

**Silent film music composition in a cross-cultural
context**

Xiaoduo Guo

Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide

September 2011

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, to be available for loan and photocopying.

Xiaoduo Guo

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Graeme Koehne, Charles Bodman Rae and Kimi Coaldrake
Especial thanks to my Principal Supervisor Stephen Whittington for the guidance and
unwavering patience.

Contents

ABSTRACT	5
INTRODUCTION	6
AIMS AND RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	7
The aims.....	7
Rationale.....	7
Overview of content.....	8
BACKGROUND	8
Early history of film in China.....	8
Music in Chinese cinema.....	9
COMMENTARY	10
Choice of film.....	10
Research tools.....	10
Overview of the plot.....	11
Methodology for the Composition of the Soundtrack.....	11
Film analysis.....	11
DESCRIPTION OF THE SCORE AND PLOT	12
CONCLUSION	31
TABLE OF TIME AND THEME	33
SYNC POINT FORM	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

Abstract

This submission realizes the project *Silent Film Music Composition in a Cross-Cultural Context* through the composition of music for an excerpt from the silent film “Peach Blossom Weeps Tears of Blood” (Shanghai, 1931). The portfolio consists of a DVD of a 58-minute segment of the film with the newly composed soundtrack. Accompanying it is an exegesis addressing the research questions for this project and outlining the process of composition.

The combination of Chinese and Western musical materials in the soundtrack was a major focus of the composition. The music is also designed to explain the rich historical background of the film and is intended to help contemporary audiences, who come from different cultures and age groups, to understand the emotions that are depicted on-screen. The entire score was created on the computer using Logic 9 software. All the instruments used are from the sound library of Logic and the final soundtrack in DVD format has been mastered using Logic.

The accompanying exegesis explains the aims of this research and the questions that are to be answered. Research began with investigation into early film music, paying particular attention to Chinese silent films. Several significant reasons are listed for the choice of a Chinese silent film. In order to give a general idea of the development of the Chinese film industry, this exegesis presents some historical background information. A summary of the plot of the film is given and details of the technology employed. The main part of the exegesis is intended to explain the thought processes and techniques used in the composition of the sound-track. It is not only a descriptive account but also presents more specific analysis of each scene and the methods used in composing. The music is divided into 26 sections corresponding to 26 scenes in the film. To assist in identifying each section, there is a table giving the starting time of each section, and a table listing the main points of synchronization between film and soundtrack. The conclusion describes how the research questions have been answered; it also includes some personal experiences and what has been learned by the author during this project.

1. Introduction

There is extensive literature on film music composition both from a theoretical and practical point of view. This includes the significant work by Michel Chion such as *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (Chion 2009) and Claudia Gorbman such as *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Gorbman, 1980), and scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Film Sound*. However, little attention has focused on non-English - especially Chinese - film music.

There has been a long history of Chinese film music from the early 20th century until now. Many Chinese film music scores have been influenced by Western techniques of composition. Some articles, such as *Music in Chinese Cinema of the 1930s* (Yeh Yueh-yu, 2002) have described how Chinese film directors and composers have been influenced by Western culture and music and of how Western techniques have been implemented in Chinese music. But research has not focused very much on practical questions surrounding the composition of soundtracks for Chinese silent films in a cross-cultural context. Questions arise such as:

- (1) What approach could composers consider when they work with a silent film produced in China in the 1930's?
- (2) How is it possible to borrow Western music material when using Chinese composition techniques, or vice versa?
- (3) How can these two kinds of musical material be combined and balanced in a film which is full of characteristics of Chinese society?

In this context, much more research is required. A number of cultural and aesthetic considerations must be taken into account which will affect understanding of Chinese music and the composition of cross-cultural music in general. This research focuses on silent film music composition in a cross-cultural (Chinese and Western) context, and also utilizes contemporary techniques (like electronic sound) in order to better understand and compose film music.

2. Aims and rationale of the research project

2.1 The aims of this research investigation are:

- (1) To review the historical, social and cultural context of Chinese silent film made in the early 20th century.
- (2) To compose a portfolio of film music of 60 minutes that demonstrates cross-cultural composition techniques and uses contemporary approaches.

2.2 The questions that this research is attempting to answer are:

- (1) How can contemporary techniques of composition be applied to a Chinese silent film?
- (2) Is it possible to compose in a cross-cultural context and balance different musical materials appropriately?

2.3 Rationale

Early Chinese films are barely known in the world today, especially the silent films. In the 1930s, the unique historical and social situation in China at the time (in the transitional Republican period between the fall of the Qing dynasty and the 1949 Revolution) greatly affected film production. From the current point of view, those films are a microcosm of Chinese society in the early 20th century, exploring the social values, the differences of social class and human relations. It can be said that the films are produced in a very complex social context (Lu 2005).

