

**THE IMAGE AND SOCIAL STATUS OF FEMALE  
MUSICIANS IN TAIWAN**

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**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy**

**JUNE 2014**

## **Abstract**

In Taiwan, female musicians who play Western classical music have often been considered a group with a fixed image regarding their appearance. The stereotype is common amongst Taiwanese people, including female musicians. It has become an important criterion for assessing whether an individual can be considered legitimate as a female musician. Although the visual factor plays a critical role for Taiwanese female musicians, it has never been seriously investigated. This thesis aims to establish why and how the stereotype is formed, what elements constitute the favoured image, what messages are sent by the principal components, what is its mechanism and how does it affect the life and career of female musicians in Taiwan.

First, the thesis traces the development and current condition both of women's status and of Western classical music in Taiwan to clarify the position of female musicians in Taiwanese society. Due to its association with the hegemonic cultural and imperial powers/domination of the West, Western classical music is considered the embodiment of progress and civilisation in Taiwan. Female musicians are also deemed a group of high class and with an appealing image. This particular status has usually made them popular and advantageous in the marital market. This is partly revealed from the analyses of newspaper reports. The statistics in the present study show that, when female musicians are discussed in newspapers, most topics centre on their marriage and appearance. This demonstrates how most people think of female musicians and which aspects of female musicians are considered important in Taiwanese society.

After reviewing the background of the status of female musicians, the thesis analyses what elements constitute the stereotype by scrutinizing the concert poster. The concert poster can be viewed as the most influential medium for displaying

female musicians' images, because of its prevalent circulation, its focus upon directly displaying the appearance of female musicians, and the fact that it is produced by the musicians themselves. The images of female musicians on their posters demonstrate high similarity. The thesis examines the critical elements of the posters by comparing them with ancient and modern women's images. Through investigating these elements and the culture in which they are rooted, the meanings and connotations involved in the poster image will be clearly demonstrated. The findings show that most images of female musicians are designed from the angle of the male gaze. The interview data further illustrate that the posters are not only designed to satisfy the male gaze, but also relate to real men's looking pleasure and interests in many cases.

This thesis undertakes interviews with 17 female musicians. These in-depth conversations with the participants reveal why most female musicians are brought up to be musicians. It is often a decision made from an early age by their parents due to the gendered stereotype and partly to enhance their marital prospects. Nonetheless, whether or not they conform to the image significantly influences their partner searching and career development. Most participants are so accustomed to the image that it is often hard to detect its presence and operation. Through the examples of the social event and the experiences of the participants, the thesis intends to denaturalise the stereotype. It also explores the possibility of changing the image through concert posters.

## Acknowledgements

Amongst the people who have helped me to finish the thesis, the one who should undoubtedly receive the greatest appreciation is Prof. Robert Adlington. Without Prof. Adlington, the completion of the thesis would not have been possible. His perfect, experienced, and patient supervision made the thesis writing a great journey to explore the beauty of knowledge. I owe most of my research ability to him. His insightful comments and useful advice on my drafts have set the highest criteria which I should pursue.

No matter what difficulties I confront, Prof. Adlington always positively supported and encouraged me. How fortunate I was to undertake my favourite research with my supervisor's full support! Because of Prof. Adlington's supervision, studying at Nottingham became the most precious thing in my life. Thanks to him for being such a role model with extraordinary academic ability and a respected personality. It is a model that I will spend my future life pursuing.

Special thanks to Dr. Laura Seddon who enriched my thesis with bountiful suggestions and intriguing discussions on gendered issues. Every meeting with Dr. Seddon was highly pleasant and rewarding. Also thanks to Prof. Paula Higgins who warmly encouraged me during my initial PhD studies. Sincere thanks to the wonderful examiners Dr. Lonán Ó Briain and Dr. Jill Halstead! The viva process was absolutely rewarding and inspiring. The discussion with them was certainly a treasured experience in my life.

In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Chien-chang Yang for always generously offering me suggestions about my academic pursuits. I am very grateful to Dr. Wen-t sien Hong and Prof. Ting-lien Wu for guiding me to finish my master's thesis which initiated my enthusiasm for the gender-related field. Also, thanks to Dr. Jen-yi Wang for her teaching of music and kind concern.

