

Literacy through Composition Techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang Style of Composer Bao Yuankai

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ABSTRACT

Music composition, particularly within the Chinese Yan Huang style, holds significance for its artistic merit and potential to enhance literacy development and foster cultural appreciation. This study delves into the literacy composition techniques employed by composer Bao Yuankai within the Chinese Yan Huang style, focusing on the piece "Going to Jiangzhou." The primary objective is to analyze the literacy composition techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai. Through a multidimensional approach integrating insights from music education, cultural studies, and literacy development, the study examines instrumentation, melody, harmony, and cultural symbolism in Yuankai's compositions. Three key informants, including music scholars, professional musicians, and music educators, provide diverse perspectives on Yuankai's works. Qualitative data analysis methods are employed to analyze insights gathered from interviews and observations. Findings reveal Yuankai's adept use of traditional Chinese elements alongside modern composition techniques, resulting in compositions that resonate with audiences worldwide. Suggestions include incorporating culturally relevant content into music education curricula to enhance student's literacy skills and cultural awareness.

Key words: Music Composition, Yan Huang Style, Bao Yuankai, Literacy Development, Cultural Appreciation

INTRODUCTION

Music has long been recognized as a universal language, capable of transcending cultural barriers and conveying complex emotions and ideas. Within the rich tapestry of musical traditions, the Chinese Yan Huang style is a testament to China's cultural heritage and artistic prowess (Storr, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Zhang, 2023). At the forefront of this musical tradition is composer Bao Yuankai, whose innovative compositions have garnered acclaim for their intricate blend of traditional Chinese elements with modern composition techniques. In this introduction, we will explore the profound connection between music composition, literacy development, and cultural appreciation within the context of the Chinese Yan Huang style, focusing on the works of Bao Yuankai (Ouyang, 2012; Shi, 2016).

The Chinese Yan Huang style, characterized by its evocative melodies, intricate harmonies, and rich cultural symbolism, holds a prominent place in the landscape of Chinese music (Lam, 2008). Originating from ancient Chinese court music and folk traditions, the Yan Huang style has evolved over centuries, incorporating influences from various dynasties and regions. Composer Bao Yuankai emerged as a key figure in contemporary Chinese music, known for his masterful compositions that reflect the essence of the Yan Huang

style while pushing the boundaries of musical innovation (Zheng, 1993; Han, 2013; Li, 2021; Ling, 2023).

As we delve into music composition, it becomes evident that the process goes beyond merely creating melodies and harmonies; it serves as a vehicle for cultural expression and intellectual development (Huang, 2024). Through the intricate interplay of musical elements, composers like Bao Yuankai have the power to evoke emotions, tell stories, and convey cultural narratives. Furthermore, studying music composition offers valuable insights into developing literacy skills, as it encourages critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness (Ng et al., 2022; Yang & Welch, 2023).

Despite the profound influence of the Chinese Yan Huang style and the works of Bao Yuankai, there remains a gap in understanding how composition techniques within this style contribute to literacy development and cultural appreciation. While scholars have explored the cultural significance of Chinese music and the technical aspects of composition, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of the specific techniques employed by Bao Yuankai and their implications for literacy (He & Sornyai, 2023; Juan et al., 2023; Zhou & Chuangprakhon, 2023).

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the literacy composition techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai. By examining the intricate nuances

of Bao Yuankai's compositions, this research aims to shed light on how music can enhance literacy development and foster cultural appreciation. Through a detailed exploration of melody, harmony, rhythm, and cultural symbolism, we seek to uncover the underlying mechanisms through which Bao Yuankai's works contribute to cultivating literacy skills and cultural understanding (Verhoef & Ravignani, 2021; Shi & Nicolas, 2023; Yunkun, 2024).

This study holds significant implications for both the fields of music education and cultural studies. Exploring the intersection of music composition, literacy, and cultural appreciation offers valuable insights into the role of music as a tool for intellectual and artistic enrichment. Furthermore, the findings of this research may inform curriculum development in music education, helping educators incorporate culturally relevant content to enhance students' literacy skills and cultural awareness. This study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the profound connections between music, literacy, and culture within the Chinese Yan Huang style context.