The earliest Chinese films are silent films. Typically, silent films do not have their own unique sound-track. When a film was screened in a theater, it was commonly accompanied by an ensemble or a pianist playing improvised music. The accompanist may work from a score, but the score only exists to provide separate, generic pieces appropriate to different moods - such as sadness, happiness, fear or excitement – depicted on the screen. So the same piece of music may be played in similar scenes of different films (Altman 2004). Even today many Chinese silent

films are still without their own soundtrack. Therefore, composing a unique sound-track for those silent films could be a challenging research topic which could make a significant original contribution.

There are many elements a composer should consider when working with a film that has been made in a complex social environment quite different to the present. For example, is it legitimate for the composer bringing new material musical and techniques into an old-fashioned film? Different cultural musical materials are combined very often nowadays (for example, in the genre known as ‘World Music’), but is this technique appropriate in this case? These questions have not been researched extensively so far, and this research will attempt to answer these and related issues in a practical way through the composition of a film score.

2.4 Overview of content

The submission of this research will include: a 58-minute-long soundtrack with full orchestral, piano and electronic instruments. This music was composed for a section of Chinese silent film *Peach Blossom Weeps Tears of Blood* (桃花泣血记). This will be presented in a DVD format. A 5000-word exegesis will form part of this submission as well.

3. Background

3.1 Early History of Film in China

The first time film appeared in China was 11th August 1896, less than a year after the film films were publicly screened by the Lumière brothers in Paris. A theater in Shanghai screened the first images which came from the West. After that, Chinese began to make their own films. The first film made in China, called *DingJun Manton*, appeared in 1905 and was directed by Ren Jingfeng. The first film company in China was established by an American businessman in 1909. During the period 1910 to 1920 several film companies started production; unfortunately most of them did not develop very well (The Ohio State University 2003).

During the 1920s, the Chinese film industry reached a difficult stage of development. Over a hundred film companies started. By 1930, more than 1000 films were produced. Most of them were unsuccessful, because the scripts were rough, equipment was out-of-date and the actors were not professional (The Ohio State University 2003).

After 1930, the Chinese film industry developed significantly. A batch of strong dramatists and writers came into the film industry. Through adapting western techniques, the Chinese industry became mature and the quality of films produced improved enormously (Di 2008). Many high quality films were made such as: *Heroic Sons and Daughters* (风云儿女 1935); *Street Angel* (马路天使 1937) and *Crossroads* (十字街头 1937). Many of these films were in the style of social realism, showing life as it was in China at the time. Because of the political significance of the stories, and the political left-wing motivation of some of the directors, these films are often today called 'Leftist films' in Chinese film studies (The Ohio State University 2003).

3.2 Music in Chinese Cinema

When the sound film era began in China, film music mainly tended towards composition of a theme song, and the use of some pieces of pre-composed music, for example: *Doom of Peaches and Plums* (桃李劫 1934); *Heroic Sons and Daughters* (风云儿女 1935), and *Melody of Fishing Light* (渔光曲 1935). These theme songs often became popular songs later. Even the current Chinese national anthem comes from the film *Heroic Sons and Daughters*. The name of this song is *March of the Volunteers* (义勇军进行曲 1935) composed by Nie Er (Di 2008).

In the 1930's, a batch of composers who were educated professionally began to write title music overtures and soundtracks for films. For example: *The View of Modern City* (都市风光 1935) composed by Huang Zi, *Crossroad* (十字街头 1937) composed by He Luding and *Phantom Lover* (夜半歌声 1937) composed by Xian Xinghai. In the period after 1940, a younger generation of Chinese composers finished their composition studies. Equipped with good composition skills, they then started to compose for entire films (Di 2008).

After 1949, many professional film music composers emerged and Chinese film music composition greatly improved. They studied Western sound-tracks, and absorbed Western musical techniques of harmony and orchestration, although they continued to compose on the basis of Chinese musical elements. The songs in the films of this period were especially excellent as a result of the increased sophistication in the techniques of composition, both of the melody and the instrumentation. These include songs like *Five Golden Flowers*, *Sister Liu*, *On the Tip of the Visitors*, *Red Women* and *The Railway Guerrillas* (Di 2008).

In the middle of the 1980s, some composers who graduated from conservatories after the Cultural Revolution focused on the film music area. At the same time, these composers blended modern composing techniques, for example polytonality and atonality, into film music. These composers include Tan Dun, Ye Xiaogang, Qu Xiaosong and Zhao Jiping (Di 2008).