Meanwhile, I would like to express my indebtedness to the participants in the present study. Their sincere conversation and unreserved sharing was a touching experience while writing the thesis. Many thanks are also owed to Dr. Andy Sun for his tremendous kindness and help, to Wendy Ruan for her enthusiasm, and to my family for being with me.

Finally, thanks to my husband Pei-hao Li. His support, in most cases, was the reason why I could undergo hardships. Thanks for being my closest friend and tasting the bitterness and sweetness of life with me.

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Out of considerations of privacy, most of the images in this thesis have been withdrawn from the e-version but can be viewed in the printed version in the library.

## I. Introduction

In November 2009, striking news caught the entire attention of the Taiwanese people. An exemplary and renowned married male legislator, Yu-sheng Wu (1958- ), had been having a love affair with a female piano teacher.<sup>1</sup> This news was the topic of every media programme and broadcast repeatedly every hour on every news channel. This heated interest was not only because legislator Wu was regarded as an industrious politician and a disciple of the Taiwanese President Ying-jeou Ma,<sup>2</sup> but also because of the exceptionally favourable way in which the media reported on and treated the mistress of the affair.

In a nation in which having an extramarital relationship is still a crime of adultery and breaks the Criminal Code,<sup>3</sup> it could easily be imagined that intruding into another person's family would induce serious condemnation. In Taiwan, certainly, when a politician has such a romance, other than intense reproaches, his honour and credibility will be generally doubted and his future career would be devastatingly affected. Similarly, the mistress in such an event would be typically presented in a very negative way.

Nonetheless, legislator Wu's love affair had a quite different and unexpected subsequent development. Most of the Taiwanese media, including newspapers, magazines and programmes and news on TV channels, repeatedly referred in admiring words to the mistress, Rebecca Sun, especially after her profession was reported to be a piano teacher. Discussion programmes unceasingly analysed her glamorous presentation, beautiful face, straight hair, big eyes, fabulous clothes and the most

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<sup>1</sup> "Been Photographed Legislator Yu-sheng Wu with a beauty wearing Chanel went into a Motel," *Apple Daily*, Nov. 13, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The Taiwanese President Ying-jeou Ma was born in 1950. He had been elected as the Taiwanese President in 2008 and in 2012, and presidential tenure will be expired in 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Although adultery is still a crime in Taiwan, in general, the people who have adultery crime would be punished by probation instead of staying in jail. The debate on abolition of adultery has been



admired quality – her special disposition and classy appearance. In Taiwan, these are the ideal qualities for a female musician.<sup>4</sup> Numerous men in the media praised her beauty and appearance and naturally connected these characteristics to her status as a female musician. Furthermore, Yu-sheng Wu’s male colleagues even expressed envy of him for being capable of having a romance with such a classy woman.<sup>5</sup> It was also reported that legislator Wu had said that his life-long wish was to marry a female musician.<sup>6</sup> As the fever of the news continually escalated, things took an even more surprising turn: numerous male legislators and high-status officers in the government and in the ruling party were found to have had meals with her or dated her.<sup>7</sup>

Following these intense discussions in the mass media day after day, it was noticed that no one had ever seen her play a piano. Gradually, her true background was disclosed - she was not a professional in Western classical music<sup>8</sup> or the piano and her status as a piano teacher started to be doubted.<sup>9</sup> The fact is that she just used the title “piano teacher” and manipulated the image and reputation of female musicians to promote her own status and glorify her ability to attract many wealthy

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flourishing in Taiwan in recent years.

