

# 試論現代作曲家創作風格之變： 以臺灣作曲家柯芳隆為例

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## 摘 要

一位文藝創作者作品風格之轉折與變化，通常是研究者聚焦的重點之一，古典音樂創作者自不例外。曾經以管弦樂曲《哭泣的美人魚》（1993）而被定位為「前衛」的臺灣作曲家柯芳隆（1947年生），後來主力轉向更具親和性的鄉土性創作，透過大型台語合唱與管弦樂曲《2000年之夢》（2000）與《二二八安魂曲》（2008）的發表昭示其轉型，從而更多地在音樂中表達母土情感，並且致力於為台語文的語調音樂化與管弦樂化。這一路從前衛到鄉土的轉折，是怎麼發生的呢？本文首先簡述幾位西方現代作曲家曲風轉變的原因與狀況，接下來就柯芳隆生命情境與其前衛、鄉土性的代表作品，分別進行分析與探索，最後由探討結果與西方作曲家的狀況做些連結比較，試論其必然性之根源所在。

關鍵詞：柯芳隆、音樂風格、台語合唱與管弦樂曲、鄉土音樂、臺灣現代音樂

# On the Stylistic Metamorphosis of Modern Composers: The Example of Taiwanese Composer Fan-Long Ko

Yushun Elisa PONG

## Abstract

The transition and stylistic metamorphosis of artists never fail to intrigue researchers, and those in classical music composers are no exception. Fan-Long Ko (b. 1947) has been labelled an “avant-garde” composer after the premier of his orchestral work, *Crying Mermaid* in 1993. Later, he turned his attention to writing works tinted with native and folk colors; through *Dream of the Year 2000* (2000) and *228 Requiem* (2008), two works for large orchestra and chorus sung in Taiwanese, he manifested his musical evolution. His music becomes a vessel through which he expresses his sentiments for his homeland and mother tongue. He commits himself to compose works that use the Taiwanese for classical orchestra works. The essay traces Ko’s return “home”—a journey from the western avant-garde back to the indigenous. The author first provides examples of western composers and their stylistic transition to serve as a backdrop for discussion. In the second part, the account of Ko’s personal life and its affinity to his modernist and indigenous works will be closely analyzed. Lastly, with a comparison between Ko and his western counterparts, the author explicates the rationale behind the stylistic transformation.

**Keywords:** Fan-Long Ko, musical style, compositions for orchestra and chorus in Taiwanese, music of locality, modern music of Taiwan

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## Summary

The transition and stylistic metamorphosis of artists never fail to intrigue researchers, and those in classical music composers are no exception. Fan-Long Ko (b.1947) has been labelled an “avant-garde” composer after the premier of his orchestral work, *Crying Mermaid* in 1993. Later, he turned his attention to writing works tinted with native and folk colors; through *Dream of the Year 2000* (2000) and *228 Requiem* (2008), two works for large orchestra and chorus sung in Taiwanese, he manifested his musical evolution. His music becomes a vessel through which he expresses his sentiments for his homeland and mother tongue. He commits himself to compose works that use the Taiwanese for classical orchestra works. This essay traces Ko’s return “home”—a journey from the western avant-garde back to the indigenous.

In accessing the life-long works of artists, most researchers generally use the broad three-stage periodization, namely—early, middle, and late, which not only facilitate the discussion on the formation and achievement of the artists but also set milestone for their creative process. As the nurture and training of a western classical musician takes longer than other art forms, the general paradigm follows that musicians would evolve from the unsophisticated and green, then slowly develop their personal styles in their middle and late works. The transformation in the different stages of a composer’s life is a natural process, therefore does not call for particular discussion. Nonetheless, as modernism dominated the mainstream in the

20th century, the transformation and metamorphosis of some of the most renowned composers became subjects constantly disputed, which in turn troubled the composers themselves. Notable examples include Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Krzysztof Penderecki (1933-2020). At the other end of the globe, the impact of the modernist movement in Taiwan could only be exerted with the exposure and absorption of western music. Without being grounded in the root of classical and romantic music, composers made a greater than usual leap to connect with modernism together with its experimental avant-garde musical vocabularies. Disjunction was almost inevitable. As a consequence, Taiwanese composers born after the Second World War were caught in between the obligation to be modern and the urgency to present works with the autonomous native characteristics. Their road was bumpy with a diverse range of challenges—including emotional identity, values, ideology, and musical vocabularies. They had to reconcile the conflicts while at the same time find their own voice. As a Taiwanese musician who pursued advanced study abroad during the imposition of Martial Law and became an active composer after the lifting of Martial Law, Fan-Long Ko's creative course epitomizes some of the key features of his epoch.

