



The Nationalization Characteristics of Iranian Piano Music: A Case Study of Mostezâ Mâhjubi's Piano Music Compositions

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SUMMARY: *With the advent of globalization, piano has become a typical sample of music culture globalization. Throughout the development of piano in various countries in the world, it keeps its internal structure unchanged on the basis of integration with various ethnic music, piano music is more and more diverse. Iranian piano music is a contemporary piano music compositions created by Iranian musicians on the basis of their traditional music system. This paper takes the piano compositions of Mostezâ Mâhjubi, an Iranian pianist and composer, as an example to explore how the piano, as a cross-border instrument, reflects the aesthetic characteristics of Iranian music culture. At the same time how does it reflect the process of nationalization of piano music culture.*

KEYWORDS: *Iranian piano; Dastgah; Mosteza Mahjoubi; nationalization of piano*

1 Introduction

Iranian piano music denotes piano compositions crafted by Iranian musicians predicated upon their traditional music system. The piano was introduced to Iran in the early 19th century and was initially preserved in the palace as an ornament.[1] Over the succeeding 120 years, the piano progressively established its position in Iranian society and musical life. The advent of Iranian piano music has incited the author to reflect upon how the piano, as a transnational instrument, embodies and reflects the aesthetics and national sentiments of traditional Iranian music. The author will take the compositions of Mostezâ Mâhjubi, an Iranian pianist and composer, as an example to endeavor to explore the national characteristics of Iranian piano music and the nationalization process of the piano.

In 1805, the piano was presented as a gift to the Iranian king Fath Ali Shah Qajar by the French ambassador to Iran. Since no one knew about this strange Western musical instrument at the time, it was kept as a decoration in the palace. In 1866, a French company initiated the sale of pianos in Tehran, which facilitated the piano's growing popularity in Iranian society. Concurrently, the santur player Mohâmad Khân-e Soroorolmolk discerned that the piano and the traditional Iranian instrument santur bore striking similarities in their playing principles. He adjusted the piano's temperament to the temperament of the dastgah system and began to play traditional Iranian music works on the piano. At the end of the 19th century, Iranian piano music initially established its own model, that is, the right hand played the melody, and the left hand mainly played the octave or repeated the melody of the right hand. [2] In this process, Mostezâ Mâhjubi and Javad Mâ roufi are two representative Iranian piano composers and performers. Among them, the musician Mostezâ Mâhjubi laid the foundation for the establishment of

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Iranian piano music. His works more completely present the Iranian music style in Iranian piano music. Therefore, in this article, the author will take the musician's Iranian piano works as an example for discussion.

2 Introduction to Iranian Piano Music

2.1 Introduction to Mostezâ Mâhjubi

Mostezâ Mâhjubi is an Iranian pianist and composer born in Tehran. He studied violin and piano with Hossein Hâng Afarin, and then continued to study piano and Ratif with Mâhmoud Mofâkham. He also studied Ratif with Mirza Abdollah. Mâhjubi composed many works of Tasnif, Pishdaeamads and Reng. As an Iranian pianist, he is good at improvisation and usually adjusts the piano before playing. At the same time, Mâhjubi also enriched the Iranian piano playing technique. For example, he tried to imitate the timbre of traditional Iranian instruments on the piano using the Riz playing technique. More importantly, Mâhjubi created Iranian piano notation based on Persian. [3]

2.2 Notation in Iranian Piano

Mahjubi used Persian to write from right to left and did not use bar lines. All Mahjubi piano scores that can be collected so far are translated into five-line scores, but in fact, his piano scores were originally based on the five-line scores with his own musical notations. [4] (See Table 1)

Table 1: Mahjubi's piano notation method

Symbol	Meaning
+	Rest
-	When it is below a note, it means all notes are played at the same time
=	Played in the same way as above, but faster
H	Natural note
b	Black key playing mark. It can indicate flat, sharp or neutral (Koron) sign, depending on the different dastgach situations
S	Trembling playing mark. It is called Riz in Persian
.	Staccato
~	Boning

In addition, Mahjoubi also incorporated the playing techniques of traditional Iranian instruments such as tar, sitar and santoor into piano playing. There are four playing methods worth noting:

First, Riz. This playing method often appears in the performance of traditional Iranian instruments, that is, a certain note is played repeatedly and quickly. When it appears in Iranian piano performance, it means that the key corresponding to a certain note is continuously pressed and lifted in a short period of time, and the playing time is the original duration of the note. The performance should be smooth, fast and regular.

