

THE RECEPTION OF
CHOPIN – THE POET
OF THE PIANO – AND
HIS MUSIC IN TAIWAN

AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT, BASED ON
A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHOIR SINGERS

At the International Musicological Symposium ‘Chopin and Romanticism’ held in 1986, in Warsaw, Professor Józef M. Chomiński asked the following questions at the end of his presentation: ‘I’m dubious as to whether knowledge of Romantic ideology is necessary for Eastern artists. Now, however, one further question arises: whether familiarity with the aesthetic doctrines of the nineteenth century is essential for contemporary performance of Chopin’s works. [...] It is a simple matter, really, which can be summarised in the seemingly naive question as to how we listen to Chopin today.’¹ The way people listen to and interpret music is indeed the essential object of reception studies. Yet while the history of the reception of Chopin’s music in Europe has been extensively discussed, its status in Asia is rarely explored.

In this article, I focus on Taiwan, an island nation located in East Asia, and try to find out what Taiwanese people think of Chopin and his music. I begin by presenting the results of a questionnaire on the experiences and impressions gained by Taiwanese choir singers when listening to Chopin’s music. That is followed by a discussion of depictions of the Polish composer in books and other mass media in Taiwan, which will give us a clear picture of Chopin reception in Taiwan. Next, I attempt to illustrate how the title ‘poet of the piano’ influences the way Taiwanese people listen to and interpret Chopin’s music. Because Taiwanese culture and history are closely intertwined with those of China and Japan,² in analysing the reception of Chopin’s music in Taiwan, apart from Taiwanese literature, I also refer to Chinese and Japanese documents, aesthetic concepts and cultural phenomena.

Research subject

This research is based on a questionnaire designed for Taiwanese choir singers, written in Taiwanese Mandarin.³ The questionnaire was created on Google Forms and distributed between 18 December 2017 and 19 March 2018, mainly via the social networking site Facebook (99 people), as well as through direct contact with the male choir of the Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School (25 people). One reason why I limited the research to choir singers is that it is

1 Józef M. Chomiński, ‘Chopin i współczesność’ [Chopin and the present], *Rocznik Chopinowski*, 19 (1990), 24.

2 Taiwan was part of the territory of the Chinese Qing Dynasty for 200 years, from the late seventeenth century to 1895; that was followed by the 50-year Japanese colonial period, which lasted up to the end of the Second World War. After defeat by the Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War (1945–1950), the Chinese Nationalist Party, called Kuomintang, along with more than one million people, retreated to Taiwan, which then became the Republic of China versus the People’s Republic of China on the mainland (that is, the ‘China’ we know today), and tried to suppress the local Taiwanese culture in order to promote Chinese nationalism. Only after 1987 did the culture of the indigenous Taiwanese people gradually regain the attention it deserved. Thus we may say that contemporary Taiwanese culture is based on Chinese traditions coloured with Japanese influences, local Taiwanese features and new elements.

3 Taiwanese Mandarin (*guoyu*), with traditional Chinese characters, is the official language in Taiwan.

difficult to reach out to random Taiwanese people and collect data from them in such a way that would make the selected samples representative of the whole Taiwanese population. Therefore, I chose only one specific group, namely choir singers, as my research subject.

Secondly, I asked the respondents to describe their impressions after listening to Chopin's music. I assumed that choir singers, as people who are regularly in touch with music, would be more likely to be able to describe their listening experience in a coherent manner. That allowed me to effectively avoid a situation where respondents might struggle to find words to express their listening experience. On the other hand, while some Taiwanese choir singers are professional musicians who graduated from music colleges, most of the others may not know much about Western art music and its history or listen to it regularly. Thus it should be clear that not all choir singers have the same level of understanding of Western art music. My approach helped to diversify the samples and prevent a scenario where all the respondents have already learned a lot about Chopin and his music from attending music lessons given by professionals or reading books and other related information. Still, it was likely that this particular group of participants would know more about Western art music than the majority of Taiwanese people.

The questionnaire was answered by 124 people, 53.2% of them male. Most of the participants (71.8%) were college students or graduates, while the rest were high school students or graduates. The age distribution is summarised in Figure 1. Regarding their extra or professional musical education, 13.7% of all the subjects had graduated or were still studying in a music 'class' or college,⁴ while 41.9% had taken or were taking private music lessons, and 4.8% had received or were receiving both institutionalised and private tuition in music. As regards their musical career, only 14% were professionals or majoring in music at college. However, 41.1% of participants claimed that they played the piano quite well, while 33.9% said they could play only a little, and the rest not at all.

General impressions of Chopin and his music

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In some elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools in Taiwan, there are so-called 'music classes'. Children in those classes, as in college, major in one instrument and learn music history and theory, as well as regular school subjects like other pupils.

In order not to bias the way participants thought about Chopin, in the short introduction given at the very beginning of the questionnaire, I did not use any words (except 'composer') to describe Chopin and his music. For the same reason, the first question I gave was an open question: 'Please write down 3-5 words associated with the surname "Chopin". These words may be things or persons, nouns or adjectives.'

Table 1. Associations with Chopin

characters and features of his music	108	characters	80	romantic, Romantic era	38
				elegant, delicate, light	11
				lyrical, full of emotion	9
				melancholic, sentimental	8
				classical	5
				brilliant, gorgeous	4
				others (poetic, pretty)	5
	features	28	difficult to play	9	
			quick tempo, coloratura	5	
			others (<i>rubato</i> , folk music etc.)	14	
life and role	81	role	52	tuberculosis, illness, early death, weakness	22
				poet, poet of the piano, patriotic poet	21
				musician, composer	12
				patriot	10
				genius	9
		life and appearance (big hands, long hair, etc.)	7		
musical genre	59	nocturne			20
		waltz	20	Waltz Op. 64 No. 1 ('Puppy Waltz')	11
				waltz	9
		etude (especially Op. 10 Nos. 3 & 12)			8
		Fantasy-Impromptu			6
		others (mazurka, ballade, 'Heroic' [polonaise])			5
piano	58	piano, piano music			35
		poet of the piano			10
		piano competition			6
		others (piano master)			7
Poland	37	Poland, Pole			29
		Warsaw			5
		Łazienki Park and the Chopin monument			3
other associations	59	other people	12	George Sand	6
				other musicians (Liszt, Mozart, etc.)	6
		Jay Chou and his movie <i>Secret</i>			8
		Europe, France, Germany and Vienna			7
		music			4
		moon, moonlight			3
		others (night, colours, rainy days in winter, etc.)			25

5
We should remember that the participants gave different amounts of words as answers, and some of the answers belong to more than one group. For example, 'poet of the piano' refers to 'poet' as well as 'piano'.

6
Only eight out of 38 answers specified the 'Romantic era', with the rest giving only the word 'romantic' (*langman*, 浪漫). As a result, I assume that they refer to the general meaning of that word as a 'poetical and sensitive mood'. See 'langman' in the online version of *The Revised Dictionary* by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education: dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/cgi-bin/cbdict/gweb.cgi?o=dcdbdic&searchid=Z00000061327, accessed 6 July 2019.

7
There are many different words in Mandarin that have the meaning of 'melancholic' in English. Sometimes the nuances are very difficult to translate.

8
In the early translations into Mandarin and Japanese, 'nocturne' is sometimes confused with 'serenade': the former is called 'night music' (*yequ*, 夜曲), the latter, 'little night music' (*xiaoyequ*, 小夜曲). This failure to recognise the difference can still be found today in Taiwan in several books and among amateur music lovers. In the answers to the questionnaire, the word 'serenade' appears three times, but for the reason mentioned above, I assume that the respondents were referring to a nocturne.

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I defined 'a great deal' as meaning 'to know generally Chopin's life, musical styles and the epoch, as well as the melodies, and to be able to name at least ten of his compositions'.

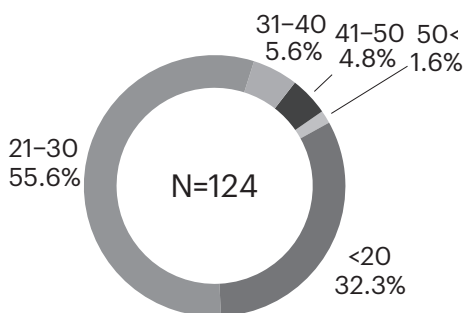


Figure 1. Age distribution

The answers are sorted and shown in Table 1.⁵ As we can see, the most popular keywords associated with Chopin are 'romantic',⁶ 'piano' and 'Poland'. Aside from 'romantic', the adjectives used to describe the characteristics of his music include 'elegant', 'lyrical' and 'melancholic'.⁷ It is quite surprising, however, that the word 'poet' appears more frequently than 'composer' and 'musician'. As for musical genres, nocturne and waltz are both mentioned 20 times.⁸ It is worth noting that the *Waltz in D flat major, Op. 64 No. 1*, which in Taiwan is widely known as the 'Puppy Waltz' (from the French *Valse du petit chien*), is far more frequently specified than other works. Among the other associations given by respondents, noteworthy is the name of Jay Chou, one of the most famous Taiwanese singers, and his movie *Secret*, from 2007, which, as I will argue later in this article, may have widely influenced and reflected the way the Taiwanese think of Chopin.

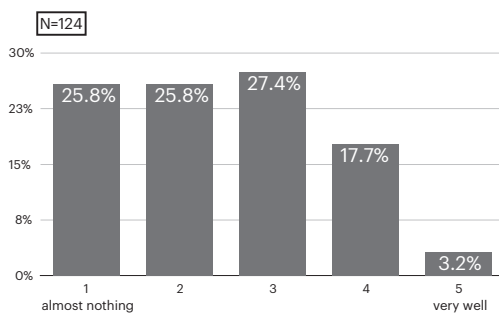


Figure 2. How much do you know about Chopin's life and music?

The next section of the questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' familiarity with Chopin's life and music. As we can see in Figure 2, only 3.2% stated that they knew this great Polish composer very well,⁹ while most of the subjects know only a little about him, or almost nothing. Nonetheless, when the respondents were asked if they had ever listened to Chopin's music, most of

them gave an affirmative response (Figure 3). As for impressions of Chopin’s music (Table 2, question not obligatory), the result does not differ much from Table 1. Among the surveyed choir singers, 70% of them like Chopin’s works (Figure 4, question not obligatory), mostly because the melodies are beautiful and the music is quite peaceful. According to those who gave neutral answers, Chopin’s music does not leave any strong impressions and is sometimes too clichéd.

