

Research Article

The “Chaohu Folk Songs” for Choir: A Creative Research in Music Arranging

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Abstract

After finishing my undergraduate studies, I started working in music education in Chaohu, where I engaged in collecting and studying local folk songs through various academic events. This work allowed me to meet important figures in the folk music community and deepened my passion for traditional music. Inspired by my experiences and China's national efforts to protect cultural heritage, I chose to focus my research on Chaohu folk songs, making them the main topic of my thesis by aiming to preserve the Chinese folk song.

Since China's reform and opening, its economy and society have experienced rapid development. However, with the advancements in science and technology, economic development, the influx of Western culture, and the rise of Internet technology, the traditional way of life is disappearing at an accelerating rate. As a result, the development of Chaohu folk songs has encountered increasing challenges and now faces the risk of extinction. The study of the artistic characteristics of Chaohu folk songs and the creation of the traditional Chaohu folk songs are of great significance for the rescue and protection of Chaohu folk songs, which is a key motivation for my research on this cultural tradition.

Chaohu folk songs are a regional musical tradition originating in Chaohu City, Anhui Province, China, and have been officially recognized as part of the nation's intangible cultural

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heritage. These songs are deeply rooted in the everyday lives, emotions, and customs of local communities, reflecting both the natural environment and the cultural identity of the region.

To preserve the Chaohu folk songs by compose and arrange the song to choir with Western classic music setting effectively, it is essential to gain a thorough understanding of their melodic structures, rhythmic patterns, core lyrical themes, and performance practices. When this knowledge is integrated with appropriate theories and methods of choral composition, the songs can be shaped into artistic expressions that communicate with a contemporary audience while preserving their authenticity. In my work, I have selected and arranged three representative Chaohu folk songs for choir, blending traditional elements with contemporary harmonic textures. This creative process not only enhances the artistic form of the songs but also advances their preservation, revitalization, and continued development within today's musical landscape. This research aims to arrange three traditional Chaohu folk songs for choir performance. This initiative seeks to foster the inheritance and development of Chaohu folk music, thereby contributing to its contemporary music landscape. The research procedure involves a brief exploration of the historical context and musical attributes of Chaohu folk songs as well as an analysis of the adapted choral arrangements, with the objective of both conserving and innovating traditional cultural practices.

Emerging from the Western ecclesiastical liturgy, choral music has undergone significant evolution, becoming a musical form widely esteemed for its intricate setting and textures. Considering the rapid expansion of the Chinese economy and its music sector, choral art, particularly the folk song chorus, has emerged as a potent vehicle for the transmission of cultural heritage. In contrast to solo vocal performances, choral singing facilitates broader engagement and more profound emotional articulation. By incorporating Western choral compositional methods, this study seeks to arrange traditional Chaohu folk melodies into novel choral compositions, thereby amplifying their artistic resonance while ensuring the Preservation and dissemination of the folk songs as well as the folk culture.

This research process begins with establishing a comprehensive research methodology, encompassing objective setting, identification of key issues, and target group selection, with a focus on an in-depth investigation into the development and current status of Chaohu folk songs. The researcher analyzed the musical characteristics of three rearranged songs to reflect

the connection between traditional roots and modern musical innovation (continuity and innovation). The final stage involves synthesizing knowledge from both the research findings and the creative process to compile a complete academic article and present the full research project to the academic community.

The three adapted choral works are inspired by the beautiful scenery of Chaohu and people's love and praise for their hometown. The purpose of this study is to sort out the development process and evolution rules of Chaohu folk songs, understand the musical characteristics of traditional Chaohu folk songs, and combine Western music creation methods to create three traditional Chaohu folk songs in chorus to inherit and innovate Chaohu folk songs. The choral composition the Chaohu Folk Song demonstrates a more sophisticated music architecture, enhanced harmonic richness, and a broader spectrum of melodic variation, thereby contributing significant referential value to the study and future development of the song composition.

Keywords: Chaohu / Folk Song / Choir / Preservation / Chinese Tradition

Chaohu folk songs, as representative traditional music of Anhui Province in China, have been inscribed on the national list of intangible cultural heritage. Their historical origins trace back to ancient agrarian civilization, bearing profound regional cultural memory. This oral tradition encompasses diverse genres, including work chants, mountain ballads, and folk tunes, portraying local life through melodious tunes and distinctive rhythmic characteristics. However, this art form faces dual contemporary challenges. On the one hand, rapid modernization has gradually eroded its original cultural foundations. On the other, its failure to integrate into modern musical trends has resulted in a lack of organic fusion with contemporary musical systems. This musical tradition now confronts an urgent threat of generational discontinuity, rendering research and preservation of Chaohu folk songs an imperative task.

