

# Study on the Characteristics and Performance of Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes

Jie Cheng

Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou Jiangsu, 221116, China

1542927654@qq.com

**Abstract.** Since the reform and opening up, the exchange of music and culture between China and the West has become increasingly frequent. In the field of composition, a large number of outstanding modern Chinese composers have enthusiastically created many excellent works, among which Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" is one of the representatives of modern Chinese piano works. In this work, Zhang Shuai combines Chinese ethnic music culture with Western modern music culture, giving the music a charm of combining Chinese and Western cultures, which has high research value. This article will mainly analyze and study the work from four aspects: the musical form and image analysis of the work, the creative characteristics of the work, and the analysis of performance skills. It will deeply explore how traditional Chinese ethnic music and Western jazz music elements can be cleverly integrated, and how to better interpret and interpret the work. It is hoped that this can provide readers with some valuable help and suggestions.

**Keywords:** Zhang Shuai; Three Preludes; Feature Piano; Playing Skills.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background

With the deepening of China's reform and opening up and cultural rapid development, many composers influenced by foreign excellent music culture, its own distinctive music elements and western modern music elements of high fusion, constantly explore and innovation in music, left many excellent works, these emerging works have a certain tentative, bold combination of Chinese traditional and western modern, fusion of Chinese aesthetics and western aesthetics, presents a distinctive chic music image, create a strong charm of folk music, for our music development road has made a great contribution. Among them, the representative is indispensable, "three prelude" is one of the most famous piano works, the works clever use of the Chinese five-tone melody motive for the outline, the national five tone and western jazz music, in rhythm, harmony, melody, texture, tone, and structure all show the wisdom of the composer and creative talent, is a rare good work. [1]

### 1.2. Study Purpose and Significance

#### 1.2.1. Study Purpose

Through the study of Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes", the first aim is to understand the evolution of contemporary Chinese composers' piano music creation, which is helpful for music researchers to have a deeper understanding of the development of Chinese piano art and the position of this piano work in this development process. Secondly, through the study of this piano work, it can serve as a reference for young music creators to combine the melodies of Chinese music with modern Western harmony. Finally, this work is one of the compulsory Chinese repertoires for the "Golden Bell Award" piano competition in the second round. Through research on this topic, the author hopes to provide some help for piano performers and better interpret this work.

#### 1.2.2. Research Significance

The significance of studying Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" lies in the fusion of national music and jazz in this piano work, and the collision of modes is refreshing. Secondly, the creative techniques



used by Zhang Shuai in this work are very original, cleverly integrating the traditional Chinese pentatonic mode with Western major and minor tones, which is different from the traditional creative concepts and techniques of our predecessors. Moreover, Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" belongs to the traditional Western music genre, and the music form of the prelude is free, earning the reputation of "although the sparrow is small," it has "all five organs". Therefore, the author believes that this is the significance of our in-depth research.

### **1.3. Research Content and Methods**

#### **1.3.1. Research Content**

The author will deeply analyze the ethnic and jazz elements contained in Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes", and combine their own practice and experience to conduct a detailed analysis of the performance techniques of the work. With specific performance techniques and creative techniques theory as the core, the author will conduct a thorough study of Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes".

#### **1.3.2. Research Methods**

In this article, the main methods used are literature research, text analysis, experience summary, and practical analysis. The literature research method mainly relies on resources such as CNKI, CNKD database, and National Library to extensively search for relevant literature materials such as "Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes", sort out and summarize research reviews on relevant topics at home and abroad, and establish the theoretical basis and development trend of this paper's research. Text analysis is used to analyze the musical form and image of a work, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the work. The experience summary method is to analyze and summarize the work through learning and watching related performance videos in piano professional courses. The practical analysis method is based on the performance of musical instruments, and the author has practiced the work and gained their own understanding.

### **1.4. Research Status**

There is no research literature on Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" abroad. The following is the collection and organization of literature materials mainly from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) in China. The author searched 39 articles on CNKI with the theme of "Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes", including 24 master's theses and 15 related journal papers. In these literature, the research subjects are roughly divided into the following three categories.