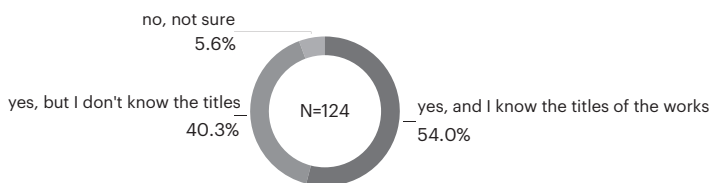


Figure 3. Have you ever listened to Chopin’s music?

Table 2. What is your impression of Chopin’s music?

full of emotions	17
gentle, delicate, graceful	16
romantic	15
waltz, polonaise, dance music, nocturne etc.	11
sentimental, sorrowful	10
beautiful	9
difficult to play	9
light, fluent	8
<i>tempo rubato</i>	6
lyrical, <i>cantabile</i>	5
bravura	5
patriotic, Polish folklore	5
others	16

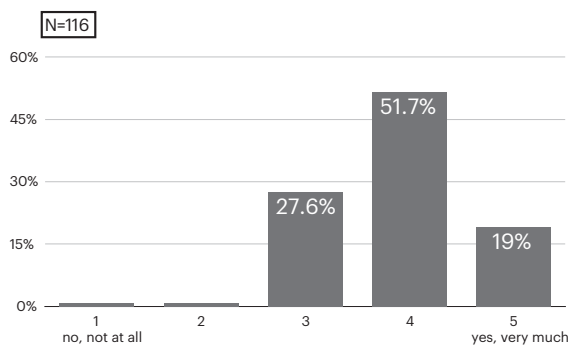


Figure 4. Do you like Chopin’s music?

Listening experience

The next and most important part of the questionnaire concerned the experience of listening to Chopin's music. I chose four one-minute excerpts, each representing a distinctive musical style of Chopin's music:

- Concerto in E minor, Op. 11 (movt III, bars 16–17):¹⁰ *brillante*,¹¹ bravura, liveliness
- Nocturne in B flat minor, Op. 9 No. 1 (bars 1–8): *romantic*, *melancholico*, lyrical
- Mazurka in C major, Op. 24 No. 2 (bars 5–54): *rubato*, *semplice*, folk dance
- Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op. 44 (bars 268–296): *maestoso*, ballade-like, *eroico*

I specifically avoided choosing the compositions which are best known in Taiwan;¹² rather, I selected those that are only fairly well known, in order to avoid potential associations with movies and advertisements, for example, in which Chopin's works are used. I am also aware that my selection was arbitrary and subjective. Since different pianists present Chopin's music differently, which could affect listeners' responses, only Artur Rubinstein's recordings were used. The participants were told beforehand that all the works they were going to hear were composed by Chopin.

¹⁰ All the bar numbers are given after the Polish National Edition of the Works of Fryderyk Chopin edited by Jan Ekier.

¹¹ The underlined words come from Mieczysław Tomaszewski, who used them to describe different stylistic idioms of Chopin's music. See Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Chopin 2: Uchwycić nieuchwytnie* [Chopin 2: to capture the elusive] (Cracow: PWM, 2016), 240–57.

¹² Such as the Waltzes, Op. 64 Nos. 1 and 2, Nocturne, Op. 9 No. 2, Polonaises Op. 40 No. 1 and Op. 53, Fantaisie-Improvisation, Op. 39 No. 1, Mazurkas Op. 33 No. 3 in D major.

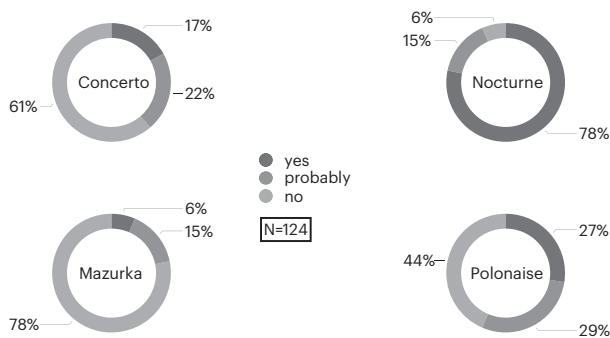


Figure 5. Have you ever heard this composition before?

While listening to each excerpt, the participants had to answer several questions. The responses to the first question, 'Have you heard this composition before?', are shown in Figure 5. As we can see, most people replied that they had heard the nocturne before. However, such a declaration does not necessarily mean that they actually have heard this particular composition. It may indicate that this nocturne reminds them of other Chopin works of a similarly

lyrical character (e.g. other nocturnes or the second movements of the concertos) or that simply the style seems to have a very Chopinesque quality (they were all aware that they were listening to Chopin’s music). Therefore, it is possible that some only felt they had heard this music before.

The participants were then asked to describe the music in up to three words (adjectives or nouns). Shown in Table 3 are the ordered answers for descriptions of the E minor Concerto which were given ten times or more. The word that appears most frequently is ‘brisk’ (*qingkuai*, 輕快). Many words associated with nature were also mentioned.¹³ Some of the other descriptions are elegant, bright, relaxed, freedom, romantic, passion and pearl.

¹³ Such as spring, summer, brook, water, wind, fairy, birds and morning.

Table 3. Descriptions of the third movement of the Concerto in E minor, Op. 11

brisk (light and fast)	68
associations with nature	39
cheerful, happy	28
lively	25
cute, naughty	20
dance	16
bouncy	13
flowing, fluent	10
others	90

Table 4. Descriptions of the Nocturne in B flat minor, Op. 9 No. 1

sorrow, melancholia, negative emotions	69
elegant, gentle	26
tangled, complicated, negative mood	21
memory, contemplation	21
peaceful, quiet	21
night, sleep	17
lyrical, expressive	14
darkness, mystery	13
others	101

Table 5. Descriptions of the Mazurka in C major Op. 24 No. 2

dance, ball, ballet, waltz	30
brisk	29
nature, field trip, party, wine, folklore	24
childhood, simplicity	23
irregularity, change, unstable	22
descriptions of rhythm	20
jump	18
lively	17
happy, cheerful	17
regularity, repetitiousness	12
relax, freedom	10
others	75

Table 6. Descriptions of the Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op. 44

strong emotions, excitement	68
grandeur, greatness, power	39
restless, winding	28
solemn, tragic, angry	25
war, army, march	20
heaviness	16
others	13

As for the B flat minor Nocturne, aside from the overwhelming use of words connected with negative emotions, one also notes words associated with peace, elegance, night-time and lyricism (Table 4). I sorted some words, such as *chou* (愁), *chouchang* (惆悵) and *jiujie* (糾結), into a different group, ‘tangled, complicated, negative mood’, separating them from ‘sorrow’ (*beishang*, 悲傷). Although they all represent a negative psychological state, sorrow is a kind of emotion evoked more directly by outside events and thus is usually direct and stronger, while the others denote a prolonged and rather subtle ‘mood’. Such a mood reminds me of the famous Polish word *zal* in Liszt’s interpretation. However, the validity of this connection certainly needs further discussion and justification. Aside from the answers listed above, words associated with the Nocturne include fluency, loneliness, burden, steadiness and poetry.

In the case of the C major Mazurka, there is no distinct domination of any word (Table 5). Many of the descriptions concern the dance character of this composition. One also notes a conflict between two groups: ‘irregularity, change, unstable’; ‘regularity, repetitiveness’. However, it seems to me that both groups reflect the nature of Polish folk music in this composition. The former indicates the shifting accents and *tempo rubato*, while the latter focuses on the repetition of the same phrases. As for the F sharp minor Polonaise, it is described as emotional, powerful, restless and tragic and associated with war and army (Table 6).

After characterising the music, participants were asked to evaluate whether the given excerpts accorded with their imagination or impressions of Chopin’s music, and, although this was not obligatory, to give their reasons. As Figure 6 shows, the Nocturne was the most Chopinesque of all four pieces, with 86.7% approval. The Mazurka, however, seems to be the least characteristic type of Chopin’s music.

For the participants, the numerous scales and ornaments in the Concerto, as well as its lightness and liveliness, represent Chopin’s signature. One of the respondents felt a clear similarity between this composition and the Waltz, Op. 64 No. 1. Contrasting opinions concern the lack of sorrow and lyricism in the extract from the Concerto, and those two characters were actually the main reasons why the Nocturne was considered the most Chopinesque of all four compositions. The Nocturne was also appreciated for its cantabile quality, ornamental melody and minor key.

The Mazurka accords with some participants’ impressions of the composer’s music due to its lightness, dance-like character and fast-flowing melodic lines. For others, however, this piece lacks the romantic feeling, elegance and sentiment characteristic of Chopin’s works. Some participants replied that they had never heard of this style of Chopin. When it comes to the Polonaise, the respondents identified strong emotions, grandeur, sorrow and the patriotic character of this piece, along with the minor key, as

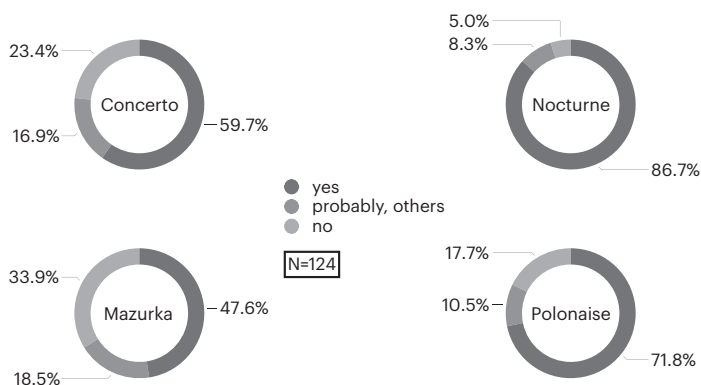


Figure 6. Does the given work accord with your impressions of Chopin's music?