<sup>4</sup> Xin-huei Lin, “Yu-sheng Wu’s extramarital relationship was with a beauty pianist,” *United Daily News*, Nov. 14, 2009; Zhang-yui Nien, “Jerry Fan: Rebecca Sun is becoming the new criteria which Taiwanese eminent women want to achieve,” *United Daily News*, Nov. 16, 2009; “Rebecca Sun’s beautiful photo showed on Facebook! Display the piano teacher’s classy appearance,” *NOWnews*, Nov. 14, 2009. <http://www.nownews.com/2009/12/31/10849-2533122.htm> (accessed May 20, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Rui-de Wang et al., “He once said that he envied Yu-sheng Wu An Eyewitness Revealed that Legislator Hua-ming Shuai also had date dinner with Rebecca Sun,” *The Liberty Times*, Nov. 17, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> “Except loving piano Yu-sheng Wu had said that he was hoping to marry a musician no wonder that Rebecca Sun was into his life,” *NOWnews*, Nov. 14, 2009. <http://fate.nownews.com/2009/11/14/11490-2533000.htm> (accessed May 19, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Wei-zhi Liu and Tieng-ru Hwang, “Rebecca Sun had been the guest at Premier Liu’s feast,” *China Times*, Nov. 15, 2009; “The Chinese Nationalist Party will be eliminated? Yu-hua Chang: One-third legislators of the Chinese Nationalist Party had meals with Rebecca Sun,” *NOWnews*, Nov. 18, 2009. <http://www.nownews.com/2009/11/18/545-2534467.htm> (accessed May 19, 2010).

“Behind the News/Rebecca Sun was invited to have meals with male medical doctors very often She was the guest at the Premier Liu’s feast,” *NOWnews*, Nov. 15, 2009. <http://www.nownews.com/2009/11/15/91-2533225.htm> (accessed May 19, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> “Western classical music” in the present study refers to the whole history of cultivated composition in the West, not the music of the classical era, which usually means the period from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>9</sup> Bo-xiang Yeh, “This mysterious woman Is Rebecca Sun a piano teacher?” *Formosa media*, Nov. 18, 2009, <http://www.formosamedia.com.tw/?p=3059> (accessed May 20, 2010).

and powerful men.

Unsurprisingly, the media soon reversed their original attitude and represented her negatively in every aspect, reverting to the typical presentation of how they described other women who have affairs with married men. Her previously acclaimed well-dressed style also soon became an unpleasant one and the most popular topic in Taiwan that lasted for many days had finally come to an end.

The occupation of the reported woman was apparently a critical factor in the attitude of the media and the public. It was a reasonable conjecture that this mistress had a specific idea about the impression of female musicians and intentionally presented herself as a musician to obtain an advantage. The media and the public also seemed to have the same impression of female musicians and thus gave this mistress the unusual positive angle in this news event. Moreover, the men with a high social status involved in this event also tended to evaluate this woman by reference to her status in a specific profession.

In addition to Rebecca Sun's event, my own experience provides another angle from which to view the stereotype. When I was a postgraduate student, one day, I was walking with my classmates along the corridor of the Music Institute when we met some students from other departments. "Are you music students?" they asked. "Yes, we are," I answered. "Great! Do you know a student in your department who is a female musician? What is her name?" these female and male students excitedly asked us.

None of us immediately answered their question. What distinction were they implying? Our group were all female and all music students, yet that did not seem sufficient to count as a "female musician." "You know, she is that one! She 'looks like' a female musician!" Their attitude implied that it was a simple fact and truth and we should certainly know whom they meant. "What do you mean, she 'looks like' a

female musician?” I asked, confused. “She has long straight hair, wears a skirt, and is very classy!”

Due to our different understanding on this topic, these questions and answers were repeated several times between us and I still could not give them the name they desired. This incident made me feel awkward in two respects: first, how could they ask a group of female musicians to identify another female musician without any other distinguishing mark apart from simply the fact that she is “like” a female musician? The way they inquired implied that we, the ones whom they were asking, are not “like” female musicians. Did they mean that we do not look like female musicians, less like female musicians, or less like them than the one they were looking for? If so, what makes her look like a female musician and us not? The characteristics which mark her as a legitimate female musician may be the reason we are not: “long straight hair, wearing a skirt, classy appearance.”

Additionally, when they mentioned these so-called “traits,” a lot of people came to my mind. I suddenly realized that many of my female classmates dressed alike, which I had not seriously noticed before. This event led me to wonder why female musicians in Taiwan have such a specific image, how this stereotype has been formed, and why many female musicians represent and embody this stereotype.

The news event of legislator Wu and my experience imply a phenomenon in Taiwanese society, namely that people might have a clearly stereotyped image and evaluation of female musicians. In Rebecca Sun’s case, being a female musician or not affects how the media and the public assess her. If there is a stereotypical image of female musicians in Taiwan, this image could be a critical factor in forming the social status of female musicians. The daily life and development of female musicians could also be influenced by this stereotyped image. The mechanism of forming this image is still not clear and the pros and cons of this phenomenon in Taiwan have not yet been

explored and studied. Therefore, this study is devoted to exploring the mechanism of image formation of female musicians in Taiwan and identifying the advantages and disadvantages of this phenomenon. This study also intends to explore the relationship between image and profession.

