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Stylistic and semiotic analysis of modern Chinese piano performance



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Abstract: The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive stylistic and semiotic analysis of contemporary Chinese piano performance to identify its distinctive characteristics, cultural influences, and artistic significance. A total of 60 Chinese pianists – categorized according to their affiliation with the Beijing conservative school, the Shanghai modernist-synthetic school, the diaspora, and postmodern innovators – and 60 Western performers (German-Austrian tradition, $n = 20$; Russian pedagogy, $n = 15$; American eclecticism, $n = 15$; specialists in Asian repertoire, $n = 10$) participated in a ten-week intercultural pedagogical project. Performance recordings obtained before and after the intervention were evaluated by expert raters using a 10-point scale across five dimensions: technical proficiency, musicality, interpretative depth, emotional expressiveness, and stage presence. Interrater reliability exceeded the accepted threshold ($ICC > 0.85$). In addition, participants completed questionnaires developed using a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. A survey of 60 Western pianists highlighted high evaluations of Chinese performers in intercultural exchange (4.10 out of 5), technical proficiency (4.05), and influence on competition culture (4.00). The study's results indicate that Chinese pianists excel in technical proficiency (8.5 vs. 8.3) but lag behind in musicality (8.2 vs. 8.6), interpretation (7.9 vs. 8.4), and emotional expressiveness (7.7 vs. 8.5) compared to their Western counterparts. This research contributes significantly to understanding current trends in global piano artistry and outlines prospects for further study of the interaction between different performance schools.

Keywords: Chinese music; cultural interpretation; ethnomusicological perspective; modern techniques; musical aesthetics; structural analysis

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1 Introduction

Musical performance, especially in the realm of piano music, constitutes a complex and multifaceted process of communication and interpretation. A semiotic approach views musical performance as the transmission of encoded messages from the performer to the audience, akin to examples found in theater or opera (Navickaitė-Martinelli 2015). However, this method often faces criticism for oversimplifying the process of understanding the emotional content of music, emphasizing the subjective nature of musical perception, and the impossibility of precisely reproducing composers' original intentions (Hatten 2020).

Traditional musical performance is traditionally perceived as a linear process of information transmission from the composer through the performer to the listener, where the performer balances adherence to established traditions with injecting personal interpretation (Navickaitė 2007). In the context of Chinese piano music, research often suffers from vague definitions of musical connotations and inadequate theoretical foundations (Chen et al. 2022). In China, the uniqueness of musical works is valued as reflecting a rich cultural heritage (Qiu and Liu 2024). Historical isolation between Chinese and European civilizations has led to significant differences in musical concepts and instruments (Sin 2022). In the era of globalization, the importance of cultural diversification and multicultural music education is increasing (Yun 2020). Traditional Chinese instruments play a pivotal role in shaping piano compositions in a Chinese style. Their influence manifests through timbral emulation, scale systems, rhythmic patterns, ornamentation, and philosophical underpinnings (Hou and Isaiah 2021). Over the decades, approaches to integrating these elements have evolved from direct emulation to a more abstract embodiment, creating a unique synthesis of tradition and innovation (Zhang et al. 2024).

The twentieth century marked a pivotal moment for Chinese national music, particularly in the realm of piano artistry. Composers and performers of this period amalgamated traditional elements of Chinese music with Western techniques, leading to the creation of new forms of expression (Bai and Wu 2025). This synergy not only enriched the piano repertoire but also fostered cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world, showcasing the uniqueness of Chinese musical artistry on the international stage (Lihan and Thothum 2020). Consequently, the study of Chinese piano music necessitates a comprehensive approach that considers both semiotic aspects of performance and cultural specificities, historical context, and the evolution of musical traditions. This research endeavors to explore these facets, highlighting the uniqueness and complexity of Chinese musical artistry within the global musical landscape.

1.1 Literature review

In recent years, scholarly research on piano music in China has focused on various aspects of integrating Chinese and Western musical traditions. One such study examines the work of a Canadian composer of Chinese descent, Huang An-lun, emphasizing the synthesis of Chinese and Western musical traditions in his compositions (Zhang 2021). The research includes a biographical overview of Huang An-lun's life, education, and cultural influences, along with a brief introduction to Chinese musical theories. Special attention is given to his piano works, analyzing the combination of Chinese modality and Western tonality, Western functional harmony and pentatonic harmony, as well as the influence of Chinese folk songs and traditional instruments on his music.

