

“MUSIC AS A GIFT FROM GOD”

ON THE INDIGENIZATION OF SACRED MUSIC IN THE CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Abstract

Since the 20th century, the predecessors of the Chinese Christian Church began to research and compose Chinese sacred music with characteristics that were considered being ‘ethnic’. For the lack of audiovisual materials in pre-audio-technological China, we can only roughly assume that the possibility of hymn chanting has already appeared during the Tang Dynasty of the 7th century according to the Nestorian Stele found in Xi’an¹. The introduction to Christianity will have to inevitably consider local conditions and customs, and it will have led to the development of an indigenized, national, and functional music used in the context of Christian religion. This article will discuss “the indigenization of sacred music in China” on its purpose and significance, the contemporary interpretations, and some aesthetic issues of composing and performing. Besides, a musical analysis will be given to the Chinese Christmas cantata *The Anointed* by Ma Geshun, which might be seen as a Chinese counterpart of Handel’s Messiah.

Keywords

Sacred Music, Chinese Indigenization, *The Anointed*, Composition, Aesthetic Education

The indigenization of sacred music in China is no longer a new term. In the first half of the twentieth century, the Chinese Christian predecessors were dedicated to exploring and writing hymns with supposedly ethnic characteristics. Although the origin of Christianity is not to be found in China, its introduction and spread throughout the country will have to investigate some synergic effects with local customs and social practice, which may have led to the development of music serving a specific nationality and religious functionality in the history of China.

In recent years, the topic *Indigenization of Sacred Music* has been often discussed in circles of the Chinese Christian Church. On the one hand, there are governmental decrees and political needs, and on the other hand there are also considerations within the church's own direction of development. Based on a brief overview of the historical development of Christian sacred music in several time periods in China’s long history, this article attempts to combine the current problems and present situation of the Chinese Christian sacred music to explore the contemporary predicament and future prospects of the indigenizing construction.

I. CHINESE INDIGENIZATION OF SACRED MUSIC: THE HISTORY AND PRESENT

According to historical documentations, Christian sacred music in the Chinese context can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty (Keevak, 2008), so there has been a long history of no less than 1300 years. However, with the change of dynasties and societies, the situation of Christian sacred music was very different in each time period. Considering the introduction of Protestantism into China, as well as the changes in the political system of modern Chinese and the most recent history, this paper will divide the historical time periods of Chinese Christian sacred music into four stages.

¹ 大秦景教流行中国碑. The Nestorian Stele documents “the Propagation in China of the *Jingjiao* (Luminous Religion) of *Daqin* (Roman Empire)” (Keevak, 2008).

A. BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF PROTESTANTISM (FROM THE EIGHTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)

In view of the lack of audio materials in pre-audio-technological China, we can only roughly say that the possibility of singing hymns has appeared during the core time period of the Tang Dynasty, around when the famous Nestorian Stele was founded in 781. The earliest hymn that can be verified at present is the Nestorian Hymn *All Heav'n Worships in Great Awe* of the eighth century, which was belonging to the hymnal used in worship service during the Tang Dynasty and was translated by the Persian missionary Adam.² The content of the poem and the lyrics are in the form of seven-syllable rhymes with typical Chinese characteristics. Unfortunately, only the lyrics remained and traces of the music have long been lost.

During the Ming Dynasty of the early seventeenth century, the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci matched eight chapters of Christian rhythmic poems in Chinese with some Western tunes. He integrated them into a collection titled *Xiqin Quyì* (Songs with Clavichord). But there was still no further record of the musical structure, only the lyrics were handed down.

In the 1750s, the French Catholic Jesuit missionary, Qian Deming, introduced Chinese music to some places in the West and asked people to copy a batch of scores in both Chinese traditional musical notation *Gong Che* and European stave notation. One of them, called *Shengyue Jingpu* (Sacred Music with Scripture Score), is a Catholic hymn translated into Chinese. The tunes are said to be related to the traditional *Southern and Northern Drama Music*.³

B. THE INDIGENIZATION ATTEMPTS OF CHRISTIAN SACRED MUSIC (FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY)

The earliest Protestant Chinese hymns appeared in the nineteenth century and were related to the time when Protestantism was introduced to China. Compared with the Catholic church, the Protestant church paid more attention to the music activities that were compatible with the local culture, extensively promoting the sacred music with a combination of popular Chinese tunes and language. These practices were probably consistent with the doctrines of Martin Luther, the former leader of the Protestant Reformation, who advocated sacred music close to believers' lives.

