

Kou Yan

The National Styles of Jiang Wenye's Piano Concerto No. 1 Op. 16

BIOGRAPHY OF THE COMPOSER Jiang Wenye(江文也 1910-1983) was born in Taiwan during the Japanese occupation. At age six, he moved with his parents to Xiamen in the Mainland of China. At age thirteen, after his parents passed away, Jiang moved to Tokyo, Japan for further education. In Japan he majored in engineering and received private music lessons. According to Jiang himself, most of his music education came from himself. He said, "I recite many famous pieces to learn fundamental harmony and learn the composition technique of European music very quickly" (Xia Su, 2006: 1). Jiang lived in Japan for fifteen years, and spoke a little Southern Min¹, but the language he used in daily life and writing was Japanese. In 1934 Jiang traveled back to Taiwan for nine days. In 1938 Jiang moved to Beijing to study Chinese traditional music. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Jiang began to work as a professor of composition in the Central Conservatory in Beijing beginning in 1950. In the Anti-Rightist Movement in 1957 he was categorized as rightist. During the Cultural Revolution, Jiang was sent to labor camps and was not able to work as a musician. In 1978 he received political rehabilitation, but his health condition did not allow him to work anymore. Jiang died in Beijing in 1983.

PERIODIZATION OF JIANG WENYE'S PIANO MUSIC Among the 130 plus music compositions composed by Jiang Wenye, 31 are for piano and only 21 have been preserved (Wu Cen, 2010: 111-2). Most of the piano compositions, written before 1949, are character pieces and sonatas. His piano compositional career is divided into 2-4 periods by different researches. It is divided into two productive periods and a transitional period by Liang Maochun (Liang Maochun, 1984: 5), including the first productive period (1934—1938), the transitional period (1938—1945), and the second productive period (1949—1953). The reason why Liang Maochun takes out the years 1945—1949 is probably that there were no popular pieces composed by Jiang Wenye during this period. Jiang's piano compositional career is divided into four periods by Wei Tingge (Wei Tingge, 1992: 15), namely, 1)

¹ A dialect widely spoken in Southern China.

the early period (1935—1936), 2) the transitional year (1936), 3) the middle period (1938—1943), and 4) the late period (1949—1953). Here Wei Tingge leaves out the years between 1943 and 1949 for the same reason—no sufficient records could be found. Jiang’s career is divided into two periods by Wang Yuhe, that is, the Japan period from 1934 to 1938 and China period from 1939 to 1957 (Wang Yuhe, 1994: 83). Though examining Jiang’s career from different perspectives, all researchers agree that Jiang’s early piano music, especially those works written before 1938, was influenced by Japanese folk music and contemporary Western music. Liang Maochun, in his 2015 article, states that during his visit to China and Japan from 1935 to 1937, Tcherepnin suggested that young composers in China and Japan should learn the composition technique directly from their contemporary European colleagues. Unfortunately, most young Chinese composers then did not follow this suggestion. Jiang Wenye, on the contrary, took the suggestion. As a result, Jiang’s early piano music betrays clear influences from impressionism and atonal music (Liang Maochun, 2015: 37).

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1, OP. 16

GENERAL INFORMATION The first and only piano concerto of Jiang Wenye was composed in 1936, and had then been kept in the manuscript form only before it was published in 2006. The only record of the performance of this concerto was taken on May 10th, 1937, with duo pianists Inoue Sonoco and Paul Weingarten performing its third section (Jiang Xiaoyun, 2006: i). The one-movement concerto survived is just a two-piano version, as the manuscript for an orchestrated score has never been found. No recordings for this concerto have ever come into being. Liang Maochun in 2016 asserted that this piano concerto has been written for two pianos. No English scholarship of this concerto has ever been found.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONCERTO This single-movement concerto consists of 665 measures and can be divided into four sections based on tempo changes:

Measure	Phrasing	Key	Material
1 to 4	4	A major	Recitative passage
5 to 8	4	b minor	New motive (motive 1)
9 to 12	4	B major	Recitative repeated
13 to 28	4+8+4	e minor	Fragmentation of motive 1
29 to 40	4+8	d minor	Motive 1