The first category is to study the performance techniques of Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" and solve the difficulties encountered in performance from multiple perspectives. For example, Zhang Wen's "Analysis of the Creation and Performance of Zhang Shuai's Three Piano Preludes" [2], an analysis was conducted on speed, force, and pedals, and new insights were also proposed on the semitone and syncopated rhythm in the work. In addition to the above points, Qu Yunhan's "Music Analysis and Performance Analysis of Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes" [3] also adds the handling and manipulation of emotions. The fingering technique is explained in detail in "On the Performance Techniques of the Three Preludes op.18"[4] written by Gao Tao. The second category is to study the musical structure of Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes"[5], focusing on the harmony, texture, rhythm, melody, mode and tonality of the works. For example, "Analysis of Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes" by Han Yan, "Research on the Creation and Performance of Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes"[6] by Li Yiyang, and so on.

The third category is to study Western jazz in Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes". For example, Zhang Manru's "Analysis of Jazz Elements and Performance in Zhang Shuai's" Three Piano Preludes "[7], Qian Xiyuan's" Integration of Five Tone Form and Jazz Elements in One Shuai's "Three Piano Preludes", etc. [8]

In summary, the author found that the research on Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" mostly focuses on performance techniques, creative characteristics, jazz music style, and other aspects. In performance

techniques, the focus is on the speed, strength, pedal, rhythm, and other aspects of the work. There is very little research on the stress and connecting lines involved in the work, There are also few studies related to the development of modern Chinese piano music and the combination of Chinese and Western creative techniques.

### **1.5. Research and Innovation**

I initially studied Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" because the author's unique creative techniques deeply attracted me, cleverly integrating pentatonic and Western modes into jazz melodies, making people linger and forget to leave. After practicing and reviewing the performance materials of this work, the author found that it has very high academic research value, but related research is relatively scarce and needs further research. In addition, as the author is a graduate student majoring in piano performance, the innovation of this paper is the targeted exploration of the performance techniques of the work. In previous research, the performance techniques are mainly focused on the speed, strength, pedal, rhythm, etc. of the work, and there is very little research on the stress and connecting lines involved in the work. This article will study and elaborate on this, hoping to provide some help to the performer.

## **2. Zhang Shuai and "Three Preludes"**

### **2.1. Introduction of the Composer**

Zhang Shuai is a famous young composer in China, born in 1979 into an art family in Shenyang, Liaoning. Zhang Shuai loved music from a young age and received orthodox music training, gaining a good understanding of both Chinese and Western music, and laying a solid foundation for his future creations. Zhang Shuai obtained a doctoral degree from the Central Conservatory of Music in 2008 and is currently an associate professor in the Department of Composition at the Central Conservatory of Music. Among Zhang Shuai's works, one must mention the piano work "Three Preludes", which was created in 1998 and premiered in 2000. The "Three Preludes" won the highest prize in the Chinese music industry, the "Golden Bell Award" bronze award in 2002, and later became one of the designated Chinese tracks in the 6th China Music Golden Bell Award Piano Competition. After the 1990s in China, this work was frequently used for performance both domestically and internationally, and was deeply loved by everyone. In addition, Zhang Shuai has also created multiple excellent works, such as "The Daughter of the Sun", "New Year Paintings", "Xun", "Poetry Rain in Jiangnan", etc., all of which demonstrate a unique creative style in his works.[9]

### **2.2. Background of the Creation of "Three Preludes"**

In the 1990s, China's reform and opening up achieved significant results. While promoting the reform and opening up, the opening up to the outside world was also further expanded, and China's economy and culture were highly developed. In the history of Western music, 20th century music has new techniques and styles in terms of rhythm and harmony, melody, orchestration, and other aspects. The representative schools include "Expressionist music", "New Romanticism", "Accidental music", "New Classical music", and so on. These distinctive Western modern composition techniques gradually entered the view of Chinese composers in the 1980s with China's reform and opening up policies. Many Chinese composers highly integrated their own unique music elements with Western modern music elements in their creations, integrating national music into modern composition techniques, and constantly pursuing innovation in music. Among them, Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" is one of the representative works of modern Chinese piano works. In this work, the composer integrates China's national and Western modes, and also adds elements of Western jazz, combining China's exotic charm with the syncopated rhythm of jazz, with unique charm.

