

A STUDY ON THE SOLO PIANO PIECES OF JIESUN LIM: SPIRITUAL DANCE
(2004), ICE FLOWER (2006), A POEM ABOUT SPRING (2008), AND FANTASIA
ON A THEME OF CHOPIN (2009)

by

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A Dissertation
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Doctor of Musical Arts
Performance

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON THE SOLO PIANO PIECES OF JIESUN LIM: SPIRITUAL DANCE (2004), ICE FLOWER (2006), A POEM ABOUT SPRING (2008), AND FANTASIA ON A THEME OF CHOPIN (2009)

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Jiesun Lim is a composer who is considered to be one of the most prominent contemporary musicians in Korea. This dissertation investigates the stylistic features of Lim's four solo piano works: *Spiritual Dance*, *Ice Flower*, *A Poem about Spring*, and *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*. To provide context and aid understanding of the characteristics of the composer, this dissertation provides some background on Korean musical contemporary music and discusses overall characteristics of Jiesun Lim's major works. This will be followed by a detailed analysis of the four solo piano works. The analysis concentrates on the examination of forms, harmonies, melodies, rhythms, and keyboard usages in each of Lim's solo piano works.

By undertaking an overview of Jiesun Lim's piano work and an in-depth analysis of her solo music, I wanted to improve my overall understanding of the composer and her musical world. In addition, I hope that follow-up research on Lim and her music will

continue actively in the future, and that her works will have the opportunity to reach more performers and a wider audience.

INTRODUCTION

Jiesun Lim is a composer considered to be one of the most prominent contemporary musicians in Korea.¹ Throughout her career, Lim has been working actively at home and abroad. Chosen as one of 60 people to lead Korea by *Gyeonghyang Daily Newspaper* in 2007, she is recognized as someone who has contributed greatly to the development of Korean contemporary music by mixing it proportionally with Korean traditional music so that contemporary music – often regarded as difficult on the ear, hard to understand, and unappealing to some – can be approachable, appreciated, and enjoyed.

To date, Lim has authored over 60 compositions, including orchestra music, chamber music, vocal music, and solo music. When we look closely at her music, we can see that Lim has shaped her distinct musical characteristics by integrating elements of Korean traditional music with the traits of late Romantic and experimental Western contemporary music.²

This dissertation will provide a biographical background of the composer, explore the Korean musical climate as a source of her musical inspiration, examine overall characteristics of her major works, and lastly present a detailed analysis of the four solo

¹ Jiesun Lim has won many international and domestic prestigious awards, including the Fulbright Research Scholar award.

² Sookin Park, “A Study of Selected Solo Piano Works by Three Korean Women Composers from 2008 to 2012,” (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2017), 94–97.

piano works: *Spiritual Dance*, *Ice Flower*, *A Poem about Spring*, and *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, each of which will be followed by performance suggestions. The analytical portion of this study will identify Lim's use of musical forms, melodies, rhythms, and the elements of Korean traditional music.

The purpose of this dissertation is to make Lim's piano works familiar to more piano players and to provide them new, but qualified, repertoires through the study of her piano works that have been ignored compared to her other works. This research is expected to contribute to expanding the solo piano repertoires for those who want to widen the scope of the musical horizon.

Statement of the Problem and Research Question

Korean contemporary music has unfortunately had a lower profile compared to the classical music of the Western countries, despite of the fact that there has been much recent growth in the genre. Soonho Kwon points out that the number of Korean compositions being premiered and performed has increased recently. However, prejudice still exists in the perception of performers and audiences that Korean contemporary music sounds clumsy and requires more popularity to be chosen for their repertoires.³

Because of this, I decided to choose Jiesun Lim's compositions to be the theme of my doctoral dissertation. I thought it was meaningful to provide new, but qualified,

³ Soonho Kwon, "Taxonomic Study and Theorization of Acoustic Group on the Korean Traditional Materials which Contemporary Music Employs," *Nangman Eumaksa* 19, no. 4 (2007): 175–176.

repertoires through an in-depth study of Jiesun Lim. But the lack of bibliography and materials available posed a challenge in terms of writing a more ambitious paper.

Literature Review

The book “*Korean Women Composers and Their Music*” by John O. Robison⁴ is devoted to the research of roughly 50 Korean women composers. Robison shows us their lives, music, and spirit by interviewing them personally and provides detailed descriptions and analyses of their works. Jiesun Lim is introduced by Robison as one of the second-generation composers trained in the United States. For this dissertation, Robison’s interview of Lim became a good source for Lim’s biography. Also, Robison includes an analysis of Lim’s piano work, *Spiritual Dance*, which provided me with some ideas in interpreting her music. However, because the book is a compiled work of 50 composers and information about their general compositions, it does not go into enough depth to provide knowledge of Jiesun Lim’s entire collection and specific styles of her piano works.

There are a few master’s theses on Lim’s compositions written in Korean. Three of them discuss Lim’s orchestral and chamber music briefly, each introducing one specific piece accompanied by analysis.⁵ Jisun Im talks about the *Hwaum Project*, where

⁴ John Robison, *Korean Women Composers and Their Music* (Missoula: The College Music Society, 2012).

⁵ These are: Hyae Rim Seok, “A Study of *Invisible Shadow* by Jiesun Lim,” (MM diss., Yonsei University, 2009); Seyoung Lee, “A Study of *Shadow of Shadow* by Jiesun Lim,” (MM diss., Yonsei

Lim was commissioned to compose extensive chamber works.⁶ And only the dissertation written by Da Hye Kim shows the study of Lim's piano composition, *A Poem about Spring*.⁷ Kim mostly concentrates on the pitch-class set theory to interpret the piece, which will not be a primary focus in my analysis.

Two doctoral dissertations discuss Jiesun Lim as a composer: "Western Music in Modern Korea: A Study of Two Women Composers"⁸ by Hae Young Yoo, and "A Study of Selected Solo Piano Works by Three Korean Women Composers from 2008 to 2012"⁹ by Sookin Park. Both have a similar interest in women composers of Korean Western music, pointing out their important roles as women in the legacy of Korean music. Yoo selected Jiesun Lim and Unsuk Chin in analyzing their respective piano works: *Spiritual Dance* and *Six Piano Etudes*. Based on an intensive interview Yoo conducted with Jiesun Lim, Yoo suggests a variety of possible influences for Lim while she was composing the piece. In addition to Robison's book, Yoo's paper was another good source for me for information about the composer's life and music. Sookin Park, who included three composers in her topic, gives a shorter and more condensed biography and analysis than

University, 2015); Doha Pyeon, "A Study of *Clash and Reconciliation: in Memory of Vanished Culture by Jiesun Lim*," (MM diss., Yonsei University, 2016).

⁶ Jisun Im, "A Study on Korean Creative Music inspired by Art Works: *Hwaum Project*," (MM diss., Yonsei University, 2015).

⁷ Da Hye Kim, "A Study of *Poem About Spring* by Jiesun Lim," (MM diss., Yonsei University, 2012).

⁸ Hae Young Yoo, "Western Music in Modern Korea: A Study of Two Women Composers," (DMA diss., Rice University, 2005).

⁹ Sookin Park, "A Study of Selected Solo Piano Works by Three Korean Women Composers from 2008 to 2012," (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2017).

Yoo. But since Park's dissertation was written in 2017 which was quite recent, I could have more updated tracks of Lim since 2005.

Despite the attention paid to her phenomenal works, relatively few studies have been conducted. Only two dissertations on the doctoral level exist; these do not focus on the composer herself, but on the role of Korean women composers in the history of Western music in Korea. Therefore, in this study I will explore Lim's musical language, looking deeply into her composition styles through detailed analysis, and examining how the specific styles are infused into her distinctively individual works throughout her entire collection of solo piano pieces.

Research Design and Methodology

This paper examines the stylistic features of Jiesun Lim's *Spiritual Dance*, *Ice Flower*, *A Poem about Spring*, and *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin* for solo piano. The first chapter includes Lim's biography and overall compositional style penetrating her entire collection of compositions. The following chapters will be devoted to the analytical examination of the four piano works. Observing the musical forms, harmonies, melodies, rhythms, and keyboard usages in each piece, I will address the particular influences of both European classical music and Korean traditional music on Lim's piano composition. Lastly, my suggestions regarding performance perspective will follow.

Korean Musical Climate and the Biography: As a Source of Lim's Inspiration

Western music has been developing constantly in Korea since it was first introduced. In the 1940s, European classical music was introduced, and Korean musicians attempted to apply it to their modern Korean compositions in various ways. Firstly, Western lyricism and Romanticism had influences mostly on the vocal music, which was being composed by the first generation of composers such as Nanpa Hong (1898–1941), Jaemyoeng Hyun (1902–1960), and Un Young La (1922–1993).¹⁰

After the end of the Korean War, the Seoul Music Festival and Pan Music Festival were created in 1969 for the purpose of establishing indigenous Korean music, which led to the establishment of a variety of active and prosperous musical events in Korea. Newly composed pieces were announced and premiered every year with the goal of “performing our own music,” which was the motto of the festivals.¹¹ After the establishment of the Seoul and Pan music festivals, composers started to open their eyes to the world around them, traveling abroad to acquire knowledge of contemporary composition techniques and the current state of world music. Called second-generation composers, they helped foster younger generations to contribute to the development of

¹⁰ Soonho Kwon, “Taxonomic Study and Theorization of Acoustic Group on the Korean traditional materials which contemporary music employs,” *Nangman Eumaksa* 19, no.4 (2007): 162–164. (My translation.)

¹¹ Korean National Research Center for the Arts, *Modern Korean Arts of 1970 IV* (Seoul: Sigongart, 2004), 303–312.

Korean classical music: Sukhi Kang (1934–2020), Byungdong Paik (b. 1936), Inyoung Ra (b. 1936), and Jungil Kim (1934–2012).¹²

As the social and cultural situation changed during the 1970s, there emerged many composers who had learned from and were influenced by the previous composers. These can be called the third generation of Korean composers. They had contact with Western music from an early age and were trained in music institutions, which were very popular at that time in Korea. Upon completion of their studies in South Korea, not a few of these ambitious composers went abroad to pursue further studies in the composition of classical music. As their studies were largely based in the United States and Germany, their music style has features of Western twentieth-century classical music, layered with their native Korean sensibility.¹³

¹² Woo Hee Kang, “A Study on the Piano Pieces of Ra Inyong: Focused on *Landscape 1*, *Landscape 2*, and *Legend*,” (DMA diss., Yonsei University, 2017), 2. (My translation.)

¹³ John Robison, *Korean Women Composers and Their Music* (Missoula: The College Music Society, 2012), 6–8.

CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF JIESUN LIM'S OEUVRE AND OVERALL COMPOSITIONAL STYLE PENETRATING HER ENTIRE COLLECTION OF COMPOSITIONS

Born in Seoul in 1960, Jiesun Lim has served as a professor at Yonsei University since 1996. Lim was nominated as one of the “Sixty Korean People Who Shall Lead Korea” by the *Kyunghyang Newspaper* in 2006. Her compositions have premiered worldwide in countries such as China, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Australia, Israel, Romania, Germany, France, England, and the United States.

The pianist Bong Ae Shin, formerly associate dean at Yonsei University, describes Jiesun Lim in the *Kyunghyang Newspaper* article as follows:

It seems that the power of Lim’s music deeply related to such a humble and friendly character. Her music sounds “sincere.” Where does that truth come from? It strikes me that her inspiration for music springs from her honest character. Raw emotion as a Korean, the mystery of nature we encounter sometimes, and momentary feelings expressed with family or friends in our daily lives—from these moments, a mysteriousness or subtle emotion seems to be awakened in her mind. These emotions, sometimes creating conflicts, work to eventually become a musical inspiration to her and are drawn by her talents as poems or essays of sound, sometimes abstract paintings. The music makes the audience dream of flying away from their daily lives and escaping into another world.

Now, Lim is positioned as a remarkable composer in Korea. However, I do not think she will stay where she is now. I believe her music will grow more through her sincerity and humility. After 20 years, I expect she will truly become “a little giant.”¹⁴

Beginning her musical studies on the piano at the age of eight, Lim kept studying piano until she was 14. When she was a student at Chungshin Girls’ High School, the

¹⁴ Bong Ae Shin, “Sixty Korean People Who Shall Lead Korea: ‘Little Giant’ Makes You Dream of Soar in Your Daily Life,” *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, May 14, 2006, http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=200605141657191&code=210000.

choir director, Hun-Cha Choi, noticed Lim's talent and suggested that she take composition lessons. The teacher, Inyong La, was one of the most significant second-generation Korean composers and later became Lim's undergraduate composition professor when she entered Yonsei University. Professor La always encouraged Lim in her studies at college and influenced her orchestral and piano compositions in various ways. While in college, Lim experienced twentieth-century classical music for the first time, which was an interesting and refreshing experience for her. From there, she became interested in all types of atonal music, listening to and imitating music by Stravinsky, Bartok, Schoenberg, and Penderecki. Lim was especially drawn to the strong rhythm and intensity of their music, which later had a significant impact on her own composition.¹⁵

After graduating from university, Lim traveled to the United States and studied at Indiana University, completing her master's and doctoral degrees by 1990. During her Indiana years, Lim was encouraged to find her own sound under the guidance of Professor John Eaton. In her interview with Yoo, she mentioned how hard it was to find her own sound in the midst of a flood of other music she was listening to at the time.¹⁶ Professor Eaton did not force his own style on her and didn't attempt to shape her as a composer, instead always asking, "Is this the sound that you really want?" As a result, Lim was able to gradually find and develop her own sound. She liked and was inspired by Ravel, Bartok, Stravinsky, and Webern. Their music is neither completely atonal nor avant-garde, but rather has the logical development of a cell motive that does not

¹⁵ Hae Young Yoo, "Western Music in Modern Korea: A Study of Two Women Composers" (DMA diss., Rice University, 2005), 137–138.

¹⁶ Ibid., 138.

completely depart from a traditional structure. Her extensive experience with contemporary classical composers under the direction of Inyong La in Korea and John Eaton in the United States later played a crucial part in building Lim's own musical vocabulary.¹⁷

Returning to Korea after her studies, Lim started her career by receiving the Yoshiro Irino Memorial Prize (1993) and the first Ahn Eak-Tai Foundation Composition Award for *Tone Poem; The Shield of Achilles* (1994), presented in her PhD dissertation. Written for a large orchestra, this composition represents Lim's new and innovative compositional techniques. Despite the success of her composition at home, Lim was still worried that her sound would not find an audience. Then, she realized that modern music composers tended to be quite self-sufficient when it came to circulating their own music. In those days, some composers would gather to play and listen to each other's music within their circle. Through such meetings, it occurred to Lim "music exists to be listened to, and I would like to build consensus with the audience within the scope of not losing what is mine." It was important for her music to be performed. She rearranged her entire works, keeping their dense texture and tremendous complexity while inserting memorable melodies that would allow her music to communicate with audiences without losing her signature sound and character.¹⁸

In 1998, Lim composed the orchestra piece *Toward the New Sky* in four movements, which portrayed the stability, decline, crises, and new millennium dreams

¹⁷ Robison, *Korean Women Composers and Their Music*, 250–251.