Second, tremolo. Tremolo is divided into upper tremolo and lower tremolo. Upper tremolo refers to the performer playing a higher note than the main note after playing the main note, and then returning to the main note. It is often called "right-left-right" in Iranian music. Lower tremolo is to play a lower note than the main note, and then return to the main note, which is often called "left-right-left".

Third, *appoggiatura*. This is a decorative note marked with a small eighth note, which can be placed in front of or behind the main note.

Fourth, repeated performance. The first form is to repeat the right hand melody in a higher octave while the left hand remains unchanged, and the second form is to repeat the right hand melody in a lower octave while the left hand remains unchanged.[5]

2.3 The Temperament System in Iranian Piano Music: Koran Tone (Three-quarter Tone)

Since the tuning scale system of Iranian piano music is based on the *Dastgah* in traditional Iranian music, the phenomenon of *Koran tone* in Iranian music also exists in Iranian piano music. From the score, we can see that the composer used the two notes of E flat three-quarters and B flat three-quarters. In addition, when I was collecting folk songs in Iran, I found that when Professor Azad of the Piano Department of Tehran University of Arts played *Dastgah-e Shur* music, he would increase the E flat on his electric piano by about 20 to 30 cents. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the phenomenon of using *Koran tones* does exist in Iranian piano music.

In the actual performance of Iranian piano music, the performers do not have very precise numbers for adjusting the piano tuning. Most Iranian piano players adjust the piano according to the note fraction of three-quarters tone, in order to change the timbre of the original black keys of the piano. The core of the discussion on the tuning problem in Iranian piano music is not the precise number of the note fraction after each tuning by the performers. Rather, it is that the behavior of Iranian musicians adjusting the piano tuning makes the piano produce new timbre expressions, and at this time, the piano shows Iranian aesthetic characteristics in cross-cultural communication.

3 Analysis of Mosteza Mahjoubi's piano compositions

3.1 Analysis of *Dastgah-e Shur*'s music

(1) *Daramad*

Mostezâ Mâhjubi's *Shur Piano Ratif* consists of a series of thirteen classical pieces. The author will analyze two of them as examples.[6, 7]

Daramad is usually the opening *gushe*, which presents the main rhythmic pattern, melodic mode and musical tone of the *Ratif*. This *Daramad* is in free tempo and can be divided into two parts. The first part is lines 1 to 6, and the second part is lines 7 to 13. The basic characteristics of this *Daramad* are the repeated changes between musical motives and the melody surrounding with D as the core tone. It is also worth noting that the left hand and the right hand play the same melody throughout the "*Darama*", that is, the left hand repeats the right hand melody in the lower octave. Therefore, the phenomenon of vertical functional harmonic progression in Western piano music basically does not exist. This is also one of the important characteristics of Iranian piano music.

In terms of melody, the progressive surround centered on the core tone is the most important creative feature of this *gushe*, and it is also the overall feature of the melody of Mahjoubi's piano music. In this *gushe*, this feature is reflected from the beginning of the introduction. The first act of the music is the introduction, starting with the octave tremolo of the main tone D, and the five notes G, A, ^bB, C, and D constitute the beginning of the music. In the Iranian *dastgah* creation, the melody of the music is centered around the main tone, backbone tone or core tone of the modal scale. In the introduction part, the central tone D appears four times in different positions, and the melody moves up and down with D as the axis. (See Example 1). After a

short pause, the music continues and enters the main part. The melody still unfolds with D as the core tone, which shows the important position of the core tone in the creation of Iranian dastgah. Mostezâ Mâhjubi added the melodic characteristics of traditional Iranian music to his piano music, which became the biggest difference between Iranian piano music and Western piano music in melody. (Example 1). At the same time, the appearance of the Koran tone E broke the twelve-tone equal temperament structure of the Western piano, and the charm of traditional Iranian music was born.

In terms of musical motives, the descending scale-like progressive pattern composed of sixteenth notes is one of the most important motives in this gushe, and it is also the iconic motive throughout the entire Shur (Example 1, line 3). This motive and its variants appear very frequently in the gushe after "Dalama", and appear eleven times in the "Dalama" section alone. In lines 4 and 5, the motive composed of quarter notes and eighth notes is often used in Mahjoubi's piano works. At the same time, the imitation technique used between each motive is also the main creative method in the composer's piano music.

