

## 〈 Cross-Cultural Music Encounters 〉

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### Preface

Since the late 20th-century, globalization became a significant topic worldwide. The convenience of the internet age brings people much closer together, sharing awareness of international events and delivering news happening thousands of miles apart almost instantaneously. Cross-cultural merging has developed into inter-cultural converging: different cultural aspects are now intertwined into each other more smoothly and naturally. Even with language barriers, digital devices allow for convenient translation.

Cross-cultural music was initially extended from nationalism and ethnomusicological study, from the consciousness of national cultural treasures to developing interests and appreciation for others' cultures and heritages. With the help of the internet, people can easily study various traditional music in depth, not only from listening to audio recordings, watching videos, reading articles and learning about other updated research materials, but also to do field study and collaborate with traditional musicians via digital conferencing methods.

While my initial studies were in mainstream western music (up to a doctoral degree in the United States), three incidences in my early life, however, have redirected my musical beliefs that evolved into a broader view, which includes interculturalism. In 1992, I was selected to represent Taiwan as a young composer in an international composition workshop in Poland, where I had inspirational masterclasses with Witold Lutoslawski and Chen Yi, with both significantly influencing my music and thoughts as a composer. At the workshop, I also established professional affiliations with the Chai Found Music Workshop (a Chinese traditional ensemble from Taiwan,) a Japanese Koto player from the Netherlands specializing in performing contemporary music, and a world-renown contemporary music flutist and extended technique specialist, Wil Offermans, who also incorporated Asian elements along into his techniques. All of them inspired me to further explore the possibility of working with the non-western musical elements. I was also given a commission to compose *Terror* for French bassoonist Pascal Gallois and Chai Found Music Workshop for Paris premiere; this was my first encounter to compose for non-western instruments, which ignited my motivation to continuously incorporate Chinese traditional instruments into many of my compositions. From 1992-1993, I composed two more pieces for non-western ensembles: *Ching-Ping Yueh* for voice and Chinese traditional silk and bamboo ensemble, and *Ballade-Mr. Snake* for Chinese instrument septet (a commission for a dance ensemble, utilizing traditional idioms from Taiwanese opera and folk songs.)

After graduating in 1993 from Soochow University in Taipei with the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Composition, I went to the United States for my master and doctoral studies in composition. Living in the US challenged me to contemplate about my future approach as a contemporary music composer. While I continued to refine western-oriented musical studies, I did not feel satisfied only having a western voice in my music, but also to define and establish my own musical characteristics that incorporate and represent my cultural background. Along with enriching my knowledge in the western acoustic and electronic music via studying with composer Mark Phillips (as well as film and

television scoring) at Ohio University, I composed *FAN-JEN*, an orchestra piece that utilizes Taiwanese aboriginal materials from different tribes in a western orchestral music setting coded with contemporary techniques as my master's thesis. This work was one of my first western instrumental compositions that successfully incorporated western and non-western musical elements.

While studying composition with Bright Sheng, William Albright and William Bolcom at the University of Michigan for my doctorate, my personal identification as a Taiwanese composer became clearer, due to their belief in students' finding their own voice. My compositions of this time period reflect the philosophy of bridging the Pacific Rim between Taiwanese and other Asian musical elements with Western contemporary music techniques and American styles, such as Jazz, etc.

Over the past two decades, especially during recent years, most of my compositions continue to follow the concept of interculturalism. This is shown in musical reference through instrumentation, performing techniques and other stylistic attributes. By presentation and discussion of my recent composition, *HongLou West Gate Story* 西門紅樓物語, (for 37-pipe traditional soprano sheng, zhongruan, violoncello and percussion, commissioned and premiered by the Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra at the MUPA International Festival in Thailand and funded by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government in February, 2016,) I will demonstrate my cross-cultural compositional approach.