Further research in this direction is presented in an article that analyzes the development of Chinese piano music and its integration with Western musical culture (Li 2021). The author provides a historical overview of the development of piano music in China, beginning with early imitations of Western styles and leading to the creation of a unique Chinese style. The study pays particular attention to the analysis of style, structure, and imitation of the sound of traditional Chinese instruments in piano compositions, as well as the study of folk music transcriptions and original works by Chinese composers.

An important milestone in the development of contemporary Chinese ethnic music is the study of the piano works of Chinese composer Zhang Zhao (Huang et al. 2023). This research examines Zhang Zhao's piece "Pi Huang" as an example of an innovative approach to integrating traditional ethnic elements into piano music. The study highlights the composer's creative techniques and aesthetic thinking, evaluating the role of Zhang Zhao's piano music in preserving and developing Chinese cultural identity.

Another study is devoted to the analysis of the piano compositions of Chinese composer Chu Wanghua, particularly his piano concerto "Yellow River" (Sun 2022). This research reveals the unique combination of Western and Chinese musical elements in the composer's work, including the imitation of the sound of ethnic instruments on the piano and the synthesis of folk music with contemporary compositional techniques. The study also suggests further exploration of the relationship between Chinese and Western elements in this piece.

In an article exploring the evolution of "Chinese style" piano music over the past century, the authors emphasize the influence of traditional Chinese instruments on the development of this genre (Hou and Isaiah 2021). The research traces the transformation from external imitation of the "form" to a deeper embodiment of the "connotation" of Chinese music in piano compositions, particularly after the 1980s.

Another significant study focuses on the development of the piano in contemporary China, highlighting its role in music education, performance, and composition (Wang and Jia 2023). The authors analyze the social, cultural, and educational factors that have influenced the evolution of Chinese piano art in recent decades and offer theoretical recommendations for improving piano teaching and practice in China.

A review of global influences on contemporary Chinese piano art is presented in an article examining the integration of national traditions with the musical experiences of Europe, Canada, America, and Australia (Ye 2018). The authors analyze the works of Chinese composers such as Wang Lisan and Chu Wanghua in the context of their integrative processes and the philosophical-aesthetic foundations of contemporary Chinese piano compositions. Another study focuses on emotional expression in piano performance, emphasizing its significance for creating a comprehensive interpretation of musical works (Wu 2020). The article argues that emotional expression is an essential component of piano performance for achieving effective musical interpretation.

Thus, these studies demonstrate diverse approaches to examining Chinese piano music, ranging from the synthesis of traditional and contemporary techniques to global influences and emotional expression, collectively forming a comprehensive portrait of the development of Chinese piano art. The relevance of our research lies in addressing a gap in existing scholarly work concerning contemporary Chinese piano performance. Previous studies predominantly focus on the historical development of Chinese piano music, the integration of Chinese and Western musical traditions, and the global influences on Chinese piano art. However, insufficient attention has been given to a comprehensive stylistic and semiotic analysis of contemporary Chinese piano performance, particularly in the context of comparing the technical and cultural aspects of performance between Chinese and Western pianists. Our study combines experimental methods of comparative analysis of interpretations, an examination of the semiotic aspects of cultural symbols and signs, and an evaluation of the contribution of Chinese performers to the development of global piano art.

1.2 Problem statement

The dominance of Chinese pianists in international competitions underscores the necessity for scholarly investigation. Cultural synthesis gives rise to novel performance practices. Systematic inquiry enables the identification of translational mechanisms that emerge at the intersection of distinct musical philosophies. Contemporary piano pedagogy increasingly demands empirical evidence to substantiate the effectiveness of intercultural exchange.

The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive stylistic and semiotic analysis of contemporary Chinese piano performance to identify its distinctive characteristics, cultural influences, and artistic significance.

The research objectives include:

1. Conducting an experimental study involving Chinese and Western pianists. Performing a comparative analysis of their interpretations, including technical aspects of performance, emotional expressiveness, and culturally specific elements of interpretation.
2. Investigating the semiotic aspects of interpretation by Chinese pianists of both traditional Chinese repertoire and Western classical music. Analyzing how cultural symbols and signs influence musical expressiveness and what new meanings they bring to the performance.
3. Evaluating the contribution of Chinese performers to the development of global piano art and their influence on the formation of new performance trends.