Example 1:

درآمد
Darâmad

It is also worth noting that the music material at the end of the first part is used at the end of this piece, which is also the ending motive of this piece, namely the eighth note C and the

quarter note D connected by a small slur, followed by the half note tonic D. The music ends here in a gradual slowing down. (Example 2)

Example 2:

In terms of rhythm, the syncopated rhythm pattern composed of quarter notes and eighth notes, and the rhythm pattern composed of two eighth notes and one quarter note have become the typical rhythm pattern of the gushe, and are also important rhythm patterns in the whole Dastgah shur. Such a seemingly simple rhythm pattern is another manifestation of Iranian music elements, that is, through simple but irregular rhythmic rhythms, the music has a great difference from the regular rhythms of Western music. In addition, the multiple transfers of accents during the melody are factors that affect the musical style and also place high demands on the performer's reaction ability. In terms of performance techniques, octave tremolo, oscillating sound, appoggiatura and Riz are the main ones. In addition to decorating the melody, their more important function is to emphasize the core sound and the main sound and change the rhythm of the music.

(2) Rohab

Overall, Gusha's Rohab is based on the musical material of Gusha's Dalama. From this Gushe, we can see that Mahjoubi has fully incorporated the changing and repetitive creation techniques of musical materials in Iranian music into piano music creation.

The melody direction and composition of Rohab are basically the same as those of Dalama, and many motives can correspond to Dalama. For example, in the second slur of the first line of "Rohab," a descending scale-like progression of sixteenth notes is used. At the end, the quarter note of the right hand jumps from D to the fourth G, and the quarter note of the left hand is connected to the quarter rest. This motive appears twice at the end of the first and fifth lines of the Gushe of Rohab, and this motive also appears twice in Dalama. (Example 3).

The motive in the second slur of the third line of the second phrase (lines 3-5) is a variation of the motive in the second slur of the third line of Dalama. The motives in the second and third slurs of the fourth line are the repetition of the penultimate motive in Dalama. Then the four quarter notes $^bB-C-D-^pE$ prepare for the ending, and the music ends with the tonic D in the left hand.

Example 3:

(3) Summary of Mostez Mahjoubi's creative style

Mahjoubi takes the Iranian traditional music theory system and aesthetics as the creative criteria, which is reflected in the modulation system, music structure, melodic pattern, rhythmic pattern and playing techniques of his piano *Ratif*. His creation is based on the Iranian traditional music system, and he tailors his own *Ratif* the piano. Each set of piano *Ratifiks* named after the *dastgah* used, and the accidentals are also used according to the requirements of different *dastgahs*. Therefore, the use of non-Western major and minor modulation systems is one of the characteristics of Mahjoubi's piano creation, especially the appearance of the flat three-quarter tone, which makes the piano using the twelve-tone equal temperament produce non-equal temperament sound effects for the first time. The Koran tone brings the melody into a wandering and suspended situation, and the piano is instantly full of the charm of Iranian traditional music.

Secondly, Mahjoubi's piano *Ratif*, like Iranian traditional instrumental works, is composed of multiple *gushes* in series. From the perspective of music structure and performance time, the composer arranges and selects *gushes* according to structural functions. In addition, from the perspective of musical texture, the left and right hands of Mahjoubi's piano pieces basically play the same melody.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the melody part, the melody of Mahjoubi Iranian piano music is mainly progressive, and the melodic and rhythmic patterns used are relatively

simple. The most commonly used patterns are: descending scale-type step-by-step patterns composed of sixteenth notes and their variants; patterns composed of eighth notes-quarter notes-eighth notes; patterns composed of quarter notes-eighth notes-quarter notes, and patterns composed of eighth notes-quarter notes-quarter notes. In addition, the imitation within Mahjoubi's patterns or between different patterns and the overall musical melody trend are mainly downward, and the ascending melody mostly appears at the beginning of some gushes in the form of arpeggios or scales.

In terms of performance techniques, Mahjoubi's piano music has no pedal markings, and the pedal is generally not used. There are three decorative performance techniques for the melody in the work: the first is Riz, that is, the composer tries to use the piano to imitate the timbre of traditional Iranian instruments to Iranianize the Western piano. Music analysis shows that Riz is generally used for quarter notes, tonics, core notes, the end of a phrase or before the end of the whole Gushe. It is also an important basis for finding the core notes, emphasis and accents of Dastgah. The second is the upper tremolo, which is frequently used in Iranian piano works, generally appearing in half notes or quarter notes, the core notes of Dastgah or Avaz, the progression of quarter notes and the short notes of syncopated rhythms. The third is tremolo, and he uses octave tremolo and third tremolo more. Octave tremolo generally appears at the beginning and end of the music and at the end of the phrase. The third tremolo appears less frequently and is generally used as a decoration in the melody.