¹⁸ Hae Young Yoo, "Western Music in Modern Korea: A Study of Two Women Composers," (DMA diss., Rice University, 2005), 139.

during the course of the 1997 financial crisis in Korea. This piece was awarded the first prize at the first Composition Festival of Korea held by the Music Association of Korea. This event was established to develop Korea's cultural industry by discovering creative music containing the spirit of Korea and introducing it to the world market. This opportunity enabled Lim to incorporate Korean traditional music into her compositional category and allowed her music to evolve to the next phase.

A distinct change in the scheme and style of Lim's music took place in 2002 and 2003 while she was at the University of Michigan as a Fulbright Research Scholar. When the Iraq invasion started in 2003, Lim saw from her television many artifacts being destroyed in the war, and she thought it was necessary and also possible for Eastern and Western cultures to reconcile and coexist. That same year, she composed *Kayakeum*¹⁹ *Concerto: Clash and Reconciliation in Memory of Vanished Culture*. It was performed by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in Israel in 2004. In *Kayakeum Concerto*, volume and tone at first collide, but then gradually enter into a harmony representing coexistence at the end. It is music that seeks the coexistence of two disparate cultures.²⁰ While writing with the traditional instrument, which is simpler with limited dynamic and melodic

¹⁹ Kayakeum is the "Korean zither, one of best-known traditional Korean instruments. Construction and playing style similar to Japanese koto, with silk string stretched over long wooden soundboard, each with a movable bridge, and plucked with the fingers. Generally has twelve strings although modern versions may have up to twenty-five. Used in both traditional court music and contemporary compositions." from "Kayagum," Oxford University Press, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.mutex.gmu.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-10236>.

²⁰ "The World of Masterpieces," *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, May 14, 2006, http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=200605141657271&code=210000.

ranges, Lim had a chance to think about more triadic resonance with a simplified style of writing.²¹

The next composition in which Lim attempted to blend Eastern and Western culture in the vessel of music was *Nori*, written for violin, flute, clarinet, and piano, which had a successful premiere at the Kennedy Center's Millenium Hall for the event "An Evening of Cultural Performances." In the composition, Lim first uses the Korean folk song "Sae-ya Sae-ya" as a borrowed melody. The folk tune does not explicitly appear in the first section, but the rhythmically modified version of the melody, accompanied by sustained dissonances, appears in a vague manner. Later, the clarinet plays a full melody against the flute's countermelody. This demonstrates that Lim does not intentionally showcase traditional Korean spirit in her music in an obvious way, but she loves to include it in subtle and unconscious ways.

Jiesun Lim wanted to break down the boundaries around musical genres such as blending traditional with contemporary, classical with popular, and so on, and even attempted to blend it with different fields of art, such as painting, sculpture, and visual arts. Throughout the last decade, Lim has written freely in and out of harmony, crossing over the boundaries between genres. Her composition *Deformity*, for clarinet, piano, viola, and cello, was composed in 2002 and inspired by the fine art of Jung Won Lee. It was the first collaboration with the Hwaum Chamber Orchestra under a program called

²¹ Park, "A Study of Selected Solo Piano," 155.

the Hwaum Project.²² Since then, her numerous orchestral and chamber music pieces have been created through this project. In her interview with Moon from the *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, Lim stated, “I wrote music for a long time, inspired by everything around me, like art, literature, and travel, but since last year, the interaction with art seems to have increased significantly.” Her extensive composition series, *Shadow*, came out in 2008: *Shadow of Shadow* for strings (Hwaum Project, Op. 62); *Invisible Shadow* for clarinet, violin, and piano (Op. 65); *Shadow of Black Sea* for solo viola (Op. 67); and *Dancing Shadow* for violin and marimba (Op. 68). All of these works were performed while audiences observed the art fixtures. Lim said, “When music combined with visual art embodies special meanings, we are able to see the audience become more immersed in the scene,” explaining her work with words such as “ghostly anxious shadows, desperate sighs, shaking small lights, and nightmares that return to their places persistently no matter how hard we try to escape.”²³

In 2012 and 2013, Lim stayed in Kyoto as a visiting research scholar at the International Research Center. After that, she delivered a master class at Indiana

²² The Hwaum Project is a core program of the Hwaum Chamber Orchestra and is a fusion project of Hwa (painting), Um (music), and Inmun (humanities). Premiering the contemporary music inspired by visual arts at the museum, it helps to foster understanding of creative music with visualized motives and the scene of the subject. It is performed by the Hwaum Chamber Orchestra and sponsored by the Arts Council Korea. Two hundred contemporary compositions have been written through the Hwaum Project since 2002. – “Introducing Hwaum Museum,” Hwaum Museum, Corporation Hwaum, Accessed April 23, 2019, <http://www.hwaum.org/info/mu.php>. (My translation.)

²³ Hak Soo Moon, “Classic Music Communicates with Other Genres of Art,” *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, January 28, 2009, http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=200901281732375&code=960802.

University as a Distinguished Alumni Composer in 2013.²⁴ It was there that her *Secret of Golden Color: Klimt's Confession* for oboe, violin, cello, contrabass, and harp was performed by the IU New Music Ensemble. Inspired by Gustav Klimt's golden-hued, erotic painting, "Judith I," Lim's *Secret of Golden Color* tells the secrets of Judith in four dimensions: 1) Judith's shadow, 2) Shape of Judith, 3) Grotesqueness or darkness of Judith, and 4) Duality of Judith. Under the darkly colored tremolos and chromatics of the string instruments, the oboe's lyrical and attractive sound shapes the erotic side of Judith.

Inspired by the Korean poet Dongju Yoon and the melody of Babylov's *Ave Maria*, Lim composed the viola concerto *A New Path in Memory of Yoon Dongju* for a centennial concert honoring the poet in 2017. Among Lim's compositions released over the past decade or so, she compiled this viola concerto by sorting out the essential parts of her previous works.²⁵ The concerto was premiered in 2017 at Keumho Art Hall and reperformed by the Budapest Chamber Symphony at the Petofi Museum of Literature for the 2018 Korea-Hungary Composer Exchange Project.

Adding the designation of musicologist to her creative activities as a composer, Lim published her book *Contemporary Music in Films*, which was nominated as a 2015 Sejong Outstanding Scholarly Book by the Korean Publishing Foundation. The book discusses the use and meaning of modern music in movies.²⁶

²⁴ "Introducing 60 Selections for Understanding Classics by Theme, by Jiesun Lim," Hwaum Museum, accessed August 21, 2020, http://www.hwaum.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=notice&wr_id=17.

²⁵ "Composer's Note, by Jiesun Lim" Youtube, Accessed August 28, 2020, <https://youtu.be/NRNG8jXtlPQ>.

²⁶ "Jiesun Lim, Seoul, Republic of Korea," Soundcloud, Accessed April 23, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/jiesun-lim>

Jiesun Lim desires Korean contemporary classical music to be performed more often to increase communication and empathy between the composer and the audience. She acknowledges that contemporary music is often regarded as a “stranger” in the world of classical music and this sense of heterogeneity is even more prevalent in Korea. The audience is not accustomed to listening to or enjoying new repertoires that are unfamiliar and completely different from traditional classical melodies. However, Lim emphasizes that once an audience, even a conservative audience, listen to the music with an open mind and attention, they will be able to sense the charm of modern music, even if they are completely new to it. Lim found this to be true from her experiences with recent concerts and lectures on contemporary music. When the National Chorus of Korea performed Lim’s *Requiem for the Lesser Known* in 2003, the audience were attentive and engaged for the duration, even though the piece was 18 minutes long. In fact, her solo piano work *Spiritual Dance* was more acclaimed and enjoyed than Chopin’s piece when performed at the same venue in 2004.

Lim’s creative works are relatively close to the traditional side in the spectrum of traditional and modernity. Though she does not use Korean traditional pentatonic scales and traditional musical instruments explicitly, it can be said that her music is genetically Korean. We can sense Korean sentiments flowing naturally from the composer in her compositions, even when she does not utilize any Korean musical elements. A synthesis of Korean traditional music with contemporary Western music creates the unique sound in her works.

As a Korean, I feel it is time to pay attention to our own music, just as we devote passion to Beethoven. Lim expresses confidence that if we play our work abroad, the music is sure to captivate the attention of people around the world. It is because Korean contemporary music has many elements that appeal to people of other backgrounds. It is not strictly Korean or Western. It is both Korean and Western, both traditional and modern. To promote the modern music of Korean composers around the world, Korean musicians should play them more often and actively on domestic and international stages—and if national support follows,²⁷ Lim's hope to introduce Korean contemporary music to the global stage does not seem to be far away.

²⁷ Hak Soo Moon, "The Composer Jiesun Lim," *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, May 14, 2006, http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=200605141657111&code=210000#csidxa1d1f72fdd3825886590b4caaacd45f.

CHAPTER TWO: SPIRITUAL DANCE (2004)

Overview

Commissioned by the pianist Cheol-Hee Yun, Jiesun Lim composed *Spiritual Dance* in 2004, and it premiered at Yun's recital at Ceramic Palace Hall on May 20, 2004. *Spiritual Dance* is comprised of four movements that represent each stage of finding a "composer's identity." Lim describes how she approached this work:

Spiritual Dance represents a process of finding "me." I followed a certain sound that comes from my mind. It appears as a struggle sometimes, or peaceful triads in the final movement. Four different movements show different stages of the spiritual journey.²⁸

The stages of the composer's journey are all connected and unified in structure, center tone, and melody in a cyclic system. The analysis will be focused on finding out the exquisite relations based on the cyclic device between the movements.

Table 1. Overview of *Spiritual Dance*

	I	II	III	IV
Number of Measures	73	44	135	97
Structure Plan	A-B-A (Theme and Variations)	A-B-A coda	A-B-A coda	A-B-bridge-A coda
Pitch Focus	D	A \flat	A \flat	D

²⁸ Interview with Yoo, "Western Music," 140.

Features	Accented notes surrounded by non-stop sextuplets	Open spaced layers in improvisatory character	Notes developed in systematic ways	Triadic sound featuring materials from previous movements
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As shown in the Table 1, all four movements are in the same ternary form (A-B-A). The composer uses a similar variational technique in the first and third movements to maintain the unity. The accented notes played by the left hand are the motivic theme throughout the first movement. As seen in Example 2.1, the theme is encircled by the ornamented sextuplets in the fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, and ninth intervals. The first half of this motivic idea does not change in its length and shape, while the second half keeps extending with inserted notes up to the second variation.

Example 2.1: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, mm. 1–6²⁹

Spiritual Dance
I

Jiesun Lim

Piano *pp* $\text{♩} = 96$

In Example 2.2, the value and register of all notes are neglected and marked as whole notes in the same register. The black notes are the original theme, and the red notes show the added notes in the first variation. The first part of the theme inverts its shape once, but does not change to any other figurations. The blue notes are added to the latter part of the second variation.

²⁹ All excerpts from works by Jiesun Lim are reproduced here by kind permission of the composer.

Example 2.2: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, theme and variations

Original

2 Var 1. Extended

3 Var 2. Inversion and more extension

4 Var 3. Transposed

5 Var 4. Repeition of Var. 3

6 Var 5. Original extended

Fragments repeated four times to the end

When we look at A section of the third movement, a similar variation technique is used. The original motivic phrase is presented in the first three measures: the first measure has two five-note sixteenth note groups which are motive *a* and *b*, and the second measure is the inversion of the first measure reaching to the note A-flat in the third measure. Measures 1-15 of Example 2.3 show the motivic idea developing with one

additional note each time it is presented. Motive *a* does not change its figuration while the next chromatic sixteenth note group keeps extending by gradually adding one note until the development finishes.

Example 2.3: *Spiritual Dance*, beginning of third movement, mm. 1–16

III

The musical score is for the beginning of the third movement of *Spiritual Dance*, measures 1–16. It is written for Piano and features a Theme and three variations (Var. 1, Var. 2, Var. 3). The tempo is marked as 132 beats per minute. The score is divided into four systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass clef). The Theme is marked with a red box and contains Motive a (orange box) and Motive b (blue box). Var. 1 is marked with a red box and contains Motive a (orange box) and Motive b (blue box). Var. 2 is marked with a red box and contains Motive a (orange box) and Motive b (blue box). Var. 3 is marked with a red box and contains Motive a (orange box) and Motive b (blue box). The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) for the Theme, *p* (piano) for Var. 1, *mp* (mezzo-piano) for Var. 2, *mf* (mezzo-forte) for Var. 3, and *f* (forte) for the final section. The score includes measure numbers 1, 5, 11, and 14. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4.

The relationship of pitch focuses between the movements is tritone. Table 1 indicates the pitch focus of each movement as D-A \flat -A \flat -D. While this tritone sound dominates the entire piece, representing the uncertainty and instability of the composer's mind, the D and A \flat also serve the role of tonic and dominant, as in tonal music. The theme of the first movement starts and finishes with D and is transposed to A \flat in the third and fourth variations, serving a developmental function similar to what the dominant does in tonal music. Resolving to D at the last presence of the motivic phrase is to define D as the tonic of the first movement.

In a similar way, A \flat extends the tension of the tritone (D-A \flat) to the entire structure of four movements, serving the developmental function of the dominant. The second and third movements start and finish with a pitch focus of A \flat (Examples 2.4 and 2.5).

Example 2.4: *Spiritual Dance*, beginning of second movement, mm. 1-4

II

The musical score for the beginning of the second movement (measures 1-4) is shown. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The score is for Piano. The right hand (treble clef) features a tritone (D-A \flat) in the first measure, circled in red, and a tritone (A \flat -D) in the fourth measure, also circled in red. The left hand (bass clef) features a tritone (A \flat -D) in the first measure, circled in red, and a tritone (D-A \flat) in the fourth measure, also circled in red. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p* (piano).

Example 2.5: *Spiritual Dance*, ending of third movement, mm. 130–135



Lim's journey to find herself is completed as the starting tone D is redefined in the last movement. To me, the bell-like gesture at the beginning of the movement reflects the recovery of her peace of mind in religious tranquility. Finally, the fourth movement demonstrates all the fragmented thematic materials of the previous movements in reminiscence of the past (Example 2.6), and it finishes with D at the end (Example 2.7).

Example 2.6: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, mm. 61–74

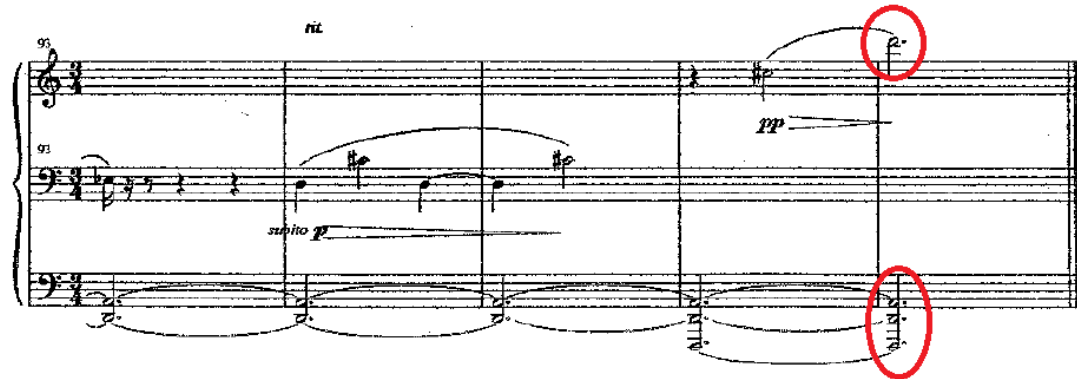
Cyclic technique

- = 1st movement
- = 2nd movement
- = 3rd movement
- = 4th movement

a tempo

The musical score for 'Spiritual Dance', fourth movement, mm. 61–74, is presented in four systems. Each system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The movements are color-coded: 1st movement (pink), 2nd movement (yellow), 3rd movement (blue), and 4th movement (green). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'subito p' and 'mf'. The movements are repeated in a cyclic fashion, with the 1st movement appearing in the first system, the 2nd in the second, the 3rd in the third, and the 4th in the fourth. The score is marked 'a tempo' in the top right corner.