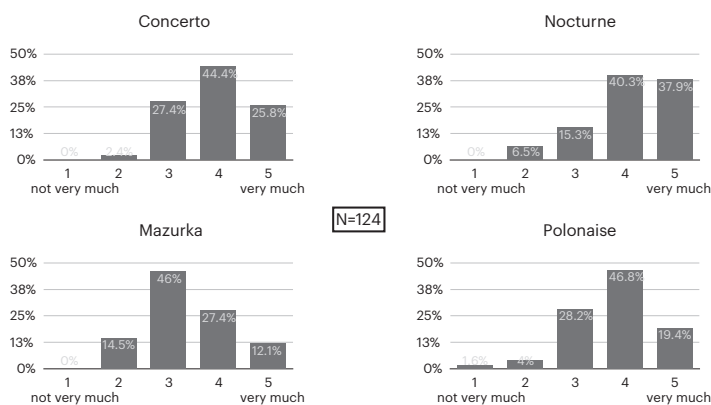


Figure 7. Do you like this composition?

hallmarks of Chopin's style. One of them felt its similarity with the Polonaise in A flat major, Op. 53. However, according to two other respondents, the heaviness of the music seemed more characteristic of Beethoven, and this lack of lightness and easiness made the piece less Chopinesque.

Shown in Figure 7 are the answers to the question as to whether the participants liked the given composition. Again, the Nocturne was favoured by most respondents. It is noteworthy that there were a surprisingly large number of neutral responses to the Mazurka (46%). When asked for the reasons, some of the respondents said that they just did not have a special feeling for this music and that it did not make any strong impressions. The shifting accents confused some listeners, but for others they were what lent the work its charm.

After listening to each excerpt, the participants had the chance to identify the title of the composition. The numbers of times

the participants gave the right answers for each composition are listed below:

- Concerto (0,11)
- Mazurka (5,3)
- Nocturne (10,16)
- Polonaise (8,5)

The first number refers to the number of times when right answers referring only to the genre name were given (e.g. ‘nocturne’), while the latter indicates the number of right answers to the exact opus number, key or numeration of the work (e.g. ‘first nocturne’ or ‘nocturne in B flat minor’). Almost everyone who successfully identified the title thought the given work accorded with their impressions of Chopin’s music.¹⁴ Therefore, the conclusion drawn from Figure 6 might be questioned, because those respondents’ impressions of his music had probably been formed by listening to this very nocturne. However, if we discount those participants who knew the titles of the works and modify the data in Figure 6 accordingly, the result remains the same: the Nocturne is still considered the most Chopinesque of all, and the Mazurka the least.

At the end of this section, the participants were asked which musical elements they paid the most attention to while listening to the given pieces (they could choose more than one). As shown in Figure 8, melody and atmosphere were the most important elements in their listening experience.

Chopin in Taiwanese culture

According to the results from the questionnaire so far, for the surveyed choir singers, Chopin is known for his nocturnes and waltzes, his illness, and also his identity as a Pole and as the poet of the piano; his music boasts a romantic, light, melancholic, expressive and lyrical character, with minor keys, ornaments and fast-flowing notes. Probably for this reason, the Nocturne in B flat minor is considered the most Chopinesque of all four compositions listened to by the participants, while the Polish folk music elements in the Mazurka in C major (Op. 24) seem to be rather foreign to some respondents. Such results are basically in accordance with the way Chopin is generally depicted in Taiwan. For example, in his lecture on Western music history aimed at a broad audience, Liu Jiu-Wei,¹⁵ a retired professor of Taipei National University of the Arts, introduced Chopin in the following way:

Chopin’s music, I think, gives us a very strong impression of a nocturnal, feminine, light and soft musical voice. It’s night-like,

¹⁴ Two respondents (one in the case of the Nocturne, the other with the Mazurka) successfully identified the titles but considered the works not Chopinesque.

¹⁵ In the text, Asian authors’ names are shown in their normal order (surname before given name), unless some other forms that are widely used already exist, such as ‘Jay Chou’. However, names in citations are given in accordance with the citation format.

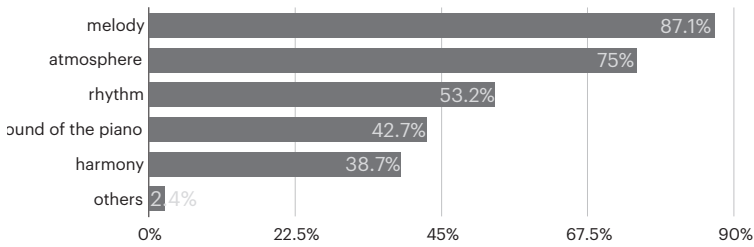


Figure 8. Which elements attracted your attention the most while you were listening to these works?

grey and dark. In a very sensitive way, he expresses his music as if he's murmuring. [plays the beginning of the Nocturne in B flat minor, Op. 9 No. 1] This kind of music, for example, is very typical of Chopin. [...] People who have listened to most of Chopin's works may have the impression that his music always sounds like nocturnes, because his musical style is best understood by the name 'nocturne' [music of the night].¹⁶

Such a description emphasising the sentimental and lyrical quality of Chopin's music can be found in music textbooks from the 1960s for pupils of elementary and junior high schools:

The poet of the piano – Chopin [...] He could express different feelings with beautiful sounds flowing naturally in the score, just as a writer expresses emotions with words. He was a patriotic young man and often expressed such a patriotic spirit while playing the piano, which deeply touched his compatriots from the vanished homeland (Poland).¹⁷

F. Chopin. Almost all his works are piano music. Because his music is elegant and full of emotions, he is known as 'the poet of the piano'.¹⁸

It seems difficult for some publishers to resist the temptation to describe Chopin in a romantic and poetical way. For instance, in its Taiwanese version, the title of Adam Zamoyski's *Chopin: Prince of the Romantics* was changed to *For Art, For Love: Chopin* (words borrowed from the lyrics of the aria 'Vissi d'arte', from Puccini's *Tosca*).¹⁹ Sometimes such an inclination is taken to the extreme. For example, the introduction found on the front cover of one book about Chopin designed for amateur music lovers – *Chopin: 100 Most Important Works and Their Stories* – is so romantically exaggerated:

Chopin, romantic and melancholic poet of the piano, whose whole life was destined for that instrument, is an icon of classical piano music. A background of mixed cultures [French father and Polish mother]

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Jiu-Wei Liu [劉岷渭], 'Lecture 43: Chopin', in *Western Music History* [西洋音樂史] (Taipei: Audio University of Art [藝術有聲大學], 1999), CD A, 1-2. All the translations in this article are mine unless otherwise stated. For the convenience of readers, in the citations of sources published in Mandarin or Japanese, the names and titles in original languages are shown in brackets instead of their English translations.

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Jing-Que Chen [陳金雀] (ed.), *Music Textbook for Elementary School*, vol. iv (Taipei: Xinxin Culture Publishing [新新文化出版社], 1962), 20. The year given in the citation of a textbook is not the year of its publication, but the year when the editorial outline, according to which the textbook was designed, was published by the Ministry of Education.

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National Institute for Compilation and Translation [國立編譯館] (ed.), *Music Textbook for Junior High Schools*, 4th edn, vol. v (National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1968), 62.

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Adam Zamoyski, *For Art, for Love: Chopin* [為了藝術為了愛, 蕭邦], tr. Hui-Jun Yang [楊惠君]; Eng. orig. *Chopin: Prince of the Romantics* (Taipei: Wu-Nan Book [五南圖書], 2010).

shaped his diverse, lush and gentle musical style, like white velvet strewn with violet tulip petals. After 150 years, the harmony in his piano compositions still sounds lively and new. With advanced playing technique, he expressed the indescribable surges of his heart. And his inborn tender affection, matured through the love affair with an elder woman [George Sand], makes [his] piano music like extremely rare vintage wine. Just one sip is enough to get lost in pleasure.²⁰

The obsession with Chopin's love stories, depicting him as a sentimental, heartbroken romantic, can be found in the titles of articles in the music magazine *MUZIK*, probably the best known in Taiwan, such as 'Chopin of Love: Chopin – George Sand. Love Story and Compositions',²¹ as well as 'A Revolutionary Poet with a Heart Made of Glass: Chopin's Rules of Love', which, despite its title, is actually about elements such as *tempo rubato*, ornamentation and chromaticism in the composer's music.²²

The way Chopin was depicted in the lectures, textbooks and magazines mentioned above undoubtedly affects Taiwanese people's impression of Chopin and his music to some extent. Most influential of all, however (at least for younger generations), are probably Jay Chou's musical album *November's Chopin* and, above all, his movie *Secret*, which some respondents mentioned while answering the first question in the questionnaire (Table 1).

The album *November's Chopin* was released in November 2005, and its first song is titled 'Nocturne'. On the Apple Music website, the album and the song are introduced in the following way: 'If the poet of the piano listens to this pop nocturne, will he be willing to commemorate with his fingertips the love that passed away? [...] *November's Chopin*, accompanied with the melancholic feeling of late autumn, a depressive atmosphere in cool tones and modest elegance, is a tribute to Jay Chou's favourite composer, Chopin. [...] [All the songs], in his arrangement and interpretation, match the poetical and melancholic mood of this album.'²³ Although, with regard to its musical style, the song 'Nocturne' does not really bear any relation to Chopin's nocturnes, the lyrics of the refrain may stir our interest:

I play Chopin's nocturnes for you to commemorate my love that passed away
The sounds like night wind are heartbreakingly beautiful
My touch on the keyboard is light, and reminiscence is delicate
The place you are buried is darkness and gloom

Later, when the chorus is repeated, lyrics such as 'I hide my name for you and play the piano under the moonlight' also appear. Thus we find almost all the keywords relating to the stereotypical image of Chopin and his music in Taiwan in this song and the album.

Compared with *November's Chopin*, the movie *Secret* (2007), starring and directed by Jay Chou himself, was an even bigger

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Cultuspeak music publishing group [高談音樂企劃小組], *Chopin: 100 Most Important Works and Their Stories* [蕭邦100首經典創作及其故事] (Taipei: Huazi Publishing [華滋出版], 2013).

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Geng-Ming Hu [胡耿銘], 'Chopin of Love: Chopin – George Sand. Love Story and Compositions' [愛戀蕭邦：蕭邦——喬治桑戀史及其創作], *MUZIK* (Taipei, May 2008).