Yangxin Shenshi, is a collection of edifying hymns, published by the first Protestant missionary Englishman Robert Morrison in 1818. It contained 30 hymns that were translated from English verse poems and hymns. It was regarded as the first songbook of Chinese Protestant hymns. There was a proverb on the cover printed "Zhuangzi said: Many evil thoughts will be launched if you don't learn goodness in one day", which shows the very distinctive characteristics ascribed to other nationals. Since then, hymn collections from Christian churches throughout China have been compiled and published, including many of the same name, some dialect and phonetic editions. The main collections are summarized in Figure 1 as follows:⁴

² Reportedly, the texts on the *Nestorian Stele* were written by Jin Jing [Adam] (Schmidt-Leukel & Gentz, 2013: 108).

³ Chen (2006: 367-368).

⁴ Chen (2006: 518-520).

Time	Editor(s)	Title	Venue	Qty.	Language	Type
1818	Robert Morrison	<i>Yangxin Shenshi</i>	Guangzhou	30	Chinese	Edifying hymns
1840	Walter Medhurst	<i>Yangxin Shenshi</i>		71	Chinese	Edifying hymns
1844	Divie Bethunc McCartee	McCartee Hymns			Ancient Chinese	Edifying hymns
1844	R. Lecher	<i>Yangxin Shenshi</i>				
1844	S.W.D. Martin	Selection of Hymns		72	Ningbo dialect, marked with Roman letters	Edifying hymns (in four-stave notation)
1851	W.C. Burns	Selection of Hymns	Xiamen	68	Chinese	Edifying hymns
1852	William Young	<i>Yangxin Shenshi</i>	Xiamen	13	Southern Fujian vernacular	Edifying hymns
1861	W.C. Burns	<i>Chaoqiang Shenshi</i>		29	Chaoshan dialect	Edifying hymns
1862	W.C. Burns	<i>Rongqiang Shenshi</i>		30	Fuzhou dialect	Edifying hymns
1862	W.C. Burns	<i>Xiaqiang Shenshi</i>			Xiamen dialect	Edifying hymns
1883	Timothy Richard, Mary Martin	Short Hymns	Taiyuan	121		Textbook of music theory and sight-reading (<i>Gongche</i> notation, including traditional Chinese music and Buddhist music)
1883	Xi Zizhi	We Have A Reason for This Gathering.			Chinese	An original hymn
1886	Xi Zizhi				Chinese	Edifying hymns
1895	Elwood Gardner Tewksbury	<i>Songzhu Shiji</i>	Beijing	400	Chinese	Hymns in four parts (notation in letters)

FIGURE 1: Table of main collections of hymns.

C. THE INDIGENIZATION OF HYMNS DURING THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (FROM 1919 TO 1949)

The Hymns of Universal Praise, published in 1936 by the Christian Literature Society for China, is considered to be the most representative and most influential Chinese hymnal from the early twentieth century. Its compilation originated from the National Christian Conference held in Shanghai in May 1922. The Hymnal Committee of Six United Sects, which was composed of the Church of Christ in China, the China-based Anglican Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church North, the East China Baptist Convention and the North China Congregational Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, jointly compiled this collection of hymns. It contains 512 hymns overall and 172 of them were written in Chinese texts or adapted in traditional Chinese tunes or composed in Chinese music style. In other words, the indigenized Chinese hymns account for about one-third of the total.⁵

D. THE INDIGENIZATION OF CHINESE SACRED MUSIC SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (FROM 1949 TO PRESENT)

After the founding of New China, the most representative and influential hymns are *The New Hymnal* and its *Supplementary Book* consecutively published by the Chinese Christian Council since the 1980s. This nationwide church music ministry is the result of the fundamental unification of the various Christian branches and denominations in China.

The New Hymnal, published in 1983, includes 400 hymns, nearly half of which are classical hymns that are widely spread among Christians around the world. They are translated and applied to older popular melodies and set to harmonic progressions. More than 200 hymns are Chinese compositions or deriving from popular local tunes. 56 of them are originally written by Chinese Christians dedicated to compositions. In addition, there are 42 short choral songs selected in the form of an appendix.