Fig.1 Structure of Allegro non troppo quasi Recitativo, measures 1 to 40

Measure	Phrasing	Key	Material
41 to 68	4+4+4+4+4+4+4	C major	New motive (motive 2)
69 to 72	4	E major	Motive 2
73 to 82	4+2+4	C major	Motive 2
83 to 84	2	E major	Motive 2
85 to 104	4+4+4+2+2+4	C major	Motive 2
105 to 120	4+4+8	E major	Motive 2
121 to 136	4+4+8	A major	Motive 2
137 to 152	4+4+2+2+4	E major	New motive (motive 3)
153 to 168	4+4+4+4	A major	Motive 2
169 to 178	2+2+4+2	E major	Motive 3
179 to 210	2+2+4+4+4+4+4+4+4	A major	Motive 3
211 to 218	8	C major	New motive (motive 4)
219 to 226	8	C-sharp major	Motive 4
227 to 230	4	C major	Motive 4
231 to 234	4	D-flat major	Motive 4
235 to 242	8	C major	Motive 4
243 to 250	8	C-sharp major	Motive 4
251 to 266	4+4+2+2+4	C major	Motive 4
267 to 274	4+4	C-sharp major	Motive 4
275 to 308	4+4+4+4+4+4+4+5+1	C major- F major- G major	Transitional passage
309 to 340	4+4+8+4+4+4+4	B major	Motive 2
341 to 356	2+2+4+4+4	A major	Motive 3
357 to 380	5+5+10+4	a minor	Transitional passage

Fig.2 Structure of Presto feroce, measures 41 to 381

Measure	Phrasing	Key	Material
381 to 416	4+4+4+8+4+4+4+4	G major	Motive 3
417 to 420	4	e minor	Transitional passage
421 to 428	4+4	e minor	Motive 1
429 to 472	4+4+4+4+4+4+3+5+4 +3+5	e minor	Fragmentation of motive 1
473 to 490	2+3+2+2+9	e minor	Transitional passage

Fig.3 Structure of Poco tranquillo non lento, measures 381 to 490

Measure	Phrasing	Key	Material
491 to 522	4+4+8+4+4+4+4	G major	Motive 2
523 to 530	2+2+4	G major	Motive 3
531 to 538	8	C major	Motive 4
539 to 546	8	C-sharp major	Motive 4
547 to 550	2+2	C major	Motive 4
551 to 554	4	D-flat major	Motive 4
555 to 580	4+4+4+4+4+6	C major- G major	Transitional passage
581 to 590	10	C major	Coda
591 to 636	4+4+4+4+4+4+4+4 +4+6+4	G major- C major	Motive 1
637 to 657	2+2+2+2+2+2+2 +2+2+3	e minor	Motive 1, slower tempo
658 to 665	4+4	a minor	A tempo, ending passage

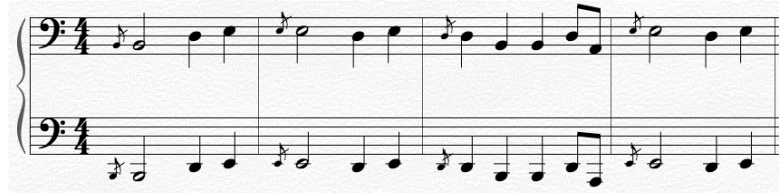
Fig.4 Structure of Tempo I, measures 491 to 665

The form of this concerto is influenced by Western music in two ways. First, the tempos of the four sections of the concerto are slow-fast-slow-fast, with the first section serving as an introduction. The tempo design of the concerto is similar to a traditional piano concerto where the tempos of the three movements are fast-slow-fast. Second, music materials that appear in the second section reappear in the fourth section, as in a ternary form.

The tonality in the introduction is unstable. When motive 2 first appears in the first section, it is mainly in C major and moves to E major occasionally. Motive 3 first appears in E major and moves to A major. Motive 4 first appears in C major and alternates between C major and C-sharp (D-flat) major. When motives 2 and 3 reappear in the first section, motive 1 moves to B major, and motive 3 is in A major. The third section is mainly in e minor, but in the beginning motive 3 appears briefly in G major. In the fourth section, motives 2 and 3 both appear in G major. Motive 4 on the other hand, continues to alternate between C major and C-sharp (D-flat) major. Motive 1 returns towards the end of the section and ends in a minor.

