the two themes appear across the entire work. Each instance will be analysed to examine how it differs from the original statement of the themes, to explore the reasoning behind the variations to the theme, and to explain how it reflects the changes to the characters and the plot development. This section of the exegesis is divided into six sub-sections, one for each of the six movements.

Movement 1 - Introduction/ Call to the Wind

As previously explained in the 4.2.3 Thematic Material, the first movement contains the first appearance of the main theme representing the character of the man, and is played in its entirety on the erhu. This particular instance of the theme has already been explored in significant depth.

Movement 2 - The Lady Feng

The second movement establishes the second theme representing the character of the Lady Feng. This particular instance of the theme has also already been explored in significant depth in 4.2.3 Thematic Material section of this exegesis.

Movement 3 - Dancing with the Wind

The third movement employs the two themes throughout, both in various states of variation. As previously mentioned, the appearance of both themes is representative of the two characters interacting
with one another. In the context of the plot, the alternation between the two themes is symbolic of the two characters dancing with one another.

The main theme, which represent the character of the man, appears prominently in the first and third section of this movement. The main theme is adapted at the beginning of the movement for the pipa as a quick upbeat melody. The fast melody shown below in Figure 14 is reflective of the fast paced action of the two characters as they dance. The first four notes of this melody are a references the main theme because the notes E-D#-E-B, share the same intervallic relationship as the first four notes of the original main theme (which are A-G#-A-E). This melody line is then imitated on erhu right after pipa finishes playing it, once again referencing the main theme in the first four notes. At the same time that the erhu is playing the melody, piano also plays the same four referential notes in the right hand. As shown in Figure 15 below, this piano gesture is the first four notes of the pipa and erhu melody but rhythmically augmented to slow it down in order to make a more direct reference to the main theme.

Piano then carries on referencing the main theme after this at bar 15. As shown in Figure 16 below, the piano is once again playing the same four referential notes, but this time in a more melodic capacity (the referential notes have been annotated in the Figure 16). This gesture is imitated by the harp right afterwards at bar 19, similarly referencing the main theme. These appearances and references to the main theme are then repeated in the third section of the movement. Because this movement is in ABA ternary form, the first and third sections are (almost) the same, and thus employ the thematic material in the same way.

The second theme, representative of the Lady Feng, is also present in the third movement. The
references and instances of the second theme appear exclusively in the middle (B) section of the movement. The second theme makes its first prominent appearance in the third movement at bar 26, where it is played on the pipa. As evident in Figure 17, the melody in the pipa is almost exactly the same as the melody from the second movement. The only difference, aside from the obvious change of A major to E major, is the slight intervallic alteration from a minor 3rd to a Perfect 4th. Figure 17 has been annotated to show this difference. This particular variation of the second theme is imitated by the first violins at bar 31 (and doubled at the same time by the flute), only this time it is rhythmically augmented so that the every note is doubled in length. The same intervallic change from a perfect 4th to a minor 3rd is also used here as well.

The final instance of the second theme is from bar 35 to 38, when the entire string section plays the same melody line at different octaves. This melody is a quotation of a part of the second theme and similarly functions as a representation of the Lady Feng. The melody as it appears in the third movement has been transposed from the original A major to E major, and rhythmically augmented by doubling the value of every note. Figure 18 shows how this particular melody compares to the original statement of the theme and has been annotated with set theory to show how the melody has been quoted.
At the same time that this melody is being played in the string section, the flute plays a counter melody that is a rhythmic variation of the pipa melody, which by extension means that it is also a reference to the main theme. The rhythmic variation has been employed here to slow down the melody so that it matches the rhythmic speed of the string melody. This counter melody is shown alongside the original pipa melody in the Figure 19 to demonstrate the rhythmic variation. The Figure has also been annotated with the pitch class set of each mode to show how the melody has been partially quoted.

Movement 4 - Windless Nights

This section makes no reference to either theme, which was an intentional compositional choice to represent the plot point of the passing of the Lady Feng. The lack of the second theme is symbolic of the Lady Feng’s absence, with the lack of the main theme representative of how the man is lost and confused without her. The flute melody in this extremely short nine bar movement was composed to uniquely represent the melancholy of the man.
Movement 5 - Shedding Your Earthly Tether

The fifth movement sees the return of both themes. The movement opens with the second theme played on the clarinets (see Figure 20). Here, the melody is re-harmonised to re-contextualise the theme in a minor tonality to represent the sadness that the man feels about losing the Lady Feng. A small part of the second theme is quoted later at bar 6 (also on the clarinets), only this time the melody has modulated down a minor third (see Figure 21). The second theme is used in a transitionary function in this instance, and is symbolic of the man’s lingering thoughts on the lady.