Half a century later, in order to adapt to the rapid development of Christianity in China and to improve some of the shortcomings of the original hymns, *The Supplementary Book* which was published in 2009 has added 200 hymns, including 61 new compositions that meet the selection criteria. In general, nearly one-quarter of the 600 hymns of these two selections were composed or written by Chinese Christians. In the respective publication, those marked with a single asterisk (*) are some already-published hymns

⁵ Chen (2006: 574).

or hymns with supposedly Chinese tunes; the double asterisks (**) marks works newly composed after 1980. Most of them are set with fitting harmonic progressions in four parts as a chorale.

In essence, not only those marked with an asterisk are the de-facto nationalized and localized works, but, both hymnal books in general are the essential expression of sacred music among the Chinese Christians. Even though most of the collected hymns use melodies and harmonic progressions of Western provenience, they are widely reflecting a modern Chinese style because of the lyrics and their musical requirements. They can be almost models in the way how they combine text and music. Not only does the lyrics accurately interpret the meaning of the originating text, but they also conform to the rhythm of texts and rhyme of poems in the respective Chinese pronunciation and language tone, without facing any conflict or appearing as exotic singing.

However, compared with the use of Western melodies and newly composed hymns, they are rather a cultural symbol. There are not many satisfying works taking other adapted works as a measurement. The reason is not difficult to clarify. Popular Chinese tunes are thought mainly as monophonic musical structures and restricted by language tones arranged in pentatonic scales.⁶ They are accompanied with four-part harmonic progressions in a Western choral style. Although the main melody is smooth and easy to sing and the rhythm of the four parts is neatly following the rules, each vocal part has to be kept in a sub- and coordinated flow resulting in a thick voice texture. Since this is often difficult to achieve, the whole sound is not as full as imagined to meet the ceremonial requirements. This is one of the problems faced by the Chinese indigenization of sacred music and other types of music based on similar imaginations.

II. TWO CATEGORIES OF CHINESE SACRED MUSIC

Sacred music (Mansfield, 1927) in China can be roughly divided into two categories: from a broad and from a narrow perspective of existence. I have once argued in an article (Sun Yue 2017), about Chinese sacred music, *Sacred Music as the Most Beautiful Offering*, that sacred music includes not only the hymns that are usually chanted, but also all the music related to worship ceremonies and the life of the believers. All music in the church, hymns sung in the Christian fellowship, spiritual songs in daily life of believers, seem to make people feeling closer to God, no matter in which style and form they are. This is in a general observation about any kind of sacred music.

The narrow perspective on sacred music is also the most important one within the general sacred music. It is the music of the Sanctuary during liturgy. Its style and form must pursue a specific sanctity and beauty of artistic quality.

It is believed that music is a kind of language of the heaven and a universal grace that transcends human communication barriers. It is seen as the Word of God and has no borders. However, the lyrics in hymns are linguistically different since people live under culturally different conditions. As the main language of Christian life in China, the Chinese language plays an important role in the composition and performance of sacred music.

About five hundred years ago, Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and compiled a large number of German choral texts for his songs and some songs written or collected by others. Nearly three hundred years ago, John Sebastian Bach composed several popular Passions based on German verses. More than a hundred years ago, Johannes Brahms offered *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem) and practiced successfully the Germanization of the requiem mass, which once used to be a genre of sacred music celebrated in Latin and dedicated to the Catholic Church. These publicly accessible works of composers have had an indelible influence on the spread and development of Christian music in the German-speaking region. In the same way, the Chinese sacred music may use the advantages and strengths of the Chinese language, to explain accurately and vividly the connotation of the Word of God, as required by this religion. At the same time, musical adaptations can facilitate to remember the texts. Therefore, the combination of specific language types and musical forms is an effective way for

⁶ This view reflects the adaptation of early Western teachings on musical structures, forms, and analyses. However, many tunes produced in China neither show monophonic nor otherwise restricting features. The terminological use of mono in connection with phonic, i.e., indicates that polyphonic might be the “right” norm to adhere to in the context described.

measuring the qualitative effectiveness of Chinese sacred music compositions from the religious perspective.

III . THREE COMPOSITION MODES OF CHINESE SACRED MUSIC

Judging from the current implementation, there are three main ways of composing Chinese sacred music dedicated to the Christian Church. Two of them are the Chinese translation of Western classical or foreign-language modern hymns and the lyrics-filling in accordance with the existing Chinese popular tunes. The other is an original musical composition using Chinese lyrics.