2 Methods and materials

2.1 Study design

The purpose of the experiment was to conduct a comparative analysis of the impact of cross-cultural training on the performance skills of pianists from different musical traditions. Over a period of 10 weeks, Chinese pianists studied Western techniques and approaches to interpretation, while Western pianists studied Chinese musical traditions. The comparison of initial and final performances, along with the analysis of participants' survey responses, allows for an assessment of the effectiveness of such cross-cultural exchange, identification of potential benefits of integrating different musical traditions into the educational process, and an understanding of how cultural context influences musical interpretation and performance.

The experiment was conducted at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, involving experienced pianists aged between 25 and 47. Inclusion criteria comprised: a minimum of 5 years of professional concert activity; verified indicators of cultural identification, as measured by the Cultural Identification Scale – Revised (CIS-R); and repertoire diversity indices (Simpson Index > 0.7), reflecting sustained cross-cultural engagement. The study included an initial performance recording, 8 weeks of master classes and workshops, and a final performance recording. The evaluation was conducted by musicologists using a 10-point scale, which included criteria such as technical proficiency, musicality, interpretation, emotional expressiveness, and stage presence (Appendix A: “Pianist performance evaluation scale”; Table 1).

Table 1: Program of the 10-week experimental study on cross-cultural training of Chinese and western pianists.

Week	Group A (Chinese pianists)	Group B (western pianists)
1	Initial performance recording. Introduction to the research program.	Initial performance recording. Introduction to the research program.
2	Master class: western playing techniques. Workshop: interpretation of western classical music.	Master class: Chinese playing techniques. Workshop: interpretation of Chinese classical music.
3	Practical sessions: application of western techniques. individual consultations.	Practical sessions: application of Chinese techniques. individual consultations.
4	Master class: emotional expressiveness in western music. workshop: analysis of western musical forms.	Master class: emotional expressiveness in Chinese music. workshop: analysis of Chinese musical forms.
5	Practical sessions: working on emotional expressiveness. Group discussions.	Practical sessions: working on emotional expressiveness. Group discussions.
6	Master class: stage presence in the western tradition. Workshop: cultural context of western music.	Master class: stage presence in the Chinese tradition. Workshop: cultural context of Chinese music.
7	Practical sessions: enhancing stage presence. Individual consultations.	Practical sessions: enhancing stage presence. Individual consultations.
8	Master class: synthesis of eastern and western elements. Workshop: cross-cultural interpretation.	Master class: synthesis of eastern and western elements. Workshop: cross-cultural interpretation.
9	Practical sessions: Integration of learned techniques. Preparation for the final performance.	Practical sessions: Integration of learned techniques. Preparation for the final performance.
10	Final performance recording. Participant survey administration.	Final performance recording. Participant survey administration.

The stratified sample ensures a representative balance: Chinese pianists ($n = 60$) are equally distributed across four groups – adherents of the Beijing Conservatory tradition, characterized by technical precision and orthodox interpretation; members of the Shanghai modernist school, known for integrating Western innovations; performers from the diaspora, negotiating hybrid cultural identities; and emerging artists synthesizing postmodern aesthetics. Western participants ($n = 60$) include representatives of the German-Austrian interpretative tradition ($n = 20$), the Russian school of virtuosic pedagogy ($n = 15$), American eclecticism ($n = 15$), and specialists in Asian repertoire ($n = 10$).

After the experiment, participants were surveyed using Google Forms, which included closed-ended questions on a Likert scale and three open-ended questions (see Appendix B: “Post-experimental survey”). The structured questions provided quantitative data (via the Likert scale) and qualitative information (through the

open-ended questions), enhancing the understanding of participants' experiences and the research effectiveness. Closed-ended questions focused on assessing the impact of participation in the study on performance skills, comfort during interpretation of works from another cultural tradition, repertoire complexity, the usefulness of master classes and workshops, changes in understanding cultural differences in musical interpretation, improvement in technical proficiency, influence on emotional expressiveness, changes in attitudes towards music from another cultural tradition, progress in understanding culturally-specific elements of interpretation, and satisfaction with the organization of the study. Open-ended questions allowed participants to provide detailed descriptions of the most beneficial aspects of the study, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improving future research efforts.

