

# On the Chinese Piano Music “Three Variations on the Yang Pass”(yangguan San Die)

## DE LA MUSIQUE DE PIANO CHINOISE « TROIS VARIATIONS SUR LA PASSE YANG » (YANGGUAN SAN DIE)

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**Abstract:** This paper introduces the producing background of the chinese piano music “Three Variations on the Yang Pass”(yangguan San Die), intending to help the player understand the deep meaning and emotion of this ancient chinese classic music.

**Key words:** producing background, meaning, emotion

**Résumé:** Le présent article introduit le contexte de création de la musique de piano chinoise « Trois Variations sur la passe Yang » (Yangguan San Die), dans le but d’aider le joueur à mieux comprendre la signification profonde et l’émotion de cette ancienne musique classique chinoise.

**Mots-Clés:** contexte de création, signification, émotion

The Qin-song “Three Variations on the Yang Pass” was composed on the basis of Poet Wang Wei’s “Seeing Yuan the Second off on a mission to Anxi”, This poem spread far and wide in Tang Dynasty and has been collected in “Yi Zhou Da Qu” as the third paragraph. It is said that once WangWei saw off his friend Yuan the second who had to enlist in army outside the pass to Wei Cheng (Wei Chen was the only way to go outside the pass. To the west of Wei Chen it would be outside the Yang pass, sparsely populated, so at that time people usually sent friend to Wei Chen and part.). They were heart broken and reluctant to part. Wangwei wrote this poem named “Seeing Yuan the Second off on a mission to Anxi ”in tears. The seven character quatrain is “Morning rain dampens the dust in Weicheng, New willow catkins turn an inn green. Drink one more cup of wine my friend, West of young pass there is no one you know.” After he wrote it, he chanted the poem with a harmonized metre. He seemed rather melancholy now that his friend will depart soon, not knowing when they can meet again. So his song was quite emotional that people around couldn’t help signing.

This poem spread soon and has been popular in the capital. Polished by musicians then, it became a great work that has been handed down from generation to generation. What’s more, it was always regarded as a send-off song.

### INTRODUCTION OF THE SONG

“Three Variations on the Yang Pass” is the famous piano-song in the Tang Dynasty of which uses WangWei’s poem “Seeing Yuan the Second off on a mission to Anxi” as words. Simple, passionate and full of gloomy mood, the tune of the song expresses the poet’s melancholy and deep concern over his friend’s leave.

“Three Variations on the Yang Pass”, the classic Qin-song and the famoust song in Tang Danysty uses the words of WangWei’s poem “Seeing Yuan the Second off on a mission to Anxi”. The original poem is “Morning rain dampens the dust in Weicheng, New willow catkins turn an inn green, Drink one more cup of wine my friend, West of young pass there is no one you know.” Because “Yang Pass” and “Wei Cheng” appeared in this poem, the song is also called “Yang Pass Song” or “Wei Cheng Song”. Three Variations means the same tune varies three times in the three paragraphs.

ChenTao, the poet of Tang Dynasty, has recorded in his poem “Xi Chuan Zuo Shang Ting Jin Wu Yun Chang Ge”: “The song is the third paragraph of ‘YinZhou’, singing the prime minister’s military song”. It is the hard evidence that “WeiCheng Song” was collected in “YinZhou Da Qu”. Words were repeatedly sang in Da

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Qu to express the mood of the poem that were always 5 or 7 words quatrain and four lines of regulated verse. "Three Variations on the Yang Pass" refers to sing the poem repeatedly for three times.

When the song passed down, a lot of collection of tunes and several songs have been created. In Song Dynasty, three tunes can be found; Su Shi had listened to two versions.

The music score before Yuan Dynasty lost, In the early Ming Dynasty Gong Jigu compiled "Zhe Yin Shi Zi music score", it collected "Three Variations on the Yang Pass" music score. This has been regarded as the oldest music score, but it was hard to search whether this score has the relationship with the score in Tany Dynasty.

The existing Qin- music score of "Three Variations on the Yang Pass" are more than thirty in total. Their tunes are almost the same, but their musical forms have some differences. The song is simple yet rich in emotion, with a slight feeling of sadness. The last tune uses the homophone to strengthen the solicitude and deep concern over friend which expresses the theme of the poem.

The version of "Three Variations on the Yang Pass" which has been performed most in recent years comes from compiler Zhang He's "The introduction of Qin" in the late Qin Dynasty. The song has been divided into three paragraphs, using one repeated tune for changes. For it is always sang for three times, we call it "Three Variations". Each variation uses Wangwei's poem besides a quoted sentence "Qing He Jie Dang Chun". The latter paragraph is the increased words of song, each variation is not identical. From musical respect, the latter paragraph is a little bit similar to refrain. The tune of the song is simple but passionate, especially the octave "Xing, Xing" in the refrain as well as repeated memorial of "Li Xin Ku" and so on. The song is full of emotion and gloomy mood, having expressed the author's boundless concern over his friend, sincere affection and reluctance to leave.

The contemporary composer Wang Xia Ya has adapted it into a chorus on the basis of pianist Xia Yi Feng's performance. The chorus has been recorded. Except singing as a song, "Three Variations on the Yang Pass" has also be performed by musical instruments. Among these instruments, Qin song , zheng bend and erhu fiddle bend are most influential.

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