4. Commentary

4.1 Choice of Film

The choice of a film needed to be made before the composition could begin. There were several conditions to be considered. First of all, it must be a Chinese film made during the silent era between 1900 and the mid-1930s. In addition, the film should have basic qualities such as a strong plot and good acting. Lastly, to answer research questions, the film should represent the time period and social conditions of early last century in China.

According to these conditions, after several films were watched, a Chinese silent film was chosen entitled *Peach Blossom Weeps Tears of Blood* (1931). The particular reason for this choice is that after 1930, the Chinese film industry became more mature; *Peach Blossom Weeps Tears of Blood* is representative of this maturity. This film also represents the conflict of social classes at that time. It matches perfectly the conditions required by the research questions.

4.2 Research Tools

Logic Pro 9 was chosen as the main platform for composition. This software is widely used by professional film composers. However I hadn't used this software before, so this project provided a great opportunity to learn to use Logic by composing the soundtrack.

Many instruments, both Western and Chinese, were used in the composition, but live recording all of them was beyond the scope of this project for practical and financial reasons. Therefore, the main instruments used were from the sound library of Logic Pro 9. The quality of some of the sound may be limited by software.

4.3 Overview of the Plot

The plot of the film is a tragic love story which uses Hollywood narrative techniques placed in a Chinese social context and also employs traditional Chinese narrative technique. The male lead character is King Teh-en (played by Jin Yan). He was born into a rich land-owning family which employs many farmers. The female lead character, whose name is Miss Lim (played by Ruan Lingyu) is a daughter of one of the King family's tenants. King and Lim met for the first time as children. They enjoyed playing together and their first meeting made a profound impression on both of them. When they grow up they meet again and fall in love. King's family will not allow them to marry because they come from different social classes. After a long and difficult struggle, King finally convinces his mother to allow the marriage with Lim, but it is already too late. Lim has died as a result of sickness and mental distress. Consequently the film ends very sadly.

4.4 Methodology for the composition of the soundtrack

The soundtrack does not have a fully notated score, because it was not composed in the traditional way. The music was composed and produced in Logic 9 on computer. This method made the composition more efficient, giving immediate feedback. This is already one of the main methodologies in sound-track industry.

4.5 Film analysis

The research requirement imposes a time limitation on the music. The entire film is 98 minutes long, so it was necessary to select one section of the film. After analyzing the film, the beginning section (which describes how the two main actors know each other when they were children) was omitted. The end of the film was omitted as well; it is not as dramatic as the middle part. The middle part was chosen because the dramatic events depicted in it offered the best opportunities to write an interesting soundtrack.

5. Description of the score and plot

Scene 1

The first scene shows the female lead, Miss Lim spinning in front of her house. The image presents a relaxed mood. One of the main musical themes is introduced (theme A, as it will be called here). *Guzheng* and bamboo flute have been chosen as the solo instruments with string accompaniment. The solo instruments use the pentatonic scale, to match the environment of a traditional Chinese country courtyard.

Example 1: Theme A

The musical score for Theme A is presented in three systems. The first system is labeled 'GuZheng' and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff with a 3/4 time signature and a bass clef staff. The melody in the treble staff is written in a pentatonic scale. The second system continues the melody in the treble staff, featuring a triplet of eighth notes and a wavy line indicating a vibrato or tremolo effect. The third system shows the melody in the treble staff with a wavy line, while the bass staff contains a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Example 2: Theme A (variation)

Bamboo Flute

Example 5



Scene 3

When this group of people moves into the house, the music turns to the second main theme (which will be called theme B). The motive of theme B mainly uses Chinese percussion. Regular wood-block rhythm is used to represent the stately walk of King's mother: because she is the landlord, all her tenants have to show her great respect. The gong is used to heighten the queenly atmosphere.

Example 6: a material of Theme B



Because King still has his childhood memory of Miss Lim, when he finds out where he can meet her, the bamboo flute uses a *leggiero* expression to evoke his childlike, happy mood.

Example 7



Scene 4

The following scene begins with King watching Lim spinning. The view of Lim through the enclosure perhaps is intended to show how pure she is. Then King walks in and watches Miss Lim from a closer distance. In his mind he admires Miss Lim's character as an unsophisticated country girl who is more beautiful than the modern city girl. The music in these scenes is a continuous, interconnecting piece. The point of this passage is to trace out an artistic conception depicting King's romantic mood and the happiness he feels when watching Miss Lim. The musical motive is derived from theme A. A *rubato* rhythm and some dreamlike electronic sounds are used in this piece. In addition, the action of spinning appears again, the harp being used again to evoke the spinning. Because the camera distance from the spinning is changing, the volume of the harp changes as well. At the end of this scene, King presents himself in something of the manner of a Western gentleman to ask Lim to take a walk to the peach blossom grove. Lim replies very shyly, which is the traditional reaction of a Chinese girl when approached by a man first at that time. To emphasize these two types of emotion, the clarinet and bamboo flute play a duo here. The clarinet shows King's modern, urban thinking (symbolizing the progressive western style).