### 3. Analysis of the Characteristics of the Third Piece of "Three Preludes"

In order to better understand the work, it is essential to analyze its musical features, which can bring us closer to the work and better understand its structure, creative techniques, connotation, and emotions. The third chapter of this article will conduct research from four aspects: the analysis of the musical form, the analysis of the musical image, the national style of the melody in the work, and the application and integration of jazz in the work, in order to have a clearer understanding of the theoretical knowledge of the work and better interpret it.

#### 3.1. Curve-type Analysis

The third piece of the "Three Preludes" is a single trilogy style with a reproduction, in G minor, in 4/4 beats, with a tempo of allegro. It is passionate and unrestrained, and is the most dynamic work among the three preludes.

**Presentation section:** (120-152) bars Figure 1, bars 120-121 are the introduction, bars 122-129 are the first section, which includes two sentences. One sentence consists of four bars and ends with a scratch. 130-140 is a variation and repetition of segment one, starting with a two-bar introduction and also a two-sentence square section, ending with a scratch, but with a change in internal structure. 141-152 is an expansion of the presentation section. In the presentation section, the left hand is mainly composed of columnar chords, and the right hand is mainly composed of chromatic scales. The harmony color is rich, and the music is full of drama and tension, with a lot of stress marks. The stress highlights the melody, making the music full of emotions and vitality!



Figure 1. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

**Middle section:** (153-187), as shown in Figure 2, the 153-160 section is a two phrase square section, the 161-175 section is a single section, and the 176-187 section is a supplement to the middle section. The speed of the middle section is different from that of the presentation section, slightly slower, and the emotions are calmer than that of the presentation section. There are more melodies in the high pitched area, creating another atmosphere. In terms of harmony, it moves from columnar chords to monophonic melodies, and the texture becomes thinner.

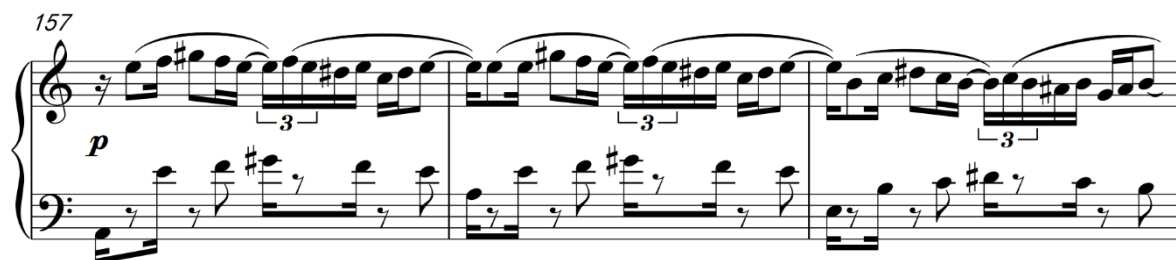


Figure 2. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

**Reproduction section:** (bars 188-208) Figure 3, theme return, using a variable reproduction method, with the beat returning from 4/2 to 4/4. The speed of the reproduction section is 130, which is more intense than before and is the climax of the entire song. The melody of bars 190 and 194 is imitated from bars 122, with thickened texture and continued use of a large number of columnar chords. The

continuous bass octave on the left hand and the dissonant seventh interval on the right hand in bars 198-205 gradually strengthen as the range increases, ultimately pushing the music to its climax.



Figure 3. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

### 3.2. Analysis of Music Image

Each capital in the "Three Preludes" represents a different musical image, and the three Preludes provide musical descriptions of the mental state of young people from different perspectives. The themes and themes of these three songs are both interrelated and have their own characteristics. The first piece is the passionate Allegro, an atonal prelude with a theme of "conflicting" and "unruly", expressing the rebellious and rebellious personality of young people, which leads to some complex psychological activities. The second piece is a mysterious Adagio, so its theme is "mysterious", as if covered with a thin layer of gauze, which is faintly visible. The second work expresses some inner activities of a young boy in the face of love, which is a feeling of pretending to be mature and mysterious. The seamless connection between sound and sound is gentle and lingering [10].