Example 2. 7: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, ending, mm. 93–97



I. First Movement

Detailed Analysis

The structure of the first movement is broadly divided into three sections, A (mm. 1–15), B (mm. 16–34), and A' (mm. 35–73), by their ways of variational unfolding and the change of pitch focuses. Overall, turbulent consecutive sextuplets, featuring rotating motions of the right hand, reflect the composer's soulful anguish in my opinion, while the left hand clearly shows the thematic melody marked with accented notes (Example 2.8). The left-hand theme is presented six times in varied shapes of pitches—extended, transposed, retrograded, and fragmented (Example 2.2). The pitch focuses are examined by the beginning and ending notes of each phrase: A section, D – D; B section, D – A; A' section, A \flat – A \flat ; Coda, D – D.

The image displays four staves of piano music, each illustrating a different variation of a theme. The first staff is marked 'Piano' and 'pp', with a boxed section labeled 'Fixed theme'. The second staff has a boxed section. The third staff is marked 'mf' and has a boxed section labeled 'Entailed chromatic passage'. The fourth staff is marked 'mp' and has a boxed section labeled 'Altered theme'. Each staff shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, featuring sixteenth-note runs and sustained bass notes.

Example 2.8: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, mm. 1–16, continued

The musical score for Example 2.8 continues from measure 11. It is written for piano in 4/4 time. Measures 11-12 feature a complex texture with multiple voices and chords. Measures 13-14 continue this texture with some changes in harmony. Measures 15-16 show a more stable harmonic structure with sustained notes and a final chord marked *ff*.

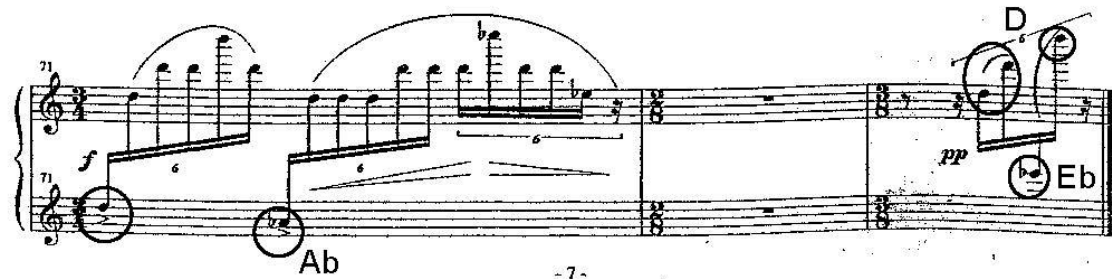
I hear this as the fixed theme presented in the beginning of section A reflects Lim's self-conscious "I" and the transformed and expanded second half of the theme mirrors her wobbly, unstable mind through those changes. In addition, every thematic phrase follows lingering passages in the interval of minor seconds, which amplifies unsteadiness in directions (Example 2.8, mm. 5–7 and mm. 12–14). These indirect and unstable moments move toward section B, which presents even more thematic developments—the first half of the original theme is now in an inverted shape, and the second half swings more with expansion of inserted notes (Example 2.9).

Example 2.9: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, mm. 17–23

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system (mm. 17-18) features a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. A vertical line labeled 'B' is placed between measures 18 and 19. A red box labeled 'Inversion' is placed below the bass staff in measure 19. The second system (mm. 19-20) continues the melodic and bass lines. The third system (mm. 21-22) shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The fourth system (mm. 23-24) shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'mf'.

Landing on the pitch focus to Ab, the tritone relationship with the pitch focus of the beginning D, the theme is repeated two times with a contrasting sound in both dynamics and registers. Finally, the pitch focus moves back to D at the beginning of the coda. However, it still does not show a sense of resolving there because the fragment of the theme finishes with Ab followed by a whole rest and the last sextuplet paired with D and Eb. This incomplete and unresolved ending connects to the second movement (Example 2.10).

Example 2.10: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, ending, mm. 71–73



The consecutive sextuple texture is interrupted by a big chord cluster followed by a sound bridge of a whole-tone ascending figure. The striking moment of this movement is created by one full-measure rest right before this big chord. Indicating a disruption from some changes in Lim's mind, this big chord with the dynamic of *ff* leads to the B section, where the inversion of the theme starts (Example 2.11, mm. 15–17). And this chord cluster reoccurs following the bridge, with extensive chromatic passages before the C section and Coda (Examples 2.12 and 2.13). Considering a source of defining the

division of the sections, these large cluster chords mean an abrupt transition to the other sections.

Example 2.11: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, chord cluster A, mm. 14–18

The musical score for Example 2.11 is in 4/4 time and features a piano (p) dynamic. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (mm. 14–15) shows a complex arrangement of notes and rests across multiple staves, with a large cluster chord highlighted in a box. The second system (mm. 16–18) continues the melodic and harmonic development, with a large cluster chord also highlighted in a box. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.12: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, chord cluster B, mm. 26–29

The musical score for Example 2.12 is in 4/4 time and features a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (mm. 26–27) shows a complex arrangement of notes and rests across multiple staves, with a large cluster chord highlighted in a box. The second system (mm. 28–29) continues the melodic and harmonic development, with a large cluster chord also highlighted in a box. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.13: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, chord cluster C, mm. 53–56

The image shows a musical score for piano, specifically measures 53 through 56 of the first movement of 'Spiritual Dance'. The score is written for a grand piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate staff for the right hand. A large bracketed section covers measures 53 to 56, indicating a 'chord cluster C'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'p' (piano). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score is presented in a clear, professional layout with a large bracketed section highlighting the specific chord cluster.

The tonal structure of the theme is based on the sonority of tritone, whole-tone, and chromatic scales. The resonance created by the mixture of these tones is a typical example of Lim's harmonic language in her solo piano pieces. As discussed earlier, the theme of the first movement is presented by left-hand accented notes. Lim creates some special sonority by having a tritone in the first two notes, D and A \flat , as a representative tritone in the beginning of the theme (Example 2.14). As the theme is repeated more than five times throughout the movement, this tritone sonority dominates among other resonances. And the importance of the tritone persists and even expands to the other movements, which will be discussed in later sections.

Example 2.14: *Spiritual Dance*, first movement, mm. 1–4

The musical score for Example 2.14 shows a piano accompaniment with a complex melodic line. Annotations highlight specific harmonic elements: a green box labeled 'tritone' points to the first two notes (Ab and Bb); a red box labeled 'Whole-tone' points to the next four notes (Bb, C, D, and Eb); an orange box labeled 'G harmonic minor' points to the final four notes (Eb, F#, G, and A). Below the staff, the notes are listed in two groups: 'Ab, Bb, C, D' in green and 'A, Eb, F#, G' in orange. An orange arrow points from the 'G harmonic minor' box to the 'A, Eb, F#, G' group.

The sound color of the first half is created by a whole-tone scale (Ab, Bb, C, and D), but the latter half of the theme appears in a G harmonic minor scale with four added tones (Eb, F#, G, and A). Therefore, the full thematic phrase is in the tonal harmony of the G minor scale, and D serves as a dominant quality in G minor, except for Ab, which is a tritone from the first note, D. Alternating Ab and A^b, it blurs the boundary of tonal and atonal quality. In addition, by adding B^b, a G major sound is built in the first variation (see Example 2.2 for the pitches in theme and variations). Finally, in the second variation, all twelve tones are presented as having a whole-tone quality. In the shape of the inverted version, the second variation tends to be more in a whole-tone scale than the original shape. The prolonged phrase in this second variation also shows the triadic gesture as

having patterned minor-third and major-third shapes along with the chromatic gesture (mm. 20–23).

The consecutive sextuplets in the right hand give a pervasive background effect with wide-ranged octaves mainly with intervals of major and minor sevenths, adding a perfect fourth and fifth in the latter part. Imitating the aspiring spiral dance movement that spins over and over, in my interpretation, this rotating gesture on the right hand captures the image of prayer for what one longs for. Major and minor sevenths are irregularly inverted to major and minor seconds, creating a chromatic sound in the entire movement. The intense chromatic passage after the B section continues with the sextuplet gesture, but it feels somewhat disrupted bringing back to the other entrance which is section A'.

Performance and Practice Suggestions

As the composer indicates her intention in the title, it is important for performers to convey the scenic design and plans first. A performer should first try to capture the mood and overall structure rather than jump straight into the detailed technical practices. In order to deliver the ideas effectively, a performer should clearly define the thematic melody structure, including the variations, to make certain phrasings. Because the first movement does not clearly show the structure at a glance, a performer needs to play the accented melody notes only, excluding other embellished parts first (Example 2.2). Playing the accented notes in a well-connected and focused fashion is the fundamental task in the movement because there are many ornamental notes surrounding each

accented note. With arms and shoulders relaxed, the fingers should have a firm and strong touch to the notes. Using the long pedal, lasting at least one measure, the performer needs to attack and release the accented notes in a very short time. The performer must move in a very quick motion to attack and release, playing each note while the pedal holds the sound ringing.

Another technical issue in this movement is how the right hand plays rotational figures lightly and smoothly. The fast sixteenth-note beams (excluding the accented note) need to be expressed as a vague background without interrupting the melody. As almost every measure has successive, fast-tempo, wide (higher than an octave) leaps, I suggest a slur-divided practice. Lim indicates all the slurs over the successive sextuplets, and a performer should delicately deliver those articulations by releasing the last notes of the slurs very carefully. In particular, the dynamic markings under the longer slurs need more attention than the shorter ones (Example 2.8, m.1, 3, 8, and 10). To start the triple-repeated note figurations with a soft and light touch for the further crescendo, proper fingering is required—my suggestions are to use fingers 3, 2, and 1 for the first three D5s and 5, 4, and 1 for the next three D6s (m.1 and 3), and to use finger 4 instead of 5 for C#5s in m. 8 and 10.

Lim's piano works require performers to use highly sophisticated technical skills to execute all the features, including wide-range leaping of registers, fast repeated and chromatic notes, frequent meter change with rhythmic complexity, and subtle dynamics for mood change. Further technical practice suggestions will be discussed in the later sections.

II. Second Movement

Detailed Analysis

Unlike the first movement, whose form was determined by its pitch focuses and variations of the theme, the second movement is distinguished by its changes of texture and figuration. The form can be divided into three sections: A (mm. 1–7), B (mm. 8–30), and A' (mm. 31–40), followed by a short Coda (mm. 41–44). Especially in this movement, the widely spaced texture of three layers creates a specific timbre that comes with each register. This gives us a chamber music effect, as if played by several instruments. Hae Young Yoo discusses in her dissertation that this particular movement relates to Korean traditional chamber music, called *Sinawi*,³⁰ which is rooted in shamanic music and played by an improvisational instrumental ensemble.³¹ Each layer unfolds improvisatory figures in different ways using repeated notes, trills, long sustained notes, and irregular rhythmic patterns. This gives us a stream of unconsciousness and continuation of Lim's spiritual journey.

In section A, three different stratifications can be heard aurally and seen visually throughout the score (Example 2.15). The main idea of this section can be seen in the

³⁰ Musical instruments such as the gayageum (twelve-stringed zither), geomungo (six-stringed zither), haegeum (two-stringed fiddle), ajaeng (bowed zither), piri (bamboo oboe), and daegeum (long transverse bamboo flute) are played freely and spontaneously within a certain rhythm. Free and spontaneous, but never distracting or dissonant, they represent the expressions "harmony in discord" and "order in chaos" in *Sinawi*. - Yoo, "Western Music," 9–10.

³¹ Ibid., 65–66.

distinct rhythmic gesture in the middle line combined with static layers on the top and bottom.

Example 2.15: *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, mm. 1–8

The musical score for Example 2.15, *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, measures 1–8, is presented in 3/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 60. The score is written for piano and consists of three staves: Treble, Bass, and a lower Bass staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A (measures 1–4) begins with a sustained pedal tone in the lower Bass staff, marked with a tritone ornament (Eb and A). The Treble staff features a static layer of chords, and the Bass staff has a rhythmic gesture. Section B (measures 5–8) continues the pedal tone and features a triplet in the Bass staff. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*. The score is annotated with circled and boxed areas highlighting specific musical features.

The bass line begins with the sustained pedal tone in low-register Ab initiating with tritone ornament (Eb and A). The pedal tone Ab is repeated six times throughout the seven-measures-long A section in the combination of two notes, Eb and A.

There are grace notes throughout the repetition, which reflects a performance technique of the gayageum, a Korean instrument. As a string instrument, the gayageum plays numerous embellishments before the beat that do not take up space rhythmically. Byeong-dong Baek, a well-known Korean composer who also composed various classical genres including piano solo pieces, has written several gayageum works, in which we can observe similar usage of grace notes in the example (Example 2.16).

Example 2.16: Excerpt from *Sinbyeolgok* for gayageum, composed by Byeong-dong Baek



This same gayageum technique can be seen in the middle layer, which has more active notes than the other two voices. In addition, this layer is centered in the pitch focus on Eb, featuring a rhythmic texture that is similar to *gugak*³² improvisation through the acceleration of the rhythmic value. It is an impromptu rhythm reminiscent of the chopping sound of Korean drums (*buk* or *janggu*), and similar features are frequently found in other Korean composer's works because of their evocative traditional sound.

³² Korean traditional music

The percussive characteristics of the piano are emphasized through the repetition of the same note (See Example 2.15, m.2 and m.5).

A static layer in the top staff is hovering between A \flat and A and landing on A \flat in measure 7 where the section finishes. Having a relatively shorter note value than A \flat , A \sharp notes create a tritone sound conflicting with E \flat in the middle and bass layers. An interval of a perfect fifth (A \flat and E \flat) wavers as the voice moves around A \flat to A. Again, as a connection from the journey of the first movement, this reflects an unstable gesture of one's angst in my opinion. On top of the pitch conflict, the *mp* dynamic on A \sharp notes emphasizes the tritone sound and diminish the notes' volume when they resolve to A \flat (Example 2.15, mm. 2–3 and mm. 6–7).

Section B (mm. 8–30) is relatively longer than A and A' sections. Featuring a chromatic hovering gesture with the interval of minor second intervals, the upward perfect fourth and downward minor third are added in melodic movement - before finishing with a four-measure phrase (Example 2.17, mm. 8–11).