Experts completed 40-hour training modules encompassing assessment criteria, cultural competence, and calibration procedures. Inter-rater reliability exceeded the accepted threshold ($ICC > 0.85$), achieved through systematic standardization exercises based on video-recorded performances.

2.2 Statistical analysis

Following tests for normality (Shapiro–Wilk), parametric analyses were conducted using SPSS 28.0. Independent samples *t*-tests were employed to compare mean scores between pianist groups, with effect sizes calculated using Cohen's *d*. Internal consistency of the assessment criteria was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.87$). Inter-rater reliability was assessed through intraclass correlation coefficients ($ICC = 0.82$). Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine relationships among various dimensions of performance. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the effect of nationality on individual evaluation criteria. Bonferroni corrections were applied to adjust for multiple comparisons (adjusted $\alpha = 0.01$). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize central tendencies and dispersion across assessment categories.

2.3 Ethical issues

All data collected during the study were processed and presented as anonymous results. All participants provided voluntary consent to participate in the research and received pertinent information regarding its objectives, methods, and potential risks. Thus, all participants had a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of

the study, as well as their rights as participants. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from participation at any time without any negative consequences.

2.4 Research limitations

The study encompassed only a limited sample of pianists aged between 25 and 47 years, which may not fully represent the diversity of interpretative approaches within the broader musical community. An important limitation is also that the influence of participants’ cultural context and prior musical experiences was not fully accounted for, which could have influenced their interpretative decisions and research outcomes.

The representativeness of the sample is constrained by geographical limitations – specifically, the concentration of major conservatories may underrepresent regional performance traditions. These limitations delineate the boundaries of interpretation while simultaneously suggesting avenues for future research aimed at addressing identified gaps through sample expansion, extended observation periods, and refinement of cross-cultural measurement instruments.

3 Results

The results of the experiment indicate that Western pianists generally received higher average scores across most criteria compared to their Chinese counterparts (Table 2). Western pianists demonstrated superior performance in musicality (8.6 vs. 8.2), interpretation (8.4 vs. 7.9), emotional expressiveness (8.5 vs. 7.7), and stage presence (8.2 vs. 8.0). Only in terms of technical proficiency did Chinese pianists slightly surpass Western ones (8.5 vs. 8.3). The overall average score of Western

Table 2: Average results of musicologists’ evaluation.

Criterion of assessment	Chinese pianists (average score)	Western pianists (average score)
Technical proficiency	8.5	8.3
Musicality	8.2	8.6
Interpretation	7.9	8.4
Emotional expressiveness	7.7	8.5
Stage presence	8.0	8.2
Overall average score	8.06	8.40

pianists (8.40) was higher than that of Chinese pianists (8.06), suggesting a general preference for Western pianists across the evaluated aspects.

The results of the statistical analysis indicate no statistically significant difference between the overall average scores of Chinese ($M = 8.06$) and Western ($M = 8.40$) pianists, $t(38) = -1.52$, $p > 0.05$ (Table 3). This suggests a similar level of overall performance mastery in both groups, despite their differing cultural and educational backgrounds. Although there is a slight tendency towards higher scores among Western pianists, this difference is not statistically significant. The findings underscore the effectiveness of cross-cultural training in balancing levels of performance mastery.

The data presented in Table 4 illustrate a multifaceted process of cultural synthesis in the interpretation of music by Chinese pianists. In performing both traditional Chinese repertoire and Western classical music, there is a unique intertwining of cultural codes, symbols, and performance techniques. This is evident in the use of pentatonic motifs, adaptation of Western harmonic structures, reinterpretation of traditional forms through the lens of Chinese philosophy, and integration of Chinese elements into the Western repertoire. Such an approach not only enriches musical expression by creating new meanings in performance but also demonstrates the ability of Chinese pianists to organically combine diverse cultural traditions. This indicates the formation of a unique intercultural musical dialogue where Eastern and Western traditions mutually enrich each other, creating a new synthetic approach to musical interpretation.

The survey results demonstrate a generally positive perception of the contribution of Chinese performers to the development of global piano art by Western pianists (Table 5). The highest ratings were received for aspects such as intercultural exchange in music (average score 4.10), technical mastery (4.05), and influence on competition culture (4.00), indicating recognition of the significant influence of Chinese pianists in these areas. Slightly lower but still positive ratings are observed regarding the innovativeness of interpretations (3.65) and influence on repertoire

Table 3: Results of student’s t -test for comparing overall performance average scores between Chinese and western pianists.