A. CHINESE TRANSLATION OF CLASSICAL WESTERN OR FOREIGN-LANGUAGE MODERN HYMNS

As the music is definite, the Chinese adaption of Western classical or modern hymns is usually an accurately translation with embedded lyrics into the original structure of the music. However, since the adaptative translation is different from the translation of the pure contents, the translator must well consider the close relationship between the structure of music and the rhythm of language. This work is not just a matter of mastering a foreign language. It is also necessary for translators to have a deep understanding of various pronunciations of singing in Chinese. In this respect, Gershon Ma (马革顺, Ma Geshun) emphasized the "incorporation into Finals" (归韵) problem in choral singing according to the "four exhalations" classification in Chinese phonology and he pointed out that the very feature of Chinese pronunciation does not exist in many foreign languages. Therefore, through the way of translating, the musicians who can be qualified for this job should be acquainted with foreign languages, understand the regulations of Chinese phonology, and master the composition techniques of those vocal works as well.

Be Still, My Soul, No.292 of *The New Hymnal*, is a model work in Chinese translation. The origin of this hymn can be traced back to the Baroque period nearly three hundred years ago. It has been translated many times into different languages. Its original texts came from a German poem *Stille, mein Wille! Dein Jesus hilft siegen*, written in 1755 by a German Lutheran believer Katherina von Schlegel, who lived mainly in the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1855 Jane Laurie Borthwick, a Scottish hymn writer, translated it into English from her compilation of "Hymns from the land of Luther: Translated from the German language". Since then, it became the popular hymn "Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side". Its original form of music was unknown, but the reason why it became popular among Christians all over the world was because it was later recomposed with the lyrical theme of *Finlandia*, a patriotic symphonic poem composed by the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius in 1899.⁷ The melody of this hymn is as smooth, soft and serene as its lyrics. Its rhythm seems to be broad, soothing and regular, and the long tones at the end of each phrase is full of affection. The Chinese lyrics are selected from the *The Universal Praise*, faithful to the original meaning of the English texts. It consists of four paragraphs of lyrics, each paragraph consists of six phrases, and each phrase consists of ten words. Each word has a rhyming in the same paragraph at the end of the phrases (see Fig.2).

⁷ Composed in 1899 and premiered in Helsinki, revised around 1900.

292 我灵镇静歌

施莱格尔词 1697 -
(Katharina von Schlegel)
选自《普天颂赞》

信徒灵修
平安喜乐

西贝柳斯曲 1899
(Jean Sibelius)

1. 我灵, 镇静: 上主在你一方; 忧痛十架, 你
2. 我灵, 镇静: 上主决然担任, 未来引导, 仍
3. 我灵, 镇静: 若因离别凄惶, 若在泪谷, 四
4. 我灵, 镇静: 日月过去如飞, 到时我众, 永

要忍耐担当; 但凭上帝为你吩咐主张;
似过去情形。莫让何事摇你希望信心;
顾黑暗茫茫, 此时更见我主慈爱深长,
能在主周围, 失望惊惶完全消除灭迹,

万变之中, 惟主忠实永长。我灵, 镇静: 天
目前奥妙, 待后必成光明。我灵, 镇静: 风
亲来安慰, 使你停止悲伤。我灵, 镇静: 莫
忧愁忘记, 纯爱之乐复回。我灵, 镇静: 世

友最是善良, 经过荆棘, 引到欢乐地方。
浪依旧听遵, 救主当年所发吩咐声音。
忧所失所亡, 主恩丰富, 日后赏赐无量。
变泪痕既逝, 我众欢聚, 大家平安永憩。 (阿们)

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FIGURE 2: *Be Still, My Soul*, No. 292 from *The New Hymnal*, published by Chinese Christian Council in 1991: 278.

B. LYRICS-FILLING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXISTING CHINESE TRADITIONAL TUNES

The existing Chinese music tradition of popular tunes are also basically fixed. The compositional work is to write lyrics in accordance with the music and make appropriate modifications. The advantage of this approach is that believers have a higher level of familiarity and identity with the original tune or the musical form itself. Thus, it is naturally much easier to be sung, achieving a better understanding and communication of contents. At the same time, the composers make a careful choice of popular tunes existing in local traditions and fully consider the artistic quality of the combination of Chinese pronunciation and rhyme in the lyrics.