Example 8: Theme A (variation)

Clarinet in B \flat

Vivace

5

The bamboo flute shows Lim's simple, kind-hearted character (symbolizing the unadorned Chinese peasant image).

Example 9

Bamboo Flute

Vivace

5

These two instruments play variations of the same melody, but give the music a different color, reflecting their conflicting characters but unified emotion.

Scene 5

The scene changes to the beautiful peach grove environment, where the two characters enjoy one another's company in the lovely setting. The music in this section uses two bamboo flutes to express a conversation between two birds.

Example 10: Theme A (variation)

The musical score for Example 10: Theme A (variation) is presented in four systems, each for two flutes (Flute 1 and Flute 2). The music is in 2/4 time and features a variety of melodic and rhythmic patterns. The first system includes a 'Rubato' marking. The second system starts at measure 9. The third system starts at measure 19 and includes 'fluter' markings. The fourth system starts at measure 27 and includes a '5' marking. The score uses treble clefs and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

On the one hand the music is intended to show the natural environment, while on the other hand the birds could symbolize the two characters just like love birds, full of vitality and with much to say to one another.

Scene 6

In the next scene, Lim is backing home and returns to her job of spinning. At the beginning of this scene, after their passionate encounter, Lim realizes that she and King come from different classes. Her imagination is reflected onscreen in her facial expression, as we see her becoming very upset. King arrives just at this time and promises he will love Lim forever. Lim is touched by King's speech. The third main musical theme appears in this section (theme C, as it will be called here). The woodwinds play a whole-tone scale:

Example 11: Whole-tone scale



which is used to evoke Lim's subjective imagination. The bamboo flute is introduced into the woodwinds as well, with the aim of bringing a more conflictual feeling. Then King walks in, and the clarinet and bamboo flute are kept present as the two characters converse. After Lim hears King's promise, the cello is used as the main instrument, playing an emotional melody to express the happiness of Lim.

Scene 7

King and Lim come to a town fair. This is a busy scene with many people. Several traditional Chinese entertainments are shown. Lim gets upset after they talk with a fortuneteller. This is a sign of the couple's future. The motive of theme B is mainly used in this section. Much Chinese percussion is used to build up this busy scene. At the same time, some earlier musical materials are used in different forms in this section. In the scene of the monkey show, the percussion uses the exact rhythm and instruments seen onscreen. After Lim talks to the fortuneteller, the strings are come in to express the variation in mood and are also used pizzicato to indicate the uncertain future of this couple.

Scene 8

This scene is very sweet. King and Lim come to the outskirts to take photographs. The theme A now appears in a slower rhythm to convey a more relaxed feeling. Because this is the first time Lim has had her photo taken, her actions are humorous. To match this point the *guzheng* is used here employing the technique known as *gua zou* (arpeggios).

Scene 9

Next scene is important in the development of the plot. King is returning to the city the next day, but Lim does not want them to separate. Therefore, King wants to find a way to allow Lim come with him to the city. The problem is that if King's mother discovers her son has fallen in love with a tenant, she will not allow this happen. Therefore, King has to deceive his mother about their relationship and also find a good excuse to convince his mother to let Lim come with them. Influenced by this guilty thought, King's actions and expression are nervous and cautious. To describe the pressure on King and Lim, the woodwind and percussion are used in an alternating way to play some short phrases. Rhythm is free but the phrases are compressed together. At the same time the *guzheng* plays the relaxed melody of theme A to present the mood of King's mother. The contrast of these two musical ideas evokes the lively conflict of both mind-sets. At the moment when King's mother agrees to the King's request, Lim's parents come in and bring some gifts, and the strings enter, changing the emotion of music to a much happier tone. Everything at this moment seems harmonious.

Scene 10

Through a short transitional scene, King and Lim finally arrive to King's home. The nightmare is about to start. King's female cousin discovers the couple's secret when King and Lim are together in the garden. She likes King as well and plans to marry him, with the agreement of their families. King's cousin feels very jealous and goes to tell King's mother straight away. King's mother is very angry at Lim and asks King to send Lim back to village immediately. Theme A reappears here in a different orchestration. When King's cousin comes out with a jealous expression, the color of music suddenly changes. The piano plays the motive of theme C in the bass register.