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Shi-Xian Xie [謝世嫻], 'A Revolutionary Poet with a Heart Made of Glass: Chopin's Rules of Love' [革命詩人玻璃心：蕭邦愛情法則], *MUZIK* (Taipei, March 2010).

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'November's Chopin', Apple Music, music.apple.com/tw/album/ye-qu/536009641?i=536009642, accessed 12 July 2019.

phenomenon. It was screened not only in Taiwan, but in many other Asian countries, with gross takings of nearly 9 million US dollars.²⁴ In a nutshell, the story is about two music students in love with each other but separated by time and death. They had the chance to meet each other only because the girl time-travelled by playing an unknown composition on a piano in an old classroom. At the very beginning of the movie, Chopin was introduced during the class:

In the nineteenth century, there was a musical genius known thereafter as the poet of the piano. That is Chopin. Why was he a musical genius? Because at the age of six he started learning the piano, and at eight he played a concerto brilliantly in a public concert, causing a great sensation. As for the reason he is called the poet of the piano, it is because his works are known to be flowing, delicate and graceful like poetry.

The whole movie is based on a nostalgic, sentimental and poetical mood. There is a scene in which the couple are sitting by the piano and looking at portraits of Chopin and George Sand (painted by Eugène Delacroix) hanging on the wall. The girl says suggestively that ‘[although Chopin and Sand ultimately broke up,] being together for ten years is still very long’, which indicates that the love of those two students could be even shorter, and so fruitless. Here the composer’s love story seems to symbolise a short but splendid relationship, as well as the fate of separation.

Jay Chou’s album and movie inherit and highlight the stereotypical image of Chopin as a sentimental, delicate and romantic pianist. The composer’s patriotism and the relationship of his compositions to Polish folk music are neglected. Of course, that does not mean that this aspect of Chopin’s music is totally forgotten in Taiwan. For example, in one music textbook for elementary schools, there is a section about Chopin titled ‘The Soil of the Homeland’, in which no words about the composer’s sentimentality are mentioned, only stories about his patriotic spirit.²⁵ However, that seems to be rather an exception, because in most cases, attention is still focussed on the lyrical and sentimental character of his music. For instance, although the mazurka genre is extensively discussed in one article about Chopin’s life from the magazine *MUZIK* titled ‘The Soul of Music Dancing in the Depths of Loneliness: The Poet of the Piano, Chopin’, the composer’s relationship with George Sand, their trip to Majorca, their devastating break-up and its influence on Chopin’s creative work are still highlighted.²⁶

The stereotypical image of Chopin and emphasis on the lyricism and sentimentality of his music did not begin in Taiwan; it can already be found at the start of the twentieth century in Japan, the first East Asian country to begin Western-orientated reforms, including in its education system. In a book published in 1915, Japanese musicologist Tanabe Hisao wrote that ‘he [Chopin] is

24

The movie was also released in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia. See ‘Bu Neng Shuo de. Mi Mi (Secret)’, *Box Office Mojo*, www.boxoffice Mojo.com/movies/intl/?page=&country=CH&id=fSECRET201, accessed 12 July 2019.

25

National Institute for Compilation and Translation (ed.), *Music Textbook for Elementary Schools*, vol. iv (National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1975), 41. Emphasising Chopin’s patriotic spirit and making him a role model is motivated by the need to encourage patriotism in Taiwanese students as a reaction to the historical event of 1971, when Taiwan (Republic of China) was removed from the UN and replaced by China (People’s Republic of China), as a consequence of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758.

26

Xin-Tian Li [李心恬], ‘The Soul of Music Dancing in the Depths of Loneliness: The Poet of the Piano, Chopin’ [舞於孤獨深處的音樂靈魂。鋼琴詩人。蕭邦], *MUZIK* (Taipei, June 2012).

27

Hisao Tanabe [田辺尚雄], *Popular Lectures on Western Music* [通俗西洋音楽講話] (Tokyo: Iwanami Bookstore [岩波書店], 1915), 272.

28

Motoo Otaguro [大田黒元雄], *From Bach to Schönberg* [バッハよりシェーンベルヒ] (Tokyo: Yamada Instrument Store [山田楽器店], 1915), 94–95.

29

For example, Otaguro's book refers to James Huneker's *Chopin: The Man and His Music*. See *ibid.*, 116.

30

Japan's influence on the reception of Western music in Taiwan can be seen, for instance, in the extensive use of Ferdinand Beyer's materials in piano lectures. Beyer's works were among the first music pedagogic materials imported by the Japanese Musical Research Institute (音楽取調掛), and they are still widely used in Japan and Taiwan (see Junichi Tada [多田純一], *Chopin for Japanese People: Piano Music in the Period when Western Music was being Introduced into Japan* [日本人とショパン: 洋楽導入期のピアノ音楽] (Tokyo: ARTES Publishing, 2013), 21). Another example is that the music books and scores published by the Zen-On Music Company (全音楽譜出版社) of Japan are extensively translated, read and used in Taiwan.

31

Beethoven's title can also be translated as 'saint of music' or 'great musician'. Here the word 'saint' does not refer to saints in Christianity, but is used more in a Confucian sense as relating to great people who are known for their humanistic passion or have great influence on the world.

32

For example, in a book written by Japanese music critic Nomura Kodō, each chapter was headed with those titles and the composers' names, such as 'The happy genius: Mendelssohn', 'The lonely philosopher: Brahms' and, of course, 'The poet of the piano: Chopin'. See Kodō Nomura [野村胡堂], *Stories about the Great Composers* [楽聖物語] (Tokyo: Record Music Publishing [レコード音楽社], 1941).

always sick and – because of his vanished homeland, Poland – melancholy, and these characters can easily be found in his music. However, [despite the sickness,] his melodies are very beautiful and have the charm to attract people. [He is] not only truly gentlemanly, but also tender and at the same time full of poetic genius'.²⁷ In another book from the same year, the music critic Otaguro Motoo introduced the composer's life and oeuvre in a more detailed way:

Chopin is the poet of the piano. All his compositions are his poetry and reflection of himself. In his music flows such passion, which is gentle and dreamy, as well as a little sorrowful, tender, and at the same time intense. As a Pole so intensely concerned for his country, sometimes he created the most thrilling and powerful music. But his true nature is seen in his romantic and sentimental pieces. I think the French phrase 'sad and beautiful' (*triste et beau*) describes the expression of Chopin's music quite well.

Chopin was weak, because of his lung disease. Therefore, in his music, there is no grandeur and richness as in Bach, Handel and Beethoven. However, Chopin created his own world. His realm is dominated by a mysterious and enigmatic scent. Some people say his music is morbid, but we find infinite beauty in this morbid music. The beauty of his music is absolutely unique and inimitable.²⁸

The stereotypical image of sentimental and lyrical Chopin in Japan apparently came from Europe at the turn of the twentieth century,²⁹ and it was later introduced into Taiwan after the island became a Japanese colony in 1895.³⁰ However, despite the similarity, did the Taiwanese only passively accept the way European or Japanese people viewed Chopin and his music? Or did they actively develop distinctive interpretations according to their own aesthetic values and tastes? The answer, in my opinion, lies in an epithet found in most of the passages quoted above: poet of the piano.

Chopin – the poet of the piano

The practice of naming Chopin the 'poet of the piano' is quite common in Taiwan. In fact, not only Chopin, but many well-known Western art music composers are given acclamatory titles. J. S. Bach, for example, is the 'father of music', Mozart a 'musical prodigy', Beethoven the 'sage of music'³¹ and Schubert the 'king of song'. Titles of this kind came from Japan,³² and they remain popular in Taiwan today,

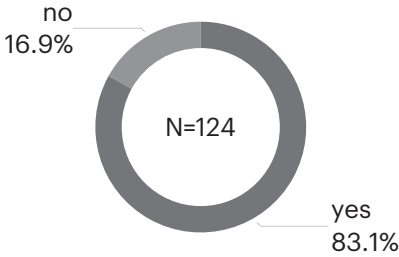


Figure 9. Did you know Chopin was known as the 'poet of the piano'?

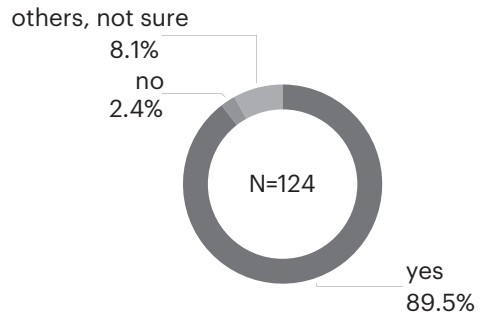


Figure 10. After listening to his works, do you think 'poet of the piano' accords with your impressions of Chopin's music?

as evidenced by their widespread inclusion in music textbooks and popular science books about music. Such titles help the Taiwanese to identify and remember the composers' stylistic features and roles in music history, while at the same time influencing the reception of their music.

Let us now turn to the last part of the questionnaire, devoted to the phenomenon of naming Chopin the 'poet of the piano' in Taiwan. As shown in Figure 9, most of the participants were aware that Chopin was known by such a title. After the previous listening part of the questionnaire, even more respondents agreed that such a title suited their impressions of his music (Figure 10).

When asked to elaborate, the emotional and lyrical character of Chopin's music was mentioned in 27 out of the 85 responses. Other qualities also appeared several times, such as composer's ability to compose in different styles (11) and the beauty of his music (7).

However, the reason most frequently cited (28 times) is that the listeners could picture a scene or story in their mind while listening to Chopin's music: 'Musical notes became words. It's vivid'; 'The music is full of stories'; 'It creates rich associations, like poetic language'; 'It's like telling a story'; 'I feel as if I can see pictures.' In my opinion, the sense of storytelling here does not refer to musical narrativity. Rather, the experience of seeing a picture and a story is connected with an aesthetic concept particularly worth our attention: *yijing* (意境, 'the realm of the idea') or *jingjie* (境界, 'the realm and boundaries'). Since the meanings of these two terms are basically the same when referring to art,³³ here I will use them in alternation. Simply put, they mean the atmosphere which makes the audience feel as if they have entered the otherworldly realm of the poetical idea of an artwork.