Indicator	Chinese pianists	Western pianists	t	df	p -Value
Average score	8.06	8.40	-1.52	38	>0.05
Standard deviation	0.5	0.5			
Number of participants	20	20			
Critical t -value ($\alpha = 0.05$, two-tailed)	± 2.024				

Table 4: Comparative analysis of semiotic aspects of interpretation by Chinese pianists of traditional Chinese repertoire and western classical music.

Aspect of interpretation	Traditional Chinese repertoire	Western classical Music
Cultural symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Use of pentatonic motifs– Imitation of traditional instrument sounds (guqin, erhu)– Representation of yin and yang concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Adaptation of western harmonic structures– Integration of Chinese melodic elements– Reinterpretation of sonata form through the lens of Chinese philosophy
Impact on musical expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Emphasis on the cyclic nature of musical structure– Subtle dynamics for conveying natural imagery– Focus on meditation and inner peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Enhanced emotional palette– Experimentation with contrasts and dramaturgy– Synthesis of Western expressiveness with Chinese restraint
New meanings in performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Reinterpretation of traditional works through modern playing techniques– Emphasis on philosophical concepts in musical interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Incorporation of elements of Chinese aesthetics into western works– A new interpretation of emotional content through the prism of Chinese culture
Technical aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Subtle use of pedals to imitate traditional instrument sounds– Use of specific playing techniques to convey national flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Adaptation of western technique to the specifics of Chinese musical language– Integration of Chinese performance techniques into western repertoire
Influence of cultural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Deep understanding and transmission of cultural codes– Emphasis on the connection of music with nature and philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Interpretation of western works through the lens of Chinese worldview– Exploration of parallels between Western and eastern cultural concept

trends (3.55), which may suggest some conservatism among Western pianists in accepting new approaches. It is worth noting that none of the aspects received an average rating below 3.5, confirming an overall positive attitude towards the contribution of Chinese performers. However, the presence of negative ratings in each category indicates diverse opinions and potential areas for further development and dialogue between Eastern and Western piano schools.

The comments provided below reflect the diversity of perspectives and evaluations, demonstrating the complexity and multifaceted nature of the researched issue. They provide valuable insider information and expert assessments that help better understand the place of Chinese performers in contemporary piano art and their impact on its development.

Table 5: Assessment of the contribution of Chinese performers to the development of global piano artistry based on survey results from western pianists.

Criterion of evaluation	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	Average score (1–5)
Technical mastery	8	7	3	2	0	4.05
Musicality and expressiveness	6	8	4	2	0	3.90
Innovativeness in interpretation	5	7	5	2	1	3.65
Influence on repertoire trends	4	7	6	2	1	3.55
Contribution to pedagogy	7	8	3	1	1	3.95
Impact on competition culture	8	7	3	1	1	4
Development of new performance techniques	6	7	4	2	1	3.75
Popularization of classical music	7	6	5	2	0	3.90
Cross-cultural exchange in music	9	7	2	1	1	4.10
Influence on the global music market	8	6	4	1	1	3.95

3.1 Respondent A

In my opinion, the contribution of Chinese performers to global piano art is extremely significant. Their technical mastery often surpasses that of Western colleagues, especially in virtuosic works. However, I believe that Chinese performers still have room to grow in terms of interpretation and emotional expressiveness. Their interpretations of classical works sometimes appear too literal, lacking depth in understanding cultural context. At the same time, their influence on competition culture is immense – Chinese pianists regularly occupy prize-winning positions in the most prestigious international competitions, prompting all other pianists to elevate their standards.

3.2 Respondent B

On the one hand, they have injected new energy into the world of classical music, attracting a vast audience in Asia. This contributes to the popularization of classical

music on a global scale. Moreover, their discipline and diligence set new standards in piano pedagogy. Regarding their influence on repertoire trends, Chinese pianists largely focus on romantic repertoire, paying less attention to contemporary music. This may lead to a certain conservatism in concert programming.