4 Thoughts on the nationalization of Iranian piano music under the background of cultural globalization

4.1 Two ways of the formation of Iranian piano music

The nationalization of music culture is a common phenomenon in the cultural field in the context of globalization today, and it is also the trend of future music culture development. The author believes that the formation of Iranian piano music culture from the time when Iranian piano first arrived in Iran to the present is the result of the joint action of cultural confucianization and acculturation, and it has also become a manifestation of the globalization and nationalization of piano music.

Driven by political and economic forces, globalization promotes world changes, and countries, nations and peoples around the world are interconnected and dependent on each other. [8] At this time, culture is constantly circulated and exchanged around the world like trade. Among them, part of the culture is indirectly and passively spread in the political and economic fields; the other part is actively and positively spread under the rapid development of science and technology and transportation. As an important part of culture, music culture also follows this dissemination model.

In the course of Iran's social development, Iran has both actively approached the culture of Western countries and been restricted by Western countries. Therefore, the influence of Western culture on Iranian society is self-evident. From the current situation of the integration of Western music culture and Iranian music culture, we can see that Iranian musicians initially actively learned Western music theory, which reflects the process of cultural immersion, that is, culture is acquired. In the study of Western music culture, Iranian musicians not only began to conduct in-depth research from the perspective of music creation, but also made Western music theory gradually popularized in Iranian society. At the same time, they also learned from the Western music education system, such as the establishment of the Tehran University Conservatory of Music. This conservatory, which was established based on the background of Western music, took Western music theory teaching and instrument teaching as basic teaching

courses at the beginning of its establishment, including harmony and instrumentation, sight singing and ear training, and Western instrumental performance. As a result, the popularization of music theory and performance became one of the driving forces for the initial development of Iranian piano music. The active acceptance of Western culture by Iranians is the first step in the Westernization of Iranian culture and the premise of the phenomenon of nationalization of Iranian music. This acceptance behavior allows multiple music cultures to coexist in the same geographical area.

Then, through the process of acculturation, culture was reintegrated in a certain area, and its internal characteristics began to exchange, thus forming the phenomenon of cultural acculturation. Cultural acculturation is a kind of cultural change, which is the result of the exchange of cultural characteristics and the continuous direct contact between groups. That is, after Western music culture entered Iran, it began to exchange with Iranian music culture characteristics, thus forming more music samples, and Iranian piano music is one of them. In this process, the unfamiliarity of Western piano music when it first entered Iran gradually weakened. Iranian traditional musicians such as Mosteza Mahjoubi, based on solid Iranian traditional skills and rich Western music theory, tried to integrate Western music and Iranian music in the piano instrument. At this time, Iranian music and Western music culture began to exchange in Iran, or the characteristics of Iranian traditional music culture and Western piano music culture began to merge. For example, the fusion of mode and tonality, that is, the Western major and minor modes and the Iranian dastgah mode system are used together in Iranian piano music works; the exchange of playing techniques, that is, the alternating use of decorative playing methods such as vibrato and balalaika in Western piano playing and Riz in Iranian music. The exchange of musical temperaments, that is, the combination of the twelve-tone equal temperament of the Western piano and the neutral tone with flat three-quarters in Iranian music. The integration of the two musical cultural elements contributed to the formation of Iranian piano music, which is the positive role played by the cultural acculturation process in piano music culture.

Therefore, the author believes that the process of cultural Confucianization is the premise for the formation of Iranian piano, and the process of cultural acculturation is the driving force for the development of Iranian piano to date. These two stages are also reflected in the process of globalization and nationalization of piano music. The popularization of piano music is an important symbol of its globalization, which is reflected in the active learning of piano by people from all countries. In the creation of piano music of various nations, the combination of the characteristics of national music and Western music is the embodiment of the development of piano nationalization and the result of cultural acculturation.