Example 12

The musical score for Example 12 is for the Piano part. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is in 2/4 time and features a treble clef with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system starts at measure 10 and includes dynamic markings: *fff* (fortississimo), *rit.* (ritardando), *f* (forte), *fff*, and *f*. The bass line in the second system has some notes circled, and there are fermatas over the first and third measures.

The snare drum uses brushes to build up the anger of King's cousin as well. There are two crescendo points; the first one is King's cousin telling the secret to his mother. The strings enter with a violent staccato.

Example 13

The musical score for Example 13 features three parts: Piano, Violin I, and Viola. The Piano part is in 2/4 time, with the right hand playing a melodic line of eighth notes and the left hand providing a harmonic accompaniment of chords. The Violin I and Viola parts play a rhythmic, staccato accompaniment of eighth notes. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering measures 1-8 and the second system covering measures 9-16.

The second crescendo coincides with the arrival of King's mother in the garden and her admonishing King and Lim. At this point, strings still play staccato in the background, but the piano takes on the role of the melody.

Example 14: Theme A1

Piano

Violin

Viola

Cello

Pno.

Vln. I

Vla.

Vc.

The rhythm of this second crescendo accelerates from slow to fast. It is effectively used to drive the emotion of anger of King's mother. The music of both these crescendos is based on theme A and a variation of it (theme A1, as it will be called here.)

Example 15: Comparison of A and A1

Example 15: Comparison of A and A1

Scene 11

In the next scene King sends Lim to a secret apartment. Lim thought she was being sent back to the country and cries along the way, but King knows he can keep Lim in the city, so he is still in a

happy mood and makes faces with his servant. The piano uses the material of theme A. The music expresses the mood but combines it with the rhythm of the vehicle's movement. This also forms the transition to the next section of music.

Scene 12

When they arrive at the secret house, Lim is very surprised. Everything in this house seems fantastic to her. The musical style in this section takes on a very different character. The basic musical material is derived from the theme A, but the harmony and the rhythm are in a jazz style, to convey a modern, urban feeling.

Example 16: Theme A Jazz (variation)

The musical score for Example 16: Theme A Jazz (variation) is presented in two systems. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system includes staves for Alto Sax, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The Alto Sax and Bass staves are mostly silent, while the Piano and Drum Set have activity. The Piano part features chords and melodic fragments, and the Drum Set has a rhythmic pattern. The second system includes staves for A. Sax, Pno., Bass, and D. S. The A. Sax and Pno. staves have melodic lines, while the Bass and D. S. staves continue their respective parts. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, chords, and drum patterns.

The musical score for Scene 13 consists of four staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (A. Sax.), the second for Piano (Pno.), the third for Bass, and the fourth for Double Bass (D. S.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 14. The Saxophone part features a melodic line with some rests. The Piano part provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The Bass part has a steady eighth-note pattern. The Double Bass part has a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and rests.

The lively rhythm of jazz is also a good musical match for the youthful, happy mood of these two characters.

Scene 13

The scene returns to the big house of King's mother. She is talking with her family about the marriage of King and his female cousin. King's mother has already agreed to it without King's consent. King returns at this very moment. He dares not let his mother know that Lim is still in the city, so he is very nervous when his mother asks him, and is forced to lie to his mother. The music uses theme C here, with the whole-tone scale expressing a feeling of disharmony and nervousness. At the beginning of this section, Chinese percussion plays in the background. It is a sign of King's mother's powerful personality and the repeating rhythm signifies her unchangeable old-fashioned way of thinking. The music also suggests the feeling that their conversation is like a trap for King's marriage. When King comes back, the rhythm becomes free, sounding a little bit like King's nervous disposition, and vividly shows the emotion of King when his mother asks about Lim. The music also expresses some of his anger and helplessness when King's female cousin asks Lim in a sarcastic way.

Scene 14

After a period of time, Lim quickly adapts to city life. Her dress is totally like a modern girl. She is also pregnant with King's baby. Unfortunately, Lim feels much stressed about her future life. She worries about King's mother still not allowing them to marry. On the one hand, King doesn't know how to convince his mother and dares not tell the truth about Lim; on the other hand, King

doesn't want Lim worry too much about this problem. Therefore, King tells Lim the lie that his mother has already agreed to their relationship. The music is still uses the jazz style suitable to the modern city environment of the scene. The mood of the characters is very happy at the start as well. When Lim asks about King's mother and their future, the music reverts to a serious emotion for a time, but quickly returns to a lighter feeling.

Scene 15

Lim has already been in the city for a long time. Her mother was seriously ill at home and wants to see her daughter. This is a short section. The piano plays with the clarinet with music expressing the difficult situation. The music is simple but emotional.