This second theme gesture is then imitated in the piano at bar 7, however the melody (shown in Figure 22) is written in Db major instead of C# major. The key signature change is merely to facilitate the transition into a flat key for the purposes of making the score reading easier as this key change does not affect how the melody sounds. The second theme appears for the last time in fifth movement at bar 9, again on the clarinet, having modulated down a perfect 4th from Db major to Ab major.

The main theme is referenced during bar 7 in the countermelodies played by the flute, trombone, and violin 1. As shown in Figure 23, the main theme is not stated in its entirety, only using the first four
notes of the theme before transitioning into new material. The Figure is annotated with solfà to demonstrate the usage of the first four notes of the main theme. This style of referencing of the main theme similarly appears later on in bar 9 in the bassoon were it once again quotes the first four notes of the main theme, before transitioning to a harmonising countermelody. A more complete rendition of the main theme is played in the final four bars of the fifth movement. As shown in Figure 24, erhu plays the beginning of the melody, with the French horns imitating. The melody is then continued on the oboe and flute, picked up by the bassoon, before the movement finishes. Figure 24 is a piano reduction of the last four bars and is annotated with the instruments.

Movement 6 - To Become Wind

The final movement features a full reprise of the main theme, and makes a very fleeting reference to the second theme at the end. The main theme is predominantly played on the first violins from bar 1 to 4,
before viola (doubled by oboe and bassoon) take over from bar 5 to 6, and then finished off on erhu from bar 7 to 8. As shown in Figure 25 below, the main theme as played by the violins is mostly unchanged except for a key change from E major to A major, and the addition of extra passing notes.

The additional notes were included to thicken the string section texture in order to conveys a feeling of resolution and confidence, which contrast against the more open texture created by the sustained notes in the strings during the original appearance of the theme which convey tension and caution. When the viola (and oboe and bassoon) take over the theme at bar 5, and then later pass it to the erhu, the theme remains unchanged aside from the key change from E major to A major. The final reference to the main theme in the whole work is in bar 13, the second last bar, played by the harp. As shown in Figure 26, this gesture makes use of the four referential notes that have been employed throughout the work. Here, the notes E-D-E-B share the same intervallic relationship as the first four notes of the main theme. The rhythm has also been augmented from the original rendition of the main theme to slow it down.

The second theme appears very briefly at the end of the sixth movement. It is included in fleeting manner as one final reference to the lady. This reference appears in bar 11 and is played on the
flute as shown in Figure 27. The use of the flute to play this last reference to the second theme is for two reasons; one is because the use of a woodwind instrument to represent a wind spirit seems fitting, and two is because the flute was used in the fourth movement to perform the melody representing the man’s sorrow. Narratively this makes sense because at this point, the man has also become a wind spirit and is reunited with the lady, and so the flute playing the second theme which is representative of the lady is symbolic of the reunion. As previously mentioned, the second last bar (bar 13) also has a direct reference to the main theme which happens right after this flute statement of the second theme, which is a more obvious representation of the characters union.

4.2.5 Influences from *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*

This final section of the exegesis will discuss the influences that *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* had on the creation of *To Become Wind*, specifically in relation to the harmony, and compositional techniques of imitation and octave doubling.

**Harmony**

*To Become Wind* makes use of chord progressions based upon the harmonic movement uncovered in the analysis of *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. Two instances in the work use the same chord progression as documented in 3.2.3 Harmonic Analysis. This section of the exegesis will analysis the usage of these two chord progressions as well as exploring how these chord progressions were used to inform further chord progression decisions.

The first document chord progression in 3.2.3 Harmonic Analysis was the chord progression found in the first movement of the violin concerto. The progression is as follows:

```
I | V | II7 vii7 iii | V | I | vi | Vc | II | V | I ||
```
As previously explained in 3.2.3 Harmonic Analysis, this chord progression creates harmonic ambiguity and was employed in the first movement of *To Become Wind* to similarly construct ambiguity. Functionally, this ambiguity through harmonic structure is reflective of how the man is feeling lost and uncertain. Musically, this harmonic ambiguity creates tension and sets up the entry of the erhu melody for a more satisfying release when it finally settles on one harmonic centre. For the purposes of *To Become Wind*, this chord progression was re-voiced, and the rate of harmonic change was altered. The chord progression as found in *To Become Wind* is as follows (and also shown in Figure 28);

\[
\text{I} \quad \text{Vc} \quad \text{II7d} \quad \text{vii7} \quad \text{iii} \quad \text{Vc} \quad \text{Ib} \quad \text{vib} \quad \text{Vc} \quad \text{II} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{I} \quad \|
\]