Overall, this concerto is in an ABA form with an introduction. The first section functions as the introduction. The first A section presents the four motives of the concerto, followed by the B section which is readily identified because of the tempo difference between these two sections. With the return of the A section, Motive 1 that is prominent in the opening A section, comes back to conclude the concerto.

MOTIVES There are four principal motives in this concerto. **Motive 1** first appears from measures 5 to 8 (see Ex. 1) and is played by the second piano. The most important interval in this motive is a perfect fourth, as it appears twice in the motive, first in the ascending B, D, E in measure 5 and then in the descending D-A in measure 7.



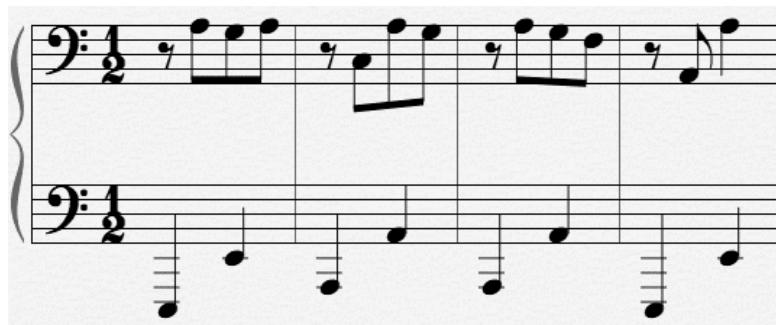
Example 1 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 5-8

This motive is extremely important because it forms the core of the accompaniment texture in the concerto. In measure 25 (see Ex. 2), the first measure of the motive appears in the solo piano as E, G, A, which forms a perfect fourth.



Example 2 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 25-8

In measure 41 (see Ex. 3), the second piano plays E, A, G, A, again forming a perfect fourth.



Example 3 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 41-4

In measures 211 to 212 (see Ex. 4), the second piano again plays E, A, G, A in a toccata texture.



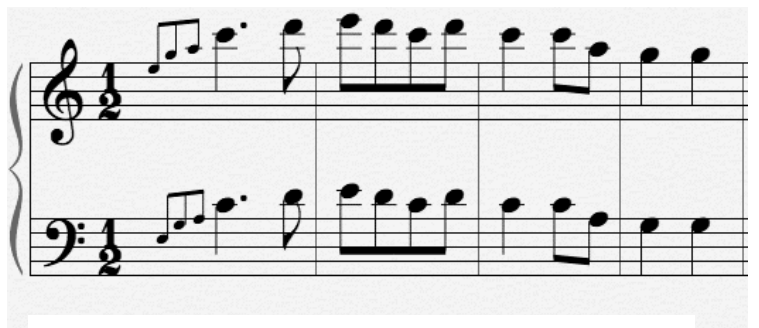
Example 4. Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 209-212

In measures 284 to 285 (see Ex. 5), the second piano plays E, A, B, A, which alters the direction of the neighbor note and still forms a perfect fourth. The interval of a perfect fourth is the basic building brick of the concerto.



Example 5 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 284-5

Motive 2 first appears from measures 49 to 52 (see Ex. 6). This motive is a four-measure phrase and obtains a dance quality. Liang Maochun described it as “dancing around a festival campfire (Liang, Maochun, 2016: 28-38).”



Example 6 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 49-52

Motive 3 first appears from measures 137 to 140 (see Ex. 7), played in the right hand of the solo piano. Like motive 2, it is in clear four-measure phrases. Motive 3 presents an even more dancelike quality with syncopation.

Example 7 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 134-145

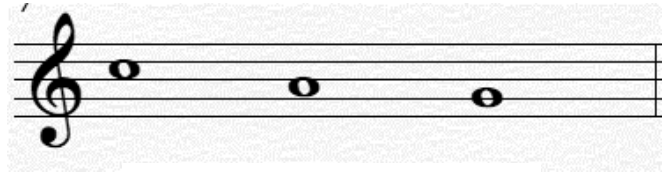
Jiang also uses motive 3 in the beginning of the slow section from measures 385 to 388 (see Ex. 8), in the right hand of the solo piano.