Chaohu Hao belongs to the Chaohu Yangge (Yangge is a popular rural folk dance with a history dating back thousands of years). It originates from farming life in ancient times.

Chaohu Yangge originates from agricultural labor, and it is created based on traditional music¹ materials in Chaohu. This piece is composed by the composer Li Huanzhi and adapted by Wang Zhixin.² I arranged it into an SATB choral piece in G major with 2/4 meter. The work features new melodies inspired by the original tune, and it is accompanied by the bamboo flute and piano. The musical form is expanded from the original one-part form to a three-part form. The enlarged scope helps fully express the beauty of Chaohu Lake and the people's love for their hometown.

Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang is a Mountain song (Mountain song is sung by peasants in the mountains and fields in an improvisatory manner). It was compiled by Wei Shuyou and Gao Ge. This song originates from Siji Township in the northern part of Chaohu Lake, which is adjacent to the Chuhe River. The water trade here is well-developed, and the romantic and humorous flirting stories of young girls depicted in the song take place here, showcasing the optimistic and cheerful folk atmosphere of the Jianghuai River Basin. I arranged *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang* as an SSA choral piece in G major with 2/4 meter. The transition goes to II – A major, adding a surprise to tonality of the piece. In addition, the work has new melodies based on the original melody, accompanied by a bamboo flute and piano. The musical form is a three-part form, expressing the beautiful wishes of the working people for love and happiness.

Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang depicts the mood of a real place—a flat river located between nine mountains on the southwest bank of Chaohu Lake. Although the altitude is not high, only over 300 meters, it is particularly winding and long, known as the “Shi Li Chang Chong” (“Ten-Mile-Long Ridge”). There are several adapted versions of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*, and they have been rewritten multiple times. Compared to others, the version with lyrics changed by Wei Shuyou and Gao Ge is more poetic. The lyrics showcase the landscape and scenery of the Jianghuai hills, bringing a melodious aesthetic to

¹ Carole Pegg, “Folk Music,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root (Oxford: Oxford University Press) accessed November 9, 2024, https://hugoribeiro.com.br/biblioteca-digital/Pegg-Folk_music-New_Grove.pdf.

² Shankang Cai, *Chaohu Folk Song Charm and Emotions* (Hefei, China: Anhui Literature and Art Publishing House, 2013), 110-112. (in Chinese)

people.³ I arranged *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang* into an SATB choral piece in G major with 2/4 meter. The entire work has four sections; the fourth section begins with A^b major unexpectedly. In addition, the arranged work has new melodies based on the original melody, increased changes in tempo, and is accompanied by the bamboo flute and piano. The incorporation of harmonic and polyphonic techniques refines the structure, making the musical form more cohesive and varied.

The objectives of this study are twofold: first, to create traditional Chaohu folk songs in the form of a choral composition, and second, to analyze the resulting choral work. The research scope centers on Chaohu folk songs as the core subject of investigation. In terms of regional scope, Chaohu folk songs are defined from the perspective of “Chaohu culture,” encompassing folk music traditions associated with administrative areas primarily concentrated in Chaohu City, Lujiang County, and Hanshan County. With regard to content, this study focuses on adapting three traditional Chaohu folk songs into a choral⁴ work. The selected songs are *Chaohu Hao*, *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*, and *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*.⁵

Methodology of Creative Music Research

In the initial phase of this research, the researcher conducted extensive fieldwork to collect data from folk song inheritors and comprehensively study the historical development of Chaohu folk songs to ensure a deep understanding of their authentic melodic structures and cultural contexts. Subsequently, during the creative process, the researcher applied compositional techniques to transform the songs from their original monophonic systems into complex polyphonic choral works by expanding the vocal range and modifying musical forms from simple one-part structures to more elaborate Three-part and Rondo forms suitable for choral performance. This process emphasized the integration of Western harmonic theories—

³ Shankang Cai, 148-150. (in Chinese)

⁴ Laurie Betts Hughes, “Choral Arrangements of American Folk Songs: An Annotated Inventory with Selected Recommendations” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2011), 63–66.

⁵ Yulin Shen, *Research on Nest Song* (Hefei, China: Hefei University of Technology Press, 2013), 13–14. (in Chinese)

specifically modulation and modal mixture—with the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale to create novel tonal colors while preserving the original indigenous flavor. Furthermore, the selection of the bamboo flute and piano as accompanying instruments goes beyond rhythmic function; they are employed symbolically to evoke natural imagery, such as the ripples and flowing waters of Chaohu Lake, utilizing techniques like arpeggios and trills to achieve a mimetic representation of nature aligned with Chinese aesthetics. Finally, regarding data analysis, the researcher adopted the musical philosophies of “Qi” (energy) and “Yun” (resonance) as a framework to interpret melodic movement and breathing, demonstrating how Western techniques can serve as a medium to harmoniously transmit the Eastern spirit rather than acting as mere superficial decoration.