May Thy Divine Life, No.365 of *The New Hymnal*, is a hymn composed by Pei Huizhen (裴慧真) based on the minority Bouyei (布依族) folk song melody *Red Flowers Are Good* (好花红). It adopts the typical Yu mode melody using popular Chinese tone rows and represents a distinct local character for

the audience. The lyrics were originally paired with a melody of the piano piece called *Canonbury* by the German composer Robert Schumann. In order to adapt to the indigenous requests later, the melody of this short tune was used and four-part harmonic progressions were added. Although there is a rich local song flavor in the tune, the originally decorating accents and some tones at the end of the phrase are missing. It is obvious that the configuration of the four-part harmonic progressions is a compromise between the melodic mode and the style of the chorale. (see Fig. 3).

365

活出基督歌*

信徒灵修
忠心服务

焦维真词 1886-1970
布依族曲调
裴基真改编 1982

1. 你的生命藉我表彰, 耶稣我主
2. 你的大爱藉我宣扬, 耶稣我主
3. 你的工作我愿担当, 耶稣我主
4. 忧喜甘苦与你共尝, 耶稣我主

万王之王; 使我能有你的形状,
万王之王; 使我作你反光明镜,
万王之王; 全心由你支配,
万王之王; 成为你的忠心伴侣,

随时随在 为你发光。
将你荣美 昭显与人。
凭你差遣 决不推诿。
一生一世 跟主到底。 (阿们)

通用调: 352 遵旨做工歌
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FIGURE 3: *May Thy Divine Life*, No.365 from *The New Hymnal*, published by Chinese Christian Council in 1991: 348.

In contrast, *Creator's Artistic Brush*, No. 178 of *The New Hymnal*, whose lyrics were written by Chen Zemin, is based on one of the many different versions of the *guqin* music *Pingsha Luoyan*. All the lyrics are rhyming. The text is not only praising God for creating wonderful things, but also encouraging believers to work with the Lord to build a beautiful world. The first sentence of the lyrics shows this: 平沙一片无穷极, 万籁悄然静寂, 落日红霞映海空, 列雁翩翩归憩 (Endless our flat and sandy land, Soundless all creation; Sunset hues light sea and sky, Wild geese return to rest). It reproduces the artistic conception of the tune with the imagined intension of ancient poetry. The combination of lyrics

and melody fits quite well but the musical form has changed after having added functional four-part harmonic progressions. (see Fig. 4).

178 神工妙笔歌**

教会生活
为国求福

陈泽民词 1982

中国古乐曲
陈泽民改编 1956

1. 平 沙 一 片 无 穷 极, 万 籁 悄 然 静 寂,
2. 三 江 五 岳 皆 主 恩, 平 川 沃 野 无 际,
3. 努 力 建 设 新 世 界, 和 平、 仁 爱、 公 义,

落 日 红 霞 映 海 空, 列 雁 翩 翩 归 憩,
历 代 辛 劳 血 和 汗, 装 点 更 加 瑰 丽。
高 擎 十 架 证 圣 道, 宣 扬 基 督 真 理。

我 愿 化 身 为 飞 鸿, 翱 翔 俯 瞰 大 地,
愿 我 信 众 随 先 哲, 世 世 相 承 勿 替,
紧 偕 人 民 同 一 心, 自 立 自 强 不 息,

祖 国 山 河 无 限 好, 皆 主 神 工 妙 笔。
共 参 神 妙 造 化 业, 与 主 同 工 同 契。
瞩 望 来 日 功 成 时, 暮 见 新 天 新 地。 (阿 们)

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FIGURE 4: *Creator's Artistic Brush*, No. 178 from *The New Hymnal*, published by Chinese Christian Council in 1991: 166.

C. ORIGINAL COMPOSITION IN CHINESE

Original compositions of musical works for sacred religious purposes written in Chinese, in which music and lyrics can flow relatively freely, may embrace a higher sense cultural identity. There is no limit to the form of such music, it can have its own structure. Not only can the composers draw on popular

cultural traditions, but they can also borrow from Western classical and contemporary music. The content of the lyrics can be obtained from the Chinese Bible and it can also be appropriate to express the devout aspirations and desires of Chinese Christians, with the spirit of times. It is necessary for the sacred music used for worship to pursue the best possible quality at the same time, even though this would be at the costs of customized hymns for the choir and the general congregation. For example, Chinese sacred music composer and conductor Gershon Ma (1914-2015) composed many short choral songs and a Christmas cantata *The Anointed* for the Chinese Christian Church in the 1950s. Although these hymns have been in use for half a century, they are still difficult to be surpassed.

