

# 從聲腔曲韻到器樂語境： 《變體孟姜女》的互文背景及 再語境化歷程論析

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## 摘 要

《變體孟姜女》一曲主要以民歌【孟姜女哭長城】為素材，運用「加花變奏」、「變換音區音位」、「填充型變奏」等手法加以發展，復以【軟詩篇】的過門樂音穿插，改變結構並予以擴充。本文討論作品與河南民間音樂素材的互文建構關係及其在古箏演奏藝術上的再語境化歷程，研究聚焦於文本間性的剖析和語境易改所致生的音聲異化，在歷時性的背景中梳理《變體孟姜女》的文本織理，並揭示民間音樂文本進入到新的表演語境之際所發生的音樂語義轉換歷程。研究發現，民間音樂文本素材的引用在意義上是河南地方音調與風格素質的介入，《變體孟姜女》透過民歌與說唱音樂素材在古箏作品中的交織，體現了傳統文本的可讀性和可寫性。器樂化之後的《變體孟姜女》在箏樂表演語境之下包容了新舊文本的立體交織與互文對話，這一項再語境化的藝術行動成就了一個兼具傳統再生意義和文本編織創意的作品。從聲腔曲韻到器樂語境的轉向過程中，因古箏技法的演繹突出了河南箏樂的音聲特點與表演美學，體現了具有河南聲腔特色的地方音樂風格。

關鍵詞：《變體孟姜女》、河南箏樂、曹東扶、【孟姜女哭長城】、【軟詩篇】

# **Adaptations of Folk Songs to Instrumental Music: On the Intertextuality and Recontextualization in *Variations on Meng Jiangnu***

Li-Chiung CHANG

## **Abstract**

*Variations on Meng Jiangnu* is a renowned piece of zheng music which is written based upon the folk song, “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall.” Techniques used for variations include ornamentation, alterations of register, fill-in variations, and insertion of bridge passages from the qupai, “Ruan Shipian” to change its melodic structure and to create richness and complexity for the work. This paper discusses the intertextual relationships between folk musical elements in Henan region and the process of recontextualization in the art of zheng performance. The research focuses on analyzing the intertextuality and the defamiliarizing effect of sound, which come as a result of changed context, exploring the diachronic verbal texts of *Variations on Meng Jiangnu*, and unveiling the transformation, which happens in the process of adapting folk musical elements for a brand-new performance context. Through the study, the author concludes that the quotations of folk musical elements bring about an intervention of Henan’s local tone in the content and style. *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* demonstrates that traditional texts can be re-read and re-written to generate completely new works for zheng through intertextual interweaving of folk songs and fragments from narrative-singing music. The instrumental adaptation in *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* showcases the potential for the genesis of a new work of zheng music with interwoven texts in multi-level dialogues and the result embodies the regenerative innovation of tradition and the ingenuity of intertextual compositional strategies. The transformation process from folk songs to an instrumental work for zheng music highlights the acoustic features of vocal techniques unique in Henan and ultimately brings forth a highly stylized piece with local colors.

**Keywords:** *Variations on Meng Jiangnu*, Henan zheng music, Cao Dongfu, “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall,” “Ruan Shipian”

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# **Adaptations of Folk Songs to Instrumental Music: On the Intertextuality and Recontextualization in *Variations on Meng Jiangnu***

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## **Summary**

The development of Chinese instrumental music has been greatly enriched by the diverse and vibrant traditions of folk music. In the middle of the last century, many folk music materials have been appropriated and interwoven into works of a wide array of instruments, which not only enrich the performances of respective musical instruments but also result in the rich intertextuality between classical instrumental works and texts of folk music. Fragments from folk songs, narrative-singing music (shuochang), theatrical music (xiqu) have been collaged, coupled, rewritten and grafted unto newly composed instrumental works; by doing so, composers give birth to new musical vocabularies. On the other hand, the pre-existing texts can no longer be assured of the familiarity due to the change of contexts. The growing number of instrumental adaptations from vocal works adds to the repertoire of instrumental pieces and further refines acoustic and aesthetic expressions of folk songs.

*Variations on Meng Jiangnu* is a work composed by Cao Dongfu in 1957. The work is structured upon the folk song, “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall,” and supplemented by bridge passages from qupai, “Ruan Shipian,” to formulate a unique intertextual work. The article first discusses the structure of *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* and the collage of folk music materials in Henan region and observes how the two heterogeneous works are juxtaposed to engage in dialogues. Secondly, by

unraveling the diachronic textual references, the author reconstructs the compositional process, explicates the steps involved in the adaptation of folk materials for instrumental music, and discusses the innovative creation of Cao Dongfu in giving a new aesthetic voice for zheng art in Henan. Lastly, the author recontextualizes the work within the tradition of the instrumentation of zheng music and its sound effects. In the process of adaptation from vocal music to instrumental music, the texts can be estranged due to textual associations and contextual relocations with which the author demonstrates the transformation in forms and meanings when the folk musical texts enter into new performative contexts.