## **I.1 The Development of Western Classical Music in Taiwan**

In Taiwan, studying Western classical music is a highly committed career. It is very costly to purchase instruments and take private lessons, and it needs long-term concentration and year-by-year practice. It is also a highly competitive profession due to the special cultivation system in schools and studying environment in Taiwan. In Mari Yoshihara's book discussing Asian musicians in the United States, one of her interviewees is a Taiwanese female musician and the condition of studying Western classical music was illustrated: "She remembered her school in Taiwan as a very close-knit community of students who were put in constant competition with each other."<sup>10</sup> However, appearance and dress style are the crucial elements by which most people evaluate a female musician in Taiwan. According to these criteria, the public decide who "looks like" a female musician and who "does not look like" a female musician. It is unusual as in most professions a woman's professionalism does not relate so closely to her appearance. Compared to other specialties, in most cases, the public does not have a fixed image linked to an occupation which is clear enough to influence their judgments or even make them doubt women's professional status. Female musicians engaged in Western classical music, therefore, reveal a special condition concerning their image.

To explore the reasons behind this phenomenon, the development of Western

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<sup>10</sup> Mari Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 146.

classic music in Taiwan is introduced briefly in the following sections to show the status of Western classical music and the environment in which female musicians live. Western classical music takes the absolutely mainstream position in Taiwan, its prosperous development even largely contributing to the restriction of traditional Chinese and Taiwanese music. The following discussion will demonstrate how and why Western classical music came to have such a dominant status by illustrating its origin, propagation and the current condition in Taiwan.

There is an inseparable and close relationship between the development of Western classical music and the history of this land. Every political change not only influenced the fate of Taiwan, but also influenced the prosperity or interruption of Western classical music.

In this section, the history of Western classical music in Taiwan is divided into four time periods, including the Dutch colonial period, the period of reopening after seclusion, the Japanese colonial period and the current condition. In the first three periods, the Japanese colonial period is the most important one, when Western classical music started to be taught in every school at every educational level. It made Western classical music the mainstream music and this status has continued.

### **I.1.i 1624-1662: the Dutch colonial period**

In 1624, the Dutch seized southern Taiwan and later from 1642 ruled the whole of Taiwan island by repelling the Spanish who had occupied northern Taiwan for 16 years (1626-1642). The Dutch intention in controlling Taiwan was to make it their trading base in the East.<sup>11</sup> They used Taiwan as a place to do business. The opportunity for business and a stable life drew lots of Chinese emigrants to leave the

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<sup>11</sup> I-hui Lee, "The Presentations of Classical Music in Taiwan: A Case Study of Philharmonic Radio Taipei," (Master thesis, National Taiwan University, 2003), 16.

mainland and settle in Taiwan. It was a crucial period which changed the destiny of Taiwan. Before this well-planned emigration, only a few aborigines had lived in Taiwan and no record of that time has been found. Hence, the 38 years of the Dutch colonial period could be seen as the first official regime which governed Taiwan systematically and changed Taiwanese history.<sup>12</sup>

The Dutch sent missionaries and teachers for religious purposes. Along with the spread of Christianity by the Dutch and Catholicism by the Spanish, church music, like chant and choir singing, was brought to Taiwan in this period. It was the first time that Western classical music was played and heard in Taiwan. At this stage, however, Western classical music just had a weak influence. The propagation was limited to a few sites and among some aborigines.<sup>13</sup>

The Chinese General, Cheng-gong Zheng (A.D.1624-1662), expelled the Dutch for special political reasons in 1662. Consequently, the Christian missionaries were forced to leave Taiwan, and so was the music that they brought in. Moreover, in 1683, Taiwan was subdued and became part of the Qing Dynasty of China. Then, Taiwan followed the policy of national seclusion which the Qing Dynasty carried out. Therefore, Western classical music vanished in Taiwan for the following 197 years.