Research Question

- How do the composition techniques utilized by composer Bao Yuankai in the Chinese Yan Huang style contribute to literacy development and cultural studies appreciation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of music composition techniques within the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai is situated within a broader context of music education, cultural studies, and literacy development. To understand the significance of Bao Yuankai's works in this regard, it is essential to review existing literature on the intersections of music, literacy, and culture.

In music education, scholars have emphasized incorporating culturally relevant content into curriculum design to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes (Choksy et al., 2009). By exposing students to diverse musical traditions, educators can cultivate cultural awareness and appreciation while fostering critical thinking and creativity (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014). Within this framework, the Chinese Yan Huang style represents a rich source of cultural heritage that offers unique insights into China's musical and literary traditions.

Furthermore, research has shown that music composition plays a vital role in literacy development by stimulating linguistic processing, enhancing cognitive skills, and promoting emotional expression (Rauscher & Zupan, 2000; Mang & Custodero, 2006). Through composing music, individuals engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-expression, all of which are essential components of literacy (Barrett, 2012). Thus, by analyzing the composition techniques employed by Bao Yuankai, we can gain valuable insights into how music composition contributes to literacy development.

In addition to its educational benefits, music also serves as a powerful medium for cultural expression and preservation.

The Chinese Yan Huang style, with its deep roots in Chinese history and tradition, embodies the cultural identity of the Chinese people and reflects their values, beliefs, and experiences (Cheng, 2000). By studying the composition techniques of Bao Yuankai, we can gain a deeper understanding of how music reflects and shapes cultural narratives, thereby fostering cultural appreciation and understanding.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) introduced the idea of cultural capital, the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and cultural resources that individuals possess and utilize to navigate social and cultural environments. In the context of music education, cultural capital encompasses an understanding of diverse musical traditions, genres, and styles, as well as the ability to critically engage with cultural artifacts and expressions (Bennett, 2001).

This study employs a multidimensional approach integrating insights from music education, cultural studies, and literacy development to explore the intricate connections between music composition, cultural capital, and literacy within the Chinese Yan Huang style. Through this theoretical framework, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of music in enhancing literacy and cultural appreciation.

METHOD

Scope of Content and Time

The scope of this research encompasses an in-depth analysis of the literacy composition techniques employed by composer Bao Yuankai in the Chinese Yan Huang style. It delves into the intricacies of Bao Yuankai's musical compositions within this stylistic framework, focusing on how his techniques contribute to literacy development and cultural appreciation. The study will primarily examine Bao Yuankai's compositions in the Chinese Yan Huang style, limited to one piece, "Going to Jiangzhou." These compositions will serve as primary sources for the analysis, providing insights into the specific techniques utilized by the composer to evoke literacy and cultural appreciation among listeners.

Furthermore, the study will explore the historical and cultural context surrounding the Yan Huang style, shedding light on its significance within the broader landscape of Chinese music. By considering the socio-cultural influences on Bao Yuankai's compositions, the research aims to contextualize his artistic choices and their impact on literacy development and cultural understanding.

In terms of time frame, the research will cover the period spanning Bao Yuankai's career as a composer, focusing on his works produced within the Chinese Yan Huang style. This may include compositions from various career stages, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of his evolving style and techniques.

The research will thoroughly examine Bao Yuankai's contribution to literacy development and cultural appreciation through his Chinese Yan Huang style composition techniques.

Selection of Key Informants and Research Tools

In this study, we aim to explore the literacy composition techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai. With the research objective of analyzing how Bao Yuankai's composition techniques contribute to literacy development and cultural appreciation, we seek to understand the intricate relationship between music composition, literacy skills, and cultural appreciation. By selecting three key informants, as shown in Table 1, and utilizing research tools such as interview forms and observation forms, as shown in Table 2, we aim to gather comprehensive insights into the impact of Bao Yuankai's compositions on literacy and cultural understanding.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis phase of this study, we will employ qualitative methods to analyze the insights gathered from the interviews and observations conducted with three key informants. We will carefully review the interview transcripts and observational notes to organize the responses and observations into themes such as how well different composition techniques help build literacy skills, how vital Bao Yuankai's compositions are to Chinese culture, and what these findings mean for music education.