The Results of the Study of *Chaohu Hao*

This research explores how Chaohu folk songs can be preserved and reimagined through choral arrangements supported by bamboo flute and piano. Focusing on three representative songs, it examines their musical traits and expands their structures into forms such as Three-part and Rondo. By combining Western choral composition techniques with Chinese aesthetic concepts of Qi and Yun, the study uses harmonic textures and instrumental color to portray local landscapes. The resulting works deepen the emotional expression of the folk tradition while maintaining its cultural authenticity.

Figure 1 Three-Part Form of *Chaohu Hao*

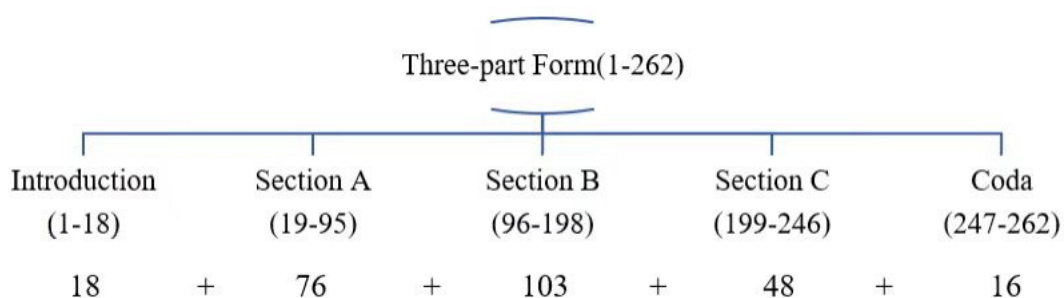


Figure 1 shows the overall form of the piece: three sections with an introduction and a coda. According to Example 1, the introduction consists of 18 bars, which can be divided into two parts: the first part goes from bars 1-10 (Example 1). The bamboo flute melody is an adaptation of a traditional tune, and the piano plays long-held rolling chords to provide harmonic support, creating an image of ripples on the lake's surface. The second part goes from bars 11-18. The traditional melody is played by the right hand of the piano, and the left hand plays the newly composed melody with pentatonic arpeggios. Section A (Bars 19–95) consists of two subsections and a transition, depicting the landscape through lyrics describing the beauty of Chaohu Lake. In Subsection b (Bars 72–87), a newly crafted tenor melody combined with a bass countermelody creates a powerful timbral richness that conveys the inner force of *Shi* (势). The shift from male to female registers at Bar 80 introduces a balance reflecting Yin–Yang duality. The section ends with a transition (Bars 100–106), where bamboo-flute and piano trills imitate flowing water, smoothly leading into the next part.

Example 1 Introduction Showing the Main Melody of *Chaohu Hao*

The musical score for Example 1, titled 'Introduction Showing the Main Melody of *Chaohu Hao*', is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 1 through 6, and the second system covers bars 7 through 12. The music is written for a bamboo flute (BF) and piano (P) accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The BF part features a melodic line that begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note B4, and finally a quarter note A4. The piano accompaniment in the first system consists of sustained chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. In the second system, the piano accompaniment becomes more active, with the right hand playing a series of beamed eighth notes and the left hand playing a bass line with some chords. The overall texture is characterized by the interplay between the melodic flute line and the harmonic support of the piano.

Bars 19-95 consist of section A, which can be divided into subsection “a”, transition, and subsection “b”. The lyrics mean “Chao Lake has beautiful scenery, birds fly thousands of miles in the clear sky, fishermen cast thousands of nets, and thousands of loads of fish and shrimp fill the cabin”. In the analysis of the musical work *Chaohu Hao* (mm. 72-87, section b), the harmony between Tenor and Bass creates a powerful resonance that reflects a deep love for the motherland and the integration of Chinese philosophy into musical composition. The balanced vocal range in Measure 80 aligns with the Yin-Yang principle, while the use of “Empty Space” (Kong Xu) effectively conveys the vastness of Lake Chaohu. By merging musical elements with aesthetic ideals such as “Shi” and “Liu Bai” (Leaving white space), this piece serves as both a cultural symbol and a spiritual elevator. Maintaining a balance between modern innovation and ancestral wisdom remains vital for sustaining traditional Chinese music in the 21st century (Example 2).

Example 2 Bars 72-87 of Subsection b of Section A of *Chaohu Hao*

The musical score for Example 2 consists of four staves, each representing a different vocal part: Tenor (T), Bass (B), Soprano (S), and Alto (A). The music is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words underlined to indicate phrasing. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system starting at measure 72 and the second system starting at measure 80. The lyrics for the first system are: "chohu ai hao ai yi ye hao ya hao feng guang yahao ya hao feng guang". The lyrics for the second system are: "qing kong ye wan li lai niao fei xiang yu min sa xia qian chong wang lai".