The second document chord progression in 3.2.3 Harmonic Analysis was the chord progression found in the third movement of *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. The progression is as follows:

\[
i7d \quad \text{vii7d} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{VII} \quad \text{ii7} \quad \text{V} \quad \|
\]

This chord progression was utilised in the fifth movement of *To Become Wind* to similarly create harmonic ambiguity in order to convey the tumultuous feelings within the man. This ambiguity is achieved by using chords that allude to both a major and minor tonality, as well as using chords in the third inversion which are unstable. In the violin concerto, the main theme is re-harmonised with this chord progression to re-contextualise the thematic material to reflect a more somber moment in the
Butterfly Lover’s tragedy. *To Become Wind* utilises the chord progression to similarly re-harmonise the second theme (Lady Feng’s theme) to reflect the man’s sadness. For the purposes of *To Become Wind*, the chord progression was largely unchanged except for slight alterations to the voicing and rate of harmonic change. The chord progression in *To Become Wind* is as follows (and also shown in Figure 29 below):

\[
i7d \ vii7d \ i \ | \ VII \ ii7 \ | \ V \ |
\]

As previously explained in 3.2.4 Compositional Technique Analysis, one of the two recurring techniques in *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* is the use of imitation. *To Become Wind* similarly employs imitation as a reference to that particular characteristic. In the context of *To Become Wind*, imitation is used alongside leitmotifs to further represent the conversation and interactions character of the man the Lady Feng. Because the third and fifth movement are specifically about the interaction of the two characters (see Table 2), imitation was limited to these two movements.

Imitation is employed throughout the third movement. The first usage of imitation is found from bar 1 to 3 when the opening piano gesture in bar 1 is imitated by piccolo in bar 2 before being repeated again by piano. This interaction is visible in Figure 30 below. This usage of imitation is repeated from bar 39 to 41 because the movement is in ABA ternary form, resulting in a copy of the opening.
The second use of imitation is from bar 19 to 21. Here, the same musical gesture is imitated across the woodwind section. The gesture is played first by the oboe, and then imitated by the clarinets. It is then closely followed by the flutes and then the bassoon, before clarinet imitates the gesture again, and then finally on the flute one last time. This interplay is shown in Figure 31. Imitation is also used in a more overarching way in this movement. Bar 5 to 8 establishes a 4 bar melody which is initially played by the pipa. This 4 bar phrases is then repeated, or imitated, from bar 9 to 12 on the erhu. Due to the ABA ternary form, this form of imitation appears again from bar 43 to 50.

Use of imitation in the fifth movement occurs on two occasions. The first is from bar 6 to 7, between the clarinets and piano as shown in Figure 32 on the following page. Please note that the key change from E Major to Db major in Figure 32 has no bearing on how the melody sounds.

The second use of imitation is from bar 10 to 13. Shown in Figure 33, erhu plays a melody (identified as the main theme in 4.2.4 Development of Themes) which is quickly imitates by the French
horns within the same bar. The erhu continues this melody in bar 11, with the French horns once again imitating half a bar later. Figure 33 has been annotated (the light grey) to also show a brief example of heterophony, which can be seen as a form of imitation. Briefly, heterophony is when a variation of a melody and the original melody itself is being played simultaneously. The flutes and oboe play a continuation of the main theme, picking up where the erhu left off in bar 11. At the same time in bar 12, the bassoon and trombone play a variation of this melodic phrase.
Octave Doubling

Similarly to the use of imitation, octave doubling was utilised in *To Become Wind* as a way to reference this particular characteristic of the violin concerto. Most of the octave doubling in *To Become Wind* is quite simple; a melody line on one instrument, whilst another doubles it an octave higher. For example, from bars 2 to 4 of the second movement, the piano (playing the second theme) is simultaneously doubled by the flute an octave higher. However there is only one instance that was based on the approach used in the violin concerto. In the violin concerto, octave doubling often happens across the entire string section, as shown in Figure 9, 10, and 11. Rather than one or two instruments doubling a melody line, the entire string section will play the melody with the lower strings doubling the melody at one to two octaves below. The third movement of *To Become Wind* makes a specific reference to this form of octave doubling from bar 35 to 38. Shown in Figure 34, the first violins play a melody which is doubled by the second violins, viola and first cellos an octave below, with the second cellos and contrabass doubling two octaves below.