According to Psalm 121, Gershon Ma composed a song *Raise My Eyes to The Mountains*. Originally the 50th in *Thy Rod and Thy Staff: A Short Choral Song Collection*, it was later included in *The New Hymnal* as the fifth of the short songs as appendix. The music is simple and seems rather beautiful. An ascending rise of the opening melody provides an expression of sacredness. The rhythm is full of power and rich in the momentum as a march. It is a masterpiece of short songs, accompanied by a powerful and colorful four-part harmonic progression. (see Fig. 5).

我要向山举目 5

(诗121:1-4)

我 要 向 山 举 目, 我 的 帮 助 从 何 而 来?

我 的 帮 助 是 主 耶 和 华! 他 永 不 打 盹, 永 不 睡 觉。

FIGURE 5: *Raise My Eyes to The Mountains*, No. 5 in the Appendix of *The New Hymnal*, published by the Chinese Christian Council in 1991: 385.

Lord Jesus, When I Think of You, No.251 of *The New Hymnal*, is an original hymn written by Chinese Christians in the 1930s. Its lyrics are touching, quite simple, and plain as well. The melody is kept in a popular Chinese style. The brisk rhythm, the normative harmonic progressions and the reasonable structural arrangement of phrases make the whole hymn unique in clarity and lyricism. The hymn seems a bit difficult to sing because there are many semitones and various intervals in the inner parts. (see Fig. 6).

251 每想到你歌^{*} 信徒灵修 念主恩爱

唐守临词 1929 毛宗杰曲 1931

1. 主耶稣啊,每想到你,心中便觉甜蜜:
 2. 世上并无一个声音,能把你恩唱尽;
 3. 最能满足我的心怀,尚非你恩你爱:
 4. 你爱多么长阔深高,没有人能知晓:

深愿我能早日见你,与你永在一起。
 人间也无一颗慧心,能道你爱何般!
 乃你自己和你神采,最能使我畅快。
 蒙爱的人只能说道:“哦,你的爱奇妙!”

(副歌)

主!你是园中的凤仙花,你是谷中的百合花,
 你是沙仑的玫瑰花,我心岂能舍下? (阿们)

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FIGURE 6: Lord Jesus, When I Think of You, No.251 from The New Hymnal, published by the Chinese Christian Council in 1991: 236.

The Anointed (受膏者), composed by Gershon Ma in 1954, is not an indigenized music in the usual sense but rather a truly local composition. It is the first large-scale sacred musical work in the history of China. It is also called "The Messiah in Chinese", which is inspired by the oratorio of Georg Friedrich Händel. The lyrics are all taken from the Holy Bible. The structural form of the cantata is exceptionally complex. Although many Western classical chorus composition techniques are used, it shows an integrated Chinese way of structuring the music to the text elements. The music combines some fragments of popular Chinese music with Western polyphony and a choral style, accompanied by a modern piano or a chapel organ. As shown in the catalogue, the cantata consists of two parts: one is *Prophecy* and the next is *Fulfillment*. Each part consists of six independent movements, including a variety of different forms of singing, from soprano, baritone, tenor solo to male duet, three-part female chorus and a soprano with a mixed chorus.

The second movement, *How Beautiful are the Feet of Those Who Bring Good News*, is a mixed chorus that combines the chorale with polyphonic imitations. The opening chorus represents rich harmonic

progressions, powerful rhythms, appealing moods and the melody of the upper part continues to rise through an ascending semitonal progression until the climax in pitch range. A following polyphonic passage quotes a part of the popular tune of the Christmas song "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" as a thematic motive. Along with some canonic imitations and contrapuntal techniques, there launches a gradual progression from a soft whisper to a resonant eloquence. Finally, the four parts reunify in the same rhythmic steps, reaching the ending through a perfect cadence. (see Fig. 7).