Example 17

Musical score for Example 17. The score is in 2/4 time and D major. The top staff is for Clarinet in B \flat and the bottom staff is for Piano. The Clarinet part consists of a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a phrase that is repeated. The Piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note chordal pattern in the right hand and a bass line with quarter notes in the left hand.

Then, the French horn and the flute continue, catching this feeling to express the sadness of Lim's mother.

Example 18

Musical score for Example 18. The score is in 2/4 time and D major. The top staff is for Flute and the bottom staff is for Horn in F. The Flute part features a melodic line with eighth notes and a phrase that is repeated, ending with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The Horn part features a melodic line with quarter notes and a phrase that is repeated, mirroring the Flute's melody.

The musical materials are created by using the first notes of theme A and repeating them in an inverted manner.

Scene 16

Lim's father comes to his landlord and asks that his daughter be allowed to come back home with him. Of course King's mother is very surprised, because she thought Lim had already been sent back by King. King arrives home at this moment. He interrupts the two parents and drags Lim's father away, urging him to run away, to avoid his mother discovering his secret. The bassoon and oboe are used to represent Lim's father and King's mother in conversation. The rhythm becomes faster and faster to emphasize the tension, as King's secret may be discovered any time. The cello plays staccato to match the expression as well.

Scene 17

In this scene Lim's father finally meets his daughter and is very angry at the change in Lim's circumstances. He also blames King for what he has done with his daughter. The music is used here to describe deeper emotion of characters. The whole musical compass is employed here from high to low register; from a brightly bamboo flute to present Lim's happiness upon meeting her father to percussion and staccato strings evoking a conflict. The orchestration depicts the change in Lim's emotion from happiness to fear. The music resembles a conversation between Lim and her father.

Scene 18

One of the dramatic climaxes of the film occurs in this section. Lim's father angrily brings the two young lovers to King's mother. An argument ensues about whether the young couple should marry or not. Lim is already pregnant, but King's mother wants to pay compensation rather than allowing the marriage. Lim's father refuses the money and is dismissed by King's mother. Lim leaves with her father; she saddened by the weakness of King when confronting his mother. In this section, the music mainly uses theme A1. However, the orchestration develops in the three different forms.

Example 19: Theme A1 (variation)

The musical score for Example 19 is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes parts for Piano, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. Violin I and II have melodic lines with some triplet figures. The Viola and Cello provide harmonic support with block chords and moving lines. The second system continues the piece, with the piano part showing more melodic development in the right hand and sustained chords in the left. Violin I and II continue their melodic roles, with Violin II ending in a rapid sixteenth-note run. The Viola and Cello maintain their harmonic foundation.

Example 20: Theme A1 (variation)

The musical score for Example 20 is in 3/4 time and consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. Violin I has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. Violin II has a more active melodic line with some rests. The Viola and Cello provide harmonic support with block chords and moving lines. The music is characterized by its rhythmic patterns and the interplay between the string instruments.

Example 21: Theme A1 (variation)

The musical score for Example 21: Theme A1 (variation) is presented in three systems. The first system includes Flute, Clarinet in B \flat , Oboe, Violin, and Viola. The second system includes Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in B \flat (B \flat Cl.), Oboe (Ob.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vla.). The third system includes Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in B \flat (B \flat Cl.), and Oboe (Ob.). The music is in 2/4 time and features various melodic lines and textures across the instruments.

There are four crescendos during this scene; after each crescendo the music suddenly becomes quieter in order to focus on a character's deep emotion, before building up to the next crescendo. The brass plays in unison at the crescendo, an effect which has been barely used in other scenes.

Scene 19

The next scene finds King locked in his room. He is angry with his mother and misses Lim very much. To match this repressive emotion, the music is assembled from several earlier piano pieces.

Scene 20

The scene returns to the country. Lim's mother has died, her father has lost his job and Lim is pregnant. Their life becomes harder. Lim still misses King very much, but there is no way he can help her out. The music here is intended to evoke Lim's imagination, with continuous changes of harmony to reach a cadence point.

Scene 21

The last crescendo in the soundtrack depicts a big fight scene. After Lim's father has been fired, the robbers think that the strongest defender of the property has gone; therefore, they come to steal the herd. When Lim's father hears the fighting, regardless of his daughter's advice, he goes to help the other tenants to protect the herd even though it isn't his duty anymore. Lim's father injures his eyes during the fighting and eventually becomes blind. The component element of music is from theme A1, with more Chinese percussion combined with brass at the commencement of the fighting.