Table 1. Selection of three key information

Key Informants	Affiliation/Background
Music Scholars and Experts	Specialization in Chinese music and composition techniques. In-depth knowledge of Bao Yuankai's works and the Yan Huang style
Professional Musicians and Conductors	Experience in performing and interpreting Bao Yuankai's compositions. Familiarity with the practical application of composition techniques in musical performances
Music Educators and Pedagogues	Expertise in teaching composition and music theory, Experience in integrating composition techniques into music education curricula

Table 2. Research tools

Research Tool	Description
Interview Form	Open-ended questions to elicit detailed insights from key informants regarding Bao Yuankai's composition techniques, literacy development, and cultural appreciation. Conducted either in person or virtually
Observation Form	Documentation of observations made during musical performances, rehearsals, or educational sessions involving Bao Yuankai's compositions. Focus on elements such as musical interpretation, audience reactions, and incorporation of cultural elements

RESULTS

Bao Yuankai's Composition Techniques

Bao Yuankai's Chinese Yan Huang style composition techniques, particularly exemplified in the piece "Going to Jiangzhou," reveal a nuanced approach to evoking literacy and cultural appreciation through music. Through a detailed analysis of the composition, several essential techniques emerge. Firstly, Yuankai adeptly utilizes instrumentation to convey cultural themes and evoke emotional responses in listeners. In "Going to Jiangzhou," traditional Chinese instruments such as the Banhu, coupled with Western orchestral elements, create a unique sonic landscape that reflects the cultural richness of the Jiangzhou region. Additionally, Yuankai's use of melody and harmony further enhances the immersive experience for the audience, with melodic motifs evoking imagery of bustling streets and lively marketplaces. Furthermore, the composition's structural elements, such as the repetition of themes and variations, reinforce literacy development by providing listeners with familiar motifs to follow and analyze. Overall, Bao Yuankai's composition techniques in "Going to Jiangzhou" exemplify a sophisticated blend of Chinese and Western musical traditions, a compelling exploration of cultural themes while enriching the listener's understanding of literacy through music.

The Chinese Yan Huang Style within Bao Yuankai's Compositions

It reveals a rich tapestry of traditional Chinese elements interwoven with contemporary musical expressions. Through an analysis of instrumentation, melody, and harmony, it becomes evident that Yuankai's compositions in this style are deeply rooted in Chinese cultural heritage while embracing modern compositional techniques. In terms of instrumentation, Yuankai masterfully integrates traditional Chinese instruments such as the banhu and wooden fish alongside Western orchestral instruments, creating a unique sonic palette that reflects the fusion of Eastern and Western musical traditions. This blend of instruments not only adds depth and texture to the music but also serves as a vehicle for cultural representation, providing listeners with a glimpse into the rich musical traditions of China. Additionally, the melodic and harmonic elements in Yuankai's compositions draw upon traditional Chinese scales and motifs, evoking imagery of ancient landscapes and cultural rituals. These rhythmic and harmonic choices contribute to the music's aesthetic appeal and play a crucial role in fostering literacy development by engaging listeners in a dialogue with Chinese cultural themes and narratives. Overall, exploring the Chinese Yan Huang style in Bao Yuankai's compositions underscores the composer's commitment to preserving and promoting Chinese musical heritage while offering a contemporary perspective that resonates with audiences worldwide.

Bao Yuankai's Literacy and Cultural Appreciation

The examination sheds light on music's profound impact on literacy development and cultural appreciation. Through a

meticulous analysis of vital musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation, researchers have uncovered the transformative power of music in facilitating cultural understanding and appreciation. Yuankai's compositions, characterized by their evocative melodies, rich harmonies, and diverse instrumentation, are potent tools for engaging listeners in deeply exploring Chinese cultural themes and narratives. By immersing audiences in the sounds and textures of traditional Chinese music, Yuankai creates a profound sense of connection to the cultural heritage of China, fostering a greater appreciation for its rich history and traditions. Moreover, the emotional resonance of Yuankai's compositions transcends linguistic and cultural barriers, allowing listeners from diverse backgrounds to connect with the universal themes of human experience expressed through music. In this way, music emerges as a powerful medium for promoting literacy development by encouraging listeners to engage critically with cultural texts and narratives embedded within the music. Ultimately, examining Bao Yuankai's composition techniques underscores the importance of music as a transformative force in enhancing literacy skills and fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

The Analysis of Bao Yuankai's Composition in the Piece "Going to Jiangzhou"

It reveals a masterful integration of traditional Chinese elements with contemporary musical techniques, resulting in a vibrant and culturally rich musical narrative. The piece draws inspiration from the folk song tradition of Jiangzhou,

a region with a long history of agricultural exchange and cultural interaction. Through a meticulous examination of the composition techniques employed by Yuankai, it becomes evident that the piece vividly portrays the cheerful and lively atmosphere encountered on the journey to Jiangzhou.