Example 2.17: *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, mm. 8–29

The musical score for Example 2.17, *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, measures 8–29, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 8–11) shows the initial phrase with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second system (measures 12–15) shows the first variation (Var. 1) with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'sempre' marking. The third system (measures 16–19) shows the second variation (Var. 2) with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a 'sempre' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

This phrase is repeated six times after the original is presented, which shows a simple rhythm featuring only quarter notes (Examples 2.17 and 2.18, mm. 12–27). During the repetition, the extensive rhythmic transformation occurs in every different direction, and there is no moment where a motive is strictly repeated. The rhythm constantly moves, splitting into 1/32 values, 1/16 values, and tripled quarter notes with irregular improvised

patterns, and for the last repetition (var 6), it combines with extra added notes with motive on the bottom line.

Example 2.18: *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, mm. 8–29, continued

16 *mp* Var. 2 *sempre* Var. 3

21 *mf* Var. 4 *sempre* Var. 5

24 *fp* *fp* Var. 6

26 *f* *f* Var. 6

27 *ff* *mf* Var. 6

The pitch levels of each repetition are transposed down a minor third from previous pitches until they reach the beginning pitch, $A\flat$, making a diminished chord with those first pitches [$A\flat - F - D - B$]. After the repetition of $A\flat$, Lim turns the pitch to $A\sharp$, which is the same pitch as shown in the beginning of the first two notes of the phrase. ($[A\flat - F - D - B] - A\flat - A\flat - A$) (Examples 2.17 and 2.18, see the circled notes). Here, the last note of the sixth variation, G , resolves to $A\flat$ in the next measure. Through the bridge-like phrase, the chromatic texture changes to whole-tone sound, and the furious climax moves on to the last section, A' (mm. 27–30).

In section A' (mm. 31–40), a texture similar to that found in section A in three layers, but with the static layers on the bottom and top transposed to the other pitches ($A\flat$ and $E\flat$) (Example 2.19).

Example 2.19: *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, mm. 30–33

Also, extensive ornamental passages are added between long-valued notes, showing the combined texture of chromatic and whole-tone scales. Indeed, the tritone relationship becomes more explicit in this section as the pedal tone in the bass floats from A \flat to D, and the top static layer moves down from E \flat to A. This contrary motion reaches to an interval of a perfect fifth with widely spaced D and A notes creating a hollow and undirected gesture. The middle layer fills the space with the repeated note figure, but also shows the imitation of the Korean traditional *buk*, like section A—the pitch is initially E \flat and changes to A \flat and A in the later part.

The subsequent short Coda (mm. 41–44) concludes the piece through the reflection of the tritone timbre. At the very last measure, the conflicting sound remains unresolved with the coexistence of the A and A \flat notes.

Performance and Practice Suggestions

It is particularly important to differentiate the tones of sound colors for each layer in the second movement since this movement has individualized speaking voices. First, widely spread octaves through A $_1\flat$ in the left hand to A $_5\flat$ and A $_6\flat$ in the right hand create the background timbre in the dynamic of *pp*. The left hand has a gayageum-like articulation, so it is important to imagine the performer imitating the flicking gesture of gayageum playing with all embellishments. Along with the tranquil and mysterious, static background, the middle layer gives some mobility with a percussive effect. A performer needs to decide beforehand how to accelerate the beamed nine repeated notes. Because

these nine notes should be played in two counts, it could be quite tricky to place the bass notes on the second beat. I recommend that the performer take time counting and demonstrating each single layer first, combining two layers next, and then playing all three together.

In the beginning of the movement, even though the long notes are connected through ties, a performer needs to lift both hands after ringing the long A \flat notes to play the middle layer (Example 2.15). The pedal should hold the long background sound while the middle-layer repeated notes are played by both hands, first the grace notes by the left hand and then the repeated E \flat by the right hand. There are two ways to handle the pedaling. One way is to push down the pedal and hold it all the way through two full measures before replaying the background notes. The other way is to use the sostenuto pedal for the first notes and separate the sound with the middle layer. In my opinion, it would be better to use the sostenuto pedal to make the middle percussive effect stand out instead of mingling all the sounds together. However, after the first two measures a performer can only use the damper pedal, as the top and bottom long-sustained notes no longer need to be held while the middle layer continues.

The most technically challenging part of this movement is in section B. The rhythmic difficulties caused by variations of complex rhythmic patterns in the left hand should be handled with subdivided rhythmic practices. For example, from m. 12 to 15 where the motive first transforms its rhythmic shape, the rhythmic value is divided into thirty-second notes from quarter notes. Furthermore, at first glance, the notes look irregularly tied together along with dotted eighth notes and sixteenth notes. When a

performer meets this kind of rhythmic complexity, I suggest extracting the shortest rhythmic value of the phrase—in this case, the thirty-second note—and counting thirty-second notes as 1, sixteenth notes as 2, eighth notes as 4, and quarter notes as 8, for a total of 32 in one bar. Furthermore, the length of each note is reduced from eight (quarter note) to seven at first repeat, six at the second repeat (mm. 16–18), roughly five at the third repeat (mm. 19–21), and four at the fifth repeat (mm. 23–25) (Example 2.20). The fourth and sixth repeat have their own rhythmic variation instead of the fixed value. The performer needs to count the divided beat first and put the right-hand part together, which has relatively regular beats written in.

Example 2.20: *Spiritual Dance*, second movement, left-hand rhythmic transformations, mm. 8–28

1. mm. 8-11



2. mm. 12-15



3. mm. 16-18



4 and 5. mm. 19-23



6. mm. 23-25



7. mm. 26-28



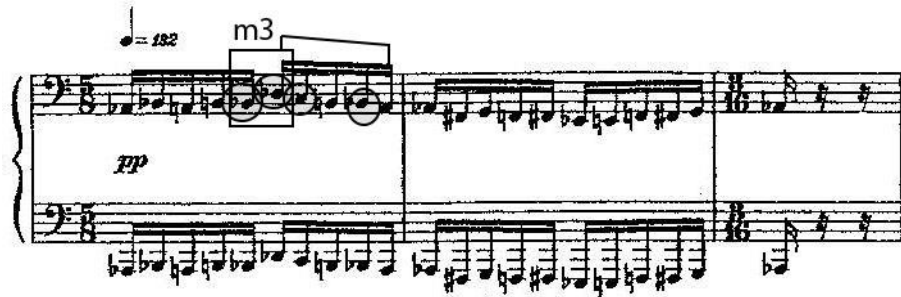
III. Third Movement

Detailed Analysis

Like all the other movements, the third movement can be largely divided into three sections and a short coda: A (mm. 1–36) and B (mm. 37–95), A' (mm. 96–128), and Coda (mm. 129–135). Although the formal structure is determined by way of written

textures, styles, and tempos, the intervallic motive unifies all sections. When we look closely at the intervals in the beginning of section A, the last note of the first beamed quintuplet is B \flat and it connects to the first note of the next quintuplet, D \flat , which is melodically up a minor third followed by a downward chromatic scale (Example 2.21).

Example 2.21: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, beginning of section A, mm. 1–3



This is trackable in the first melodic gesture of long-valued notes in section B: E \flat to G \flat (up a minor third) and F to E \flat (descending stepwise) (Example 2.22). It is repeated three times in different pitch levels, initiating a new beginning for each unit, a feature that will be discussed further later on.

Example 2.22: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, beginning of section B, mm. 37–39

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes marked 'm3' and a slur. The middle and bottom staves provide a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The measure numbers 37, 38, and 39 are indicated at the end of each staff.

Section A can be divided into two units based on where the melodic and rhythmic texture are changed: the first unit is mm. 1–15 and second unit is mm. 16–36 (Example 2.23).

Example 2.23: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 1–18

The musical score is for a piano piece in 4/4 time, spanning measures 1 to 18. It is divided into two main sections: Unit I (measures 1–14) and Unit II (measures 15–18). The score is written for piano and includes four distinct phrases, each with a dynamic marking and a unit label.

- Phrase 1:** Measures 1–4, marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). It features a series of eighth-note patterns with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5, and 1. A bracket labeled "Unit I" spans measures 1–4.
- Phrase 2:** Measures 5–8, marked *p* (piano). It continues the eighth-note patterns with fingerings 5 and 3. A bracket labeled "Unit I" spans measures 5–8.
- Phrase 3:** Measures 9–12, marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). It features a series of eighth-note patterns with fingerings 5, 3, 3, 3, and 1. A bracket labeled "Unit I" spans measures 9–12.
- Phrase 4:** Measures 13–14, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). It continues the eighth-note patterns with fingerings 5, 3, and 5. A bracket labeled "Unit I" spans measures 13–14.
- Unit II:** Measures 15–18, marked *f* (forte). It features a series of eighth-note patterns with fingerings 5, 3, 1, and 5. A bracket labeled "Unit II" spans measures 15–18. A boxed section is present in measure 15, containing a series of eighth-note patterns.

Unit I especially exhibits a mathematically progressive system through the extension and alteration of notes within four transformed phrases. As I mentioned in the overview section, the first measure presents two motives making an arch-like gesture—a mixed

pattern of whole steps and half steps in a zigzag motion, marked as motive *a*; and a five-note descending chromatic line, marked as motive *b*. In the subsequent measure, these two motives are shown in inverted shapes and finish with A \flat in the third measure, completing the first phrase. From the second phrase, Lim transforms motive *b* by adding one note to the original, which is also applied to the inverted version of motive *b*: 5 notes (mm. 1–2), 6 notes (mm. 4–7), 7 notes (mm. 9–10), and 8 notes (mm. 12–15). In addition, the odd-number grouped notes (3, 5, and 7) are strictly maintained by dividing the beams and measures during the manipulation until the arrival at Unit II. As the dynamic of each phrase grows from *pp* to *f* in Unit I, Unit II features a more intense and strong sound with the dynamics of *f* and *ff*. Furthermore, the newly added passage in the time signature of 4/4 (mm. 17–18) gives a conflicting rhythmic gesture as the even-numbered group of 4 first appears against the odd-numbered groups.

In Unit II, an excellent example of Lim's ability to unite all sections is shown. A phrase initiating Unit II has transformed figures from Unit I (Example 2.24).

Example 2.24: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 14–18

The image shows a musical score for measures 14-18 of the third movement of *Spiritual Dance*. The score is in 4/4 time. Measure 14 shows a right-hand arch-like gesture. Measure 16 shows a right-hand arch-like gesture and a left-hand new rhythmic gesture. Measures 17-18 show inversions of the right-hand arch-like gesture. Annotations include 'Unit II', 'from motive a', 'from motive b', 'new rhythmic gesture', and 'inversions'.

Two motives (*a* and *b*) in m. 1 (See Example 2.3) can be seen in the right-hand arch-like gesture (m. 16), and also in the inverted version (mm. 17–18) in both-hand unison in an all-zigzag pattern. In measure 16 in particular, while the transformed motive of Unit I is played in the right hand, a new figuration with a radical rhythmic gesture in a series of short and accented chord clusters appears in the left hand. These left-hand chord cluster shapes become the main rhythmic texture for all of section B.

Section B contains five subdivided sections: *a* (mm. 37–54), *b* (mm. 55–68), *a'* (mm. 69–74), *b'* (mm. 74–83), and *a''* (mm. 84–75). As mentioned briefly earlier, every *a* section begins with the same melodic gesture that is derived from section A section in three different pitch levels: E \flat (mm. 37–40), E (mm. 69–72), and A (mm. 84–87) (Examples 2.25, 2.26, and 2.27). These melodic lines are accompanied by the rhythmic gesture in chord clusters from Unit II in section A.

Example 2.25: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, subsection a, mm. 35–39

Example 2. 26: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, subsection b, mm. 68–70

Example 2. 27: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, subsection c, mm. 80–85

Subsection *a* displays a full melodic phrase in a total of nineteen measures. Featuring tranquil and sometimes chordal-like melodies, this section forms a contrast with the

Example 2.28: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 44–47

Example 2.29: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 52–56

53

Section *b* exhibits another contrast featuring tritone and rhythmic ostinato in the left hand (Example 2.29, mm. 55–56). This abrupt change of timbre reflects a return of the composer's conflict. The ostinato in the left hand is derived from the rhythmic gesture of section *a*, in a transformed form to the one-note figure instead of chord clusters. Also, we can observe the mixture of chromatic, whole-tone, and tritone sound in the right-hand figure. This interlocking of the ostinato and the ascending pattern creates a unique moment heading to the climax.

In section *a'*, after the extreme of the loud dynamics, only the extract of melodic gestures from section *a* are partly shown for the contrast. The striking moment is in the last section *a''* as Lim again tries to show all four elements in one place for the unity: 1) the first intervallic melodic gesture, 2) the mixture of chromatic, whole-tone, and tritone sound, 3) chordal-like gesture, and 4) the rhythmic gesture of chord clusters (Example 2.30).

Example 2.30: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 80–96

The musical score for Example 2.30, *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 80–96, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 80–85) features a piano staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The piano staff has a treble clef and a bass clef. The score includes annotations for *accel.*, *a tempo*, *ff*, and *mf*. The second system (mm. 86–92) continues the piano and bass staves. The third system (mm. 93–96) features a piano staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The score includes annotations for *a tempo*, *ff*, and *A'*. The score is annotated with several colored boxes and numbers: a blue box labeled '1.' around mm. 80–85, a red box labeled '2.' around mm. 86–92, a green box labeled '3.' around mm. 93–96, and an orange box labeled '4.' around mm. 93–96. The score also includes a section labeled 'A' and a section labeled 'A'.

The A and A' sections display an identical unfolding through systematic development, except for the several dynamic levels and the register of the last chromatic passage followed by a short coda, which presents a prolonged tone of pitch center, Ab, with the rhythmic gesture.

Performance and Practice Suggestions

There are many rapid passages in this movement that require agility and adequate fingerings. For example, in the unison-like passage in the beginning of the movement, the left hand does not play the same notes that the right hand plays after the first phrase. The first phrase is played in unison from pitch A \flat , but as the phrases go further, the pitch levels of the left hand ascend to B \flat , B, and C, while the right hand repeats the same pitch levels (Example 2.23, see the circled notes). Alongside the extension of the phrases caused by the accumulation of notes, this change of left-hand pitches makes for an incredibly challenging technical issue for the performers. To solve this problem, pianists must set proper fingering and make practice plans to achieve the accurate execution of these complicated phrases. I suggest dividing the long passage into short subphrases and setting different fingering positions for each phrase.

It is also important to pay attention to different articulations, as the composer has marked some specific phrases with slurs. In my opinion, all of Unit I should be played with a very light touch and a delicate sense of dynamic growth, until it reaches Unit II, where the first slurred lines appear. Because it is specially marked with slurs in measures 16, 19, and 20, and mm. 23–33, a performer must craft different tones colors and special touches between phrases.

Another technical issue in the third movement is combining the rhythmic ostinato of the left hand with the zigzagged pattern of sixteenth notes in the right hand in section *b* (Example 2.29, mm. 55–65). As the rhythmic ostinato displays an alternative gesture of small and big leaps, it is better to lock the hand when a performer plays small leaps and

jump to the next position when a big leap occurs. After figuring out the pattern for each hand, it is better for a performer to cut the phrase into small blocks, where two hands are played in different directions, and to practice those blocks separately. This practice allows for joining both hands to work together easily (Example 2.31).