The third piece is a tempestuous allegro, with the theme of 'young'. This work is neither a description of love nor a deep reflection on life, nor a vivid reflection of a young man with full vitality. It is a burst of youth and a completely different emotional expression from the previous two songs. The third work seems to depict a young person who is fearless and ignorant of the world, full of passion and longing for life, with a cheerful personality and fearless attitude towards everything, always moving forward bravely. Although there may be difficulties and obstacles along the way, they still rise to the challenge, a burst of primitive power, accurately displaying the inherent characteristics of young people. So in the third piece, the composer used a lot of syncopation rhythm, stress, and scraping marks, making the music full of drama and tension. The syncopated rhythm with jazz rhythm makes the work more explosive, allowing the music to continuously move forward. The use of stress makes the work more suitable for the stormy image, and the scraping brings the music to a climax, rendering the atmosphere, and making the music more in line with the music image set by the collaborator.

### 3.3. The National Style of Melody in the Works

Ethnicity refers to the worldview, personality, and behavioral patterns exhibited by a country or ethnic group under the influence of the same culture, also known as national character. Due to the alignment of this shaping process with the entire social and cultural pattern, a common characteristic is formed, which is national identity. Ethnicity is the most obvious product of the cultural and historical development of various countries, and each country has its own different forms of ethnic characteristics. Chinese music works focus on linear development, especially in the direction of melody. The melody of most pieces dominates the development of the entire work. Chinese composers extract a variety of musical materials from Chinese ethnic and folk music for creating music, especially from these beautiful melodies to obtain their desired national identity. Therefore, in Chinese music works, we often feel the distinct national melodic color, which is one of the reasons why it has Chinese characteristics, and Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes" is no exception.

In the third piece of Zhang Shuai's "Three Preludes", the use of pentatonic melodies has created new techniques. The composer cleverly integrated national pentatonic music with Western jazz rhythms,

highlighting the composer's creative philosophy of "combining Chinese and Western". After repeated experiments, the composer combined simple pentatonic melodies with Western harmonies and adopted the national pentatonic mode of our country in terms of melody; In terms of rhythm, it adopts the syncopated rhythm in Western jazz. At the same time, a large number of chromatic scales are also used in the work, which is a unique creative technique that maximizes the sound effect of the work and also reflects a collision between Chinese and Western cultures.[11]

Starting sound Figure 4 presents a pentatonic (G, D, E) pattern with three backbone tones in the starting left hand. The following melodies use melodic tones with distinct Xinjiang style as embellishments. The melody is marked as having a speed of 120. The music consists of two outer parts with the main chord, and the inner part is filled with multiple triads. The melody line is in the left hand part, while the right hand runs with a fast sixteenth note and the left hand fills with a relatively stable eighth note as the main melody. All of these five notes fill the melody part with a chromatic scale, creating an disharmonious and tense atmosphere. At the same time, the five note connection after horizontal inversion is the second degree, The typical ethnic element characteristics enhance the instability of the music and also drive the development of the music forward.



Figure 4. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

At section 157, Figure 5 shows that the writing of the right hand melody imitates the characteristics of Xinjiang dance music, with a combination of a minor second and an additional second to make the melody more elastic. Subsequently, a minor second with ethnic characteristics is used to add a minor third interval, switching back and forth. The left hand is accompanied by an inserted eighth note, and the melody of the left hand matches the main melody of the right hand. This creative technique makes the main melody more prominent, The syncopated rhythm of jazz with the left hand and the exotic melody played with the right hand make the work very interesting but without losing its charm, giving the audience a joyful rhythm, and at the same time, kneading the national music vocabulary perfectly. This kind of ethnic vocabulary usage also appears in the 167 bar. During the octave movement of the right hand, the notes on the outer frame are dotted with melody lines, which are like an arc, rising first and then falling, full of bouncing feeling, showcasing the granular feeling of Chinese ethnic plucked instruments.



Figure 5. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

### **3.4. Application and Integration of Jazz in the Works**

In the work "Three Preludes", we can not only feel the strong national atmosphere, but also feel the rich elements of Western jazz, both of which are indispensable.

Firstly, in "Zhang Shuai's Three Preludes", the commonly used chords are those formed by overlapping fourth intervals, especially the stacked chords of added four+pure four and pure four+pure four. This is also a commonly used interval combination in jazz music. The stacked chords of fourth intervals, due to their color relationship, make the sound more hazy and blurry. Among them, "mysterious chords" are chords composed of added four+pure four, which are widely used by Scriabin. This chord is also frequently used in Zhang Shuai's prelude, enhancing the jazz elements of the piece.