4.2 Reflection on the current situation of Iranian piano - the particularity of music culture

4.2.1 "Westernization phenomenon" in Iranian piano

After visiting Tehran in August 2019, the author learned that there are various "Westernization phenomena" in the creation and performance of Iranian piano and Iranian piano music education.

In terms of piano music composition and performance, in addition to the musicians mentioned above, there are many well-known Iranian pianists and composers. For example, Farman Behboud, Amir Farid, Mohammad Medi Goorangi, Hooman Khalatbari and Anoushiravan Rohani. From the music learning and creation experience of Iranian pianists and composers, it can be seen that most of them have a background in Western music theory knowledge and tend to prefer Western music style in music creation. Especially in the field of

Iranian piano creation, today's Iranian pianists have not made significant achievements in promoting Iranian piano music, but mostly continue to play the piano works of pianists Mosteza Mahjoubi or Javad Maroufi. During my field trip, I went to audio-visual stores around Tehran University to look for music scores and audio-visual materials related to Iranian pianos. I found that there were relatively concentrated audio-visual stores around Tehran University. Each store, diminutive in stature, proffered a remarkably homogeneous assortment of merchandise. For example, the music scores and audio materials sold mainly include piano scores (including a small number of Iranian piano scores and a large number of Western classical piano scores), guitar scores, violin scores, Santur scores, vocal scores (Iranian traditional vocal works and Western vocal works), Western chamber music audio materials, as well as children's music teaching materials and popular science music teaching materials. As for piano materials, when I asked whether they sold Iranian piano scores, many audio-visual stores said that due to the small number of people buying Iranian piano scores, the books were often out of stock. The few audio-visual stores said that there were only two or three books of this type of scores left in the store. Additionally, given the paucity of patrons procuring these items, the temporal duration for restocking this category of scores was considerably protracted.

In terms of piano music education in Iran, piano education is concentrated in the two cities of Tehran and Shiraz, among which Tehran has the most piano learners. After asking students from the Department of Music at the University of Tehran, the author learned that the music performance major of the Department of Music at the University of Tehran offers a variety of instrument performance directions such as piano, violin, cello and clarinet. Within the piano specialization curriculum, the faculty imparts knowledge and the pupils engage in the rehearsal of predominantly Western piano compositions. Students majoring in piano are required to organize solo recitals on a semesterly basis and undergo comprehensive assessments via intimate concert performances. In addition, students can also hold public solo concerts. The Iranian students interviewed by the author have formed a "Pianists Club" band with their friends and held three concerts. In addition, there are many music training institutions on the streets of Tehran that provide piano teaching and accompaniment services. The popularity of academic and social piano education in Tehran is relatively high. Both the University of Tehran and the Tehran University of Arts have piano departments. During my sojourn in Iran, I had the opportunity to converse with Pooyân Âzâdeh, a distinguished Iranian piano professor. He revealed that the piano division of the Tehran University of Arts, the music faculty of Tehran University, and various private music institutions regrettably do not offer courses specifically dedicated to Iranian piano music. Undeterred by this omission, he is endeavoring to introduce pertinent courses within his own piano academy in a valiant effort to perpetuate the rich tradition of Iranian piano music. Currently, Professor Pooyân Âzâdeh's piano school has more than 500 students, and offers both Western piano courses and Iranian piano courses.

4.2.2 Thinking about the particularity of musical culture in Iranian piano

From the current situation of Iranian piano music, the development of Iranian piano music is slow, and the teaching and creation of piano in Western music style accounts for a large proportion in Iranian society. The author has searched for audio-visual and video materials related to Iranian piano on domestic and foreign websites, and found that except for the performance materials of the two musicians Mosteza Mahjoubi and Javad Maroufi, Iranians are not very professional in playing or improvising Iranian piano works, and most of them are entertainment performances. Professor Azad once told the author that most Iranian musicians or musicologists like to study traditional Iranian instruments such as oud and tar, and Iranian piano has not received due attention in Iranian society. The above phenomena triggered the author's further thinking. From the beginning of the formation of Iranian piano music to the

present, about 200 years, why is the Iranian piano creation system still not mature enough, why are there fewer composers who have a significant impact on Iranian piano music, and why are Iranians more accepting of Western piano works. The author believes that this is related to the particularity of culture - cultural model.