3.3 Respondent B

In terms of technical mastery, Chinese pianists are setting new standards, especially in Liszt's works and those of other virtuoso composers. Their influence on pedagogy is also significant – many Chinese teachers are currently employed in leading conservatories worldwide, introducing their methodologies. Regarding emotional expressiveness, I see significant progress in the younger generation of Chinese pianists, who demonstrate a deep understanding of Western music.

3.4 Respondent C

I assess the contribution of Chinese performers as revolutionary for world piano art. They not only demonstrate exceptional technical mastery but also bring a fresh perspective to the interpretation of classical works. However, I believe their contribution to the development of contemporary music is currently limited. Most Chinese performers prefer classical and romantic repertoire, experimenting less with avant-garde works. Overall, their influence has led to an elevation in the overall standard of piano performance worldwide.

4 Discussion

Results of the analysis of short piano performance videos demonstrate intriguing parallels in the development of contemporary piano art (Zijian 2022). Our study revealed a significant influence of Chinese pianists on the global music scene, emphasizing their technical mastery while also noting certain differences in interpretation and emotional expressiveness compared to their Western counterparts. Concurrently, the analysis of short videos showcases the democratization of piano art, where anonymous performers create a new cultural phenomenon, emphasizing the universality of musical experience. Both studies underscore the importance of intercultural dialogue and the interplay of different traditions in shaping the contemporary musical landscape. While our study focuses on professional performers and their impact on the classical music scene, the analysis of video content

unveils new forms of musical self-expression in the digital realm. Together, these studies paint a comprehensive picture of the evolution of piano art encompassing both academic and popular culture domains, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of the contemporary music world. A subsequent study delves into the application of musical semiotics and narrative theory in analyzing Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata* (Li 2023). In contrast to traditional analytical approaches focusing on form and harmony, this study examines the direct and indirect meanings of specific musical motifs within the sonata. Elements such as intervallic structures, tonal shifts, rhythmic patterns, and textural features are scrutinized to reveal their narrative potential. Comparing with our study on the influence of Chinese pianists on global piano art, notable parallels, and distinctions emerge: both studies seek to broaden traditional approaches to musical performance analysis using interdisciplinary methods; our study focuses on cultural influence and performance styles, whereas the *Waldstein Sonata* study concentrates on semiotic analysis of a specific work.

Another scholarly investigation was dedicated to integrating the performer's role into semiotic analysis of music, aiming to develop a theory of intentionality based on Peircean semiotics for the logical justification of intuitive processes in musical interpretation (Ledger 2020). The primary outcome demonstrates how a semiotic approach can assist performers in formulating informed interpretations of various musical styles. Comparison with our study reveals both focus on the performer's role but from different perspectives: ours from the standpoint of cultural influence, theirs from the position of semiotic analysis. Our study employs quantitative methods to assess performance mastery, whereas theirs proposes a qualitative semiotic approach. Both strive to deepen understanding of the musical interpretation process: ours through analysis of cultural differences, theirs through semiotic theory. Our study focuses on contemporary performance trends, while theirs offers a tool for analyzing works from different epochs. Both underscore the importance of theoretical grounding in performance decisions, albeit from differing methodological positions. A subsequent study proposes a cognitive-semiotic approach to analyzing musical meaning, using an updated version of Zlatev's semiotic hierarchy (Giacosa 2023). It focuses on the phenomenological aspect of musical experience, emphasizing the role of the aesthetic dimension and bodily sensation in music perception. Compared with our study on the influence of Chinese pianists on the global piano art, both approaches aim to broaden the understanding of musical experience, but from different perspectives. Our study concentrates on cultural aspects of performance and their impact on the global music scene, employing quantitative methods to assess performance mastery.

Furthermore, one study focuses on the development of piano music in China, particularly on the integration of traditional Chinese music with Western piano art (Chen et al. 2023). It underscores the role of cultural exchange and adaptation in

shaping a uniquely Chinese approach to piano music. Compared to our study on the impact of Chinese pianists on the global piano art, a shared interest in cultural interaction in musical contexts is notable. However, our study concentrates on the contemporary influence of Chinese performers on the global music scene, using quantitative methods to assess performance mastery, whereas this research examines the historical process of piano music development in China. Similarly, another study analyzes the evolution of Chinese art music through the lens of paradigm shifts, examining the influence of colonialism, politics, and ideology on its development from the 1930s to the present (Yang and Irisarri Izquierdo 2022). It focuses on the transformation of musical traditions, scholarly trends, and their relationship with political systems. Our study focuses on the contemporary impact of Chinese performers on the global music scene, employing quantitative methods to assess performance mastery, whereas this study offers a historical and theoretical analysis of the development of Chinese art music. Both studies underscore the importance of cultural context in shaping musical traditions and practices, but ours leans more towards contemporary performance aspects while this one focuses on historical and ideological factors influencing the development of Chinese music as a whole.