Secondly, the use of chord extensions is one of the biggest highlights of jazz music. Chord extension refers to the higher position chord note superimposed above the seventh chord, which is an extension of the seventh chord. The chord formed in this way is similar to a stacked chord. By calculating the distance between the extension note and the root note, nine notes, eleven notes, and thirteen notes can be obtained in sequence, which are considered the "natural extension notes" of the chord. On the basis of natural extension sounds, it can also form a "variable extension sound", as the name suggests, which means a nine tone down or a nine tone up, an eleven tone down or an eleven tone up. After adding an extended sound to a seventh chord, the arrangement of its parts can retain the original arrangement, which follows the pattern of a third degree arrangement. Extension notes do not necessarily need to be placed on the highest part, but can be converted to the inner part. At this time, continuous second intervals between adjacent parts should be avoided as much as possible.

Subsequently, half-tone is a commonly used technique in jazz music. In "Zhang Shuai's Prelude", the composer adopted the technique of semitone progression and applied this writing technique throughout the entire work, especially in the third piece, which can be clearly felt. In the first section of the third prelude, the composer adopted the writing method of semitone scale and added stress to the main notes of the semitone scale, Make the semi tone melody clearer and more prominent, thereby creating a non tonal artistic conception. The composer perfectly matches the jazz scale with the work, and also incorporates the syncopated rhythm with jazz characteristics, making the work more dramatic and tense, thereby adding to the appeal of the piece.

Finally, the rhythm of the syncopated rhythm is widely used in Zhang Shuai's preludes. Although other rhythm types such as punctuation, rest, and homophonic lines are sometimes used, the creation of these rhythms is mainly based on the development of the syncopated rhythm [12]. From this, it can be seen that the syncopated rhythm occupies the main position in the work, and it is very important for jazz. It is a manifestation of jazz and also a manifestation of the composer's creative concept of "combining East and West". From the above analysis, Zhang Shuai injected new vitality into Chinese style piano music in his piano work "Three Preludes"!

In summary, there are numerous ethnic pentatonic melodies and Western jazz elements in the "Three Preludes", and these materials do not appear alone, but rather the continuous collision and fusion of the two. For example, in this work, not only the national pentatonic mode of our country is used, but also the major and minor tone modes of the West are used. The composer cleverly integrates the national mode and the major and minor tone modes, blending the two together from the bottom of their bones. In the melody and rhythm, there is me in you and you in me; In terms of harmony application, stacked chords and pentatonic vertical chords complement each other, and the reason why this work is loved by everyone is because the composer perfectly combines the two elements while comparing each other, producing extraordinary effects and highlighting the unique creative style of "Zhang" [13].

### **4. Analysis of the Performance Techniques of the Three Preludes**

To fully and perfectly interpret the work, one not only needs to master the creative background, musical structure, music characteristics, etc. of the work, but also needs to master the performance

skills of the work. The fourth chapter of this article will conduct a detailed analysis from five aspects: speed, strength, stress, linking lines, and fingering, in order to better grasp the work in practice.

#### **4.1. Mastering Speed**

In the third piece of "Three Preludes", the speed has changed three times. The speed in the presentation section is a quarter note 120, the speed in the middle section is a quarter note 110, and the speed in the reproduction section is a quarter note 130. As the emotions and texture of music change, the speed also changes. For example, in the middle section, the texture becomes thinner, transitioning from columnar chords to monophonic melodies, and the intensity significantly weakens, forming a contrast with the presentation section. But the reproduction section even surpassed the speed of the presentation section, pushing the music to a climax and fully embodying the image of young people rushing forward and fearless.

At the beginning of the practice, you can use a metronome to fix the speed of each segment and practice in segments. Once you have mastered the speed changes, you can practice on your own. At this time, you can handle natural changes in speed according to your own music. In this way, adding music processing to the foundation of regularity can more accurately grasp the work.