*HongLou West Gate Story* 西門紅樓物語 for 37-pipe traditional soprano sheng, zhongruan, violoncello and percussion

## A. Introduction

Ximen Honglou (aka The Red House) in Taipei city is the best preserved Classified III Historical Monument and one of the most important Taiwanese Arts and Cultural venues. Built in 1908, it was the first public market in Taiwan. It was designed by a young Japanese western-styled architect **Kondo Juro**. The market entrance, incorporating both octagonal (eight trigrams as eastern bagua 八卦 design) and cruciform (implies a western "cross") shapes, was second to none. The Octagon Building, Cruciform Building, and the adjacent South-North Square are now collectively known as '**HongLou (The Red House)**.' Its existence signifies the crossover of Japanese, Shanghai, western and Taiwanese cultures in an avant-garde, modern, novel and diverse fashion.

The *HongLou West Gate Story* portrays the history of the Red House in a chorological order

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1908-1945 | Taiwan's first public market in a unique building style—combining both the Eastern octagon and Western cruciform layouts designed by the Japanese architect Kondo Juro, built with strong and high quality materials, such as red bricks and steel, imported from Japan.   |
| 1945-1963 | Theater/Storytelling Period—Red House Theater<br>After WWII, members of Nationalist Chinese Party (or known as KaoMingTang/KMT) along with mainland Chinese fled to Taiwan after losing the Civil war to the Communist Chinese. A Shanghainese gangster Hui-Wen Chen took over HongLou and made it into a theater for the Huyuan Beijing Opera, storytelling, crosstalk, Musical and pop music. It was an important social gathering site for the Chinese immigrants. Many of well-known entertainers (singers, actors and actresses) were discovered at the HongLou Theater, such as 鄧麗君 (Teresa Teng), 張小燕 (Hsiao-Yen Chang), 葛小寶 (Hsiao-Pao Ko) , |

and crosstalk masters Long-Hao Wei and Zhao-Nan Wu 大師級相聲演員魏龍豪、吳兆南, etc.

1963-1994

Movie Period—Red House Movie Theater

It was transformed into a popular movie theater to westernized youngsters, showing Black & white martial arts movies, imported second-run western cinema, and local costume films, etc. Between 1970 and 1997, the business of the movie theater declined and it became a cinema playing 2<sup>nd</sup> run movies and porn. It also became a gathering place for the early gay community in Taiwan.

1994-current

Restoration/Rebirth into a Must-see tourist attraction in Taipei

In 1994, a number of performing artists started a series of performances, known as the “Red Chamber Dream: Ximen,” to re-proclaim the importance of Red House.

In 1997, the Red House was declared as a Class III Historical Site. The Red House Movie Theater ended its business later in the same year.

In 2000, Cruciform Building and buildings in violation of ordinances at South-North Square was burned down. The post-disaster restoration turned over a new leaf for The Red House.

In 2002-2007, the nonprofit Paperwindmill Arts Foundation was involved in “The Red House Theater Historical Site Restoration.” Performance groups staged performances in a collaborative effort to bring back the bustling and joyous atmosphere of The Red House market. However, the revenue was not sufficient to support its operation and the foundation decided not to renew its contract of property management after its five-year contract expired.

In 2003, Ximen-HongLou (the Red House) became the location of the first gay parade in the country. The city mayor Ying-Jeou Ma, whom later served 2 turns of president, stated at the end of the parade that Taipei, as an international city, respects individuals of different groups and cultures. The parade is now an annual event and the largest in Asia.

In Feb 2006, the first gay bar “Bear Bar,” located by the market area next to the Red House, was open for business. It has brought a new focus to the area.

In November 2007, the Taipei City Government's Department of Cultural Affairs commissioned the Taipei Culture Foundation (TCF) to manage the Red House complex in its entirety. The foundation has taken into account the area's past and present in its management of the site. It has been transformed into a must-visit landmark in the tourist-packed Ximending area.

Nowadays, the Ximen-HongLou (The Red House by the west gate) is a platform for crossover collaborations between independent performers/exhibitors and marketplace for original arts or designs. The revamped Creative Boutique provides owners of local cultural & creative labels for a retail space in an aesthetically unique mall setting at Taipei's west end.