Conrad Phillip Kottak proposed in his book *Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity* that Cultural specificity refers to the unique attributes or features of a particular culture that exist within a specific temporal, spatial, and social context. It is confined to a particular locale and society. In the milieu of rapid cultural evolution and interchange, when cultural characteristics are borrowed and adapted to an alien culture, the foreign culture undergoes reintegration. In other words, the culture is reconfigured, which becomes an ineluctable process of cultural adaptation and identification.^[9] Ralphie Beer believes that culture is integrative, and in this process, the behavior of people in different cultures is influenced by their own values and their own cognition of things. As a result, different cultures have formed unique paradigms, which are recognized by society and constrain the cultural subjects to a certain extent. From the perspective of music culture, the formation and spread of specific musical styles are the same as the origin and spread of all cultures. Their formation is closely related to specific cultural types and cultural levels.^[10] Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettel utilizes Blackfoot music, Indian Kakjeri band concerts, and Iranian traditional music as illustrative cases to endeavor to elucidate why, despite all being monophonic, these three genres of music still exhibit substantial divergences. Nettel asserts that while geography, climate, biology, and language all exert an impact on the nature of music, the ultimate reason why each nation possesses its own unique music and musical behaviors is determined by the intrinsic nature and characteristics of a particular group's culture.^[11] In the context of Iranian piano music, the confluence of the piano's inherent particularity and the particularity of Iranian traditional music has necessitated that Iranian piano music must possess its own distinct musical and cultural characteristics.

The piano music culture is predicated upon the framework of Western music culture. Its intrinsic cultural specificity is rooted in its European provenance. In contemporary times, it employs the twelve-tone equal temperament tuning and the Western diatonic system of major and minor keys. It serves as a quintessential exemplification of polyphonic musical thought. The systematic harmonic progression and formal structure constitute the fundamental and salient features of piano music compositions. However, Iranian traditional music is founded upon the *dastgah* system, which encapsulates the essence of West Asian music culture. It predominantly adheres to linear musical thought, with melodies that are progressive and revolve around the core and terminal notes of distinct *dastgahs*. In particular, the appearance of the *Koran* tone makes Iranian traditional music and Western music have obvious differences in timbre and emotion.

In the process of the integration of the two musical cultures, the incompatibility between the two sides has become the reason for the imperfection and slow development of the Iranian piano music system. As for the Iranian composer concerned in this article, his works reflect the incompatibility between vertical harmonic progression and horizontal melodic progression, the incompatibility between the development of Iranian and Western musical materials, and the incompatibility of timbre expression.

Mahjoubi hopes to highlight the development of linear musical thinking without emphasizing harmonic accompaniment. He chose to let the left and right hands play the same melody at the same time. Therefore, the musical materials and piano sound effects of his works are relatively simple. Furthermore, although Iranian musicians have made the piano start to play *Koran* tones, each *dastgah* has different requirements for changing tones, and the complicated tuning steps before each performance make many Iranian musicians avoid tuning as much as

possible. Musicians have endeavored to emulate the timbre of Iranian folk instruments using the piano. However, the sonic principles and performance techniques intrinsic to the piano, as a keyboard instrument, engender a sense of timbral dissonance. Furthermore, among the Iranian populace, the preconceived notion of Western piano music has rendered the majority of Iranian listeners well-acquainted with and receptive to piano compositions within the Western musical framework. The advent of Iranian piano has to a certain extent shattered the conventional perceptions of the instrument that people harbor. The Iranianized rendition of the piano is even regarded as an incongruous timbral phenomenon and an inadmissible musical format. That is to say, this genre of music transcends the customary definition of piano music as conceived by Iranians. Consequently, the diverse idiosyncrasies inherent in the two musical cultures have inexorably engendered conflicts within Iranian piano music when amalgamating the two musical systems, thereby resulting in a relatively sluggish progression of Iranian piano.

4.2.3 The road to nationalization of piano music

Amidst the confluence of globalization and the nationalization of music culture, musical instruments, as salient vehicles of musical expression, are invariably implicated in the cultural collisions that ensue. Irrespective of the developmental trajectory of the piano in non-Western locales, its stature as a quintessential instrument within the Western musical lexicon inexorably situates it at the vanguard of the global and national currents shaping music's evolution. Thus, this phenomenon has catalyzed the author's contemplative inquiry. A musical instrument is an entity capable of producing sound, and it also serves as a vessel for cultural context and significance. In author estimation, the piano is designated as the "sovereign of Western musical instruments" not merely due to its exceedingly high prevalence, but more significantly, it encapsulates the cultural attributes of Western music in terms of musical ontology and musical thought. This Western musical instrument, predicated on a tri-dimensional harmonic function and polyphonic musical ideation, is inextricably linked to a cultural milieu that diverges significantly from the traditional Iranian musical ethos. Consequently, the endeavor to incorporate non-Western music, which predominantly adheres to linear musical thought and does not accentuate tri-dimensional harmonic traits, into the piano, or to coax the piano into emulating the timbre of the Santoor and Oud, is bound to engender a sense of dissonance for both musical traditions. The trajectory toward the nationalization of piano music is assuredly fraught with complexities and protracted in duration.