#### **4.2. Mastery of Strength**

The mastery of strength is particularly important in the third piece of "Three Preludes". Unlike the first two, the third piece is more intense in emotions, expressing a burst of youth, a love for life, and a fearless personality among young people. So in the first section of the third piece, the composer adopted the intensity of *ff* and added stress, which formed a sharp contrast with the second piece. However, in addition to the intensity marking of *ff*, we can also see the intensity marking of the " $\diamond$ " symbol. Therefore, after playing the first intensity, it immediately weakens, gradually strengthens, and gradually weakens. Mastering this detail is very important. If the entire piece is played with the intensity of "*f*", it will cause auditory fatigue and even excessive noise, So extra attention should be paid to the intensity marking of "*p*". In other words, only by achieving the "weak" in the work can the listener feel "strong".[14]

The change in intensity is related to the direction of the sound and the division of the phrase. As the pitch increases, the intensity becomes stronger, while as the pitch decreases, the intensity becomes weaker. The connection between phrases should also pay attention to the changes in intensity. For example, in the 122-125 bars, the four bars form a single sentence, and the weakening is done at the end of the sentence to introduce the next sentence. However, in the 126-129 bars, the intensity is strengthened by scraping at the end of the sentence to convey a strong emotion to the next bar. Even between sections, attention should be paid to the handling of strength. In sections 153-156, the strength has changed four times, from *ff-mf-mp-p*. It is important to pay attention to the comparison of strength here and make a sense of gradually weakening layer by layer.[15]The 206-208 bars fully demonstrate the explosive power of the performer. The composer adds stress marks to each note, requiring the performer to push the intensity to the extreme in one go, and finally end the entire piece with *fff* intensity. So in daily practice, it is necessary to repeatedly practice and ponder, and accurately grasp the changes in strength.

#### **4.3. Application of Stress**

In the third piece of "Three Preludes", the stress is obvious, and it can be imagined how important the stress occupies in the third piece. The use of stress makes the main melody more prominent, allowing listeners to clearly feel the rich melody lines. In the third song, the position of the stress changes multiple times with the rhythm. Let's explore it now.

The stress has already appeared in the 120th bar, with each bar in the 120-129 bar having four beats, each consisting of four sixteenth notes. The stress is on the first note of the first beat, the third note of the second beat, the first and fourth notes of the third beat, and the third note of the fourth beat.

The left hand is consistent with the stress on the right hand.[16] It can be seen that this is different from the general logical stress. The strength of 4 / 4 shots should be strong, weak, second weak and weak. The composer separated the stress and hides in the many sixteenth characters, which is the wonderful part of the composer's creation.

The stress changes in bar 140, when the beat of the entire piece changes from 4/4 to 4/2. The stress also changes with the beat, appearing on the first and fourth notes of the first beat and the second half of the second beat.[17] As the stress changes, the rhythm and melody also change, so it is necessary to master the stress in order to master the melody and rhythm of the entire work. In this piece, 4/4 and 4/2 alternate twice, ending on 4/4. Therefore, when practicing, it is important to pay attention to mastering the rhythm change, stress switching, and melody direction. In places where stress is not marked, one should also consider which note the stress of a sentence is on, such as some on the highest or last note. In the last three bars, the composer marks the stress on each note, and at this point, he should concentrate his whole body to play a full and rich harmony, and ultimately the entire piece ends in excitement.

#### 4.4. Application of Connecting Lines

When practicing the third piece of the "Three Preludes", I did not pay attention to the use of ligatures at the beginning. It was during a piano lesson that the teacher explained the importance of ligatures in this piece. Due to the use of columnar chords and syncopated rhythms in most of this work, there is a certain distance between the notes of the piece. At this point, it is necessary to use the pedals well, but it is also necessary to use them accurately. Excessive pedal pressure can make the notes turbid, while insufficient pedal pressure can make the music more dry and inconsistent. Therefore, attention should be paid to the use of pedals, and more attention should be paid to the use of connecting lines, And the connecting line has also appeared multiple times in the work.

In this work, some connecting lines are used to extend the duration of the notes, but some connecting lines make the music more flowing and coherent. For example, in bars 132-133, Figure 6, and 136-137, the composer connects the last note of the left hand first beat with the first note of the third beat, and the last note of the third beat with the first note of the next measure, highlighting the melody line of the left hand and giving it a different flavor. Of course, while practicing the ligature, it is also important to pay attention to the use of rest notes. Only by mastering the accuracy of rest notes can the utility of ligature be demonstrated.



Figure 6. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

In bars 141-143, as shown in Figure 7, the form of the ligature has changed, with each bar on the left using a ligature that contrasts with the syncopated rhythm of the right hand and complements each other. At this point, the ligature becomes even more important.