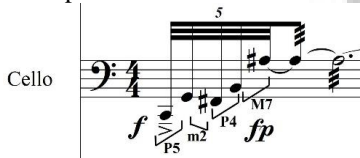
Pictures are provided by Ximen (West Gate) HongLou (Red House) museum

## B. Musical Examples and Analysis

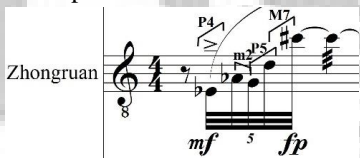
Examples 1 through 4, demonstrate the primary pitch focus of the piece, both perfect fourths/perfect fifths and seconds/sevenths. These intervals “symbolically” tie together east and west, in that the quartal/quintal intervals represent Eastern pentatonicism and the secundoal intervals represent Western chromaticism (Ex. 1, 2, and 4 express this concept linearly, whereas Ex. 3 expresses it vertically in pyramid.) In addition, the notated rhythmic deceleration in Example 1-4

represents my regular reference to the quality of Asian “Breath-Rhythm” throughout the piece.

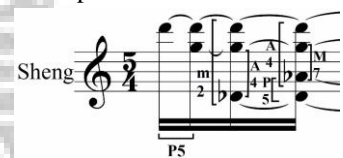
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



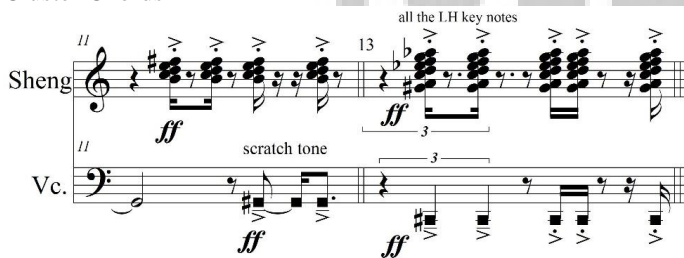
Example 4



Regular use of secundal harmony in the sheng also crosses over between western contemporary music cluster chords when syncopated (Ex. 5) at the first section and Japanese court music when more sustained (Ex. 6) at rehearsal letter [C].

Example 5

#### Cluster Chords



Example 6

#### Imitating Japanese Shô from Gagaku



At rehearsal letter [L], the vibraphone uses a bending note technique to imitate the

bending passages from both sheng and zhongruan (Ex. 7.) The conception initially comes from the bending string technique of guzheng (揉弦) and pipa (推拉音). This idea also serves as a preview for the next section which emphasizes freedom through expressive glissando.

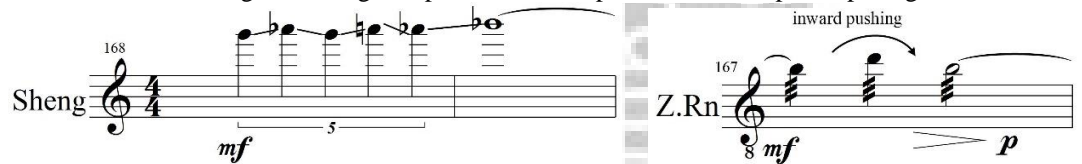
### Example 7

Vibraphone bending-pitch passage at mm. 170-174:

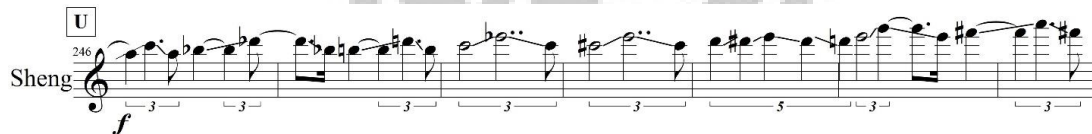
LH hits the note with regular vib. mallet, immediately RH uses xylophone mallet\*\*\*\*) to slide the note bar either inward or outward with lots of pressure to create bending tone



In relation to the sheng and zhongruan parts that occur prior to the vibraphone passage above.