Bars 100–106 form a transition between sections A and B, using a melodic line that symbolizes flowing water through trills in the bamboo flute and piano. The composer reshapes a traditional folk melody to evoke the vivid atmosphere of the Chaohu River, combining

ancient motifs with fluid, cascading notes to create a tactile sense of splashing water. Through melodic contour, layered textures, and clear orchestration, the music mimetically illustrates rising and falling droplets, the rhythmic motion of a vessel, and the river's purity. These techniques reflect a sophisticated application of music theory that balances traditional materials with harmonic and melodic depth (Example 3).

Example 3 Bars 100-106 of the Transition of *Chaohu Hao*



Bars 119-198 are section B, which can be divided into subsection a, transition, and subsection c. The lyrics mean “Chao Lake has beautiful scenery; green mountains and mist hide on both sides, golden valleys, silver, cotton, and fruit are fresh, and the harvested land is fragrant.” Bars 156-159 are a transition and have a newly created melody, with choral melodies without specific lyrics. Instead, the melismatic⁶ “a” is used as the background, emphasizing emotional expression. According to Example 4, the tenor, bass, and piano add triplets, creating a sense of urgency and building the emotions to a climax.

Chinese aesthetics places paramount importance on Qi and Yun (spiritual consonance or resonance). In bars 156-159 (Example 4), the singer must gather Qi to manage the expansive melody and long sustained notes. Qi serves as the internal driving force transmitted as energy

⁶ Philip Tagg, “Entry for EPMOW—Melisma,” accessed December 15, 2024, <https://tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/melisma.pdf>.

in the music, while Yun manifests these thoughts through specific musical design and activity. Since these measures are designed as a transition, they provide the energetic preparation needed to soar toward a graceful conclusion. Furthermore, the synthesis of poetry and music must align with the principle of He (Harmony), or the resonance between heaven and earth.

Example 4 Bars 156-159 of the Transition of *Chaohu Hao*

The musical score for Example 4, Bars 156-159 of the Transition of *Chaohu Hao*, is presented in a standard musical notation format. The score is written for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano (P) in 2/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score shows four measures. The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) feature a melodic line with a trill in measure 156 and a sustained note in measure 157. The piano part (P) features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. The score is labeled with (S), (A), (T), (B), and (P) for the respective parts.

Even in passages without lyrics, the spirit of Chinese poetry continues to flow through every note, making Chinese art songs a cultural medium—often analyzed through multimodal and translational perspectives—that bridges national identity and spiritual beliefs. The clever use of modal mixture—particularly the iv minor chord in G major—borrows notes from the parallel minor mode to shift the melodic ‘color’. This technique creates a profound emotional impact, evoking a sense of sadness or splendor that surpasses typical diatonic progressions. Furthermore, the application of the vii^o/iii (secondary leading-tone chord) provides the momentum and harmonic tension necessary to drive the melody towards its point of resolution.

The Results of the Study of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

This research integrates Western composition theory with Chinese aesthetics, using the concepts of Qi and Yun to regulate breath and melodic movement. It applies the principle of “Yin-Yang” to balance the harmonic voices of male and female vocalists, creating “Shi” or musical momentum. The harmonic sections utilize modal mixture techniques, such as the use of the 'iv' chord in a major key to create deeper tonal nuances than typical diatonic structures. Musical elements like the flute and piano are designed with the concepts of “emptiness” and “space” to open imaginative possibilities, transforming folk music into a more refined and contemporary multi-genre composition.