However, in contrast to the evolution of Iranian piano music, despite the fact that Chinese traditional music also embodies the characteristics of linear musical thought, Chinese piano music has developed a relatively comprehensive and sophisticated compositional system. The author posits that the integration of Chinese musical elements into the Western musical framework represents a significant and innovative creative approach among Chinese piano composers. Chinese composers, while adhering to the Western musical framework of major and minor keys, harmonic progressions, and formal structures, judiciously incorporate Chinese musical elements such as pentatonic scales and traditional melodic motifs into their piano compositions. This amalgamation allows them to express the aesthetic nuances of Chinese music within the Western musical idiom. Consequently, Chinese composers are more predisposed to utilize the Western musical system as a vehicle for conveying the distinctive aesthetic qualities of Chinese music. In this creative process, the majority of Chinese musical elements function as supplementary components within the compositions, and the potential discord between Chinese and Western musical traditions remains relatively subdued.

Then, within the milieu of the globalization of music culture and confronted with the arduous process of piano nationalization, what insights can we glean from Iranian piano music and Chinese piano music culture? Initially, the author posits that, broadly speaking, the

"nationalization" of piano music signifies the assimilation of the piano into a specific national music paradigm in terms of musical content and thought processes, as opposed to the ongoing application of Western music performance and theoretical systems. For instance, the Indian violin has altered the tuning of the Western violin and shifted the playing posture from standing to a seated position on the ground. In this manner, the Indianization of the violin, encompassing both its physical form and playing technique, enables the instrument to fully manifest the timbre and stylistic nuances of Indian music. Another exemplar is the pipa, China's preeminent national instrument, which originated in India and the Western Regions and underwent complete nationalization within China. During the Tang Dynasty, Chinese musicians amalgamated the straight-necked pipa with the curved-necked pipa from the Western Regions, retained the pear-shaped resonator of the curved-necked pipa, discarded the plectrum playing method associated with the curved-necked pipa, and transitioned from a horizontal or oblique holding position to a vertical one.

During the Tang Dynasty, the pipa emerged as the paramount solo instrument. Its flourishing development and the pivotal role it occupied within the realm of traditional Chinese music were attributable to the profound degree of nationalization the instrument had achieved. Analogous to the aforementioned scenario, Iranian musicians likewise undertake modifications in tuning, music theory, and playing techniques within their musical compositions. Consequently, in the future, the piano should undergo a comprehensive nationalization process, both internally and externally. This entails the nationalization of the instrument's tuning system and playing methods, as well as the nationalization of the thinking and structure inherent in its compositions.

Secondly, the judicious equilibrium between Western music and indigenous musical culture is also a crucial nexus in the process of piano nationalization. From the Iranian pianists concerned in this article, Mahjoubi tilted the balance towards traditional Iranian music. From the perspective of Chinese piano music creation, composers generally tilted the balance towards Western music. The author believes that for future composers and pianists, how to position the Iranian piano should be the primary issue to contemplate. Should the piano be perceived as an epitome of Western musical culture, it is imperative to exercise prudence when selecting and discarding elements from one's own national music and determining the extent of reference to Western musical elements, especially when it is necessary to rely on the Western musical system for its development.

Furthermore, if the piano is merely regarded as a musical instrument, the question arises as to how to transcend the inherent particularity of the piano and integrate it into non-Western national musical cultures. Moreover, can the question of piano pitch serve as a starting point in the process of piano nationalization? At present, we are accustomed to describing the piano as a twelve-tone equal temperament instrument, but this is actually not an accurate description. The description of an instrument should be based on the temperament system to which it is tuned, rather than the temperament system of which it is an instrument. For instance, during the Bach era, the harpsichord did not employ the twelve-tone equal temperament but rather the tuning system devised by Bach himself. In contemporary times, to achieve a harmonious timbre and facilitate swift and seamless modulation and detuning, modern pianos generally utilize the twelve equal-tone temperament to establish the piano pitch. Therefore, our understanding of the piano should be more flexible, that is, the piano is a keyboard instrument, and the twelve-tone equal temperament is not its only pitch mode. Looking at the different national music theory systems in the world, whether each nation stipulates or calculates its own national music theory from the perspective of musicology or from the perspective of temperament, there will be differences, and these differences are one of the factors that constitute the particularity of music. Can this particularity be presented in the process of piano nationalization, just like Iranian piano

music, where composers add the particularity of traditional Iranian music theory to the piano, and the piano begins to have the charm of Iranian music.