These previous passages foreshadow the music in the later section, such as this passage in the sheng at rehearsal letter U:



As a blending of east and west at rehearsal letters A to C, through symbolizing the architecture of the octagon (eastern Bagua 八卦) and western cruciform (cross from Christianity) is a merging of pitch relationships. The cello and zhongruan melodies presented in Gregorian Chant plaintive style by using two church modes (Ex. 8) that, combined, make up the Bagua pitches (Ex. 9). The zhongruan's melodic line fully merges these modes into the Bagua (Ex. 10.)

### Example 8

Church Modes

A Dorian:

A Aeolian:



### Example 9

Eastern Bagua reflects in musical pitches

卦象:	坎	乾	坤	震	巽	艮	兑	离
音名:	A	B	C	D	E	F	F#	G

Church modes (Dorian + Aeolian) → Bagua scale

22. **B**

Z.Rn. *p dolce*

Vc. *mp dolce*

26

Z.Rn.


Vc.

### Example 11

in the middle of bars, hit hard and pull back at the same time to create bi-tones (original & 15va harmonic) simultaneously

### Example 12

Pick hits the top of rim(solid frame part)      RH 3-5 fingers hit the right upper corner of soundboard

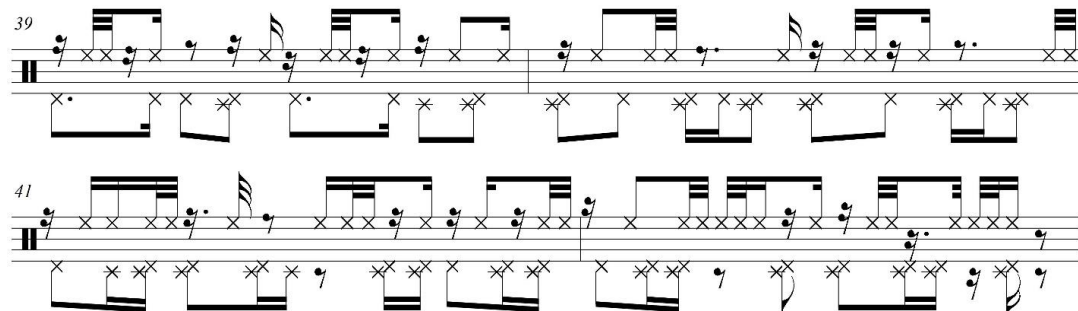
Pick hits the top of rim (solid frame part)      RH 3-5 fingers hit the right upper corner of soundboard  
  
 LH hits the middle of soundboard (solid lower sound)

The Zhongruan later develops this percussive technique into the foreshadowing of Beijing opera rhythm, (Ex. 13.)



## Example 13

Zhongruan imitates Beijing Opera percussion section



Starting from the rehearsal letters **D** to **K** (mm. 43-158), moving onto the time period from 1945-1963, the Theater/Storytelling Period—where the Red House Theater was primarily occupied by the Shanghaiese gangster who escaped from China. At this period, the Red House Theater only carried art forms from Mainland China, such as Huyuan Beijing Opera, storytelling, crosstalk, Musical and pop music, etc. Signifying the varieties of musical arts that were performed at the Red House Theater is canonic and fugal polytonality (Ex. 14) on top of Beijing opera percussion section (Ex. 15.)

## Example 14

Containing contrapuntal polytonality between different styles of music in Beijing Opera with western techniques of consistent modulation, octave displacement, transformation and development: this type of writing is used frequently throughout not only this section, but also in the second part with different motivic ideas.

**F** freely add any traditional ornamentation

75 Shg *p*

84 Shg

84 Z.Rn

84 Vlc

ord. *p*



### Example 15

Beijing opera percussion influences (approx. mm. 42-158,) starting with the combination between dà luó wàng mén kū tóu (大鑼望門哭頭) and dà luó dǎo bǎn (大鑼倒板), followed by Xiǎoluó yuán chǎng (小鑼圓場) and shàng tiān tī. Zhā wǔ (上天梯·紮塢) with jí jí fēng (急急風) intersected together.

banzi (or highest pitch of woodblock)

2 mallets (sandwich the woodblock)

3

D

Dalo<sup>\*)</sup>

accel.