Figure 2 Musical Form of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

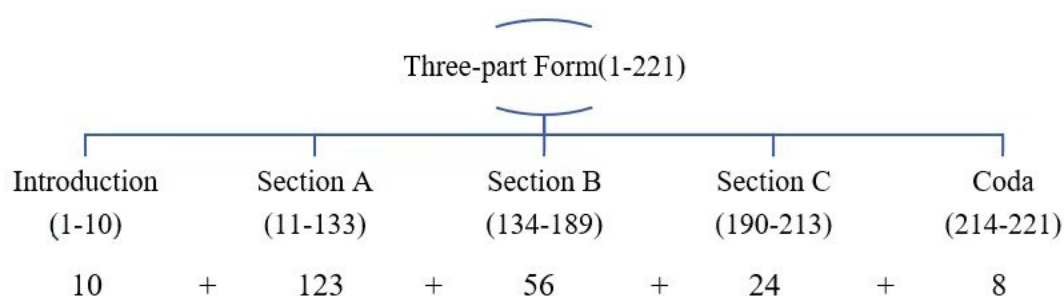
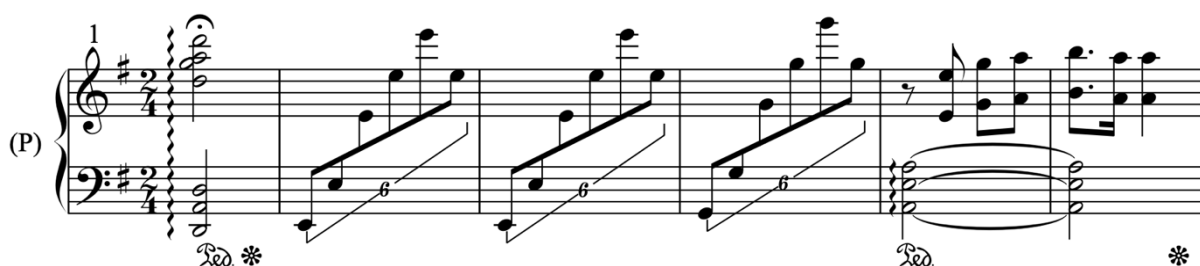


Figure 2 shows the form of the piece: three sections with an introduction and coda. Bars 1-6 are newly created melody, according to Example 5, shows the piano using a sextuplet arpeggio to depict lake ripples beautifully.

Example 5 Bars 1-6 of Piano Melody of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*



In Example 6, bars 66-69 demonstrate a newly crafted transitional section that blends the textures of the bamboo flute and piano. The melody of the piano is marked with accents, depicting the scene of waves hitting rocks on the lake surface.

Example 6 Bars 66-69 of the Transition of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

66 Transition

(BF)

(P)

p *mp* *f*

Example 7 are the transition between sections A and B, during which the mode shifts to A major. The lyrics are composed of the vocalization of “ah” combined with some lyrics. The choir melody is mainly composed of long-held notes, serving as background. With a thick texture and full sound, the piano uses sixteenth-note chords to push the emotions of the entire work to a climax, the transition between sections A and B forms an emotional pivot, with the shift to A major, brightening the folk-based sound.

The soprano and alto “ah” vocalise remove semantic meaning to emphasize pure sonority, while sustained choral lines contrast with the piano’s energetic sixteenth-note chords to heighten intensity. The piano evokes traditional instruments such as the Guzheng or Pipa through layered chords and intervallic patterns, creating a blend of polyphonic richness and linear vocal writing. This “harmonious conflict” reflects contemporary Chinese compositional aesthetics rooted in cultural tradition.

Example 7 Bars 134-137 of the Transition of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

134 Transition

(S1)
(S2)
(A)

a

(P)

Example 8 Bars 174-177 of the Section B of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

174 Section B

(BF)

(S1)
(S2)
(A)

a

a

ni zhege mi_ dao hai hao you liang ge bai zi you liangge kang

(P)

In section B, bars 158-189, the tempo increases. As illustrated in Example 8, the main melody is carried by the Soprano II and Alto voices, while Soprano I provides a countermelody sung without any textual content. In addition, the bamboo flute material is added to complement the soprano 1. The piano melody uses staccato, and the emotions shift from lyrical to lively. This section is built from four balanced phrases (8+8+8+8), with themes that evolve to maintain interest.

In bars 174–181, the texture thickens as the bamboo flute ornaments the Soprano I vocalize, forming a lively polyphonic exchange. The humorous lyrics—“two barnacles and two brans”—portray the girl’s playful attempt to prolong her interaction with her lover, echoed by the piano’s staccato, which adds rhythmic wit. Overall, the arrangement expresses the bright folk character of the Jianghuai region and transforms a simple trade scene into a vivid moment of youthful romance.

Bars 198-213 are section C. The soprano 1 is the main melody, the soprano 2 and alto are the supporting harmonies. As indicated in Example 9, the piano’s left-hand part features three contrapuntal voices, enriching the harmonic texture and effectively delineating the closure of the piece. The use of the submediant and supertonic makes the melody color dimmer, showing the girl's sadness for the lover to leave.

Example 9 Bars 198-209 of the Section C of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

The musical score for Example 9 is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 198 to 203, and the second system covers bars 206 to 211. Both systems are in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The treble staff in both systems contains chords, while the bass staff features a staccato eighth-note pattern. In the second system, the bass staff includes triplets marked with a '3'.