Fan-Long Ko was affiliated to the locale of his native country. With his passion for nature and his human touch, he has wanted his artistic creation to express his whole-hearted embrace for the motherland and inherent connections. Nonetheless, to express the native affinity with foreign modernist musical language poses greater than usual difficulty. After his return to Taiwan from his study in Germany, he was generally acknowledged as an academic school composer with the premier of his orchestra piece, *Crying Mermaid*, in which he reflected on the ecological destruction with the avant-garde techniques of sonorism. The overall sound effects convey his critique with the musical arrangement that contains convoluted and brisk changes, hysterical emotional outbursts, and the synergy generated with the rapid relaxation and restriction of musical notes, all within few bars. With his extensive use of modernist musical language, he highlighted the negative sensibility and images to strengthen the sense of alienation and the estranged, which ultimately became an accusation.

Nevertheless, the diction of the avant-garde, with its universality, can but have few connections with the mother tongue, thus proves insufficient in articulating the inbred affection. It was not until Fan-Long Ko loosened his use of the new musical vocabularies and shifted his focus to the musical expression of the Taiwanese that he found the natural habitat for his creative work—that is, to speak the mother tongue with music and to sing in mother tongue. To achieve that goal, Fan-Long Ko invited Yang-Min Lin to write the text in Taiwanese for his work, *Dream of the Year 2000*, through which he experimented his stylistic transition by elevating the musical expression of the Taiwanese. To a great extent, the piece also materializes his experiences with the soil and soundscape and thus consummates a “search for return” which he zealously pursued alone. *Dream of the Year 2000* marks the stylistic transition of Ko’s creative career, and since then his works no longer serve as an instrument for critique; on the contrary he appeals to a more elaborate and sumptuous musical language to form a positive note, which sparks hope for the new era and new society.

Following *Dream of the Year 2000*, *228 Requiem* is another of Fan-Long Ko’s attempt to combine Taiwanese poetry and symphony orchestra. With his previous experience in the composition of *Dream of the Year 2000*, he was able to set the large-scale narrative epic written by Kuei-Shien Lee with even more mature command over incorporating cultural heritage, and eventually attained the goal of composing a work similar to a cantata. Whereas in *Dream of the Year 2000*, Fan-Long Ko adopted both a *Khau-tiau* and *Liam-kua*, but only the latter was used in *228 Requiem*. It is as if he intentionally repressed the tragic aspect of the incident in order that he could present a musical narrative that is emotional-charged without being sentimental. By choosing Taiwanese, a medium that had not been fully developed previously in musicals, he explored the potential of the Taiwanese and presented an indigenous musical of epic scale. From the perspective of historic authenticity, the Taiwanese was the language prevalently used by most of the Taiwanese people during the late 1940s, when the February 28 incident took place. Thus, Taiwanese would be the ideal medium to more eloquently communicate the story of the people, emotions and the events. In composing *Polish Requiem* (1984), Krzysztof

Penderecki followed the tradition of using Latin, the liturgical language for the mass of the dead, and expanded it by traditional Polish supplication to commemorate victims who suffered political suppression. The requiems of these two composers not only probe into the tragic historical past of their native lands but also mark the transition of their musical styles. Their shared quest is to transform negation to affirmation and to convert alienation to reconciliation.

Composed after a lapse of 8 years, how does *228 Requiem* differ from *Dream of the Year 2000*? In *Dream of the Year 2000*, Fan-Long Ko substantiated his ambition to conjoin symphony orchestra with Taiwanese choral works. With the part of the orchestra weighing comparatively heavy, traces of composition techniques used in *Crying Mermaid* can be vaguely detected, with passages where the semi-tonal and atonal musical materials seem to have clashed against each other. This is inevitable for any composer undergoing a transitional period. On the other hand, *228 Requiem* displays a rich array of vocal variations. Despite the fact that the composer did not quote or allude to folk pieces directly in his own creative work, the words and rhythms which invoke semi-folk elements are ubiquitous. The relatively simplified orchestration betokens his attempt to break free from the shackles of “modernist musical techniques” in order to achieve a concord between poetry, history and music.

No matter how these two works will be evaluated in Taiwan musical history, for a composer who spent his life learning and teaching western music composition, the shift from avant-garde musical language to the traditional vocabularies is way to respond to an internal calling. The affirmation, positive attitude and the soothing power embedded in *Dream of the Year 2000* and *228 Requiem* not only reverse the alienation of the past but also bridge the disparity between society and the self. The return to the root and the basic is a voluntary choice which Fan-Long Ko never regrets.

**Keywords: Fan-Long Ko, musical style, compositions for orchestra and chorus in Taiwanese, music of locality, modern music of Taiwan**

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