Bongo (LB<sup>\*\*)</sup>)

*p*

*f*

H.hat (pedal)

<sup>\*)</sup> Dalo (Beijing Opera) hangs on a stand

<sup>\*\*)</sup> bongo (prefer lower pitch one) use 2nd mallet from RH

42

49

♩ = 200

53

42

49

53

Recommend position:

- 1) Sitting position, L Foot pedaling the H.hat, LH plays Dalo with mallet; RH 2 mallets (sandwich the banzi or the highest woodblock), the 2nd mallet also plays the lower Bongo (prefer, nevertheless if HB is easier, it can be an option).

The percussive sections from rehearsal letters **I** – **J** refer to crosstalk comedians' call and response between multiple artists in conversation, (Ex. 16.)

### Example 16

125

Sheng

LH hits the middle of soundboard (solid lower sound)

Zhongruan

LH fingers tap on the soundboard (left upper corner) all 4 fingers together (no thumb)

Cello

hi-hat from closed, gradually release to open (last note of the pattern)

Percussion

5 woodblocks

SD same off

BD no hat

pedal

*p* *mf* *mf*

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>a = anular (ring); m = middle finger; i = index finger; p = pulgar (thumb); c = chico (pinky)

Moreover, there are parts of the music that describe the struggles between Taiwanese and Chinese communities. Various interrupted sections between the Beijing opera theme show the frustration and discomfort of Taiwanese who were excluded by the recent Chinese mainlanders

gles between natives and outsiders

L.H pi  
the na  
(meta)

*f*

*f*

*ord.* *l.t.s.* *ord.*

middle of the SD,  
to raise the pitches

gradually release the press

*mf*

3

### Interruption III (perc)

WB HB L.B SD WB WB  
BD pedal hi-hat BD BD  
slightly open after pedal to create  
sizzling sound from hi-hat

138 141 143 145

*ad-lib.* *ad-lib.*

As a symbol of the location's connection to LGBTQ right, several parts refer to the Lady Gaga's song "Born This Way". Near the opening, at measures 7-9 (Ex. 18) the vibraphone quotes the opening Aug5 7th chord oscillation from the beginning of the "Born This Way" music video.

### Example 18 (mm7-9)

Vibraphone

6 6 6 5

*p* *mp* *sim.*

light pedal *ped.* wait until notes are naturally fade out

At measures 17-23, (Ex. 19) the top line within the sheng chord implies the bass line (F#-F-A) from "Born This Way." A further variation of this gesture is shown by the top line at mm. 215-223 (Ex. 20.)

### Example 19

Shg

17

*p* *pp*

B

### Example 20

Sheng

215 222

*mp* *mp*

3

Starting from rehearsal letter **Q** (to reference LGBTQ.) and through the end of the piece, the music represents the period from 1994. The Red House represents the importance of local arts and designs, as well as music and people. The significance of activities by foreigners and the minorities, such as LGBTQ community, have been recognized and supported openly at the Red House and its surrounding areas. HongLou in recent times is one of the most visited locations in Taipei for tourists and locals. By sharing the point of view that all humans are equal and free, many references in this particular section are fundamentally based on Lady Gaga's "Born This Way", such as an interpretation of its main verse (Ex. 21.)

## Example 21 “Born This Way” verse

Other elements refer to a nightclub atmosphere when the Red House was used for LGBTQ meetings, such as the dance-techno bassline by the violoncello (Ex. 22,) dance-techno drum patterns in the percussion (Ex. 23,) and zhongruan imitating electric guitar (Ex. 24.)

## Example 22

I. The original dance-techno bassline of the violoncello in (||: 4/4+5/4 :||) grouping

II. Regrouping in mixed meter

## Example 23

I. Original pattern in mixed meter concept of the drum beats (||: 4/4 + 3/4 + 3/8 & 4/4 + 5/4 :||)

II. Regrouping in mixed meter

## Example 24 Zhongruan is treated as an electronic guitar

Near to the end of piece, a sense of freedom is referenced by free improvisation (Ex. 25.)