The two main sources of *Variations on Meng Jiangnu*, “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall” and “Ruan Shipian” both originate from the musical traditions of Henan with the former being a popular tune of folk song and the latter an important qupai of folk drama (da diao quzi) in narrative-singing music. “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall” complies to the prototype of the popular tune “Meng Jiangnu” because in form it is structured upon four-line stanza with an overall structure of introduction, elaboration, transition and conclusion. Musically, it also conforms to the standard pattern of “Meng Jiangnu” with zhi mode in the pentatonic system, identical melodic contour and the accented notes of “shang–zhi–yu–zhi.” Folk drama qupai “Ruan Shipian” in Henan region consists of three couplets which form three musical units; within the 6 lines of lyrics, musical bridge refrains are repeated in between different lines and units. The variable alternations between singing and musical bridge refrains endow a sense of balance between the vocal and the instrumental. Sources from “Ruan Shipian” chosen to be included in *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* all come from these bridge passages.

The main body of *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* consists of the complete melody of the folk song “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall,” which is repeated three times to formulate a four-section structure. The first section is the exposition and is to be followed by movements of variations using techniques such as ornamentation, alterations of register, and fill-in variations. In the last thematic variation in the fourth section, the composer inserts the bridge refrain from “Ruan Shipian.” The technique of fill-in variation, extremely popular among folk musicians, creates extended



passages to the work, which in turn not only rearrange the order of music in *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* but also program the dialogues between the two intertexts.

Within the system of folk music, it often requires a concrete format and mechanism for two raw materials to be blended together. The technique used for *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* is similar to that of “jiqu,” equivalent to pastiche in that it incorporates stylistic elements of several forms or musicians. Jiqu, also nicknamed “feng jiao xue” (literally, wind stirring snow), is a method popular in the folk music of the northern region in China because of its capacity in extending, lengthening, enlarging the original work. Experienced performers usually begin their improvisation by using jiqu. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that there are several pre-requisitions in its practice. First, the two raw materials should share the same structure and style so that they can be harmoniously blended to reverberate and enter into dialogues with each other. Secondly, the tonality and mode should also be compatible in order to facilitate the linking and the interweaving of the original music pieces. Last but not least, consistency and coherence should be maintained with proper connections and common context between the musical scale and pitch.

The process of instrumental adaptation renders a major shift in rhetorical context. Therefore, the liberty, which Cao Dongfu offers to the performers in their interpretation and translation of the work is of the uttermost importance. The article also analyzes the composer’s artistic creative approach from the perspective of fingering and sound delivery achieved through techniques which can be summarized as follows. In fingering for melodic development and ornamentation: add neighboring notes in conjunct motion, replace valid notes with void so that they create repercussion, delineate points into lines to fill up note values, juxtapose the high and low pitch notes based upon the straightforward fingering, establish the contour first and then add to the richness and complexity with decorative notes. In the acoustic and performance techniques, *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* faithfully convey the generic style of zheng music in Henan with its complex stringing and rapid rhythm, which result in a forceful and resounding timbre. The intricate alternations in the use of tactics in tapping, pressing, sliding, trilling during the

performance accurately characterize Henan zheng music, which is flowery but refine, lively without boisterous — thus fabricating a masterpiece that has both intensity and expressiveness.

Cao Dongfu's *Variations on Meng Jiangnu* is not only a work with innovative significance but also a work that reflects the features of the historical time from which it was produced. He combined and rewrote folk songs and the music of traditional narrative singing, and then gave them new life by closely knitting pre-existing texts together. These previously unrelated musical passages and fragments are coupled in a new context to act, interact and counteract against each others. In the process of instrumental adaptation, he kneaded a new zheng music work by coalescing the essence of traditional folk music. With the incorporation of two heterogeneous folk elements in the body of *Variations on Meng Jiangnu*, he successfully transported the paradigm of Henan vocal interpretation to that of zheng performance and produced new meanings in the processes. Under the work of the composer, the folk vocal elements heighten the multiplicity in the performance of zheng and with the versatile tactics of tapping, pressing, sliding, and trilling, *Variations of Meng Jiangnu* bears an easily identifiable mark of Henan folk music.

The quotations and allusions of folk music in *Variations of Meng Jiangnu* embody an intervention of local tunes and styles typical in Henan region. Through the interweaving of folk songs and narrative-singing music, *Variations of Meng Jiangnu* demonstrates that the traditional folk materials possess great potential to be reread and rewritten. The instrumental version of the Meng Jiangnu legend becomes a locale where the old textual sources can encounter to render multiple layers of signification. With the imping of vocal elements, the instrumental music of zheng is able to break through the traditional boundary of zheng music art with new performance techniques, enrich the acoustics and aesthetics and ultimately show the beauty of Henan vocal music in another way.

**Keywords:** *Variations on Meng Jiangnu*, Henan zheng music, Cao Dongfu, “Meng Jiangnu Crying at the Great Wall,” “Ruan Shipian”

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