The Anointed		
<i>Part One Prophecy</i>		Page
1. The Root of Jesse (<i>Isaiah 11 : 10</i>)	Tenor	1
In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.		
2. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!	Chorus	3
(Romans 10 : 15) How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!		
3. Shout for joy, O heavens (<i>Isaiah 49 : 13, 40 : 8</i>)	Baritone	10
Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.		
4. Immanuel (<i>Isaiah 7 : 14</i>)	Soprano	14
Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.		
5. A sure foundation (<i>Isaiah 28 : 16, 9 : 2</i>)	Tenor and Chorus	18
"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed." The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.		
6. For to us a child is born (<i>Isaiah 9 : 6</i>)	Chorus	22
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.		
5. Burst into jubilant song with music (<i>Psalms 98 : 1, 2, 4</i>)		
Duet—Tenor and Baritone		51
Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;		
Chorus		54
(This one can be sung either in duet or in chorus.)		
6. To him be the glory (<i>Romans 11 : 36</i>)	Chorus	59
For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.		
<i>Part Two Fulfilment</i>		
1. My soul glorifies The Lord (<i>Luke 1 : 46-49</i>)	Soprano and Female Trio	30
"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name."		
2. God so loved the world (<i>John 3 : 16</i>)	Tenor	36
For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.		
3. Glory to God (<i>Luke 2 : 8-14</i>)	Recit—Soprano and Chorus	40
And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."		
4. The Spirit of the Lord is on me (<i>Luke 4 : 18-19</i>)	Baritone	47
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."		

FIGURE 7: the lyrical contents of *The Anointed*, published by the Chinese Christian Council in 1997, 4-6.

The seventh movement, *My Soul Glorifies the Lord*, uses the texts of Mary's Song from the Gospel of Luke. It is composed in a ternary form: first two musical passages are in a performance of a solo soprano and the last passage is a soprano with a three-part female chorus. The melody of the soprano solo fits the Chinese lyrics of this passage, and the tune is soft, delicate and seemingly feminine. The first passage "My soul glorifies the Lord", in E flat, is reflecting gratefulness. Then it reaches a climax while the scripture at the same time is "from now on all generations will call me blessed." The second passage "for the Mighty One has Done Great Things for Me" turns into C minor, with a soft whisper just as inner monologue getting into a deeper mystery. In the last passage, the soprano solo theme reappears in a style of the three-part female chorus. The climactic phrase shows a close relationship between soprano solo and the chorus, ending in a peaceful, gentle and seemingly grateful mood. In addition, there is another choral version based on the first passage of the theme, changed to C major, which bases on three verses

of lyrics added that are re-harmonized in a four-part mixed chorus. It has already been included as No. 329 of *The New Hymnal*, titled *My Soul Extols the Lord*. (See Appendix).

IV . THE AESTHETIC PROBLEMS AND EDUCATIONAL INHERITANCE OF SACRED MUSIC

Although the Chinese sacred music has been in China for nearly a hundred years, it still faces some difficulties in the present. For example, compared with secular music or other social music, the richness and artistic quality of Chinese Christian sacred music are far from superior, and the pursuit of cultural identity is comparatively more onesided and simplified. In the process of compositional exploration of Chinese sacred music, there is a more prominent problem that most composers only pay attention to the writing and application of local melodic features, while other elements of music are relatively neglected, such as the musical instruments used, sound textures, voice flow and harmonic progressions, forms and structures, and others. The following three aspects may lead to an improvement from the perspective of musical artistry and religious effectiveness.

A. MAKING MUSIC IN A SPECIFIC ARTISTIC QUALITY

Christianity is a religion supporting music. Undoubtedly, the most important in all kinds of Christian sacred music is the one performed in worship rituals. It is thought as an offering to God. In this context, liturgical music has the widest and deepest influence on the believers. Therefore, the liturgical music should have the highest artistic quality, strive to be solemn and beautiful, and at the same time be suitable for the congregation. Both the composition and the performance of Chinese sacred music should be improved to perfection, which depends not only on musical ability but also on personal attitude. Consequently, the indigenization of Chinese sacred music may be particularly rigorous and prudent in musical composition and performance for liturgy. It is necessary to follow the essential laws and structural rules of the musical art itself, that is, first to seek high standards in art quality, and only then a local identity.

The actual situation of Protestant choirs differs vastly from place to place. Generally speaking, improvements on the overall musical literacy of the Chinese Protestant choir should be an important part of the construction of choirs. In particular, the conductor of the choir must not only have a certain musical professionalism, but also have close cooperation with the relevant pastoral staff. On the basis of the principle of faith, the music service should be fully hosted by professional conductors by fully respecting the essential laws of this musical art, and cultivating, training, and leading choirs in a regular manner as well, so that the musicians and singers can serve the church wholeheartedly.