Fourthly, from the perspective of musical thinking, piano music creation can be divided into two aspects: vertical and horizontal. The highly systematic vertical harmonic function in Western music is perfectly reflected in the piano. In non-Western countries, such as China, India, and Iran, traditional music does not emphasize the concept of harmony. So, can piano creation diminish its dependence on harmony? This has been attempted in Mahjubi's creation. In the horizontal melody, the frequent addition of ornaments such as appoggiatura or trills in the right-hand melody, and the challenge of different syncopated rhythmic patterns to the traditional regular beats are the nationalization methods chosen by Iranian piano music. Although this approach can express the characteristics of musical motivation, it is limited in the expression of musical emotions. Therefore, piano composers should also think about how to balance the relationship between Western music creation techniques and their own national music creation thinking, and how to unify the content and style of piano music.

Finally, from the perspective of playing techniques, the timbre of musical instruments is related to the playing techniques to a certain extent. Therefore, the innovation of piano playing techniques is a key factor that cannot be ignored in the process of piano nationalization. The Iranian flavor in Iranian piano works comes not only from the Dastgah tuning system, but also from the frequent use of the rez playing technique by composers and performers. This playing technique is a method used by Iranian musicians to imitate the timbre of traditional Iranian instruments, and it is also a unique playing technique of Iranian piano. The author believes that the innovation of piano playing techniques can be a question worth thinking about in the process of piano nationalization. Diversified playing techniques not only change the traditional timbre of Western pianos, but will also be the iconic feature of piano music of different nationalities.

5 Conclusion

Frequent contacts and collisions between Iran and Western countries in history have made all aspects of its society influenced by Western culture to a certain extent. Iranian piano music is both the result of Westernization in the field of Iranian music and the embodiment of the nationalization process of piano music. It not only carries the cultural characteristics of Western piano music, but also reflects the unique aesthetics of Iranian music.

Owing to the unique geographical position and religious beliefs of Iran, despite the presence of musical activities such as public concerts and music lectures in Iranian society, they remain relatively restricted when compared with other nations. Moreover, given that Iranian piano has not yet established a comprehensive system, this distinctive musical style of Iranian music has not garnered the attention it deserves within Iranian society. In author perspective, Iranian piano music possesses aesthetic value. It amalgamates Iranian and Western musical styles, thereby expanding the developmental domain of Iranian music. Meanwhile, as a musical phenomenon, it also holds cultural value. It mirrors the process of nationalization of instrumental music in global music, offers references for other instruments or musical genres facing nationalization, and also provides musical exemplars for the diversity of world music culture.

The emergence of Iranian piano music culture exemplifies the Iranian people's tolerance towards global music culture. Thus, Iranian piano music is a cultural phenomenon that deserves to be treasured, and it is hoped that it will not be submerged by the wave of globalization.

About The Author

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- [5] The text is from the preface to the musical score <The Instrumental Radif of Persian Traditional Music Piano Radif of Maestro Morteza Mahjoubi>.
- [6] Shur is one of the most important dastgahs, which was formed in the 19th century. Shur is large in scale, and Iranian musicians generally believe that the five types of awaz in dastgah are all evolved from Shur. Shur structure is D pE F G (p) A bB C D, D is the main tone, core tone and ending tone. In theory, Shur Latif should usually start from the high octave D, but in actual performance, it often starts from the fifth tone G. At first, Shur had only 15 gushes, and later it developed to 23 to 69.
- [7] Mostezâ Mâhjubi's Shur piano Ratif consists of thirteen Gushes, namely Daramad, Chaharmezrab, Rohab, Kereshmeh, Shahin (oj), Razavi, Salmak, Muyeh, Hoseyni, Ozal, Gereyli, Shahnaz and Kord-e Bayat.
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