Example 25 mm. 254-256

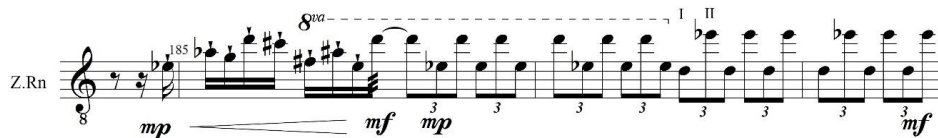
*HongLou West Gate Story* is held together by various gestural ideas that are all interrelated throughout the entire composition. For example, starting from mm. 183-210, during the 1963-1994 Movie Period (Red House Movie Theater,) the music shares a darker side and the depression of a second run movie theater (as well as showing pornography.) Abandonment by the mainstream culture turns the Theater into a new haven for minorities (LGBTQ). The gestural ideas (such as tremolo using the symbolic east/west interval combinations from ex. 1 to 4) from the intro reoccur to bridge a new era for the Red House, (Ex. 26.)

Example 26

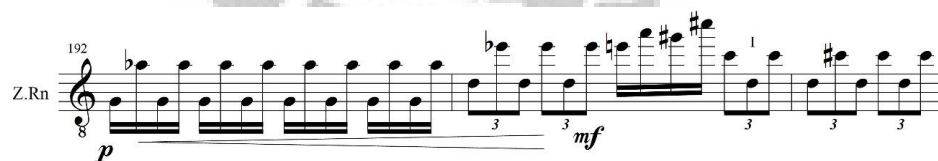
Tremolo concept from the intro vs. mm. 183-194

Tremolo in various treatments in mm.183-194

Zhongruan  
Measures  
185-187



Zhongruan  
Measures  
192-194



Sheng  
Measures  
189-190





The build-up of clusters in the rehearsal letter **O** (Ex. 27) was initially prepared previously in mm. 11, 13, 92 (Ex. 5 and 6,) etc.

Example 27

cluster (as many notes as possible)

Shg 207  $A^{\flat}$   $A^{\flat} \rightarrow A^{\natural}$   $G^{\sharp}$  **P**  $f$

Z.Rn 8  $f$

Vlc. 3

Vib. 3 move to drum set SD w/snares

Shg 209  $ff$  3 5

Z.Rn 209  $ff$  3 5

Vlc. 209 *sul pont.* (lots of pressure, mixture between original pitches, harmonics and scratch tone)  $ff$  3 5

Perc. hi-hat from closed, gradually release to open (last note of the pattern)  $p$   $mf$

As conclusion, the ending of the piece combines several different motivic ideas that were introduced and developed throughout the entire piece, (Ex. 28).

Example 28

The musical score for Example 28 is written for four staves: Shg (Sheng), Z.Rn (Zhu Ruan), Vlc (Violoncello), and Perc (Percussion). The score is in 3/4 time and includes various dynamics and performance instructions.

- Shg:** Starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic, followed by a *ff* (fortissimo) section. A cluster of notes is marked "cluster (as many notes as possible)". The piece ends with a *p* (piano) dynamic.
- Z.Rn:** Starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic, followed by a *ff* (fortissimo) section. The piece ends with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic.
- Vlc:** Starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic, followed by a *ff* (fortissimo) section. The piece ends with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic.
- Perc:** Starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic, followed by a *ff* (fortissimo) section. The piece ends with a *p* (piano) dynamic.

Performance instructions include "arco" for the Vlc, "SD rim", "PH", "SD rim", "H.hat", "SD", "Dalo", and "pedal hi-hat".

This particular composition exemplifies the excited historical background of Taiwan in a cross between east and west. The composition maps out a narrative structure of this history through symbolically representing an important location's evolution through time. In this process, it reveals many of my compositional approaches to converge global music encounters. Through challenging myself, by finding various possibilities to interweave musical elements from different nationalities and cultures, I have enhanced my compositional output and honored the culture of my origin.