B. CUSTOMIZING MUSIC FOR SPECIFIC CHOIR AND CONGREGATION

It is said that an extremely highbrow song is too difficult to be popular. The composer ought to consider the actual situation of a specific singing group. The composition of Chinese Christian sacred music as we wish is to customize some well suiting sacred music for some specific choirs and for the general congregation. The ideal situation is that it does not make the singer feel difficult, but also has a high level of artistry in a Chinese way of musicianship. A feasible approach is to regularly commission professional composers to customize music for congregation and specific choirs. Give the composer full respect and freedom so that they will be able to write the most sophisticated musical works dedicated to God. According to the actual situation of a choir, the composer can customize music of different levels so that the vocal parts can be harmonized and textured reasonably. By means of various composing techniques, the overall sound structure of performance may have a much stronger expressive power, which is affective enough to lead the hearts of the congregation to get closer to God. As long as the music is conceived and based on spirits, languages, tones, and emotions of the local population, there will be a standard arrangement of combination between lyrics and melodies. If the design of harmonic progressions and texture is reasonable, the music might be eloquent and unconstrained. It is possible to fully express the connotation of faith in the singing of Chinese texts, which is far more effective than applying local tunes directly.

C . MUSIC EDUCATION AND TALENT CULTIVATION

The cultivation of music talents should become an important plan in the construction of sacred music in China, which can provide a guarantee for the sustainable development of Chinese sacred music in the future. Throughout the history of Christian music, choirs have always cultivated a large number of outstanding musicians, not only for the church but also for the entire society. They have become the core strength of the development of Christian sacred music in the world and have carried out the reproduction of the greatest works of art in this context. Without a well-balanced normative music education as the foundation and support, it is impossible to bring up these outstanding musicians. It is remarkable that it is closely related to the attitudes of church towards music services and music professionals. For example, if J.S. Bach was not put in such an important position at that time by St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, his historical contribution to Western music would be difficult to have an irrefutable universal value in present days. It is true that such great musicians are numerous in history. From this point of view, the construction of Chinese sacred music not only relies on social forces to enrich and supplement, but also needs to make useful attempts and efforts on its own in order to popularize music education and talent cultivation.

As far as the current situation of Chinese Christian music is concerned, there is a great space for developments in this regard. Even the main church in the first-tier cities have some projects and special institutions dedicated to the education and training of musical talents. In contrast to the wider secular society, official or commercial art training institutions involving music education are now spread almost all over the country and have become important sources of future music talents.

APPENDIX: My Soul Glorifies the Lord (the seventh movement of *The Anointed*), pages 30-35.

第二部 成就

我心尊主为大

路 1:46-49

女高音独唱与女声三部合唱

感谢, 赞美 柔和 $\text{♩} = 78$

The musical score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes markings for *cresc.* and *f*. The vocal line starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes markings for *dim.*, *mp*, and *f*. The lyrics are in Chinese and are written below the vocal line.

我心尊主为大,
我灵以上帝我的救主为乐。
因他顾念他使女的卑微,
因他顾念他使女的卑微,
从今以后,
万代要称我有福。
从今以后,
万代要称我有福。

First system of musical notation, including piano accompaniment with dynamics such as *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*

Second system of musical notation, including vocal line and piano accompaniment with dynamics such as *mp* and *p*.

Third system of musical notation, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Fourth system of musical notation, including vocal line and piano accompaniment with dynamic *mf*.

Fifth system of musical notation, including vocal line and piano accompaniment with dynamic *f*.

Sixth system of musical notation, including vocal line and piano accompaniment with dynamic *f*.

Seventh system of musical notation, featuring multiple vocal parts (女高音 *p*, 女中音 *p*, 女低音 *p*) and piano accompaniment with dynamic *p*.

灵 以上帝我的救主为乐。 因他 顾念他 使女的卑微，
灵 以上帝我的救主为乐。 因他 顾念他 使女的卑微，
灵 以上帝我的救主为乐。 因他 顾念他 使女的卑微，

从今以后， 万
因他 顾念他 使女的卑微。 从今以后， 万
因他 顾念他 使女的卑微。 从今以后， 万
因他 顾念他 使女的卑微。 从今以后， 万

代要称我有福。 从今以后， 万代要称我有
代要称我有福。 从今以后， 万代要称我有
代要称我有福。 从今以后， 万代要称我有
代要称我有福。 从今以后， 万代要称我有

福。 万代要称我有福。 要称我有福。 ppp
福。 万代要称我有福。 要称我有福。 ppp
福。 万代要称我有福。 要称我有福。 ppp
福。 万代要称我有福。 要称我有福。 ppp

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