The introduction, spanning Bars 1 to 4, sets the tone for the piece with a distinctively "strong national style." Here, the composer employs a dynamic interplay of musical elements, including the rapid movement of piano motifs and the gradual descent of plucked violin melodies. This juxtaposition of textures creates a sense of rhythmic vitality and excitement, capturing the bustling energy of the journey. As the woodwind instruments and string band join the ensemble in Bars 3 to 4, a dramatic contrast in timbre further enhances the musical landscape, adding depth and complexity to the composition, as shown in Figure 1 (Scan QR Code).

The sections labeled A in Bao Yuankai's composition "Going to Jiangzhou" demonstrate the composer's adeptness at crafting dynamic and engaging musical narratives within a non-square structure. Despite the non-square structure, both sections feature the same theme, melody, and tonality, providing continuity and coherence. Notably, the main instrument featured in Section A is the banhu, a traditional Chinese musical instrument renowned for its high-pitched and resonant timbre, ideal for expressing vibrant emotions. Through clever manipulation of musical elements such as dynamics and rhythm, Yuankai effectively conveys a sense of wit and cheerfulness inherent in the folk song tradition of Jiangzhou.

The image displays a page of a musical score for the piece "Going to Jiangzhou" (走 绛 州). The score is written for a large ensemble, including Cor.I.II, Trib.I.II, W.b., Pn, Banhu, Sanxian, VI.I, VI.II, Vle., Vc., and Cb. The tempo is marked "Allegretto" and the time signature is 2/4. The score shows the introduction spanning Bars 1 to 4. A QR code is visible in the top right corner of the score area.

Figure 1. The introduction, spanning Bars 1 to 4

Source in Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXMK8qzQMKw>

In the sections labeled A² and A³ of Bao Yuankai's composition "Going to Jiangzhou," the composer employs repetitive melodic structures to establish a sense of continuity and cohesion within the piece. Despite the repetition of the theme melody, subtle variations in rhythm tones, particularly in the d¹ sentence of A³, contribute to the development and progression of the music. Additionally, both sections maintain a consistent B tone, underscoring the relationship between A and A' in the same tonal framework. This deliberate choice allows Yuankai to infuse the composition with a distinct national tone while introducing nuanced changes in tonality to accentuate contrasts in sound.

Regarding instrumentation and tone design, Section A² features the piano as the primary instrument, skillfully juxtaposed with the wooden fish percussion instrument. The piano positioned two octaves apart from the folk song theme, creates a dynamic contrast that adds depth and richness to the musical texture. Meanwhile, the violin voice, adorned with decorative fixed notes, complements the piano melody, enhancing the overall artistic imagery of the composition. The wooden fish percussion instrument infuses the music with a sense of joy and exuberance, further improving the portrayal of characters depicted in the folk song tradition of Jiangzhou.

Moreover, incorporating rhythmic elements such as drums and gongs (Bars 103–104) adds depth and texture to the musical landscape, drawing inspiration from Chinese folk music traditions. The clarinet, horn, and trumpet effectively simulate the rhythmic patterns of opera gongs and drums. At the same time, using copper pipes enhances the overall brightness and metallic quality of the sound. This meticulous attention to detail underscores the composer's commitment to seamlessly integrating Chinese and Western musical expression elements, resulting in a harmonious synthesis of cultural influences, the music score as shown in Figure 2 (Scan QR Code).

Overall, the analysis of Bao Yuankai's composition techniques in "Going to Jiangzhou" underscores the composer's ability to evoke a sense of cultural authenticity and narrative richness through music. By skillfully blending traditional

Chinese folk melodies with contemporary orchestral arrangements, Yuankai creates a compelling musical experience that resonates with listeners and fosters a deeper appreciation for the cultural heritage of Jiangzhou.