Example 22: Theme A1 (variation)

The musical score for Example 22: Theme A1 (variation) is presented in two systems. The first system includes Trombone, Percussion, Bass Drum, Horn in F, Violin, and Cello. The second system includes Tbn., Perc., B. Dr., Hn., Vln., and Vc. The music is in 4/4 time and features a mix of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is written for a variety of instruments, including woodwinds, strings, and percussion.

When the scene cuts back to Lim's house, the intensity of the music decreases, leaving only percussion, cello and woodwinds. But the music builds up rapidly when the scene cuts back to the fighting. To highlight the action as one robber sneaks up to attack Lim's father's eyes, the timpani and string were used to match the action. After Lim's father is wounded, the music leads the audience out of the fighting environment; strings, brass and Chinese percussion continue, but more quietly. At that point the piano enters and clearly comes to the fore in a solo role. The music

is intended to change the emotional tone, prefiguring Lim's father's harder life in future. The music continues with a short reappearance as the camera follows Lim's father being carried home by a tenant.

Scene 22-24

The ensuing four scenes illustrate Lim and her father's miserable life. They have no money to live. Lim refuses a rich old man's money because he wants her to marry him. Meanwhile King continues to refuse to marry his cousin while he struggles with his mother. The music mainly uses variations on theme A, A1, B and C.

Scene 25

This the final scene scored for this project. Lim's family is desperate as they have nothing to live on. She makes the difficult decision to go to the rich old man for money after she watches her child suffering from starvation. As she passes through the peach grove, Lim stares at the peach blossom and recalls that when she was a child, her mother told her to be honest. Lim's emotion gets the better of her: she doesn't want to sell herself for money, but the necessities of life don't give her much choice. Lim cries and rushes back home. The music here features a reappearance of theme A when Lim enters the peach grove. The harp plays theme C interspersed with theme A to present Lim's memory of her mother.

Example 23

The musical score for Example 23 is arranged in two systems. The first system includes the GuZheng, Harp, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The second system includes the Piano, Harp, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The score is written in 3/4 time and features a variety of musical notations, including slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The GuZheng part is in the upper register, while the Harp, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass parts are in the lower register. The Piano part is in the upper register of the second system. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/4.

Then theme A1 is employed to push the emotion to a climax at the end of this section.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion reached at the completion of the composition is that composers should investigate the historical background before composing for a Chinese silent film made in 1930s. The screenplays of the era reflect social phenomena which are not common in today's society, and contemporary audiences may not understand. The soundtrack can play a key role in helping the audience understand the plot. As far as the difficulty of composition is concerned, the combination of traditional Chinese instruments and musical material with Western instruments and techniques in a contemporary context poses certain problems. For example, there is potential conflict arising from the use of different scales – within each scale system the harmonies that arise work well, but used together (for example the combination of Chinese melody and Western harmony) they can produce unpleasant effects. There is also the danger that some contemporary Western composition techniques will dilute the characteristic features of Chinese music. During the composition of this film soundtrack, the solving of these problems has been a constant concern.

Samples of several Chinese instruments were used in the soundtrack: *guzheng*, *pipa*, bamboo flute and a Chinese percussion group. Their timbre was found to combine with Western instruments well. Instrumental combinations help to preserve the features of Chinese and Western musical material and also reconciled the two systems. For example, when the harmonic context is compatible, the Chinese instruments can play the melodic lines while the orchestra plays the role of background. The main melody can also be played alternately by Chinese and Western instruments. In certain sections where the harmony does not suit Chinese traditional music, the Chinese percussion group can be successfully used. The harmonic logic of the music is maintained while a Chinese musical atmosphere is still present through the characteristic percussion timbres.

This research will be extremely helpful to my future work. I am intending to compose for more films, but not only Chinese. To understand more about how to combine and reconcile the characteristic musical materials of different cultures music in composition offers the prospect of unexpected and interesting musical results. If the right decisions are made when film composers adopt a cross-cultural approach, the sound-track could be more effective. It is also in line with the contemporary trend towards greater diversification in film sound-tracks.

Table 1

<i>TABLE OF SCENES AND THEMES</i>		
Scene	Time code:	Theme:
Scene 1	<i>From 00:00 to 00:52</i>	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 2	00:53 01:56	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 3	01:57 03:03	<i>Theme: B</i>
Scene 4	03:04 05:21	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 5	05:22 06:48	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 6	06:49 10:29	<i>Theme: C; A</i>
Scene 7	10:30 13:20	<i>Theme: B; A</i>
Scene 8	13:21 14:41	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 9	14:42 17:26	<i>Theme: B; A</i>
Scene 10	17:27 20:59	<i>Theme: A; A1; C</i>
Scene 11	20:59 22:09	<i>Theme: C;</i>
Scene 12	22:10 23:08	<i>Theme: Jazz A</i>
Scene 13	23:09 24:59	<i>Theme: C</i>
Scene 14	25:00 27:27	<i>Theme: Jazz A; A</i>
Scene 15	27:28 28:58	<i>Theme: A</i>