Example 2.31: *Spiritual Dance*, third movement, mm. 55–61

The musical score for Example 2.31 consists of two systems of three staves each. The first system covers measures 52 to 56, and the second system covers measures 57 to 61. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first system begins with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The second system begins with a 't tempo' (tutti tempo) marking and a 'p' dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

IV. Fourth Movement

Detailed Analysis

The fourth movement is divided into five sections, including a bridge and a coda: A (mm. 1–34), B (mm. 35–58), bridge (mm. 59–73), A' (mm. 74–85), and Coda (mm. 85–97).

Even though it is in the structure of a ternary form, which was determined by the difference of its distinct rhythmic texture and articulation, the entire movement stays around the pitch focus D in the shape of major seventh chord, and sometimes in just the single pitch itself.

Section A is composed of four phrases, which continuously change shape and add new features: phrase *a* (mm. 1–12), transitional phrase *b* (mm. 13–22), phrase *c* (mm. 23–30), and transitional phrase *d* (mm. 31–34). Lim employs the interval of a third to utilize the triadic sound in both vertical and horizontal shapes in this section. The first measure of section A establishes a D major seventh chord as the mark of the central tone color (Example 2.32). After that, the triads in the left hand, which stack vertically in intervals of thirds (major and minor thirds) move down and up in parallel from D to B \flat for the first five measures. Raising a half-step to E \flat -flat in measure 5, the triads continue to move up and down from E \flat to G for the remainder of the six measures, descending to F \sharp at the end of the phrase *a*. The concept of these first twelve measures in the left hand gives us the main idea of the pitch focus and triadic sound, which will dominate the rest of the movement.

Example 2.32: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, section A, mm. 1–16

The musical score for Example 2.32, section A, mm. 1–16, is written for Piano. It begins with a D major 7th chord in the first measure. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Brackets below the staff indicate harmonic groupings: 'D and B-flat major triads' for measures 1-4, 'E-flat and G major triads' for measures 5-8, and 'F-sharp' for measures 9-12. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'a' (accendo).

The fourth movement's section especially has more traditional features from Classical and Romantic periods. These are the refined four-measure motivic phrases, triadic sound with usage of many triads and seventh chords, and a comparably simple and stable rhythmic texture. The reason why Lim particularly utilizes these Classical and Romantic features in the last movement is to establish an underlying concept that she has found a place to settle down. In my opinion, the simpler rhythm and more tonally stable harmonic language could be said to capture more peaceful and settled emotions that she would feel. Along with the ostinato in the right hand in the beginning, a wide leaping of the interval major seventh and ninth, this section exhibits a bell-like gesture, like church bells. This imitation of a church-bell sound reflects the return of the composer's journey to her own religious beliefs from a fight against oneself.

However, it is very interesting that Lim does not completely move back to the past. In section B, the new and innovative rhythmic texture emerges, this time keeping the triadic sound using broken major seventh chords. As the time signature changes from a simple meter of 3/4 to a compound meter of 9/8 and finally to a complex meter of 7/8, a steady pulse from section A abruptly changes to a gasping unbalanced rhythm (Example 2.33). Featuring improvisatory figures in the right hand, the ostinato with an odd-numbered beat keeps moving forward in the left hand, embracing an eighth rest that is sometimes in the middle and sometimes after the second or fourth beat metrically.

Example 2.33: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, section B, mm. 35–40

The musical score for Example 2.33, *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, section B, measures 35–40, is presented in a piano score format. The score is in 3/4 time and features piano (p), mezzo-forte (mf), and forte (f) dynamics. The score is annotated with handwritten markings: a red box labeled 'B' and 'a' at measure 35, a blue box labeled 'D' at measure 36, a blue box labeled 'Bb' at measure 41, a blue box labeled 'F#' at measure 45, and a blue box labeled 'D' at measure 48. A blue box labeled 'd' is also present at measure 48. A blue box labeled 'b' is at measure 37. A blue box labeled 'c' is at measure 41. A blue box labeled 'd' is at measure 48. A blue box labeled 'D' is at measure 48.

Section B is composed of five phrases, and each phrase repeats a certain pitch set in two measures followed by some repetition of the pitch set (Example 2.33). The division of these phrases is determined by the transformation of rhythm and pitch levels of this pitch set in the left hand: phrase *a* (mm. 35–40), *b* (mm. 41–44), *c* (mm. 45–48), *d* (mm. 49–54), and *e* (mm. 55–58). The pitches are consecutively transposed down by intervals of major thirds, from D4 down to one lower octave at D3 (D – B \flat – F \sharp – D).

As I mentioned above, in the left-hand ostinato, an eighth rest creates the break in every measure, and there are two break occurrences for every pitch collection presented. Here, Lim shifts the place of the first eighth rests in a quite metrical way. Except for the first measure of phrase *a* (m. 35), which displays longer value in the first two notes, the first eighth rest in the pitch collection is placed in the third beat. When the next phrase starts in measure 41, the rest moves to the fourth beat, and to the fifth beat in measure 45, where phrase *c* begins. Finally, the rest goes back to its original place along with the return of the prime pitch.

Interestingly, I found these hidden metrical system in rhythms and pitches make for a “order in chaos” moment in this movement. At first glance, we hear this section as continuous free passages because of the randomly played improvisatory passages in the right hand. However, a planned metrical access in the left hand gives a well-defined structure underneath. Because it is the last movement and marking the near-end of a personal spiritual journey, the systematic portion explains the provision of nature allowed by God, and the conscious “I” whose identity is not still completely settled is depicted in improvisatory fragments in the right hand.

Another remarkable moment in this movement is the bridge section, which unifies all four movements by presenting specific portions of each movement.³³ This nostalgic moment sheds light on every moment from the journey and connects to the last sections, section *a'* and Coda. After a shortened version of section A, the coda section comes to a close through a grandiose descending passage. Depicting a huge bell sound from heaven, each hand demonstrates the materials from sections A and B: paralleled triads from A in the left hand and the pitch set from B in the right hand, respectively (Example 2.34). The tempo of the right hand accelerates gradually through the decrease of note values as the pitches are transposed down a major third for three octaves until the arrival at D.

³³ I discussed this feature earlier in the overview section.

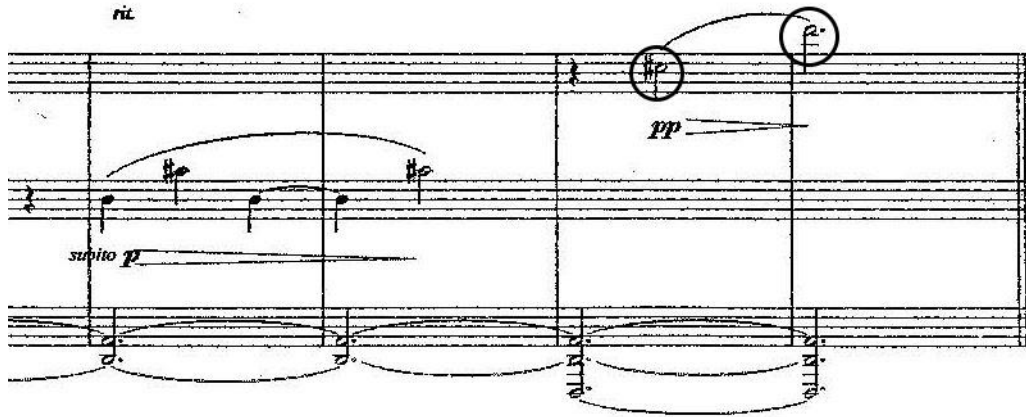
Example 2.34: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, Coda, mm. 83–92

Coda

 = triads (A)
 = pitch set (B)
 = transposed notes

The last four measures declare the final seeking through the conflict between C# and D, finding the arrival pitch focus, D, at the last measure (Example 2.35).

Example 2.35: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, Coda, mm. 93–97

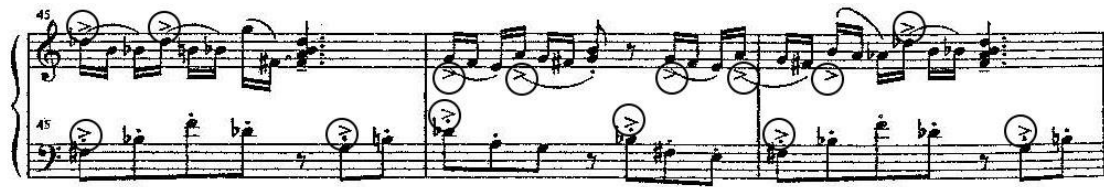


Performance and practice suggestions

To deliver the distant sound of large bells in section A, it is important to relax the wrists sufficiently in both hands. However, prior to thinking about the relaxation of the wrists, a performer could think about the way bells ring and know how piano strings work with hammers. The hammers inside of the piano strike the strings and vibrate to produce the sound, just as the clapper swings in the bell to make it ring. Even though piano performers use keyboards to manipulate the hammers to hit the strings, the ringing bells analogy still works, since a hammer and a keyboard are connected as one piece, like a long stick. Performers can treat their fingers as a part of the stick and imagine they are ringing the bell with those sticks in each note in section A. In order to simulate it, they need to control their wrists and fingers to be relaxed enough after each note to imitate the motion of the clapper.

Treating the polyrhythmic texture and irregular accents between hands in section B is another challenging moment in this movement. From measure 35, where the rhythmic texture changes, the faster rhythmic value with sixteenth notes in the right hand interrupts the ostinato pattern of the left hand (Example 2.33). Also, the improvisatory character, featuring large leaps combined with chord clusters, results in more technical challenges. As the conflicting accents are added to the right hand from measure 45, it is even harder to maintain rhythmic independence between hands (Example 3.36). The performer needs slow and detailed practice for the accented notes to prevent any loss of the rhythmic pulse.

Example 2.36: *Spiritual Dance*, fourth movement, Coda, mm. 45–47



We have looked at how all the movements of *Spiritual Dance* have their own characteristics, including interesting compositional techniques and musical elements. Each movement presents one's spiritual suffering and moments of conflict, sometimes with the longing for freedom. It seems that Lim expresses this depression and fear through the distortion of melodic tunes, irregular rhythmic patterns, nonharmonic timbre, and musical ideas from Korean traditional music.

The first movement is written in a variation format, the second half of the theme converted with extra notes, while the first half stays in the original form. The theme played by the left hand is always surrounded by enriched nonharmonic tones of sextuplets in the right hand, evoking the spiral dance of a wandering soul. The second movement especially shows some Korean traditional music elements as a way to express Lim's deep self-reflection. The widely spaced texture of three layers in improvisatory figures features the Korean traditional music ensemble, "Sinawi," rooted in shamanic music that exhibits sounds similar to Korean traditional instruments in each layer. In the third movement, the systematic approach to the notes is observed. Exquisite numerical compositions give a radical sound throughout the movement. As the conflict is resolved in the final movement, it describes a more peaceful and calm stage with fewer dissonances.

On the whole, the four movements are held together by the cyclic use of motives. The motivic fragments are so organically connected and combined together that it creates a perfect piece of deep self-reflection right before the piece ends, framing the entire piece as one whole journey.

CHAPTER THREE: ICE FLOWER (2006) AND A POEM ABOUT SPRING (2008)

Overview

Ice Flower is a piece written by the composer and inspired by natural phenomena experienced directly during her research years in Michigan, during the winter of 2003. Lim sublimated her impression of the shimmering fragility of the beautiful scene into a piano piece in a single movement.³⁴ The piece was commissioned by Professor Shin Bong-ae of Yonsei University in 2006, and premiered as the first song in the second part of her recital at Kumho Art Hall on August 31, 2006.

It is still dark and cold at dawn, and as the sun begins to rise after an early spring rain, light seeps through the frozen branches of a tree. Ranging across almost six octaves, *Ice Flower* displays this scene very well through the arch form of A-B-C-B-A in a single movement. A wide and open texture of notes enables the contrast of low and high registers in two layers, especially in section A. It is also visible with the textures of contrasting passages between the darkness of cold dawn in the low register and bright sunshine through the ice in the high register. Also, it is obvious that both hands should play each layer with a similar weight of importance, as they move pretty much independently of each other. However, section B employs a completely different texture of style than the first section. The left-hand ostinato accompanies the melodic gesture of

³⁴ From the interview with the composer by the author on February 17, 2021.

the right hand in broken chordal texture. Putting the notes in the middle register in this section, the narrowly packed range of register between the right and left hands, along with the usage of modes, reminds us of music of the Classical period. The short length of section C displays a very similar choral-like passage from the second movement of *Spiritual Dance*, and is interpreted as a praying or meditating moment.

Table 2. Overview of *Ice Flower*

Sections	Measures	Tempi	Pitch Focus	Features
A	1-40	♩ = 60	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Widely open texture of layers · Tritone(seven-note) clusters · Contrast of static and active blocks · Chromatic contrary motions
B	41-91	♩. = 84	F – B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Modal melody over the Ostinato · Cross use of duple and hemiola rhythms
C	92-111	♩ = 72		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chordal texture, contrast to the counterpoint of side sections · Parallel open-fifth
B'	112-152	♩. = 84	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Shortened version of B · Use of all the mixture of Octatonic, Whole-tone, and chromatic scales in the transitional passage
A'	153-179	♩ = 60	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · More emphasis on the pitch A through the left hand ostinatic bass note · Extreme contrast of the register at the end

A Poem about Spring was a semi-final designation for the 2008 Seoul International Competition in the Piano section, and is a work commissioned by the

competition. At that time, the composer came up with the theme of *A Poem about Spring*, from the fact that the competition's semifinal would be held in April 2008. Therefore, in this piece, various images from the theme of spring are emerging as factors that develop the music. As a large number of promising pianists from all over the world participated in the competition, this piece requires high-level techniques and the ability to communicate with the audience.

This is a one-movement piece that is basically divided into three sections of ABA form in terms of the different colorations of harmonic language. However, it can also be considered as an impromptu divided into eight smaller sections (ABCDC'D'A'B'), as the textures of notes change clearly in both visible and audible ways. Also, the tempo changes in each section, except between a and b. In my interview with the composer, she spoke of her fondness for working with new and stimulating ideas when she is in the process of composing, which means her process is not really programmed or planned beforehand.³⁵ Based on the characteristics of this song, which expresses the inspiration of spring as a poem, the author tends to interpret more toward the impromptu structure divided into eight smaller sections, which is more adaptable to this piece. Table 3 gives an overview of the structure.

³⁵ From the interview with the composer by the author on February 17, 2021.

Table 3. Overview of *A Poem about Spring*

Sections		Measures	Tempi	Pitch focus	Features
A	a	1–21	♩ = 92	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Elongated trills with ornaments depicting birds singing · Parallel fifth and contrary motion in fast passages · Contrast of horizontal (melodical) and vertical (chordal) texts
	b	22–46	♩ = 92	D-A-E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Percussive texture on repeated notes paired with accented dissonance · Similar phrases stated in three different pitch focuses · Occasionally features motivic idea from section A
B	c	47–55	♩ = 52	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chromatic use in wide intervals (sevenths, ninths, and seconds) · Use of triads blended with dissonance in polytonal texture
	d	56–83	♩. = 84	E ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Contrapuntal texture featuring modal melody from <i>Ice Flower</i> · Creates a climax developing the thematic idea through thickening the texture, extending range of register and dynamics, extreme tempo changes
	c'	84–92	♩ = 60	B ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Wide-open texture of notes with similar coloration as found in section C
	d'	93–101	♩. = 84	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Shortened from section D, rearrangement of fragments, but in a more developed way
A'	a'	102–119	♩ = 92	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Similar to section A but presented in pitch focus D
	b'	120–132	♩ = 84	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Coda-like section bring materials from section B, and the bass ostinato from section B of <i>Ice Flower</i> · Highly developmental passages

Lim composed *Ice Flower* two years before *A Poem about Spring*, and it is worth noting that *Ice Flower* may have laid the groundwork for *A Poem about Spring*, based on the use of thematic materials and specific compositional features. Because the composition of *Ice Flower* was inspired by impressions of beautifully crystalized ice flowers in the time of late winter, one may assume that the later work, which is about spring, carries on the composer's timeline from the cold of winter to the warmth of spring.³⁶ I want to discuss several compositional features that Lim employs differently in these two pieces, which can be seen as both similar and different.