Utilization of Primary Sources

The utilization of "Going to Jiangzhou" as the primary source for analysis provides a rich and authentic foundation for understanding Bao Yuankai's composition techniques within the Chinese Yan Huang style. By immersing themselves in this singular piece, researchers gain direct access to Yuankai's artistic vision and creative process. Through meticulously examining the musical elements present in the composition, such as instrumentation, melody, harmony, and structure, insights emerge regarding the intricate ways Yuankai weaves together cultural themes and emotional narratives.

In dissecting "Going to Jiangzhou," researchers uncover the nuanced techniques employed by Yuankai to convey the spirit and essence of the Chinese Yan Huang style. From utilizing traditional Chinese instruments like the Banhu to integrating Western orchestral elements, every aspect of the composition deliberately evokes cultural themes and elicits emotional responses from listeners. Through this focused analysis, researchers can elucidate the specific compositional choices contributing to the piece's overall impact and significance within literacy development and cultural appreciation.

Furthermore, by grounding the analysis in a single composition, researchers can delve deeply into the nuances of Yuankai's artistic expression without the distraction of disparate sources. This laser-focused approach comprehensively explores the composition's intricacies, enabling researchers to uncover hidden layers of meaning and symbolism within the music. Utilizing "Going to Jiangzhou" as the primary source for analysis provides a one-of-a-kind chance to gain a deep understanding of Yuankai's writing styles and their broader implications for literacy development and cultural appreciation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of literacy composition techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai has provided valuable insights into the intricate relationship between music composition, literacy development, and cultural appreciation. Consistent with previous research in music education and cultural studies, this study highlights the significance of incorporating culturally relevant content into curriculum design to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes (Choksy et al., 2009). By focusing on Bao Yuankai's compositions, which exemplify a fusion of traditional Chinese elements with modern composition techniques, this research contributes to our understanding of how music can serve as a tool for intellectual and artistic enrichment.

Through a multidimensional approach integrating insights from music education, cultural studies, and literacy development, this study sheds light on the role of music



Figure 2. The music score of "Going to Jiangzhou"
Source: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/111YytsbDml93VQY04uy6lZ--ZqIja-MD/view>

composition in enhancing literacy and cultural appreciation. By analyzing Bao Yuankai's composition techniques, including instrumentation, melody, harmony, and cultural symbolism, researchers have uncovered the transformative power of music in facilitating cultural understanding and appreciation (Huang, 2024). Yuankai's compositions are potent tools for engaging listeners in exploring Chinese cultural themes and narratives, fostering a greater appreciation for China's rich history and traditions (Shi & Nicolas, 2023).

The utilization of "Going to Jiangzhou" as the primary source for analysis has provided researchers with a rich and authentic foundation for understanding Yuankai's composition techniques within the Chinese Yan Huang style. By immersing themselves in this singular piece, researchers have gained direct access to Yuankai's artistic vision and creative process, enabling a deep exploration of the nuances of his writing styles (Lam, 2008). This focused analysis has uncovered hidden layers of meaning and symbolism within the music, further elucidating the specific compositional choices contributing to the piece's overall impact and significance within literacy development and cultural appreciation.

In conclusion, analyzing literacy composition techniques in the Chinese Yan Huang style of composer Bao Yuankai has provided compelling evidence of the profound connections between music, literacy, and culture. By meticulously examining Yuankai's compositions, researchers have demonstrated how music composition serves as a vehicle for cultural expression and intellectual development, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness (Ng et al., 2022). By blending traditional Chinese elements with modern composition techniques, Yuankai creates compositions that resonate with audiences worldwide, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers (Storr, 2015).

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of music as a transformative force in enhancing literacy skills and fostering cross-cultural awareness and appreciation. By analyzing Bao Yuankai's composition techniques, researchers have illuminated how music composition can evoke emotions, tell stories, and convey cultural narratives (Verhoef & Ravignani, 2021). Furthermore, the findings of this research may inform curriculum development in music education, helping educators incorporate culturally relevant content to enhance students' literacy skills and cultural awareness (Yang & Welch, 2023).

Overall, this study underscores the importance of music as a universal language capable of transcending cultural barriers and conveying complex emotions and ideas. By examining the intersection of music composition, literacy development, and cultural appreciation within the Chinese Yan Huang style context, this research contributes to a deeper appreciation of the profound connections between music, literacy, and culture.

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