Scene 16	28:59 29:44	<i>Theme: A1</i>
Scene 17	30:03 32:16	<i>Theme: A; A1</i>
Scene 18	32:17 36:51	<i>Theme: A1</i>
Scene 19	36:52 39:59	<i>Theme: C; A</i>
Scene 20	40:00 42:24	<i>Theme: A</i>
Scene 21	42:25 46:13	<i>Theme: A1</i>
Scene 22-24	46:14 54:47	<i>Theme: A; C; B; A1;</i>
Section 25	54:48 57:27	<i>Theme: C; A; A1</i>

Table 2

Major Synchronisation Points			
Scene #	Timing	Instruments	Description
1	00:00	Harp	The harp begins playing as the spinning wheel turns
2	02:34	Castanets	The percussion coincides with the moment King turns his face as he thinks about Lim
3	03:10	Harp	The harp begins again when the shot cuts back to Lim spinning
4	04:00	Pad 1	A dreamlike electronic sound comes in to describe the pure beauty of Lim
5	06:40	Harp	The harp plays when King accidentally sits on the ground
6	07:12	Clarinet	The whole tone scale is used at the point when Lim's mood changes
7	09:50	Cello	At the moment when Lim is touched by King words, an emotional melody begins on the cello
8	11:14	Castanets	The percussion emphasizes Lim's annoyance when she sees a picture of naked woman at the fair
9	11:25	Cymbals, hand drum	The cymbals and hand drum match the rhythm that the monkey plays
10	13:18	Woodwind, Strings	The orchestration is changing to a happy mood to fit the screen
11	13:58	<i>guzheng</i>	The <i>guzheng</i> highlights the awkwardness of Lim
12	16:04	Strings	A change in orchestration coincides with the change in mood from caution to relaxation
13	17:27	Orchestra	Reappearance of Theme A, with strings to playing a concertante role
14	18:19	Piano	Coinciding with the appearance of King's female cousins, the bass register of the piano is used to suggest the threat to the couple's happiness

15	18:27	Piano	As the female cousin expresses her anger, the piano plays fortissimo
16	21:21	Tom	When King's servant pulls a face, the toms highlight his suggestive expression
17	22:10	Piano, bass, drum	When the couple enter King's apartment, jazz begins to play, highlighting the modern, urban atmosphere
18	24:57	Strings	The string entry coincides with a cut
19	25:10	Orchestration	When the scene cuts back to King's apartment, jazz begins again
20	27:33	Piano	A piano cue when the scene cuts to Lim's mother
21	29:40	Flute, clarinet	The rapid exit of King and Lim's father is illustrated by a chromatic scale played the two instruments
22	31:17	Tuba	The sadness of this moment is expressed by the use of the tuba
23	32:29	Orchestration	The string cue coincides with characters meeting and beginning an argument
24	39:03	Wood	The clarinet cue coincides with the beginning of scene of King's jail imagination of his feeling
25	42:47	Orchestra	The percussion plays as the robbers appear onscreen and ready to fight
26	44:49	Timpani	The timpani draws the audience's attention to one of the robbers, who subsequently attack's Lim father
27	44:55	Clarinet	The clarinet plays a chromatic scale when Lim's father is wounded
28	50:25	Tuba	The tuba solo highlights the evil face of old rich landlord
29	51:18	Viola	The use of tremolo in the viola coincides with King's expression of anger
30	55:57	Theme A	Theme A is played as Lim remembers her mother's words

Bibliography

Chion, M. et al., 1994. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press

Gorbman, C, 1987. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. London: BFI

Yeh, Y.Y., 2002. Historiography and Sinification: Music in Chinese Cinema of the 1930s. *Cinema Journal*, 3(44), pp.78 – 97

Altman, R., 2004. *Silent Film Sound*. New York: Columbia University Press

Lu, H.S., 2005. *Chinese Film History*. Beijing: Zhang, Z.K.

Di, Q.A., 2008. *Music In the Film*. Shanghai: Yaowei Fei

Lawson, P., 2007. *Film Music*. Translated from English by She, X.L., Wang, W.B. UK: Reaktion Book Ltd

The Ohio State University, 2003. *A Brief History of Chinese Film*. [online] Available at: <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/denton2/courses/c505/temp/history/chapter1.html>>

NOTE:

DVD containing segment of “Peach Blossom Weeps
Tears of Blood” with the newly composed soundtrack
is included with the print copy of the thesis held in
the University of Adelaide Library.