The Coda (Bars 214-221) in G major manifests as an evocative aesthetic dialogue between the bamboo flute and the piano. The piano utilizes continuous sextuplet figurations

to cultivate a fluid, shimmering harmonic texture, providing a rhythmic contrast to the flute's expressive, sustained melodic lines. From a structural perspective, the harmonic progression transitions from A minor through a secondary dominant (V/V), eventually resolving onto a half cadence (chord V). This resolution, punctuated by a fermata and arpeggiated gestures, achieves an “open-ended” aesthetic that transcends formalistic analysis. It effectively transforms intangible rhythmic and sonic elements into a profound phenomenological experience, evoking a sense of infinite imagination while reflecting a deep-seated spiritual beauty inherent in the work's expressive design (Example 10).

Example 10 Bars 214-221 of the Coda of *Xin Da Xiao Chuan Liang Guang Guang*

The musical score for Example 10 consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 214 to 216, and the second system covers bars 217 to 218. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes a Flute (BF) part and a Piano (P) part. In bar 214, the flute has a half note, and the piano has a rising arpeggiated line. In bar 215, the flute has a half note, and the piano continues the arpeggiated line. In bar 216, the flute has a half note, and the piano has a rising arpeggiated line. In bar 217, the flute has a half note with a 'rit.' marking, and the piano has a rising arpeggiated line. In bar 218, the flute has a half note with a 'tr.' marking, and the piano has a rising arpeggiated line. The score ends with a 'Red *' marking in the piano part.

The Results of the Study of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

The arrangement of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang* elevates the traditional folk song into an SATB choral work in G major by expanding its structure into a Rondo form to establish artistic unity and a cohesive narrative. A key feature is the application of signified tertian harmony and the modulation to A $\flat$ major in section C, which creates a novel coloration

alongside complex canonical imitation techniques. The interplay between the bamboo flute and piano, utilizing sequence techniques, mimics the winding imagery of the ridge, reflecting the integration of local aesthetics with Western musical architecture to sustainably preserve the traditional spirit within a contemporary context.

Figure 3 Musical Form of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

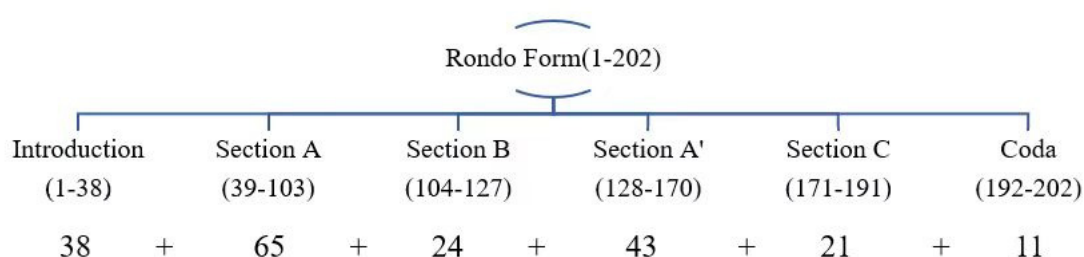


Figure 3 shows the overall form of the piece. Bars 1-38 are the introduction, composed of bamboo flute and piano melodies. Bars 1-9 and 10-18 are sequenced to create a sense that is unified and structured yet developmental (see Example 11). The analysis of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang* highlights a refined compositional approach that focuses on restructuring traditional musical materials through a Rondo form, creating a coherent narrative with recurring themes, contrasting episodes, and a clear coda. Developmental techniques—such as melodic exchanges between bamboo flute and piano—emphasize motivic growth and artistic unity. The piece ultimately blends cultural heritage with modern structural design to achieve a balanced synthesis of tradition and innovation.

Section A consists of four subsections, namely a1, a2, b, and c. The lyrics mean “ten miles long, ten miles long, wheat seedlings green, cauliflower yellow.” According to Example 12, the choir⁷ part adds the harmony based on the main melody of the original work. The soprano is a traditional melody, the alto is a countermelody, and the tenor and bass are harmony. The piano melody is performed in the form of staccato, highlighting the liveliness of the melody.

⁷ Ursula Geisler and Karin Johansson, *Choral Singing: Histories and Practices* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholas Publishing, 2014), 1-11.

Example 11 Bars 1-18 of the Introduction of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

1 Rubato Introduction

(BF)

10

(BF)

Example 12 Bars 51-58 of Subsection a2 of Section A of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

51 Subsection a2

(S)

(A)

a yi ye a yi ye a ya yi ye

(T)

(B)

a yi ye a yi ye a yi ye

(P)

Bars 80-103 consist of a newly created transition played by the bamboo flute and the piano, with a total of three parts. In the second subsection. Example 13 shows a transition to *Andante*, during which the bamboo flute and piano articulate the melody through continuous sixteenth-note figures, lending it a graceful fluidity and an expressively lyrical quality. Also, the three repetitions of the bamboo flute melody help push the emotions to a high point.