Thematic similarity

There are several thematic similarities found in these two works. Firstly, in section A of *Ice Flower*, three distinct motivic ideas are shown in the beginning: motives *a*, *b*, and *c*.

Motive *a* consists of seven semitones from A down to D \sharp , which is a tritone (Example 3.1). The starting note, A, is dropped to D \sharp , introducing the tritone sound and rebounding to G \sharp right before the chromatic downslide and finish, with A going up a minor third.

³⁶ From the interview with the composer by the author on February 17, 2021.

Example 3.1: *Ice Flower*, motive *a*, m. 6

6 A and D# [Tritone]

seven semitones

motive a

sfz *8^{vb}*

Presented about nine times in section A, motive *a* is displayed in a variety of transformed shapes: extended first note with fifth note omitted (m.10), extended with extra notes (m. 14, 16–17), shortened (m. 21), and inverted (m. 24 and 31) (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2: *Ice Flower*, transformations of motive *a*, m. 10, 14, 21, and 31

m.10

extended note value

fifth note -> rest

mf

f

m.14

original notes

added notes

m.21

Omitted C

f

m.31

inverted

sfz *8^{vb}*

The format used without the fifth note was chosen in *A Poem about Spring* to be presented two times in section A, starting with the notes A and D. The motive is combined with another motive, *b*, the extended phrases of which will be explained in the following paragraph (Example 3.3).

Example 3.3: *A Poem about Spring*, motive *a*, m. 12

The image shows a musical score for measures 12 of a piece in 4/4 time. The score is written for three staves: a treble staff, a middle staff, and a bass staff. Motive *a* is highlighted with a blue box in the middle staff, consisting of a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) followed by a quarter note (B). Motive *b* is highlighted with a red box, consisting of a dyad of two notes (F# and B) in the middle staff, and a corresponding dyad in the bass staff. The interval between the two notes in the dyad is labeled as m7 (minor seventh) and m9 (minor ninth). The bass staff also features a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) and a quarter note (B). The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signature, and accidentals.

Extracting two notes from the front and back respectively of the seven semitones mentioned above, motive *b* is the two dyad notes of an interval of a major seventh (Example 3.4). Each dyad is headed in a different direction and features a symmetrical texture with a thirty-second rest between them. This angular, ragged gesture describes the pointed surface of an ice flower (Figure 1).

Example 3.4: *Ice Flower*, motive *b*, m. 7



Figure 1: Ice flowers³⁷



In measures 15 and 16 of *A Poem about Spring*, motive *b* is transformed from a quintuplet shape to a sextuplet shape by adding extra notes in front of the dyads. The sextuplet motive with added notes creates distinctly different sounds. The much softer texture seems to symbolize moving closer to the warmth of spring when flowers bloom

³⁷ “Ice flower,” Floravin, accessed April 19, 2021, <https://blog.naver.com/daviny1231/50161084091>.

and birds chirp. This motivic idea is developed further in section B. Reminiscent of the sounds of birds, the primitive motivic idea of a major seventh is combined with repeated and accented notes in this section. A very percussive and intense character in this section reveals Bartok's influence (Example 3.5).

Example 3.5: *A Poem about Spring*, motive *b*, mm. 22–23

The musical score for Example 3.5 is presented in a three-staff format (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece begins at measure 22, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand (treble clef) contains a series of sixteenth-note runs with accented notes. A blue box labeled 'M7' highlights a major seventh interval in the right hand. The left hand (bass clef) plays a series of chords, with a blue box highlighting a major seventh interval. The score concludes with a 3/8 time signature change at the end of measure 23.

An open texture of three consecutive chords constitutes motive *c* in *Ice Flower*. Here again, the seven semitones derived from motive *a* are used over the parallel fifths in the left hand. The open texture of the chords creates an empty and hollow ambience, and ultimately these short phrases give a unique sonority to the piece (Example 3.6).

Example 3.6: *Ice Flower*, motive c, m. 11

While not using the exact same seven semitones and intervals from *Ice Flower*, Lim uses three chords with very similar texture in slightly different intervals without losing any of the unique sonority in *A Poem about Spring* (Example 3.7). Both pieces reflect the sunshine coming through the branches.

Example 3.7: *A Poem about Spring*, motive c, mm. 8–10

Besides these motivic similarities, there is an obvious common theme used in the two pieces. The eight-measure-long melodic phrase on the right hand is used as a secondary theme in both pieces in B (B') and D (D') sections respectively. In contrast to the contemporary harmonic language that is based on the combination of whole-tone and chromatic scales in other sections, a “modality” is introduced in this secondary theme. When the theme first presents, it is in Lydian mode: F Lydian in *Ice Flower* and Eb Lydian in *A Poem about Spring* (Examples 3.8 and 3.9).

Example 3.8: *Ice Flower*, section B, mm. 41–55

The image displays a musical score for section B of *Ice Flower*, measures 41 through 55. The score is written for piano and includes several annotations highlighting specific musical features:

- Measure 41:** Marked with a blue box labeled **B**. The tempo is *poco a poco rit.* and the time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#).
- Measure 42:** The tempo changes to 8/8, indicated by a quarter note equal to 84. The dynamics are *p* (piano).
- Measure 43:** A blue box labeled **Theme in F Lydian** highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 44:** A red box labeled **Slurred notes in step motion 5+3** highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 45:** A green box labeled **Repeated notes combined with accented clusters** highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 49:** A pink box labeled **Three-note pattern** highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 50:** A blue box labeled **F Phrygian notes** highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 51:** A blue box labeled **fragments used in further development** points to a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 53:** A pink box highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 54:** A green box highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.
- Measure 55:** A red box highlights a melodic phrase in the right hand.

Example 3.9: *A Poem about Spring*, section D, mm. 56–68

D Theme in Eb Lydian 7

mp

thicker texture in octaves

53

58

62

66

Subsequent phrases in both pieces develop further by using fragments of three thematic materials: the slurred first five notes of the Lydian scale followed by three downward notes marked with a separate slur; repeated notes combined with accented notes; and three notes patterned in step-motion (see the descriptions in the Example 3.8 and 3.9).

Furthermore, adding a Phrygian scale on top of Lydian, the developmental phrase ultimately displays all twelve tones (see the circled notes in the Examples 3.8 and 3.9). As a result, the three thematic materials from the original theme tangle themselves freely, displaying whole-tone and chromatic lines that are almost improvisatory in character. In *A Poem about Spring*, the developing texture is much more thickly layered than in *Ice Flower*, using octaves, additional notes, and stronger dynamics, ultimately reaching a huge range of the keyboard.

Even though the same theme is used in both works, it is quite interesting to observe how the phrase sounds different with two distinct styles of left-hand accompaniments. In *Ice Flower*, the ostinato employing triads without the third pervades everywhere the modal theme is present. In addition, Lim brings a bitonality in this section by alternating E-major and F-major chords under F Lydian mode—broken chords in E major sometimes conflict and sometimes match tonally.

In the same concept of polytonality, however, the left hand in *A Poem about Spring* is engaged as more of an additional layer than the accompaniment. The left hand has an independent melodic line beside the thematic melody in the right hand, displaying a question-and-answer quality characteristic of Baroque style. For example, in measure

56, the right hand speaks with slurred sixteenth notes as the left hand responds with a linear melody of grouped sixteenth notes in measure 57. This conversation-like gesture continues in this format in every two measures, as shown in Example 3.10.

Example 3.10: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 56–59

The musical score for Example 3.10 shows measures 56 through 59. The right hand (treble clef) plays slurred sixteenth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a linear melody of grouped sixteenth notes. Red boxes highlight these phrases in measures 56, 57, 58, and 59. Blue arrows indicate the conversational relationship between the hands, showing how the right hand's phrase in one measure is answered by the left hand's phrase in the following measure.

In the following phrase the conversation enters an imitative stage, accompanying a much thicker texture that extends to the climax of the piece (Example 3.11).

Example 3.11: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 72–74

The musical score for Example 3.11 shows measures 72 through 74. The right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) are shown. Blue boxes highlight specific melodic phrases in both hands across measures 72, 73, and 74. The texture is thicker than in Example 3.10, with more complex harmonic structures and overlapping lines.

Symmetry

The characteristic of symmetry is often found in Lim's piano works. Shown earlier in *Spiritual Dance*, the frequent use of inversions of thematic phrases displays her affinity for symmetrical ideas. In *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring*, however, Lim greatly expands her interest in symmetry, applying it to more extended areas in evermore sophisticated ways.

Structurally, the use of ternary and arch forms is a part of the evidence that Lim intends this sense of symmetry in her works. This principle of symmetry is used not only in terms of structure but also as a tool to create new tones in her music. Lim uses many symmetrical features as an evolutionary device for breaking down the traditional tonal system. She breaks away from the traditional compositional system by using the chromatic technique more intensively to treat twelve notes equally. In addition, employing tritone and symmetrical scales like octatonic, whole-tone, and chromatic scales enables her to manipulate scales to be transposed to other notes while retaining the same notes as the original scale.

For example, motive *a* in *Ice Flower* exhibits all seven semitones within a tritone distance. Depending on where the pitch focus moves, the motive appears freely without any restrictions, starting with A, A \flat , E, E \flat , and sometimes in inversion in section A (Example 3.12).

Example 3.12: *Ice Flower*, mm. 6, 10, 14, and 16

The image displays four measures of a musical score for 'Ice Flower'. Each measure is labeled with its measure number (m.6, m.10, m.14, m.16) and a circled letter indicating a specific pitch or interval. A blue box in each measure highlights a descending eighth-note scale. The score includes various dynamic markings (f, sfz, mf, p) and articulation markings (loco, 3).

On top of that, motive *a* is developed to a linearly symmetrical shape having contrary motion with both hands moving in other directions, involving the expansion of the interval range from tritone to octave with all twelve tones (see the circled notes in Example 3.13). This motivic idea is further developed by mirroring the motive with an axis of symmetry—here the axis is “C” as both hands play the same pitch intervals in the opposite direction (Example 3.13).

Example 3.13: *Ice Flower*, mm. 10 and 16

The image displays two pages of a musical score for 'Ice Flower'. The left page shows measures 10 through 15. A red line is drawn across the staves, indicating a symmetrical shape of 12 tones. The right page shows measures 16 through 21. A blue line is drawn across the staves, indicating an axis of symmetry. A green arrow points from the left page to the right page.

A similar example of the axis of symmetry is observed in *A Poem about Spring*.

Motive *a* from *Ice Flower* also accompanies an inverted motive *a* in the left hand with an axis of symmetry. But here, the first appearance of motive *a* follows the transformed version of motive *b* and switches places after two measures, displaying another symmetrical shape in a longer phrase (Example 3.14).

Example 3.14: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 12–17

The use of the octatonic scale is found in section B' of *Ice Flower* (Example 3.15). Here, the way of displaying the octatonic scale is quite unique. The bottom notes in the left hand elevate from F1 to F4 for three octaves in a zigzag motion, alternating the intervals of perfect fifth and fourth, and sometimes tritone and minor second. At first glance, the octatonic scale in this passage is hardly noticeable or hearable because of the inserted notes in between the octatonic scale. However, when we pick up the first, third, and fifth notes in every measure, the octatonic scale is hidden by the notes of the fifth and fourth intervals. And the pattern of the right hand, mixed with whole-tone and chromatic qualities, gives hints suggesting the scale tones of the octatonic in the first, fourth, and last notes in every measure. As a result, this transitional passage exhibits a new texture of

timbre created from the combination of octatonic, whole-tone, and chromatic scales, as well as tritone.

Example 3.15: *Ice Flower*, mm. 139–148

The musical score for Example 3.15, *Ice Flower*, measures 139–148, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 139–141) is in bass clef and features a piano (p) dynamic. It includes a red bracket labeled "octatonic scale" spanning measures 139–141. The second system (measures 142–145) is in treble clef and features a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. It includes a red bracket labeled "octatonic scale" spanning measures 142–145. The third system (measures 146–148) is in bass clef and features a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. It includes a red bracket labeled "octatonic scale" spanning measures 146–148. The score is annotated with various musical notations and labels:

- Measure 139: Bass clef, piano (p) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.
- Measure 142: Treble clef, mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red. Notes are labeled with pitch classes: F, F#, G#, A, Bb, C.
- Measure 146: Bass clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red. Notes are labeled with pitch classes: Db, D, E.
- Measure 148: Treble clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.
- Measure 149: Bass clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.

The score also includes various musical notations and labels:

- Measure 139: Bass clef, piano (p) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.
- Measure 142: Treble clef, mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red. Notes are labeled with pitch classes: F, F#, G#, A, Bb, C.
- Measure 146: Bass clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red. Notes are labeled with pitch classes: Db, D, E.
- Measure 148: Treble clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.
- Measure 149: Bass clef, mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. Octatonic scale bracketed in red.

Contrast

Lim employs “tension and release” as the key feature in these two pieces. In other words, the contrast of different textures in rhythm, tempo, dynamic, contour, and harmonic language drives the music’s vitality from beginning to end.

Firstly, the contrast between the blocks of static and active is shown in the A sections of both *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring* (Examples 3.16 and 3.17). It is very easy to see where the texture changes in these A sections. The static moment with longer valued notes abruptly changes its texture to a fast and wavy melodic gesture, and it continues to the next static-moment block with long and sustained notes followed by the active-moment block again. Not only is the speed of the notes different, but also the array of the notes is different too. Notes are arranged in a quite vertical way in harmonic chordal figures when they are in static moments, while in more active blocks, notes are moving in a horizontal direction more melodically. Indeed, this is how Lim unfolds both the first and last sections and keeps the phrases moving forward with tension and release.

Example 3.16: The beginning of *Ice Flower*, mm. 1–13

The musical score for the beginning of *Ice Flower* (mm. 1–13) is presented in four systems. The first system (mm. 1–5) is labeled "static" and features a single pitch (A) in the bass clef, starting with a very soft dynamic (*pp*) and moving to a forte dynamic (*f*) by measure 5. The second system (mm. 6–8) is labeled "active" and shows more complex rhythmic patterns, including a forte dynamic (*f*) and a mezzo-forte dynamic (*mf*). The third system (mm. 9–11) continues the active patterns with a mezzo-forte dynamic (*mf*) and a forte dynamic (*f*). The fourth system (mm. 12–13) shows a piano dynamic (*p*) and a forte dynamic (*f*). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*pp*, *f*, *mf*, *p*), articulation (*sfz*), and phrasing (*locos*).