The term *jingjie* was established and made famous (but not created) by Wang Guowei (1877–1927), in his well-known critical treatise on *ci* poetry³⁴:

33

The difference between *yijing* and *jingjie* is that the former is normally used only in reference to artworks (the *yijing* of poetry, painting), while the latter can also describe a higher level or depth of, for instance, one's life or mind ('that monk's life and spirituality have reached a very high *jingjie*') and mastery in certain (usually artistic) activities ('compared with others, her performance has reached a totally different *jingjie*').

34

Ci (詞) is a type of traditional Chinese poetry broadly cultivated during the Song Dynasty (960–1279). It actually constituted song lyrics, so its form depends on the structure of the tunes. Poets had to compose in accordance with such a structure (taking account not only of rhythm, but also of the tone of each word). Today, the music is lost and only the lyrics, *ci*, remain.

35

According to Ko Ching-Ming, the word *xingcu* means here ‘aesthetic experience of feeling aroused by things’. See Ching-Ming Ko [柯慶明], *Aesthetic Modes of Chinese Literature* [中國文學的美感] (Taipei: Rye Field Publications [麥田出版], 2006), 116.

36

K.-Y. L. – Here ‘to be converged’ means ‘to put things together (somehow by force) in such a way that the result lacks harmony’. We can also interpret ‘unable to be converged’ as suggesting an act of inspired creation (instead of mechanical ‘making’), which cannot be explained with words or done by force.

37

Kuo-Wei Wang, *Poetic Remarks in the Human World*, tr. Ching-I Tu (Taipei: Chung Hwa Book Company, 1970), 5–6. I changed some words in the cited fragment to their modern spelling, e.g. ‘Northern Sung’ to ‘Northern Song’, ‘tz’u to *ci*.

38

Here the words in quotation marks are the English terms used by Zhu Guangqian himself in the book.

39

Concepts borrowed from Benedetto Croce. See chapter one of his *Aesthetic*.

40

Note the difference in meaning between what Zhu Guangqian called ‘image’ here and the element in *yijing* theory that I translated also as ‘image’. See nn.49 and 58.

41

Guangqian Zhu [朱光潛], *On Poetry* [詩論] (New Taipei City: Ting Yuan [頂淵], 2003), 51–55.

42

Ibid., 56–57.

43

The term *shenyun* is mentioned by Wang Guowei in the passage cited above, translated as ‘spiritual expressiveness’.

44

Ko, *Aesthetic Modes*, 96.

45

Also known as *Shijing*, the *Book of Songs* or *Book of Odes*. It is the oldest collection of Chinese poetry (dating from around the eleventh to the sixth century BC), which is said to have been compiled by Confucius and is known for the lyrical character of its poems.

In his *Ts’ang-lang Shih-hua*, Yen Yü (fl. 1200) says, ‘The major poets of the golden Tang were concerned exclusively with the concept of “inspired interest” [K.-Y. L. – *xingcu* (興趣)].³⁵ Their poetry resembles the antelope hanging its horns on the tree, leaving no traces to be found. Therefore, the excellence of their poetry lies in its being limpid, elegant and unable to be converged,³⁶ like sounds in the sky, colors in visual images, moonlight in the water and reflections in a mirror. Its language can be exhausted, but its meanings are inexhaustible.’ This, in my opinion, can also characterise the *ci* poetry up to the Northern Song. However, the concept of ‘inspired interest’ advocated by Yen Yü and the concept of ‘spiritual expressiveness’ [K.-Y. L. – *shenyun* (神韻)] suggested by Wang Shih-chen (1634–1711) only touch upon the surface of poetry. They are not comparable to my concept of world [K.-Y. L. – *jingjie*] which probes the fundamentals of poetry.³⁷

An explanation of how *jingjie* works was given by aesthetician Zhu Guangqian (1897–1986) in his discussion on *jingjie* in poetry. In order to create *jingjie*, the poet first needs to see intuitively, which means seeing things as they are and having ‘knowledge of individual things’³⁸ rather than ‘knowledge of the relations between things.’³⁹ In this way, we see the ‘image’ (*yixiang*, 意象)⁴⁰ created in our mind by the ‘form’ (*xingxiang*, 形相) of the art. Then, in a way similar to ‘empathy’, we associate the ‘feeling’ (*qingqu*, 情趣) evoked by the art with the ‘image’ we see. Thus, such seamless correspondence between the ‘feeling’ and ‘image’ creates *jingjie* in poetry – ‘the feeling is projected onto the scene [i.e. image], and the scene can express the feeling.’⁴¹ This theory of *jingjie* applies to the creation as well as the reading (or, to use Zhu Guangqian’s word, ‘recreation’) of poetry: poets create poems bearing the idea of *jingjie* in mind, and readers should try to grasp the *jingjie* that the poets created.⁴²

What Zhu Guangqian has described is known as ‘the fusion of scene and feeling’ (*qingjing jiaorong*, 情景交融), which is a fundamental mechanism in *jingjie* theory. A similar statement can be found in a section on the aesthetic characters of *shenyun* poetry in Ko Ching-Ming’s *Aesthetic Modes of Chinese Literature*.⁴³ Instead of moral and social concerns or meanings, in *shenyun* poetry, poets focus on their own emotional state and depict scenes, constituting the ‘symbolic scenario’ and reflecting the poets’ state of mind.⁴⁴ This is illustrated in the first stanza of the poem ‘The Reeds’ (‘Jianjia’, 蒹葭), from the *Classic of Poetry*⁴⁵:

The reeds and rushes are deeply green,
 And the white dew is turned into hoarfrost.
 The man of whom I think
 Is somewhere about the water.
 I go up the stream in quest of him,
 But the way is difficult and long.
 I go down the stream in quest of him,
 And lo! he is right in the midst of the water.⁴⁶

The first two lines play a particularly important role. On the one hand, when read alone, they represent an independent ‘picturesque’ scene for aesthetic contemplation. On the other, when read with the rest of the stanza expressing the ‘poetic feeling’, they gain symbolic or suggestive meaning and thus the ‘picturesque’ scene is fused with the ‘poetic feeling’, creating a ‘symbolic scenario’. The readers should be guided by the language to create an image in their mind and try to perceive the author’s aesthetic experience, to catch ‘the meaning beyond the scene and words’.⁴⁷

Both Zhu Guangqian and Ko Ching-Ming demonstrated ‘the fusion of scene and feeling’, that is, the basic mechanism in experiencing *jingjie* or *yijing*.⁴⁸ However, if we want to understand the deeper meaning of this aesthetic category, we need to know about its history and the elements that contribute to this experience. They are the idea (*yi*, 意), things (*wu*, 物), images (*xiang*, 象),⁴⁹ realm (*jing*, 境) and words (*yan*, 言).⁵⁰

To create *yijing*, a poet needs a poetic idea, which he tries to convey in the poem. This ‘idea’ is not a concept (e.g. moral or philosophical), but usually some kind of emotion or mood (pleasure, yearning, nostalgia, etc.), which, nevertheless, is often too abstract or nuanced to be described explicitly in words.⁵¹ Thus poets endeavour to convey the idea indirectly by means of ‘images’ of certain ‘things’. These things are objects which could suggest and symbolise the poetic idea, and the images are the depictions of these things in the poetry. Expressing the poetic idea through the images of things is possible partly due to the ancient belief that human feelings are affected by things, and such feelings prompted humans to create music.⁵² The theory that there is a correspondence between things and human mental states is called ‘feelings aroused by things’ (*ganwu*, 感物). From this theory, we can infer not only that poets are inspired by things, but also that the same things having produced ‘affections’ in poets can create similar effects in readers when presented in poetry.

On the other hand, such procedures of selecting certain things to suggest deeper meanings came from the creation

46

The English translation is from *The Chinese Classics*, tr. James Legge, vol. iv: *The She King, or The Book of Poetry* (London: Trübner, 1871), ii: ‘The Body of the Volume’, 195–96.

47

Ko, *Aesthetic Modes*, 98–101.

48

Although the word *jingjie* was not mentioned directly by Ko Ching-Ming, it is closely connected with *shenyun* poetry. See Jing-Jin Huang [黃景進], *The Creation of Yijing Theory – Research on Yijing Theory of Tang Dynasty* [意境論的形成——唐代意境論研究] (Taipei: Student Book [學生書局], 2004), 226; Li-Min Liu [劉麗敏], ‘Research into Zhu Guangqian’s On Poetry’ [朱光潛詩論研究], MA diss., (National Taiwan University, 2001), 41.

49

Note that here the word ‘image’ has a different meaning from what Zhu Guangqian translated as ‘image’ in the passage quoted above. See n.40.

50

The English terms used here are slightly different from those used by Zhu Guangqian, in order to avoid confusion and to aid comparison between the two theories (see n.64). The term *yan* sometimes refers to words depicting the images in poems, and sometimes words of an expressive character.

51

They are, as Yen Yü wrote, ‘like sounds in the sky, colors in visual images, moonlight in the water and reflections in a mirror’. See the passage from Wang Guowei’s book quoted above.

52

Such a belief can be found at the very beginning of the chapter ‘Record of Music’ from the *Book of Rites*, one of the traditional Confucian canons: ‘All the modulations of the voice arise from the mind, and the various affections of the mind are produced by things (external to it). The affections thus produced are manifested in sounds that are uttered.’ English text from James Legge’s translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. Friedrich Max Müller (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885), XXVIII, 92.

53

Huang, *The Creation of Yijing Theory*, 95–100.

54

In fact, human knowledge and the anthropocentric perspective distort the nature we see, thus making *dao*, nature in itself, even more inaccessible.

55

Lang Ye [葉朗], *History of Chinese Aesthetics* [中國美學史] (Taipei: Wenchin [文津], 1996), 71. The idea of understanding the essence of the universe by seeing nature without doing anything is proposed by Zhuangzi, one of the two main representatives of Taoism, in the chapter ‘Knowledge Travels North’ of his book *Zhangzi*: ‘The universe is very beautiful, yet it says nothing. The four seasons abide by a fixed law, yet they are not heard. All creation is based upon absolute principles, yet nothing speaks. And the true Sage, taking his stand upon the beauty of the universe, pierces the principles of created things. Hence the saying that the perfect man does nothing, the true Sage performs nothing, beyond gazing at the universe’. The English text is taken from Herbert Allen Giles’s translation of *Zhuangzi*, retitled as *Chuang Tzu. Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889), 279–80.