5 Conclusions

The conducted study demonstrates the significant influence of Chinese pianists on the global piano art while revealing certain differences compared to their Western counterparts. Statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in overall mean scores between Chinese ($M = 8.06$) and Western ($M = 8.40$) pianists, $t(38) = -1.52$, $p > 0.05$, suggesting similar levels of general performance mastery. Chinese pianists excelled in technical proficiency (8.5 vs. 8.3) but scored lower in musicality (8.2 vs. 8.6), interpretation (7.9 vs. 8.4), and emotional expressiveness (7.7 vs. 8.5). Surveys of Western pianists revealed high ratings for the contribution of Chinese performers to intercultural exchange (4.10 out of 5), technical mastery (4.05), and influence on competition culture (4.00) while receiving lower ratings for innovative interpretations (3.65) and impact on repertoire trends (3.55). These results, along with qualitative analysis of semiotic aspects of interpretation, indicate the formation of a unique intercultural musical dialogue where Eastern and Western traditions mutually enrich each other, creating a new synthetic approach to musical interpretation and performance. Future research perspectives involve a deeper exploration of the dynamics of interaction between Chinese and Western piano schools. A significant direction includes a detailed analysis of pedagogical methodologies employed in Chinese music educational institutions and their comparison with

Western approaches, aiming to identify key factors influencing the development of performance mastery.

Appendix A: Performance mastery rating scale for pianists

- 10 Exceptional Level: Flawless technical mastery, profound musicality, innovative interpretation, exceptional emotional expressiveness, and charismatic stage presence.
- 9 Outstanding Level: Highly developed technical proficiency, refined musicality, original interpretation, strong emotional expressiveness, and confident stage presence.
- 8 Very Good Level: Excellent technique, clear musicality, interesting interpretation, convincing emotional expressiveness, and good stage presence.
- 7 Good Level: Stable technique, consistent musicality, thoughtful interpretation, noticeable emotional expressiveness, and adequate stage presence.
- 6 Above Average: Competent technique, mature musicality, logical interpretation, sufficient emotional expressiveness, and acceptable stage presence.
- 5 Average Level: Satisfactory technique, basic musicality, standard interpretation, moderate emotional expressiveness, and neutral stage presence.
- 4 Below Average: Limited technique, unstable musicality, unoriginal interpretation, weak emotional expressiveness, and uncertain stage presence.
- 3 Weak Level: Problematic technique, insufficient musicality, superficial interpretation, minimal emotional expressiveness, and minimal stage presence.
- 2 Very Weak Level: Serious technical deficiencies, lack of musicality, inadequate interpretation, absence of emotional expressiveness, and problematic stage presence.
- 1 Unsatisfactory Level: Critical issues in all performance aspects, rendering it unfit for professional evaluation.

Appendix B: Post-experimental survey

How do you evaluate the impact of participating in this study on your performance skills? (scale 1–5)

How comfortable did you feel interpreting works from a different cultural tradition? (scale 1–5)

How would you rate the level of difficulty of the proposed repertoire? (scale 1–5)

How useful were the masterclasses and workshops for you? (scale 1–5)

How has your understanding of cultural differences in musical interpretation changed during the study? (scale 1–5)

To what extent do you feel you have improved your technical mastery during the study? (scale 1–5)

How would you evaluate the impact of the study on your emotional expressiveness in performance? (scale 1–5)

How has your attitude towards music from another cultural tradition changed? (scale 1–5)

How do you evaluate your progress in understanding and performing culture-specific elements of interpretation? (scale 1–5)

How satisfied are you with the organization and conduct of the study? (scale 1–5)

Open-ended questions:

11. What aspects of the study were most beneficial to you and why?
12. What difficulties did you encounter during your participation in the study and how did you overcome them?
13. What recommendations would you give to improve similar studies in the future?

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