Example 8 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 381-391

Motive 4 first appears from measures 211 to 214 (see Ex. 9), in the right hand of the solo piano. The major difference between this motive and the previous two is the long note at the end of the phrase.

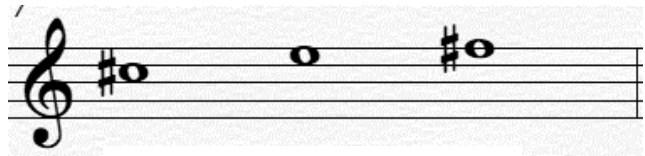
Example 9 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm. 211-4

Besides motive 1, the other three motives also share connections with a perfect fourth. The ending of the first appearance of motive 2 consists of a perfect fourth with the notes C, A, G (see Ex. 10).

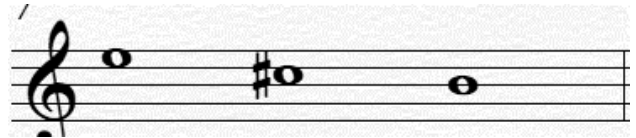


Example 10 Fourth interval in motive 2

The first appearance of motive 3 consists of two perfect fourths in the four-measure phrase, first in the ascending C-sharp, E, F-sharp (see Ex. 11), then in the descending E, C-sharp, B (see Ex. 12).

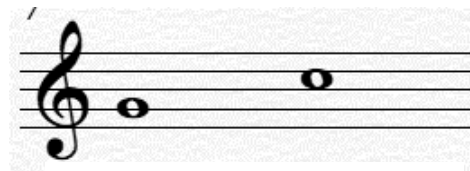


Example 11 Fourth interval no. 1 in motive

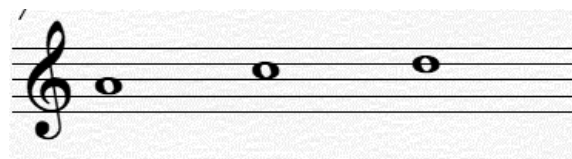


Example 12 Fourth interval no. 2 in motive

In the first appearance of **motive 4**, two perfect fourths can be found, first in G, C (see Ex. 13), then in A, C, D (see Ex. 14).



Example 13 Fourth interval no. 1 in motive



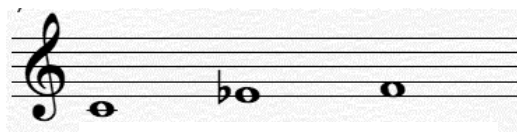
Example 14 Fourth interval no. 2 in motive

All four motives are linked by the use of a perfect fourth. This is Jiang's approach of organizing this concerto.

SCALES The reason why the perfect fourth is the core interval of the concerto is that it is based on Japanese scales, and Japanese scales are based on fourths:

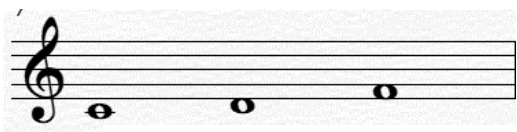
It was not until after World War II, however, that Koizumi Fumio (1958), influenced by the methods of Western comparative musicology, first developed a theory to account successfully for all Japanese musical genres. Koizumi conceived of the scale based not on the unit of the octave but on the unit of the fourth. Although the importance of fourths in Japanese scales had already been noted by Robert Lachmann (1929) and Simohusa Kan'iti (1942), Koizumi was the first to use the fourth as a unit of musical analysis. Koizumi called his unit a tetrachord because its two outer tones formed the same interval as the ancient Greek tetrachord, despite the fact that it had only one intermediate tone. . . . To account for melodies with a range wider than a fourth, Koizumi suggested that two or more tetrachords could be combined either conjunctly (sharing a nuclear tone) or disjunctly (forming an octave pentatonic scale). In addition, combination of different tetrachords is common. . . . Koizumi's tetrachord theory, now widely accepted by Japanese scholars, has formed the basis of many subsequent modal theories. (Komoda Haruko & Nogawa Mihoko, 2002: 568-9)

In Koizumi's theory, there are four kinds of tetrachords in Japanese music. The *min'yo*, which is often seen in folk songs and traditional children's songs, is constructed with a major second on top of a minor third (see Ex. 15).