In the beginning of *Ice Flower*, the introduction starts in a single pitch (A) with very soft dynamic (*pp*) and with half notes. The intensity of this passage moves to a

higher point through the growth of the texture and dynamic by adding one semitone and moving to a louder dynamic. It seems to be released with the sudden *subito piano* and back to a single note in measure 5. However, the trill transforms to a fast passage with thirty-second notes featuring a wavy melodic contour. Keeping the dynamic intensity as *forte*, the sustained single tone A suddenly goes into a static moment accompanied by a four-note cluster in the left hand. In measure 7, the mirrored motive with an interval of major sevenths suddenly breaks the silence again with a fast and abrupt quintuplet lingering A, which connects to next active passage. A sense of relaxation occurs in measures 8 and 9 as a sustained A and a seven-note cluster provide the longest static moment.

Example 3.17: The beginning of *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 1–4

The similar contrast of textures is shown in section A of *A Poem about Spring* (Example 3.17). Long sustained trills contrast with the fast moments in prolonged passages with parallel fifth motion. Sometimes slow chordal texture contrasts with fast

passages in a contrary motion. Indeed, there are more interesting contrasts in *A Poem about Spring*, as subsections *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d* show such big character changes. Lim creates a variety of sounds and textures by contrasting all sections with different textures and rhythms.

Section B of *A Poem about Spring* features persistent repeated notes with accented notes in random places (Example 3.18). The tempo is unchanged from section A; however, the nonstop, repeated-note figure actually makes a huge contrast in both rhythmic intensity and melodic gesture. While section A displays the contrast between fast and slow passages, section B exclusively exhibits a percussion-like gesture throughout. Occasionally featuring the motivic phrase from the active block in section A, only two layers are presented—repeated notes as a stubborn ostinato, and accented notes that are mostly marked in a different stave.

Example 3.18: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 22–25

The intense and percussion-like section B marks a big contrast to section C. Changing to an almost twice as slow tempo, from $\text{♩} = 92$ to $\text{♩} = 52$, the lyrical melodic gesture is presented as having chromatic sonority with intervals of seventh and second (Example 3.19). In a very short length, reaching only nine measures long, section C is reminiscent of the last movement of *Spiritual Dance*. Especially from measures 51 to 55, a bell-like gesture distancing mostly in major seventh and augmented fourth is a prominent motive that symbolizes a peaceful moment. We could think of section C as the released moment between sections B and D.

Example 3.19: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 44–52

The musical score for Example 3.19, mm. 44–52, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 44–52) shows a piano accompaniment with triplets and a vocal line. The tempo is marked as 52. Red boxes highlight specific chords: a 2nd interval and a p 7th chord in the vocal line at measure 52, and M7 and TT chords in the piano line at measures 50 and 51. The second system (mm. 48–52) shows the piano accompaniment continuing with triplets and a vocal line. Red boxes highlight specific chords: M7 and TT chords in the piano line at measures 50 and 51, and M7 and TT chords in the vocal line at measures 50 and 51. The tempo is marked as 52.

Moving forward to section D, the tempo changes to $\text{♩} = 84$. There is no dramatic contrast in tempo, rhythm, or dynamic as between previous sections; however, section D presents a new and creative style through the innovative harmonic language mentioned earlier in this chapter. Lim borrows modes that combine with other tonal harmonies, resulting in an atonal sound with polytonal texture. On top of that, the rhythmic gesture even reminds us of the dance movements of Baroque suites. Lim alternates 5/8 and 6/8 meters back and forth consistently, and the shortened half-beat in 5/8 creates a tension that comes from the lack of the last beat. The use of hemiola sometimes blurs the lines

between measures, moving freely in and out and disrupting the hierarchy of the traditional meter system (Example 3.20).

Example 3.20: *A Poem about Spring*, mm. 53–61

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 53 to 61. The time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked 'mp'. A blue box highlights a 'hemiola' in measure 59, where two measures of music are compressed into one. A red box highlights a section in measure 60. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves.

Through the contrast of the musical elements in certain blocks of musical passages or sections, Lim makes an attempt at replacing the traditional harmonic tension and release. There is no sense of harmonic resolution in Lim's piano works, as she does not use a traditional harmonic system, which always requires a resolution into a stable harmony. Instead, an explicit contrast serves as a source from which to go forward and make performers and listeners experience and, at the same time, explore new sonority or

timbre. And *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring* distinctly exhibit her intentions for these contrasts.

Performance and practice suggestions

Because of the irregular rhythms and frequent meter changes in both *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring*, performers must keep track of a pulse throughout the piece. The irregular rhythms are generated by many short-valued notes and rests and triplets grouped in three, five, seven, and nine. The combination of these factors makes it difficult for performers to count the correct beats. Also, the meter changes so often, almost in every one or two measures—especially in *A Poem about Spring*—that performers should be aware of all the rests and count and express their values very precisely. It is important to know how many subdivided notes fit into longer-valued and tied notes correctly. To do that, I suggest that performers get the bottom numbers of the time signatures first and decide which note should be the standard. The next task will be marking all the divisions of every beat and practicing with the metronome in order to not lose control of the underlying pulse, which is frequently obscured by syncopations and accents off the regular beat.

In addition, the performer needs to have a delicate sense of dynamics in order to express subtle differences among all levels of dynamics within the phrases as well as the differences between sections. There are several moments that require sudden dynamic changes, such as measures 4–35, 135–137, and 162–165 in *Ice Flower* and measures 9–11, 44–47, and 74–76 in *A Poem about Spring*. There might be some preparations needed

regarding how performers control the volume to maximize the effect of their expression. Similarly, there are sections where the dynamic level increases gradually over a long span of time as the texture get thicker toward the climax. For example, the B' section of *Ice Flower* spans almost 40 measures, with a long crescendo starting from *mp* reaching to *ff* and *subito piano* to *ff* where propelling of the intensity finishes. It is necessary to plan the distribution of the degree of sound progressively.

There are many places in these two pieces that require highly refined techniques, and one of the most difficult technical problems a performer confronts in *A Poem about Spring* is playing the rapidly repeated notes while changing the dynamics precisely with fingering playing parallel and contrary motions.

In *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring*, Lim makes exquisite motivic transformations and unique colorations through her own compositional features. The motivic elements used in *Ice Flower* are transformed into different shapes inside the piece itself; furthermore, they are repurposed in *A Poem about Spring* to create a new sonority. The three motivic ideas and secondary theme shown first in *Ice Flower* are used as the primitive factor to be developed and transformed in *A Poem about Spring*, expressing how nature revives at the end of winter as spring approaches in the seasonal cycle of death and rebirth.

In addition, through the use of symmetrical features in structures, harmonies, and melodic contours, Lim sought in these compositions to move away from the traditional tonal system and freely place individual notes in her desired spots. Moreover, by giving

contrasts to the sections and even between phrases, Lim uses contrastive characteristics as a driving force for the piece to move it forward through tension and relaxation.

CHAPTER FOUR: FANTASIA ON A THEME OF CHOPIN (2009)

Overview

Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 2, seems to be singing the dreary inner side behind glamour. Harmony, which unfolds under slow-moving melodies, changes delicately and subtly and conflicts and harmonizes with itself. I wrote this *Fantasia* inspired by fascinating sonorities that frequently escape their traditional harmonic echoes. I am imagining that I am having a conversation with Chopin about my own musical language beyond time and space . . .³⁸

— Jiesun Lim

Commissioned by a pianist Miran Song, *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin* was premiered in October 2009 by Song. As the title suggests, Lim borrows the theme from one of Chopin's more dissonant pieces, Prelude, Op. 28, No.2. She was attracted to this particular Prelude because of the unique sonority that comes from the nonharmonic tones under the incomparably slow melody.³⁹ And as stated in her reprogram note and hinted at in the piece's title, Lim in her *Fantasia* illustrates with a delicate touch the harmonic features such as the brutish tritone and chromaticism.

Through the free-form genre of fantasy, the composer was able to develop and transform the theme in more free and unique ways. Distinct in their textures and colors, sections in *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin* are clearly delineated through their own tempo markings and sometimes by rests between sections. Lasting approximately nine to ten minutes, *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin* consists of ten distinctive subsections total.

³⁸ Translated from program note, October 2009.

³⁹ From the interview with the composer by the author on February 17, 2021.

Table 4. Overview of *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*

Sections		Measures	Tempi	Pitch Focus	Features
A		1–28	♩ = 108	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-note motive in octave unison showing the characteristic of sequence Long arpeggiated improvisatory passages
B		29–59	♩ = 52	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhythmic change from the first three-note motive with chordal accompaniment Pentatonic fast passages also in improvisatory figure
C		60–100	♩ = 92	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open texture with three layers Three-note motive sets in the middle with wider intervals Outer layers show long and sustained octaves in fifth The first appearance of motive <i>b</i> and left-hand accompaniment of Chopin's Prelude
D		101–173	♩ = 120	B-A-G-D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motive <i>a</i> in two-note clusters Consistent sixteenth notes throughout the section Percussive texture on repeated notes either over or under the motive
C' (Chopin)		174–194	♩ = 60	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original theme of the Prelude is fully presented, paired with the texture of section C with wide-open chords
Coda	A'B'	195–205	♩ = 108	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The motivic elements of A and B coexist
	D'	206–217	♩ = 120	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortened D section

	A''	218–222	♩ = 108		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Very brief and transitional version of section A · Gradually thickens in texture
	C''	223–227	♩ = 60		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Compressed C section
	A	228–235	♩ = 108	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The repetition of the compressed motivic idea from section A

A remarkable compositional feature to look in *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*⁴⁰ is the unity of the entire piece. As discussed earlier in *Spiritual Dance*, Lim has a certain affinity for integrating the piece through the thematic materials. In *Spiritual Dance*, the fragmented themes of the preceding movements appeared in the final movement, giving a sense of unity; and in this *Fantasia*, the entire work is integrated in such a way that the borrowed theme is transformed and developed in all subsections. In other words, Chopin's theme in Prelude, Op.28, No.2⁴¹, permeates throughout Lim's *Fantasia* through the thematic transformations.

Lim seems to have introduced the practice of thematic transformation as an homage to the Romantic era in the nineteenth century. Just as Liszt used this method of composition as a source for musical development in his Piano Sonata in B minor, Lim subtly uses thematic transformation in her *Fantasia*. Thematic motives appear in each

⁴⁰ Hereafter referred to as *Fantasia* for the remainder of the chapter.

⁴¹ Hereafter referred to as *Prelude* for the remainder of the chapter.

section as living, independent individuals with different characters defined through permutation, augmentation, diminution, and fragmentation.

Furthermore, Lim uses a sort of “cumulative technique,” which is the technique that gradually develops the music until it announces the main theme of the composition at the end. This is “a complex form virtually unique to Charles Ives.”⁴² In the beginning of *Fantasia*, the only three-note motive of Chopin’s Prelude is introduced (see examples of the beginning of both Prelude and *Fantasia*, Examples 4.1 and 4.3). This motivic fragment is constantly transformed by changing its combined rhythm, pitch, and texture while maintaining the intervallic factor, down a perfect fourth and up a minor third, each time the section changes. However, as the piece progresses, we can see that the rest of the theme appears intermittently in fragmented shapes. Then, the whole theme of the Prelude is fully presented, almost identical to the original shape, right before the last big coda-like section, where all the transformed thematic figures reappear. A more detailed analysis about the use of cumulative technique in *Fantasia* will be discussed in a later section.

Thematic transformation

There are two motivic ideas, motive *a* and *b*, forming the theme in Chopin’s Prelude (Example 4.1). The three-note motive mentioned above is motive *a* (mm. 3–4) and the following melody is motive *b* (mm. 5–7). If we abbreviate motive *b*, extracting the neighboring and repeated notes, the first two notes are in the interval of down a perfect

⁴² J. Peter Burkholder, “‘Quotation’ and Emulation: Charles Ives’s Uses of His Models,” *The Musical Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (1985): 3. Accessed April 26, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/948169>.

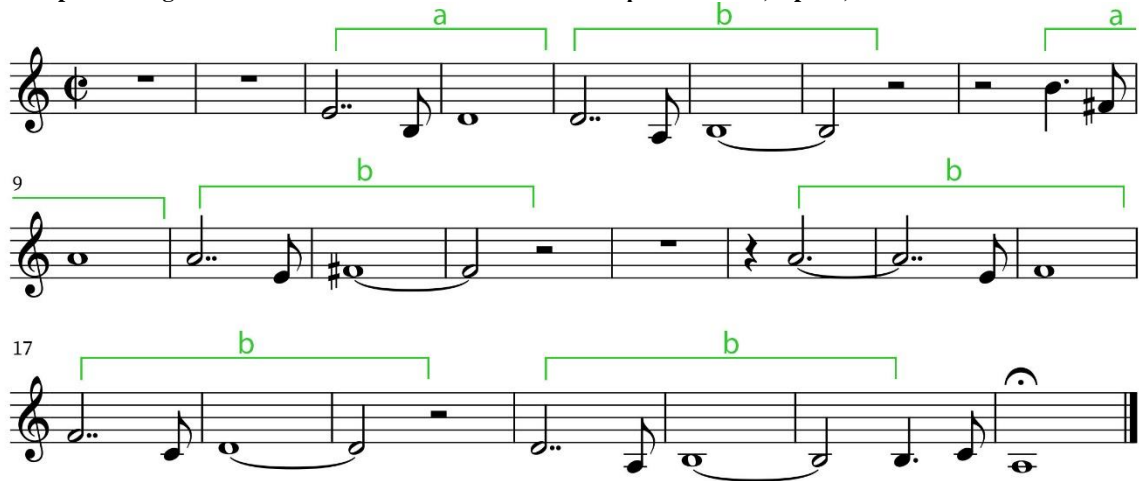
fourth. It is the same for both motives, but each motive ends up having the interval of up a minor third or major second, respectively.

Example 4.1: Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 2, mm. 1–8

The musical score for Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 2, mm. 1–8, is shown. The piece is in 2/4 time, B-flat major, and marked 'Lento'. The score includes a piano introduction (mm. 1-4) and two motives, 'a' and 'b'. Motive 'a' (mm. 5-6) is marked 'mf' and consists of a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. Motive 'b' (mm. 7-8) is marked 'mf' and consists of a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. The score includes fingerings, dynamics, and interval markings (P4, m3, M2).

In Prelude No. 2, Chopin employs motives *a* and *b* twice as full sentences, transposing it the second time and finishing the piece with the sequence of motive *b* (see Example 4.2 for a reduction of the score).

Example 4.2: Right-hand motives in abbreviated form in Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 2



From the introduction, the motives are accompanied by an ostinato pattern composed of two voices: the upper voice moves in chromatic motion while the lower voice jumps up more than an octave from E to G (Example 4.1). When these two voices are played together, a somewhat bizarre, one might even say grotesque, sound is heard. The clash of two tones, A# and G, in the second eighth notes of each voice tangle with the chromatic tones generated by horizontal movement of former and later notes. This dissonance created by the harmonic conflicts in the left-hand predominates the entire piece, with the traditional tonal cadence, a functional harmony V7-I (E7-Am), at the end. This feature is quite rare in Chopin's compositions.

Jiesun Lim draws several musical elements from this Prelude to make the *Fantasia* special, although not in exactly the same format. Rather than just “take and variate” the theme, Lim extracts: the intervallic idea from the theme, tone color from the

harmony, and the sequential motivic development from the compositional technique that Chopin has used.