The piece *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang* systematically blends the unique characteristics of Anhui folk music with Western and contemporary musical structures. During

the transition, Chinese harmonic styles are integrated with Western counterpoint techniques, played through the bamboo flute and piano, creating a fluid musical texture. The B-section emphasizes tonal balance through male vocals supported by chord progressions and stable piano accompaniment. This develops to a harmonic peak in the C-section with a key change to $A\flat$ major, utilizing complex polyphonic techniques to create a dense soundstage. Finally, the piece culminates in a coda, an emotional climax where the main theme is re-recorded, incorporating soprano harmonies, bamboo flute, and folk exclamations, culminating in a stable return to G major. This perfectly reflects the fusion of Western structural perfection with the spirit of Chaohu folk culture.

Example 13 Bars 88-95 of the Transition of “*Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*”

The musical score for Example 13 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Transtion' (sic), covers bars 88 to 91. It features a Bamboo Flute (BF) part in the upper staff and a Piano (P) part in the lower staff. The BF part consists of a melodic line with slurs, while the P part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The second system, covering bars 92 to 95, continues the melodic and harmonic development. The BF part plays a more active line, and the P part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is written in 2/4 time, key of G major, and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accidentals.

Bars 104-119 of section B have newly created melodies, consisting of the tenor and bass with piano accompaniment. According to Example 14, the tenor is the main melody, while the bass sings the countermelody. The piano uses triadic accompaniment, and the emotions appear more stable. Moreover, the musical analysis of section B in this composition

reveals a systematic integration of musicological elements and literary aesthetics, where the tenor serves as the primary melody harmonized by a parallel countermelody in the bass to achieve tonal equilibrium and cultural identity. This structure is reinforced by a G major chord progression (V - I - ii - vi) and triadic piano accompaniment that enhances emotional stability and the overall aesthetics of listening. In terms of literary merit, the lyrics utilize natural imagery-such as “willow trees” and “dancing with the wind”—reflecting a sophisticated linguistic aesthetic through precise rhyme schemes and idiomatic expressions. This convergence of music and text functions as a deliberate communication of ideas, characterizing the song’s beauty as an emergent property of its complex cultural and structural design.

Example 14 Bars 104-111 of Section B of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

104 Section B

(T) *Tenor*

(B) *Bass*

(P) *Piano*

According to Example 15, the transition from bars 120 to 127 repeats the fifth subsection of the introduction with a tempo that is marked “Moderato”, creating a cheerful mood and laying the groundwork for section A'. The aesthetic quality of this piece comes from the cohesive interaction of its musical elements. Its bright G major key, Moderato tempo, and the recurring introduction are deliberate choices that guide listeners from simple perception toward emotional and intellectual involvement. This passage is not merely sound but an artistic structure that shapes thought and feeling. By balancing an accessible cheerful mood

with theoretical depth—such as the ii^7 chord and its transition design—the composer achieves notable artistic coherence. With basic musical knowledge, listeners can better appreciate this through analysis, and Example 15 becomes essential to understanding the true “soul” of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*.

Example 15 Bars 120-127 of the Transition of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*



Section C has bars 171-191, which are surprisingly in $A\flat$ major, with the tempo changed to andante. According to Example 16, the soprano and tenor are the main melody, while the alto and bass are canonic, delaying the entry of one bar and with slightly different rhythms. Here, the piano accompaniment has dense sixteenth-note chords with an intense build. The most salient feature of this passage is the manifestation of a polyphonic texture realized through the application of canonic imitation, wherein the soprano and tenor voices articulate the principal melody in octaves while the alto and bass voices function as a canon, staggered by a one-bar delay with subtle rhythmic nuances. This structural organization generates an architectural density of sound that necessitates the cognitive detection of composition regularities, a process fundamental to the aesthetic experience. The inherent temporal overlap serves to evoke aesthetic fascination—a state characterized by high-level cognitive processing to navigate the interaction of independent melodic lines. Consequently, this profound mental engagement, which utilizes music theory as a language to interpret and organize musical sound, anchors the listener’s focus firmly to the aesthetic object, effectively suppressing extraneous environmental stimuli and everyday concerns. This exceptional state of mind is

qualitatively distinct from everyday experience, resulting in a strong feeling of unity with the musical work.