56

According to Taoist ideas, *dao* manifests itself in everything, including human beings. By recognising the true nature of *dao*, humans realise that there are no fundamental differences between themselves and nature or other things, and then fuse their feelings and spiritual energy with nature. The greatest obstacle to this revelation is the human perspective and its unnatural ways of organising and describing the world.

57

See also the story about a painter who became one with his landscape painting, in Wolfgang Welsch, ‘Sztuka wykraczająca poza granice ludzkie – ku postawie transludzkiej’ [Art transcending human boundaries: towards a transhuman approach], in *Estetyka poza estetyką* [Aesthetics beyond aesthetics] (Cracow: Universitas 2005), 161–165.

58

The term *yixiang* was translated as ‘image’ and treated as *xiang* (the ‘image’ here in *yijing* theory) by Zhu Guangqian. See nn.40 and 49.

59

The introduction of realm into literary theory was influenced by both Taoism and Buddhism. See Huang, *The Creation of Yijing Theory*, 158–170.

of hexagrams in an ancient classic called *Yi Jing* (also known as the *Book of Changes*). The hexagrams – by which, it is said, man can foretell the future – were created by sages, who, after closely observing the universe (things), selected the images of some things and transformed them into hexagrams to represent universal truths. Such procedures are called ‘observe things and take images’ (*guanwu quxiang*, 觀物取象) and ‘establish images to convey ideas’ (*lixiang yi jinyi*, 立象以盡意),⁵³ and they were later borrowed in literary theory. Because the interpreters or readers need to understand the idea by reading the images, the most crucial part in creating poetry is to select appropriate things to create images which can most effectively suggest the idea the poets intend to convey.

The rise of landscape poetry and the reinterpretation of Taoism beginning from the fourth and fifth centuries prompted the further development of *yijing* theory. The theory of ‘feelings aroused by things’ was passed down and led to the idea that nature can affect poets’ state of mind and stimulate the creation of poetry. Made into an object of aesthetic contemplation, landscape became a source of inspiration and the main object (thing) of the depiction (image) in poetry suggesting the poetic idea. Besides, according to Taoist ideas, nature itself is the manifestation of the essence of the universe known as *dao* (or *tao*, 道). Although *dao* cannot be understood and described by human knowledge and language,⁵⁴ by seeing nature ‘intuitively’ and making it the object of pure aesthetic contemplation, man can feel its great beauty, which is *dao* itself.⁵⁵ Such a process is similar to readers’ seeing images in poetry and feeling the poetic idea, which, like *dao*, is known to be indescribable. It is also worth mentioning that, although the nature or images in poetry is treated as the object of contemplation in the process of this aesthetic experience, the ultimate goal of the observer here is often to become one with nature⁵⁶ or to enter into the world of poetry and align his/her own mental state with the poetic idea in the poem, thus overcoming the subject–object duality.⁵⁷

So far, the poetic idea (*yi*) has been suggested by the images (*xiang*) of chosen things; hence this theory is called ‘the images of the idea’ (*yixiang*, 意象).⁵⁸ Later, in the Tang dynasty (618–917), the idea of realm was introduced and applied to the creation of Tang poetry.⁵⁹ It is worth citing two Tang poems, Wang

Wei's 'Bird-Singing Stream' (鳥鳴澗)⁶⁰ and Liu Tsung-yüan's 'River-Snow' (江雪), as examples:

Man at leisure. Cassia Flowers fall.
 Quiet night. Spring mountain is empty.
 Moon rises. Startles – a mountain bird.
 It sings at times in the spring stream.

A thousand mountains – no bird's flight.
 A million paths – no man's trace.
 A lone boat. Bamboo raincoat. An old man
 Fishes alone in the cold river snow.⁶¹

The realm is the space in which things are found, and thus it is also known as 'the realm of things' (*wujing*, 物境). Poets should look for an ideal realm (real or imaginary), which corresponds perfectly with the poetic idea that they already have in mind or which inspires them with new ones. The choice of realm is important, because each realm can create a distinct atmosphere and defines the character of the things found in it, and thus it determines the stylistic unity of the poem (e.g. two different mountain scenes in the cited poems). The poets then choose from the realm appropriate things (falling flowers, moon, boat, raincoat, etc.), which should effectively suggest both the realm they belong to and the poetic idea, and turn them into images, which, along with hinted expression ('at leisure' or 'fishes alone'),⁶² are depicted in words. In the opposite direction, readers read the words in the poems describing the images and recreate the realm which the poets had in mind. The readers should then see the realm 'intuitively' (as an object of aesthetic contemplation) and combine it with the expression revealed in the poem, in order to reach the deepest poetic idea (elegance, tranquillity of mind, humans' unity with nature in Wang's poem, and loneliness, an otherworldly feeling, the insignificance of man in nature's vast scheme in Liu's poem).

Because the realm seen by readers is the extension of the images shown in the poem, it is also known as 'the image beyond images' (*xiangwai zhi xiang*, 象外之象); the idea is also the extension of the expression and images depicted in words and thus is known as 'the meaning beyond text' (*wenwai zhi zhi*, 文外之旨). Both of them, detectable only through suggestion, belong to the deeper level of the poetry, while images and expression belong to the upper level, because they are shown directly in words. The relationship between these elements is shown in Figure 11.⁶³

60

It is worth noting that Wan Wei's art was appreciated for having 'paintings in [his] poems and poems in paintings.'

61

English translations taken from Wai-Lim Yip, 'Aesthetic Consciousness of Landscape in Chinese and Anglo-American Poetry', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 15/2 (1978), 222–223.

62

Expression in poetry is not always directly written down, but can be implicitly suggested by the images alone.

63

This chart is cited, translated and slightly modified from Huang, *The Creation of Yijing Theory*, 218.

64
In 'the fusion of scene and feeling', as exemplified by Zhu Guangqian's *jingjie* theory and Ko Ching-Ming's thesis on *shenyun* poetry, the object of aesthetic contemplation seems to be the 'images' themselves instead of the realm; thus that object becomes a variant of *yijing* theory. Or we can assume that, at least in Ko Ching-Ming's case, the images and the realm together were treated as a whole or a 'scene'.

65
Ko, *Aesthetic Mode*, 114.

66
Wang, *Poetic Remarks*, 1.

67
The most famous collection of Tang poetry is *300 Tang Poems* (唐詩三百首), which children in Taiwan are often encouraged to read. The lopsided emphasis on poetry in the *shenyun* style, along with so-called 'lyrical aesthetics', prompted Ko Ching-Ming to remind us of the existence of other types of poetry. See Ching-Ming Ko, 'The Origin and Critic of Lyrical Aesthetics' [抒情美典的起源與質疑], *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Literature* [清華中文學報], 3 (December 2009), 97.

68
Yijing is emphasised especially in the playing of the *guqing*, a traditional musical instrument which is often considered a symbolic instrument of higher culture and the intellectual elite. Confucius himself is said to have been a master of the *guqing*. See Ming-Mei Yip [葉明媚], *The Art of Guqing Music* [古琴音樂藝術] (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1992), 13; Edward Ho, 'Aesthetic Considerations in Understanding Chinese Literati Musical Behaviour', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 6 (1997), 35–36.

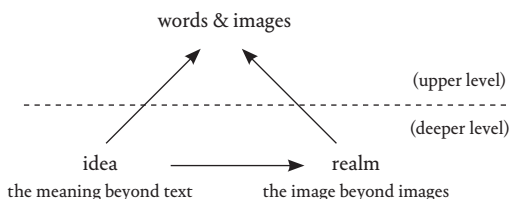


Figure 11. The relationship between elements in *yijing* theory

As we can see, in the creation of poetry, the poetic idea is the source of all other elements. The realm should reveal the idea, and it contributes to the creation of the images of the things depicted in poetry. Words, including those of images and expression, are chosen and written according to the idea and the realm. In the reading of poetry, the arrows go in the opposite direction: the realm is suggested by images and poetic words, the idea by words and realm. Thus the word *yijing* is comprised of the two elements from the deeper level, the idea (*yi*) and the realm (*jing*), and this whole process and effect of penetrating into the deeper level of poetic meanings is the theory of *yijing*, the realm of the idea.⁶⁴

Yijing as an aesthetic category was and still is highly esteemed in traditional Chinese literary criticism. For example, Yen Yü treated *shenyun* poetry, in which *yijing* is applied, as the ideal of all poetic styles,⁶⁵ and at the very beginning of his book, Wang Guowei wrote that *jingjie* is the highest value of *ci* poetry.⁶⁶ Today in Taiwan, where elements of the Chinese cultural heritage remain essential in the education system, knowledge of classical poetry and literature is still considered a telling criterion in determining one's level of education and good taste. Thus in schools, children are encouraged to learn and memorise Tang poems and Song *ci*, which are representative of *yijing*- and *shenyun*-style poetry.⁶⁷

Therefore, it is reasonable that after such a long exposure to poems of this kind, when it comes to what makes good poetry, most Taiwanese would first think of *yijing*. Moreover, after its establishment during the Tang dynasty, *yijing* became an aesthetic standard to be applied to arts other than poetry, including painting, calligraphy and music.⁶⁸ That is why, if we look at the questionnaire again, the feeling of seeing a scene or a story (equal to a 'realm' in the *yijing* theory mentioned above) and the emotion felt from the music (the 'expression' or 'idea') were considered the main reasons why Chopin's compositions seem poetical and he himself is deemed a poet. Hence, although the word *yijing* itself was mentioned only four times in their replies, it is obvious that the Taiwanese respondents used this very concept to examine Chopin's music.

The idea of *yijing* was also referred to by Chinese pianist Fu Ts'ong when interpreting Chopin's compositions during an interview with Taiwanese music critic and musicologist Chiao Yuan-Pu. The Polish composer was even compared with two specific poets:

Fu Ts'ong: [...] The first [of the two Op. 27 Nocturnes], in C sharp minor, is a very deep and horrifying work: it seems that the music comes from a deep ocean and a dark night. But the second, in D flat major, shows us a night lit by a bright and clear moon. Compared with each other, they express totally different *yijing*. [...] Sentimental Chopin is what I hate the most. I absolutely cannot accept it! Chopin is not melancholic at all! He is at least like Li Yu [李煜, 937–978]. [Chopin's] music is 'written with blood' and never narrow-minded! [...]