Instead of introducing the harmonic aspect as in the Prelude, the *Fantasia* begins with a long melodic unison (Example 4.3). Keeping only the same pitch (interval) from the first appearance of motive *a*, the rhythm, dynamic, articulations, and the ultimate ambience appear differently: 1) a long double dotted half note paired with an eighth note into two short eighth notes played in staccato; 2) a whole note D re-formed as a half note tied to an eighth note; and 3) a soft dynamic featuring a gloomy and dark sound turns into triumphant fanfare in *ff*. The following three downward notes in half steps (D \flat , C, and B) are the echo of the three notes (F \sharp , E, and D) in motive *b*, including the appoggiatura. This little echo, which also serves to help connect with the following passages, becomes more prominent in section B, as does motive *a*.

Example 4.3: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 1–8

The musical score for Example 4.3, *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, measures 1–8, is presented in three systems. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108. The piano part begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The first system (measures 1–4) features a 'motive a' (blue) and an 'echo' (red). The second system (measures 5–8) includes a 'loco' section and an 'accel.' (accelerando) section. The third system (measures 9–12) shows a 'rit.' (ritardando) section followed by 'a tempo'. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, sixteenth notes, and a tritone (highlighted in green). The piano part is marked with 'ff' and 'fff' dynamics. The violin part is marked with 'V' and 'VI'.

As Chopin employs sequential writing through motive *b* in the last section of the Prelude, Lim adopts this idea for *Fantasia* to develop the motivic phrases in much more explosive and expanded appearances. For example, from measures 2 to 4, the segments derived from motives *a* and *b* overlap, showing melodic sequence descending for more

than four octaves. Ending the sequence in the same pitches from the beginning (from motive *a*: E-B-D), the left hand repeats motive *a* two more times, again in different rhythms and articulations. Here, Lim introduces a tritone, appearing in the middle of the D octave. This tritone is emphasized by an accent and extension of the note value, with several tied notes to amplify the tritone sonority.

After the introduction of the motive (mm. 1–8), there is a long improvisatory passage until section B (mm. 9–28). Featuring the chromatic tones from the Prelude, B and A \sharp , this fast passage displays the intervals of fifth, eighth, and major seventh, which are primarily used in the ostinato in the Prelude. The harmonies are changing in close positions with small movements.

Lim adopts all these features from the Prelude and unfolds them in her own style. They are in new, different colorations, but with some similarities. In section B, motive *a* is altered simply by coloring it with Phrygian modes. Throughout the frequent transposition, motive *a* is almost in the same shape, but it is color-coated by the Phrygian harmony. The left-hand chord in measure 29 is a hollow D major chord without the middle tone F \sharp and proceeds to the E \flat major chord, which creates a sonorous color (Example 4.4). The sudden appearance of the mode gives not only a surprise II chord (instead of a ii chord as in major or minor) but also a continuous chromatic gesture from the previous section. The motive is presented many times, sometimes shaped in shorter note values. Accompanied by the left-hand chords in I–II, it is continuously transposed throughout the section.

Example 4.4: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, m. 29

B ♩ = 52

p D Phrygian

I II

Another transformation of the motive happens at the start of section C. In a very open texture, the theme now is exhibited in wider intervals while maintaining the same pitches. Between the two layers set widely apart by a fifth, almost five octaves from each other, the motive appears without the echo part but follows some other pitches from motive *b* (Example 4.5).

Example 4.5: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 59–66

C ♩ = 92

pp *p* pitches from motive *b*

E A B

In a feeling of floating over the sky in a widely spread-out texture, some pitches from motives are sometimes omitted, as if surrounded by moving clouds. As the scattering texture goes by, Lim draws fragments of the left-hand ostinato from the Prelude into the middle of section C (Example 4.6), continuously introducing the original pitches of motive *b* after presenting motive *a* in the left hand (Example 4.10).

Example 4.6: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 81–101

The musical score for Example 4.6 is presented in a standard piano score format. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 81. The left hand plays a continuous ostinato of eighth notes, starting with a half note F#4 and a quarter note G#4. The right hand features a melody with a three-note motive (F#4, G#4, A4) highlighted by a red box. The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a tempo marking of 'mp' (moderato piano).

The final transformations of motives are shown in section D accompanying the nonstop percussive sixteenth notes in the other hand. There are two appearances of the three-note motive in keeping with the percussive accompaniment: one, as part of two-note clusters marked in staccato; two, as a hidden layer in the flourish of the sixteenth notes with tenuto signs (Examples 4.7 and 4.8).

Example 4.7: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 97–105

97 rit. **D** ♩ = 120

102

pp

mf

Example 4.8: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 110–112

110

mf

In the middle of section D, the original form of motive *a* is inserted with the left-hand ostinato for the first time in slightly altered shapes in both melody and accompaniment (Example 4.9): the pitch starts with G, which is not presented in the Prelude, and the rhythm maintains the order of [half note – quarter note – whole note], same as the transformed rhythm in section D (not from the Prelude); the left hand repeats only the first two notes of the original pattern.

Example 4.9: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 142–146

The musical score for Example 4.9, *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 142–146, is presented in 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 142–143) features a complex texture with multiple staves. A red bracket highlights a section of the score, and a red box contains the text "similar to original motive a". The score includes markings for "rit." (ritardando) and "a tempo" (return to original tempo). The second system (mm. 144–146) features a more complex texture with multiple staves. A red bracket highlights a section of the score, and a red box contains the text "similar to original motive a". The score includes markings for "mf" (mezzo-forte) and "a tempo".

Culminative technique

The themes of Chopin's Prelude are presented in the next section almost in their original shape. I refer to this section as *C'* because of the similar texture of open-spaced octaves in the outer layers in the *C* section; also, Lim has already forecast exhibiting the full motives *a* and *b* once with the ostinato in the last part of section *C* (Example 4.10).

Example 4.10: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 87–101

The musical score for Example 4.10, *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 87–101, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 87–91) shows a left-hand ostinato in the middle voice, marked *p*. The second system (mm. 92–96) features 'motive a' in the bass and 'motive b' in the treble, both marked *p*. The third system (mm. 97–101) includes a 'rit.' marking, a tempo change to 'D' (120), and a 'pp' marking. The score is annotated with various musical notations including dynamics (*p*, *mp*, *pp*), articulation (accents, slurs), and structural markers (left-hand ostinato, motive a, motive b).

Instead of having wide leaps between the thematic notes in the middle layer, in section C', Lim inserts the full Prelude in a shape very close to the original. The right-hand

melody, the left-hand accompaniment, and even the rests are reproduced within the boundaries of Lim's realm. There are several small changes from the original: the rhythm of motive *a* from measure 3 in the Prelude, and the very last phrase, which closely follows the previous phrase with the extension of note values at the end (Example 4.11). These changes do not have a large impact on the style and sound from the Prelude, but they provide a transitional flow to the following coda sections.

172 *mp*

175

179 *p* *mp* *p*

183 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Prelude Op. 28, No.2

Example 4.11, continued: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 172–193

The image displays a musical score for piano, specifically measures 187 through 193 of *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked as 108. The music features a left-hand ostinato. Motives *a* and *b* are highlighted with red vertical bars, and the main four-measure theme is highlighted with a blue horizontal bar. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Starting with only the extract of motivic ideas of motives *a* and *b* in sections A and B, the main four-measure theme of the Prelude appears in section C accompanying the left-hand ostinato with slightly altered shapes. Once more, the similar appearance of original motive *a* is briefly inserted in section D. Finally, as I mentioned above, the original theme reveals itself fully as containing one whole section featuring the idea from section C, which are two open chords on the top and bottom.

James Hepokoski explains this process as “teleological genesis,” which is “the concept of a composition as gradually generative towards the revelation of a higher or fuller condition [and] is characteristic of the modern composers.”⁴³ Charles Ives is a representative composer who develops music gradually to reveal the tune. As Ives borrowed many tunes, techniques, and forms from Liszt, Beethoven, and Wagner, I perceive that Lim was influenced by Ives as she processed Chopin’s theme in her *Fantasia*, as discussed earlier in the chapter.

Performance and practice suggestions

Composed in a free form of improvisation, Lim’s *Fantasia* is constantly fast-paced in every part except for C and C’. There are three types of fast passages: a long arpeggio frame in section A, repeated notes reminiscent of percussion playing in section B, and chromatic scales used as transitions in the Coda section. These fast-paced, repetitive, and patterned phrases can also be seen as trademarks of Lim’s composition in other former pieces, all of which work very effectively in conjunction with elements throughout the *Fantasia*. Among them, long arpeggio-like passages repeated in specific patterns should absolutely be studied as part of an advanced understanding of the movement of patterns.

Especially in this *Fantasia*, there are many subtle changes in one or two notes as patterns move forward. These changing notes require a different response than other repeated notes. A performer can give more weight to those different notes, treating them almost in a tenuto fashion, so that the listeners will be more attracted to the sound. Also,

⁴³ James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26.

another type of arpeggio that includes only limited pitches from the Phrygian mode in section B need especially careful management of articulation and dynamic. Because those arpeggios are used as an elaborating extension of the ending pitch of the motivic phrase, the passages require a well-connected legato with a long breath rather than to be played note by note.

Another technical difficulty occurs with the overlapped hand positions in sections C and D. For example, in section C, there are four layers; the outer two are spaced far away from each layer while the middle two layers share some part of the keyboard (Example 4.12). From measures 64 to 67, the top F# and the bottom B are apart from each other for more than six octaves, and the motive notes (B-F#-A-E-F#) move swiftly in large leaps accompanied by a long D# diminished chord. At the first beat of measure 66, F#, a chord tone of D# diminished chord, is played by the right hand as it is the second pitch of the motive. When a performer plays this chord and the motivic pitch together, it is important for flexibility of movement to place the hand that plays the chord (accompanying part) under the hand that plays the melodic pitches. In addition, the sonority of the melodic pitch F# should be stand out on its own and not be heard as part of the chord.

Example 4.12: *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*, mm. 59–74

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 59 to 66, marked *pp*. The second system covers measures 67 to 74, marked *mp*. The right hand (RH) is in treble clef, and the left hand (LH) is in bass clef. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 92$. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Specific notes in the RH are highlighted with blue circles and labeled with pink text: *G# dim* in measure 60, *D dim* in measure 61 (which is also enclosed in a pink box), *Bb dim* in measure 68, and *F dim* in measure 70.

Lim brings the thematic ideas of Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No. 2, and includes them in every section to form different shapes of melody, rhythm, and texture. Moreover, Lim utilizes a culminative compositional technique in this *Fantasia*. The original thematic materials of the Prelude appear in fragments at the beginning and earlier sections, but they gradually reveal their shapes in longer phrases toward the middle

sections, finally showing the entire Prelude before the restatement of all previous thematic ideas. The harmonic color derived from Chopin's dissonances and tensions of nonharmonic tones is revived in *Fantasia* and mingled with Lim's particular use of modal and triadic sonorities.

Lim presents both "unity" and "unique coloration" in *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin*. If unity was given through the final presentation of all previous thematic phrases in *Spiritual Dance*, then in *Fantasia*, a closer and more extended sense of unity is formed through organic connectivity of the thematic elements and compositional techniques that seem to match like puzzle pieces. Also, the contrasts of timbre shown in *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring* seek a more colorful sound and texture through the palette of the fantasia genre.

CONCLUSION

There are so many prestigious composers, and of course, much research has been done on them. In the flood of research that exists on the major composers, it was not easy to find a suitable composer who had not already been researched exhaustively as a theme for my dissertation. As a Korean piano performer, it is a shame that almost all performers depend on Western music when they choose their repertoire because of the lack of indigenous piano music. Therefore, it was meaningful to choose a noteworthy Korean composer and introduce her musical style and piano works. Through exploring Lim's musical languages and styles in this dissertation, I think we are able gain a deeper understanding of the inspirations for Korean-Western music.

Jiesun Lim is an active composer working as a professor of composition at Yonsei University. She was selected as the first composer for the Harmony Chamber Orchestra. She has consistently been commissioned to compose music in connection with art in other fields such as paintings, sculptures, photograph, and the humanities. There are piano solo pieces included in her roughly 60 compositions. In the broad range of her works, however, only four works were written specifically for solo piano. These piano pieces were composed mostly in the middle period of her composition, when she was composing her most extensive works. The limited catalogue of her piano music contributed to a lack of awareness, and as a result, a lack of insightful research. Nevertheless, I thought it was important to study and analyze Lim's piano works because of how well they demonstrate her musical insights and characteristics. This study can

then proceed naturally to an examination of the piano works' connection to Lim's entire catalogue.

In her four solo piano works, the transformation of thematic materials is used as a major tool to integrate the whole piece and imbue a variety of colors in each piece. The thematic units are transformed into many types of different shapes in rhythm, length, pitch, and speed in fragmented form. They are organically connected to each other and accompanied by a variety of other layers in fast chromatic passages, patterned ostinatos, percussive rhythms, modal sonorities, and sometimes with traditional triadic chords. In *Spiritual Dance* there are four movements that are each characterized as single or double ideas, and which are united in the last section of the last movement by presenting all previous thematic materials in fragmented shapes. *Ice Flower* and *A Poem about Spring* feature similar thematic materials. A symmetrical use of themes and the contrast of those themes in many varied textures abstractly represent the different meanings of winter and spring. *Fantasia on a Theme of Chopin* as the last solo piano work shows a definite unity binding all thematic materials, borrowed from Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, No.2, in the free form of fantasia.

Through the study of Jiesun Lim's piano music, I came to sense heightened interest in and affection for Korean creative works. Though the number of Lim's piano works is small as of yet, I hope they will be performed more often and therefore reach more listeners. Further, with increased attention paid to Korean classical music, it stands to reason that more Korean classical piano works will be created, and we will be able to

expand the repertoires that have up to now relied too heavily on the Western classical composers.

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BIOGRAPHY

Yerin Choi, a native of South Korea, is a current doctoral candidate in the DMA program concentrating in Piano Performance at George Mason University under the tutelage of Dr. Linda Apple Monson. Yerin was grateful to have been chosen as a doctoral Graduate Teaching Assistant for Keyboard Studies at Mason. She completed her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at Ewha Womans University in Korea, and she earned her Master of Music degree in Piano Performance at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music under the guidance of Dr. Stewart Gordon. An active soloist and accompanist, Yerin has performed many solo and ensemble concerts across the United States and Korea. She was chosen to perform for the Series of Selected Musicians' Concerts held by the Culture Foundation of Hwaseong City and performed a solo piano recital in Banseok Art Hall in 2013. She also was chosen as a finalist in the Carmel Piano Competition in California and won top prizes in competitions in Korea sponsored by the Music Association of Daegu City, Youngnam University, and Daegu University. Yerin has been selected as a winner of Mason's annual concerto competition and performed Bach's Keyboard Concerto in D Minor with the Mason Symphony Orchestra in 2016 under the direction of Dr. Dennis Layendecker. Additionally, she was invited to perform as a piano concerto soloist with the Friends & Family Chamber Orchestra in 2017 under the direction of Prof. Wayne Taylor. She was also selected to perform as a solo pianist in Mason's Grand Piano Celebration, Arts by George, and numerous additional performances at George Mason University.