Example 15 A min'yo tetrachord 4

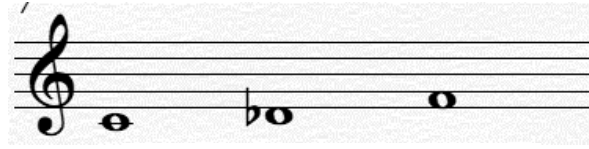
The *ritu* is constructed with a minor third on top of a major second (see Ex. 16).



Example 16 A ritu tetrachord

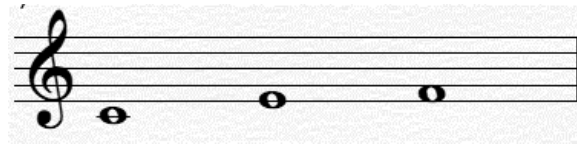
The *miyakobusi*, often seen in urban music, is constructed with a major

third on top of a minor second (see Ex. 17).



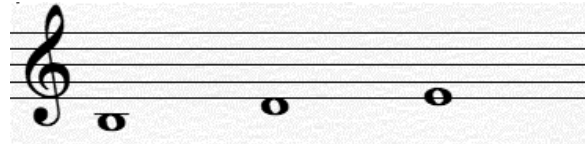
Example 17 A miyakobusi tetrachord

The *Okinawa*, often seen in music from the Okinawa region, is constructed with a minor second on top of a major third (see Ex. 18).



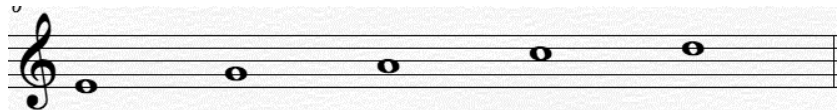
Example 18 An Okinawa tetrachord

All the motives in Jiang Wenye's piano concerto can be analyzed with this theory. The core notes in motive 1, B, D, and E, form a *min'yo* tetrachord (see Ex. 19).



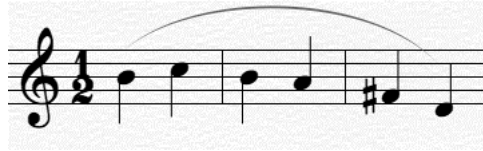
Example 19 Min'yo tetrachord from

The first appearance of motive 2 from measures 57 to 60 includes a pentatonic scale from E, G, A, C, and D. This scale can be interpreted as a Chinese pentatonic scale of E-jue, or two conjunct *min'yo* tetrachords of E, G, A, and A, C, D (see Ex. 20). The same situation applies with motive 3, with its first appearance from measures 138 to 141 and the first appearance of motive 4 from measures 212 to 215.



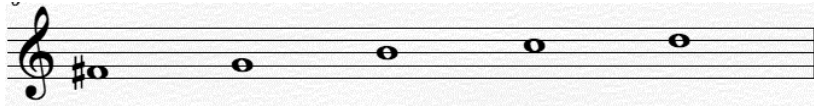
Example 20 Pentatonic scale from motive 2, 3, and 4

Another example of the use of Japanese scales is from measures 430 to 432 (see Ex. 21).



Example 21 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16, mm.

The pentatonic scale in this phrase includes notes F-sharp, G, B, C, and D. This scale does not fit any Chinese pentatonic scales but is clearly a conjunct scale of two *Okinawa* tetrachords G, B, C and D, F-sharp, G (see Ex. 22).



Example 22 Two Okinawa tetrachords from Jiang Wenye's piano concerto, mm. 430-2

NATIONAL ELEMENTS: CHINESE OR JAPANESE? Even though this concerto is the first Chinese piano concerto, its musical style is heavily influenced by Japanese music. There are three reasons for this mismatching. Firstly, it is true that except for motive 1, every other motive in the concerto can be interpreted as using a Chinese pentatonic scale or two conjuncts Japanese *min'yo* scales. China and Japan have long history of musical communication. As early as in the Tang dynasty (618-907), Japan sent musicians along with ambassadors to China, which partially explains why the music of the two countries have many similarities. Secondly, Jiang Wenye's personal experience indicates influence from Japanese music. Jiang moved to Japan in 1923, and before his return to China in 1938 he had been living in Japan for over fifteen years. He received his music education in Japan, and it was natural that he was influenced by Japanese music. Thirdly, according to Wei Tingge, Jiang did not have an awareness of his Chinese identity at the time this concerto was composed:

This shows that China and Japan belong to the same cultural circle and have a long history of communication. Although their music styles are generally different, there are still some similarities, exactly like the music styles of different European regions. If Japanese composers can also write in non-chromatic pentatonic scales, then some of Jiang's early works cannot be categorized as Chinese style or Chinese-Japanese style for their use of non-chromatic pentatonic scales. On the contrary, it was more likely that Jiang had no intention to set up his own Chinese style, and he did not have enough

knowledge to do so even if he had had the intention. The style of his early piano compositions we detect from hearing and tend to accept as the Chinese style is actually the common style among Chinese and Japanese music. Thus, as to nationalism, the style of Jiang Wenye's early piano compositions should be categorized as a "Japanese" one. (Wei Yingge, 1992: 14-20)

Based on these three reasons, the author of this paper tends to believe that the nationalist elements in Jiang Wenye's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16 are from Japanese music, rather than from Chinese music.

CONCLUSION Jiang Wenye composed his first piano concerto in 1936. It has been the first known piano concerto composed by a Chinese composer. Influences from Western music are clear in terms of form, as the concerto does follow the Western standard of movement division and divides the concerto into an "Introduction-Fast-Slow-Fast" structure. The concerto takes the form of ABA with an introduction. The concerto includes four important motives, which share the interval of a perfect fourth. The scales Jiang used in the concerto are mostly Japanese *min'yo* scales. Although this composition is the first piano concerto by a Chinese composer, its music is influenced by Japanese music. Jiang Wenye's piano concerto was written at a time when Chinese composers were still seeking an independent style for Chinese music. Jiang followed the approach of putting nationalistic elements within a standard Western form, a rather safe step that many composers of nineteenth century nationalism such as Borodin and Dvořák chose. Later, Jiang developed a unique style of his own, yet he never wrote another piano concerto.

The normal contrasts and tensions between the solo piano and the orchestra never appear in Jiang's concerto, partly due to the writing in the second piano part. This part suggests that it was composed for a piano. As an example, from measures 291 to 298 (see Ex. 23), the solo piano and the second piano switch their parts. This writing is common in compositions for two pianos, like that in the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in D Major for two pianos, K. 448 (see Ex. 24), but rarely seen in a piano and orchestra reduction score. This kind of trading texture appears multiple times throughout the concerto. As an orchestrated score was never found, and Jiang Wenye made no attempt to re-orchestra this concerto later in his career. It is most likely that Jiang wrote this concerto with two pianos in mind, rather than a piano and orchestra.



Example 23 Jiang Wenye, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16,
mm. 290-8 (Jiang Wenye, 2016: 114)

Example 24 Mozart, Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, K.
448, mm. 15-21 (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 2018, 3-4)

Because of that, the contrast of tone and color between the solo piano and the orchestra is not shown in Jiang's concerto. Given this was Jiang's first (though only) piano concerto, especially in the very beginning of his career, he was still learning as a composer.

Jiang did not follow the traditional sonata allegro form in this concerto. It is certain that the form of this concerto makes a few references to a sonata form, like the return of the motives. However, the core driving power of this concerto is the motives with dancing characters. In this way Jiang made his own innovation on the genre by putting musical material as the center of the composition and set a form around it. This concept was picked up by later compositions like the Yellow River Piano Concerto, which did not follow any traditional western form in all four movements.

Jiang Wenye was never known as a virtuosic pianist, so the pianistic writing in this concerto indicate some difficulty, but not as virtuosic works in his time like those of Rachmaninoff's. The piano writing in Jiang's piano concerto indicate influences of his contemporaries like Bartok and Ravel.

The national styles Jiang put in this concerto appears to be an interesting attempt for Chinese composers on this genre, and this concerto is different from traditional western classical piano concertos. As the first piano concerto by a Chinese composer, Jiang Wenye's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 16 did not receive enough recognition in the field. Jiang is an interesting composer, and this concerto deserves more research.

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