Example 16 Bars 179-183 of Section C of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

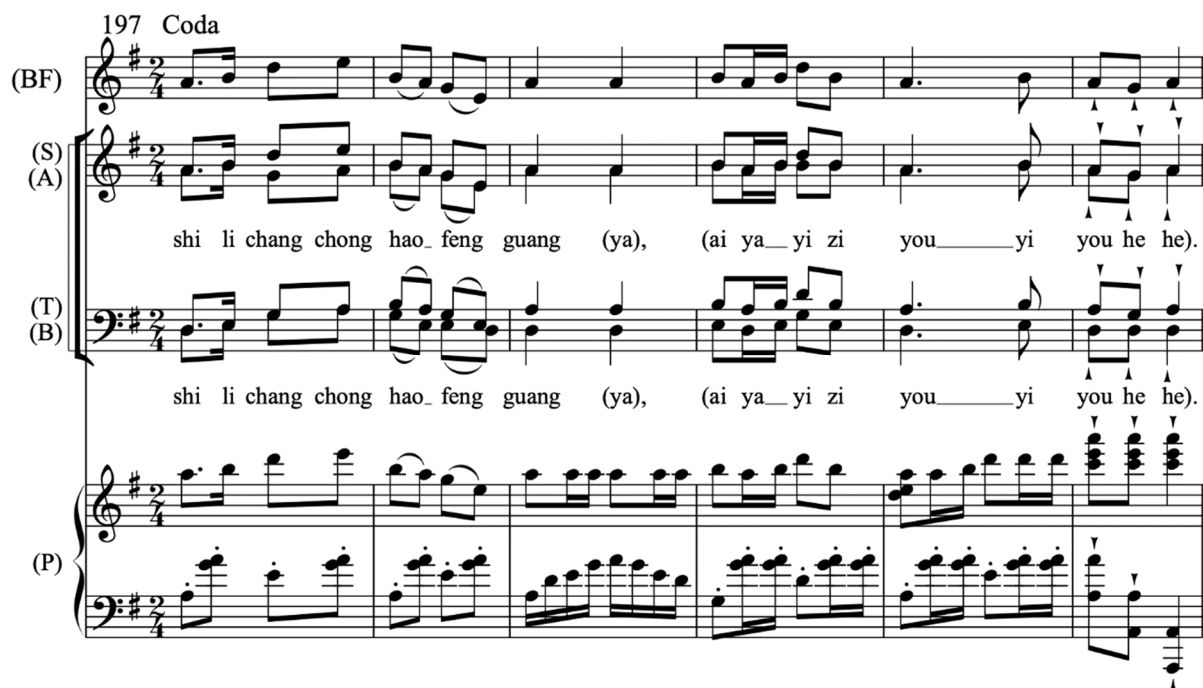
179 Section C

(S) shi li chang chong hao feng guang ai ya
(A) shi li chang chong hao feng guang,
(T) shi li chang chong hao feng guang ai ya
(B) shi li chang chong hao feng guang,
(P)

According to Example 17, the coda is the emotional climax of the entire work. The main melody reappears, appearing more lively and powerful, forming the first relation with section A. The composition features a coda that functions as the emotional climax, powerfully restating the primary melody from section A to reinforce thematic unity. In terms of musical composition, it employs a four-part (SATB) vocal arrangement accompanied by bamboo flute and piano, utilizing an A minor seventh-G major progression in G major to ensure a stable and conclusive resolution. The lyrical and melodic structure exhibits a sophisticated counterpoint between the soprano line and the flute, incorporating traditional interjections such as “(ya)” and “(ai ya)” to evoke the aesthetic essence of folk music. Ultimately, the piece prioritizes harmonic coherence and structural integrity, utilizing melodic repetition to emphasize its core message and achieve a resonant, complete finale.

Example 17 Bars 197-202 of Coda of *Shi Li Chang Chong Hao Feng Guang*

197 Coda



(BF) *shi li chang chong hao feng guang (ya), (ai ya yi zi you yi you he he).*

(S) *shi li chang chong hao feng guang (ya), (ai ya yi zi you yi you he he).*

(A) *shi li chang chong hao feng guang (ya), (ai ya yi zi you yi you he he).*

(B) *shi li chang chong hao feng guang (ya), (ai ya yi zi you yi you he he).*

(P)

Conclusion

This study focuses on preserving Chaohu folk songs, which are fading due to modernization. By creating contemporary choral arrangements of three representative songs, the project shows how traditional monophonic melodies can be transformed into modern polyphonic works without losing their cultural identity. The integration of Western harmony, choral textures, and instruments such as bamboo flute and piano expands the expressive range of the music. Techniques including modal shifts, rhythmic variation, and layered textures highlight the flexibility of traditional materials in modern contexts. The results demonstrate that creative reinterpretation can both preserve Chaohu folk heritage and enhance its relevance today. The project also illustrates how tradition and innovation can coexist, reinforcing the idea that Chinese musical traditions continue to evolve. Future research could apply similar approaches to other regional folk music, explore digital preservation, intercultural performance, and educational uses of folk-based choral works.

Declaration of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Gemini 2.5 (Google) solely to improve language clarity and grammar. All scientific content, interpretations, analyses, and conclusions were developed by the authors. The authors reviewed and edited the AI-generated output as necessary and take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the manuscript.

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