Fu Ts'ong: [...] Besides, the *yijing* [of Chopin's late works] is difficult to understand. That's why I say late Chopin is like Li Shangyin [李商隱 (813–858)], because the feelings expressed in those works are very intricate, inward, extremely profound, but hidden as well. It's a very dubious and unclear world.

Chiao Yuan-Pu: I think your analogy between Li Shang-Yin and Chopin is perfect. [...] Superbly sophisticated writing technique is exactly the style of late Chopin.⁶⁹

Here Fu Ts'ong used two kinds of scenery to distinguish different *yijing* in Chopin's Nocturnes, Op. 27. As already mentioned, a particular poetic idea should be matched by a corresponding realm, creating a unique *yijing*. Thus sometimes the word *yijing* is also used to denote different characters or styles of artworks.⁷⁰ The ability to successfully create various or distinct styles or *yijing* is what makes a great poet, which Chopin is also appreciated for according to the results of the questionnaire.

By examining the poetic styles of the poets mentioned above, we can learn what kind of poet Chopin is according to Fu Ts'ong. Li Yu, the first poet mentioned, was the emperor of the small kingdom of Southern Tang, which was destroyed by the Song dynasty during his reign. Li Yu's achievement in poetry resulted partly from his dilemma of being born to be more an artist than an emperor, which determined his profound suffering at failing his kingdom. All of this is reflected in his creation of *ci* poetry:⁷¹

When will the last flower fall, the last moon fade?

So many sorrows lie behind.

Again last night the east wind filled my room —

O gaze not on the lost kingdom under this bright moon.

Still in her light my palace gleams as jade

(Only from bright cheeks beauty dies).

To know the sum of human suffering

Look at this river rolling eastward in the spring.⁷²

69

Yuan-Pu Chiao [焦元溥], *Hear Chopin* [聽見蕭邦] (Taipei: Linking Publishing [聯經出版], 2010), 415, 417–18.

70

Huang, *The Creation of Yijing Theory*, 233–34.

71

Jing-Nong Tai [臺靜農], *The History of Chinese Literature* [中國文學史] (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press [臺大出版中心], 2016), 2: 613.

72

Translated by Cyril Birch in John Minford and Joseph S. M. Lau (eds), *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1130.

73

Wang, *Poetic Remarks*, 11. Nietzsche's words come from 'Reading and Writing', the seventh chapter in the first part of *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. They are followed by 'Write with blood, and thou wilt find that blood is spirit'. See the translation by Thomas Common (New York: The Modern Library, 1917), 39.

74

Wang, *Poetic Remarks*, 10.

75

Such techniques involve above all flawlessly pairing words between two poetic lines to achieve a harmonious effect in both meaning and intonation. For example, in the poem by Li Shangyin cited here, the first two words from the fifth line, 'vast sea', correspond to the first two words in the sixth line, 'Blue field', and then 'moonlit' to 'sun-warmed' and 'pearl' to 'jade', etc.

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K.-Y. L. – Li Shang-Yin often quoted historical stories or classical literature in his poems to create more profound meanings. The third line denotes Zhuangzi's fable about his dream in which he became a butterfly and forgot who he really was. This fable questions our ability to tell illusion from reality. The fourth line refers to the story about Emperor Wang. Because he worried about his country so much, he became a cuckoo after his death and cried so hard that he coughed up blood.

77

The English translation is taken from James J. Y. Liu, 'Li Shang-Yin's Poem "The Ornamented Zither" (Chin-Sè)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85, 2 (1965), 129–30.

78

Tai, *The History of Chinese Literature*, 2: 504–5.

79

Ko, *Aesthetic Modes*, 122.

Wang Guowei regarded Li Yu's works very highly, because 'it was not until the time of Li Yu that the *ci* began to broaden in scope and to become deeper and deeper in expressing human feelings. [...] Nietzsche says, "of all that is written, I love only what a person has written with his blood". Li Yu's *ci* were indeed written with blood.'⁷³ Wang also mentioned the poet's sentimental and feminine side: 'A *ci* poet is one who has not lost his inborn innocence. As a ruler, Li Yu was handicapped because of his birth in the forbidden palace and his up-bringing in the hands of women; but these became advantages for him as a poet.'⁷⁴

The other poet mentioned above, Li Shangyin, is known not only for his sophisticated writing techniques,⁷⁵ but also for the veiled and vague *yijing* in his poetry, making it difficult to interpret and analyse, just like in his most famous poem:

The ornamented zither, for no reason, has fifty strings;
Each string, each bridge, reminds one of a youthful year.
Master Chuang was confused by his morning dream of the butterfly;
Emperor Wang's heart in spring is entrusted to the cuckoo.⁷⁶
In the vast moonlit sea, pearls shed tears;
At sun-warmed Blue field, jade engenders smoke.
This feeling might have become a thing to be remembered;
Only, at the time one was already bewildered and lost.⁷⁷

According to Tai Jing-Nong, Li Shangyin 'hid the facts and expressed the feeling of his poetry to the fullest. [...] We must not guess but feel his poetry. He transformed his grief and feelings, using words and intonation, into a complete image, which deeply moves readers. In this way, he achieved his artistic goal [...] All we have to do is to feel the emotions expressed in his works'.⁷⁸ As for the poetic form, the structure of the middle part of the poem is worth our particular attention. If we read the fifth or sixth line alone, we can catch the pictures they present respectively. However, when these two lines are combined as a pair, because of their symmetrical structure and the complementarity between their images, they create a balanced and more complete realm, and thus a richer *yijing* (the same is true for the third and fourth lines). Such skill in poetic form is characteristic of *shenyun* poetry and greatly helped its evolution.⁷⁹

It is easy to note that Li Yu's fate can be associated with Chopin's pain and exile from Poland after the November Uprising. And the nuanced and subtle *yijing* in Li Shangyin's poetry, resulting from his mastery of form, can be compared to Chopin's late works, such as the Polonaise-Fantasy, the form and profound expression of which never cease to puzzle and amaze listeners. The poems of these two poets also display lyricism and a sentimental mood. Despite Fu Ts'ong strong objection, his analogy also indicates a close association between Chopin's music and the

sentimentality characteristic of the two poets named Li and of poetry from their epoch. Such poetry belongs to the so-called lyrical (*shuqing*, 抒情) tradition and thus is known for its lyricism, and such a character also dominates Chopin's oeuvre.⁸⁰ Of course, apart from lyricism and sentimentality, there are other kinds of *yijing*. However, Chopin's music seems to be more associated with these two characters, as is shown by the results of the questionnaire and supported by the conversation between Fu Ts'ong and Chiao Yuan-Pu.

To sum up, the title 'poet of the piano' encourages the Taiwanese to associate Chopin's music with poetry, especially with verse in which *yijing* plays an important role, and thus it also prompts Taiwanese listeners to use such an aesthetic category to assess and understand the composer's works. Because of the 'expectancy' effect (a word borrowed from psychology), which means that listeners are prone to recognise and call to mind the music they expect to hear, Chopin's classification as a poet makes it easier for Taiwanese people to identify his works as being full of lyrical and sentimental *yijing*, or to recognise compositions of such a character (e.g. most of his nocturnes) as being more Chopinesque. This association in turn reinforces the title 'poet of the piano'. Thus is created a unique form of Chopin reception in Taiwan, in which the title 'poet of the piano', *yijing* and lyricism play a vital role.

Chopin for Taiwanese people

The practice of describing Chopin as a poet already existed during the composer's lifetime. It came from romantic ideas such as 'poet inspired by mysterious forces', 'romantic genius' and 'national poet'. And the word 'poetry' was used to describe his compositions for their artistic value, expressive power and as a symbol of Polish folk music and patriotic spirit. All these ideas and ideologies are contained in the words 'poet' and 'poetry'. However, without any knowledge of romanticism, Taiwanese people do not think of 'poet' in the same way as Heine, Liszt or Tarnowski did. Instead, based on the epithet 'poet of the piano', the Taiwanese use their general understanding of poetry and poets, which most likely fall under the aesthetical category *yijing*, to interpret Chopin and his music. Therefore, although the Taiwanese listen to the same musical works, use the same title 'poet' and have a similar experience of feeling a strong emotion and even seeing scenes as Chopin's contemporaries did, they understand the composer's music in a quite different way.

Although the idea of *yijing* is common among the Taiwanese, no other studies, as far as I know, have systematically approached the subject of interpreting Chopin's music by examining this concept. In addition, *yijing* is a concept rather foreign to Western culture,⁸¹ and thus it makes the reception of Chopin in Taiwan an interesting

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Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Chopin: The Man, his Work and its Resonance*, tr. John Comber (Warsaw: The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 2015), 676.

81
However, both Zhu Guangqian and sinologist Karl-Heinz Pohl have noted the similarity between *yijing* and Kant's *Ästhetische Idee*. See Guangqian Zhu, *Western Aesthetic History* [西方美學史], vol. 2 (New Taipei City: Ting Yuan, 2001), 51; Karl-Heinz Pohl, 'Chinese Aesthetic and Kant', in Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson (eds), *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2006), 134.

82
Nai-Xiong Liao [廖乃雄],
Chopin [蕭邦] (Taipei:
Mercury Publishing
House [世界文物出版社],
2001. First published in
Beijing: People's Music
Publishing House [人民音
樂出版社], 1998), 7.