![FIGURE 34](image)
*To Become Wind*, fifth movement, bars 34-38. Excerpt of original score: example of octave doubling across the string section.
The exploration of a compositional practice through the lens of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* facilitated the creation of a new orchestral work that was directly informed by analysis of a piece of Chinese music. The new orchestral work, *To Become Wind*, made use of structure, melody, harmony, and compositional techniques directly inspired by the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*. A greater understanding and appreciation for Chinese music as exemplified in the violin concerto was achieved through this practice-based research. As a result of the analysis, the composition of the new work saw a notable development in the compositional practice. These developments include: an expanded harmonic palate, composing in a multi-movement structure, usage of imitation and octave doubling, and composition with pentatonic melodies. Ultimately, this project allowed for the development of a compositional practice through the incorporation of compositional techniques and choices informed by analysis of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*.

Even though the new orchestral work did incorporate compositional techniques and choices informed by analysis of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*, the extent of these incorporations was somewhat to be desired. While it is true that the techniques of imitation and octave doubling employed in the new work were based the violin concerto, the usage of the techniques in the new work is significantly less prolific by comparison. This is a shortcoming because the recurring nature of these techniques in the violin concerto was the main reason they were chosen to be incorporated into the new work.

Having concluded the project, there are a number of changes that would go into refining of the methodology based upon personal evaluation. The changes include analysing more than one piece, to have a more comprehensive survey of Chinese works, conducting a more in-depth and thorough analysis of the work, and investigate further the notation and writing for traditional Chinese instruments, as well as sourcing the musicians to play these Chinese instruments.

Because of this project, I was able to compose an entirely new orchestral work informed by systematic analysis, something that I have never done in the past. Undertaking this process has allowed for my compositional practice to develop in a positive direction and has spark interest in further exploration in this field. Understanding the time and effort require to undertake a project of this scope has been a true learning experience and has given me a new appreciation for research.
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梁山伯与祝英台

小提琴协奏曲
To Become Wind

Full Score
[First Edition]

Composed and Orchestrated by

Jonathon Jie Hong Yang
To Become Wind

Date of Composition: 20/08/2020
Duration: ~6:45 min

Programme note:

A new orchestral work was composed as a direct result of honours thesis project. Titled To Become Wind, this orchestral suite is a six movement orchestral work composed with composition decisions informed directly from the analysis conducted on the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto. The work is quasi-programatic and tells a story that is loosely inspired by the Butterfly Lovers tragedy. The plot of the story is elaborated on at the start of each movement.

This orchestral work is broken down into a few sections to represent moments of story:

1) Introduction / Call to the Wind, 2) The Lady Feng, 3) Dancing with the Wind, 4) Windless Nights, 5) Shedding your Earthly Tether, 6) To Become Wind

Instrumentation

Flute / Piccolo
Oboe
Bb Clarinet
Bassoon
Horn in F (2)
Trombone
Timpani
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Piano
Harp
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabasse

(1.1.1.1 – 2.0.1.0. – timp – 2perc. –Pn. – Hp. – str.)
I. Introduction / Call to the Wind

*The Introduction* sets up the scene and tone of the composition going forward. *Call to the Wind* is representative of the male protagonist. The erhu melody is the man’s theme and is the tune that he plays on his erhu atop a mountain overlooking the valley. The tune is full of yearning and is meant to represent him calling out across the valley in hopes of connecting with someone.
II. The Lady Feng

The erhu melody is heard by a wind spirit referred to as the Lady Feng. (Feng or 風 is wind in Chinese). *Call to the Wind* is meant to be the man calling to her, the Lady ‘Wind’. This section introduces and establishes the second theme representing the lady.
III. Dancing with the Wind

This movement is quick and upbeat to represent the dancing, and makes use of both themes, alternating between the two themes to represent the two characters interacting with one another.


**IV. Windless Nights**

This movement employs a stripped back instrumentation to reflect the loneliness of the man. The Lady Feng has passed on and returned to being a wind spirit. The flute solo is meant to capture the sorrow and sadness of the man, with dissonance in the harmony representing the turmoil in his heart.
Tempo Rubato $\approx 45$

Flute

$$\text{mp quasi ad lib. dolce}$$

Harp

$$\text{mp grazioso e dolce}$$

Fl./Pc.

Hrp.

pp
V. Shedding Your Earthly Tether

This section is meant to describe the man coming to the decision to let go and leave behind all his earthly desires and join the lady as a wind spirit himself. The section features the themes and develops them to reflect the change and transformation that the man goes through.
poco a poco accel.
VI. To Become Wind

This section is a representation of the man and the lady reunited together as wind. The erhu melody returns in full on the erhu in a recapitulation. The thicker orchestration is to capture the grandeur of the wind whisking through the grand valley.