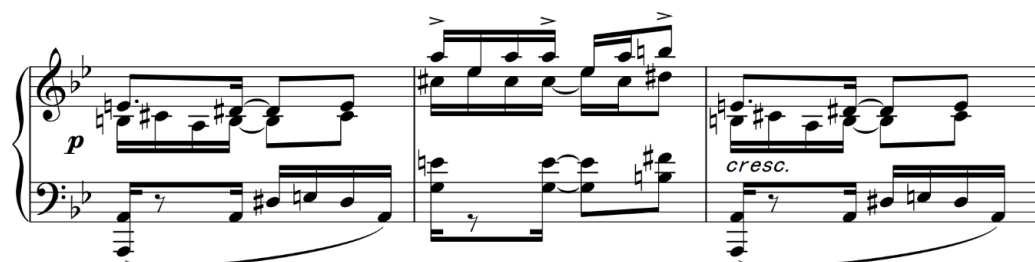


Figure 7. Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

In bars 163-166, Figure 8, the connecting line switches to another form, connecting the first note of the left hand beat to the first note of the third beat, and then connecting the second note of the third beat to the last note of the fourth beat. Take a small breath between the first and second connecting lines to distinguish the sentences and make the performance more accurate.

**Figure 8.** Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

From this, it can be seen that the important position of the connecting line in this work requires extra attention during practice.

#### 4.5. Application of Fingering Techniques

When receiving the third score of the "Three Preludes", there was no indication of fingering on the score. However, fingering is crucial for playing a good piece, not only because it needs to be played smoothly, but also because it can achieve better sound effects. In the third song, a large amount of syncopation rhythm and the use of left-handed bass were used, and the prominence of left-handed bass played an important role in jazz music. At the same time, the appropriate use of fingering can also make the music more coherent, especially in the case of a majority of column chords, so it should be designed to use what fingering to play.

In the 120-121 bars of the left hand, the top part of the left hand needs to be prominent and coherent, so it is best not to use the same fingering method to play to avoid melody disconnection. You can try using the fingering method of "532-531-532-531" (sorted from low to high), which can make the notes coherent and use strong fingers. In the right hand melody of section 122, the highest point of the melody can be played with the third and fourth fingers to avoid insufficient power of the little thumb and not achieving the desired effect. In bars 163-166, Figure 9, the composer used a technique of alternating left and right hands in these four bars. At this time, it is very important to play the notes in the low range with the right hand, and it is on the heavy beat of the syncopated rhythm. Therefore, the fourth finger can be used to play. At the same time, the left hand can be used as the first note of the first beat, and the third finger of the left hand can be used to play. This fingering method can make the syncopated rhythm strong and full, and can also highlight the stress.

**Figure 9.** Zhang Shuai's Prelude No. 3

So the use of fingering is also very important in performance. Do not change fingering or use inappropriate fingering at will. Both should be carefully analyzed from multiple aspects, such as choosing the use of fingering based on the direction and strength of the music. Of course, fingering also varies from person to person, and the same fingering can have different effects on different

people. Therefore, it is more necessary to choose the appropriate application of fingering through practice.

## 5. Conclusion

The "Three Preludes" written for the piano is a highly successful work and a crystallization of the wisdom of Zhang Shuai's composer. In this work, we can clearly feel the ingenuity of the combination of Chinese national music culture and Western music culture, and are deeply attracted by the combination of Chinese and Western elements. The rhythmic jazz elements collide with the strong national melody, Make the work both exotic and melodious.

The composer in "Three Preludes" provides a detailed description of the inner activities of young people, from "conflicting" to "mysterious" and then to "young". The reason why they are loved by everyone is because the composer's continuous innovation and exploration of new elements make the music more rich and diverse. At the same time, in order to perform this work well, it is necessary to master various knowledge, from theory to practice, from consulting the background information of the work to analyzing the form, harmony, melody, texture, etc., and then to practice, dealing with the timbre of the work, grasping the strength and speed of the work, designing the fingering and pedals used in the work, analyzing the changes in connecting lines and stress, etc., all of which require continuous progress.

Zhang Shuai's piano works not only enrich modern Chinese piano music, but also make great contributions to promoting Chinese music to the world. I believe that over time, this work will be known and loved by more people.

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