83
Ibid., 27.

84
For instance, in an article
commemorating the
150th anniversary of
Chopin's birth, in 1960,
the author Zhao Feng
wrote that 'To insist on
the lyrical was to render
Chopin's music senti-
mental and salon-orient-
ed; qualities that could
not be tolerated under
socialist realism.' See
Hon-Lun Yang, 'Power,
Politics, and Musical
Commemoration:
Western Musical Figures
in the People's Republic
of China 1949–1964',
Music & Politics, 1/2
(Summer 2007), 9. This
article can be found
online: quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/power-politics-and-musical-commemoration-western-musical.pdf?c=mp;idno=9460447.0001.205;format=pdf,
accessed 26 July 2020.
See also Shan-Teh Ting,
'What Makes the Chinese
People Accept and Appreciate
Chopin's Music', in Zofia Lissa
(ed.), *The Book of the First International
Musicological Congress Devoted to
the Works of Frederick
Chopin: Warszawa 16th
- 22nd February 1960*
(Warsaw: PWN, 1963),
399–403.

topic to explore. However, since my theory relies heavily on ideas and terms from the Chinese literary tradition, an inevitable question presents itself. Is Chopin's music interpreted and received in China in the same way as it is in Taiwan? Although Taiwan and China share basically the same Chinese traditions, the development of contemporary Chinese culture in China drastically changed direction with the birth of the People's Republic of China in 1949, as its communist regimes, socialist realism, Cultural Revolution and Chinese nationalism may have greatly affected the reception of Chopin and his music. For example, folklorism and nationalism seem to be given more attention in China than in Taiwan. At the very beginning of a concise biography of Chopin by the Chinese writer Liao Nai-Xiong, we can easily sense the differences:

In nineteenth-century Europe, various nationalistic groups of composers appeared with the rise of nationalist movements. Those composers actively developed the music of their nations, which is closely connected with the pursuit of national liberation and independent political status. Thus they created a splendid page in music history.

Among them, Polish nationalistic music is especially outstanding, and its figurehead is Chopin.⁸²

And further on, in a section on Chopin's musical styles:

On the one hand, it is grand and dramatic; on the other, it is poetical and lyrical. Some bourgeois critics only see or emphasise Chopin's lyrical and tender aspect. [...] His spiritual *jingjie*, as well as his world of ideas and feelings, is as broad and magnificent as only a national warrior could have.⁸³

Later on, in another section on Chopin's compositions, it is written that in almost every genre we can find compositions closely associated with nationalistic and patriotic content. We can regard such an approach as a continuation of the socialistic interpretation of Chopin's music at the beginning of the second half of the last century.⁸⁴ It seems that although China retains the idea of *jingjie*, it is interpreted differently than in Taiwan, and lyricism is even condemned as a symbol of the bourgeoisie. However, more research is needed to determine whether the nationalistic content outweighs the traditional Chinese lyricism, or whether there are fundamental changes to Chopin's image in the minds of Chinese people today due to the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda.

As for Japan, which also influenced Chopin reception in Taiwan, a preference for lyricism over nationalistic and folkloristic content was evident already at the beginning of the twentieth century, as shown by Japanese musicologist Tada Junichi:

If we compare the nationalism and lyricism felt in Chopin's music, it is clear that the importance of the latter is more emphasised. [...] [In concert reviews from the Meiji period] keywords such as 'delicate', 'nervousness' and 'sorrow' were mentioned, and they correspond to images like 'sentimental', 'melancholic', 'ill', 'salon-like' and 'feminine' [...] Those keywords are clearly more connected with the lyricism felt in the lyrical melodies than with the national character. Besides, although the first Chopin works performed in Japan were polonaises, which are iconic compositions representing a connection with Polish national music, polonaises and mazurkas were subsequently played less frequently, and [the Japanese] tended to become familiar with Chopin's music through the Fantaisie-Impromptu. [...] In other words, knowing the nature of the Japanese, who are more attracted by the lyrical, than the national, character [in Chopin's music], we can say that such a temperament is the reason why they love Chopin's music.⁸⁵

In Japan, Chopin is widely known as the poet of the piano probably for the expression and 'subjectivity' of his music. As Japanese poet Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886–1942) wrote, in *Principles of Poetry*, 'people call Chopin (as well as Beethoven and Debussy) "poet musician", but not Haydn, J. S. Bach or Handel, because Chopin's music is more "subjective", while Bach's is more "objective".'⁸⁶ Despite the similar preference for lyricism and expression as in Taiwan, the uniqueness of Chopin reception in Japan might be found in its relationship with Japanese aesthetical conceptions, such as *mono no aware* (sorrow over things) and *yūgen* (deep and profound),⁸⁷ which is also a topic that needs more exploration.

Although there is room for improvement in the design of the questionnaire, the results of this study might give us a rough understanding of the reception of Chopin and his music in Taiwan, which can be referred to and compared with in future research. In addition, this article shows that the *yijing* theory offers the Taiwanese an aesthetic basis for interpreting Chopin's music and his title 'poet'. There are, however, still some aspects of Chopin reception in Taiwan to be explored. For example, the Taiwanese are quite fascinated with the composer's love story, which seems to affect the reception of his image in Taiwan. However, we do not know whether such a fascination is common to listeners from all over the world or, rather, there are some distinctive elements applicable to the Taiwanese alone. Secondly, even if the Taiwanese do show an interest in Chopin's romance in a particular way, the exact reason for such an interest is unknown. Some answers probably lie in *ci*, in which there are major themes about romance, and lyrical love songs prevalent in Taiwan.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, it is certain that more investigation is needed to discover their connections to Chopin reception in Taiwan.

There are also questions to be answered concerning the application of *yijing* theory to the interpretation of Chopin's works

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Tada, *Chopin for Japanese People*, 106–7.

86

Sakutarō Hagiwara [萩原朔太郎], *Principles of Poetry* [詩の原理] (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1947), 115.

87

Susumu Tamura, 'The Reception of Chopin's Music in Japan', in Irena Poniatowska (ed.), *Chopin and his Work in the Context of Culture* (Cracow: Musica Iagellonica, 2003), 470–71. It seems to me that *yūgen* shares some similarities with *yijing*. According to Japanese aesthetician Onishi Yoshinori, *yūgen* was cultivated in *waka* poetry, and a very important characteristic of *waka* is the fusion of expression and the description of scenery, which is the same as in *yijing*. See Onishi Yoshinori [大西克礼], *Yūge, Aware, Sabi. Collection of Onishi Yoshinori's Aesthetics 1* [幽玄・あはれ・さび 大西克礼美学コレクション 1] (Tokyo: Shoshi-Shinsui [書肆心水], 2012), 17. However, the exact relationship between *yūgen* and *yijing* needs further research.

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Because of the prevalence of lyrical love songs, since the 1980s, Taiwan has been known as 'the kingdom of lyrical songs' (see Mingsung Lee [李明璁], ed., *Music in the Past – Taiwanese Popular Music of Memories* [時代迴音: 記憶中的的台灣流行音樂] (Taipei: Locust Publishing [大塊文化], 2015), 226).

or music in general. First of all, we do not know how exactly the theory of *yijing* can be applied to the experience of listening to music. The problem lies chiefly in the ‘images’: they can be shown directly in painting and in poetry, but music has neither paints nor words at its disposal. Therefore, we should consider which musical elements would play the role of ‘images’ and how they could make listeners see the realm;⁸⁹ or whether in music the theory of *yijing* requires modification to be applied to listening experiences. Secondly, if we assume that the feeling of *yijing* results from the melodies and atmosphere of the musical excerpts the participants listened to (as the two elements to which most attention was paid during listening; see Figure 8), we should ask what would happen if a complete composition with a more complex formal structure (such as one of the ballades or the Polonaise-Fantasy) was played instead of excerpts. Would the formal design as a new factor heighten or weaken the experience of *yijing*? Lastly, does the poetic idea felt in *yijing* have a universal quality? Do Taiwanese people reach the essence of Chopin’s music or understand it ‘correctly’ by feeling the poetic idea, despite their lack of historical and aesthetical knowledge of romanticism?

Regarding the last question, and also the question asked by Józef Chomiński, cited at the beginning of this article, I would say that a knowledge of romanticism is not indispensable for Taiwanese people to be able to appreciate the composer’s works. Rather, the Taiwanese refer to their own culture in order to explain their listening experience. Whether this is a ‘correct’ way or not is debatable, but it is certainly only one of many possible ways of appreciating Chopin’s compositions, and such diversity proves the richness of the composer’s creative genius. As Chomiński noted and implied at the very end of his presentation: ‘While listening to the works, we try to grasp and preserve above all what we want to hear. Hence, Chopin’s oeuvre in social reception becomes a series of almost infinite individual impressions, although its sound structure remains the same. The form of its existence in listeners’ experience also creates an extended domain for reconsideration, research and discussion. It makes me wonder how contemporary musicians and listeners react to the history, that is, to Chopin and romanticism, and what kind of interdependence appears between the elements of this polymorphic structure, which suggests that Chopin became the most popular composer in the world.’⁹⁰

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Although tone-painting (with the aid of programmatic titles) may be considered as ‘image’ in music, it cannot be applied to Chopin’s compositions or to absolute music.

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Chomiński, ‘Chopin i współczesność’, 24.

ABSTRACT

Although the popularity of Chopin and his music in East Asia is a well-known phenomenon, we know quite little about how exactly Asian people understand and listen to Chopin's music. This article aims to show the general situation of the reception of Chopin and his music in Taiwan by examining three different aspects. Presented in the first part are the results of a questionnaire about Taiwanese choir singers' impressions of Chopin and his music and their experience of listening to excerpts of four different compositions by the composer, while the second part deals with the cultural image of Chopin in Taiwanese books, textbooks and film. The results suggest that the designation 'poet of the piano' plays an integral role in Chopin reception in Taiwan. In order to understand how Taiwanese people's understanding of beauty in poetry can affect their understanding of Chopin's music, an aesthetic category called *yijing*, frequently used in literary and art criticism in Taiwan, is introduced in the last part of the article. It seems that the epithet 'poet of the piano' encourages Taiwanese people to understand Chopin's works according to *yijing* (by seeing imaginary scenes and feeling the expression, they experience the deeper beauty and meaning of the music) and to associate them with poetry representative of that aesthetic category. Moreover, the Taiwanese tend to perceive Chopin's music as lyrical and sentimental and to consider such qualities as characteristic of his oeuvre.

KEYWORDS

Chopin reception, Western music in Taiwan, *yijing*, poet of the piano

KWEN-YIN LI

comes from Taipei, Taiwan. He received his master's degree with distinction in musicology from Jagiellonian University and is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on the poetical character of Chopin's music under the supervision of Prof. Maciej Gołąb at the University of Wrocław. He received an honourable mention in the Hieronim Feicht Competition for his master's thesis 'The Polonaise after Chopin: Piano Works by Polish Composers from 1850 to 1918', written under the guidance of Prof. Małgorzata Woźna-Stankiewicz. His research interests include Chopin's music and its reception in Europe and East Asia, music aesthetics, music of the nineteenth century and music editing.