### **I.1.ii 1858-1895**

After an interruption of nearly two centuries, Western classical music was brought into Taiwan again with the missionaries. This time has usually been regarded as the first formal introduction of Western classical music into Taiwan. The Qing Dynasty, in 1858, lost a war which resulted from forbidding the opium import from

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<sup>12</sup> Bi-juan Chen, *Taiwan xin yinyue shi: xishi xin yinyue zai rijshidai de chansheng yu fazhan* (New music history of Taiwan: the introduction and development of Western music during Japanese colonial period) (Taipei: Yueyun Publishers, 1995), p.8-9.

<sup>13</sup> Yu-xiu Chen, *Bainian Taiwan yinyue tuxiang xunli* (Picture of Taiwanese music for hundred years)

Britain and then had to make a treaty with Western countries in 1860. Obeying this Tian-jin treaty, the Qing Dynasty opened up Taiwanese harbours to Westerners, so Taiwan finally ended the seclusion. In this second propagation of Western classical music, missionaries still played the leading role. The British Presbyterian Church was located in southern Taiwan and the Canadian Presbyterian Church was situated in the north. They established several schools which had music courses. This was the first time that “music” was a course in schools in Taiwan.<sup>14</sup>

The missionaries also used music as an approach for preaching. In this stage, Western classical music started to be introduced into Taiwan and it has not been interrupted since, although it existed in limited sites, among the church schools and the believers in Christianity. However, in the following Japanese colonial period, Western classical music started to gain an absolute dominant status and had been propagated prevalently.<sup>15</sup>

### **I.1.iii 1895-1945 The Japanese colonial period**

In the nineteenth century, Japan’s Meiji Government was ambitious about becoming one of the top nations of the world. It thoroughly imitated every aspect of the powerful Western nations and revolutionized all of the systems of government and infrastructure. The process of Westernization was a tool for modernization. During Japan’s revolution, Western classical music was seen as the product of Western fine art. Yoshihara analyzed this condition: “The governments of Japan [...] considered music to be an important element of modern education and eagerly implemented ways to

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(Taipei: China Times Publishing Company, 1998), 146.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 148; Chen, *Taiwan xin yinyue shi*, 50-51; Lee, “Classical Music in Taiwan,” 17.

<sup>15</sup> Tsang-houei Hsu, *Yinyue shi lunshu gao* (Essays on the history of music) (Taipei: Quanyin Publishers, 1996), 93, 94.

incorporate Western music into school curricula.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, all these systems were along with Japan to its colonies. “Japan’s colonial power [...] thus propelled Western music education in these countries, [...]”<sup>17</sup>

There are two education systems of Western classical music in school education in the Japanese colonial period: teacher training schools from 1899 and general music education for primary and high schools from 1895.<sup>18</sup> Both of these schools had official music courses, and the former trained individuals to teach in the latter. The content of the music course was singing and preliminary music theory. Every Taiwanese student had to learn notation and singing Western songs with Japanese lyrics (Figure I-1).<sup>19</sup> In Taiwan, this was the first time that Western classical music was taught systematically and prevalently on a nation-wide scale. In Taiwan, hence, at the beginning of teaching music nationally on “music courses” with the “music textbook,” it was just Western classical music, not traditional Taiwanese or Chinese music.

However, no specialized music school was founded in Taiwan at that time. Consequently, if Taiwanese people wanted to pursue advanced music training and become a musician, they would have to go to Japan for further study.<sup>20</sup> Because of the colonial policy of Japan, Taiwanese people were not allowed to study politics, law, history and other disciplines in the social sciences which may cause thoughts of opposition. Therefore, many Taiwanese pursued medicine and the arts as their career. Moreover, Taiwan at that time belonged to Japan, so the communication between Taiwan and Japan was unrestricted and the common language was Japanese. That is

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<sup>16</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>18</sup> Lee, “Classical Music in Taiwan,” 21; Chen, *Bainian Taiwan*, 63; Lu-fen Yen and Mei-ling Shyu, *Taiwan de yinyue* (The music in Taiwan) (Taipei: Tsaituan faren Li Teng-hui shueishao, 2006), 115, 116.

<sup>19</sup> Figure I-1 is from Yen and Shyu, *Taiwan de yinyue*, 118.

<sup>20</sup> Hsu, *Yinyue shi lunshu gao*, 106.



the reason why all Taiwanese first generation musicians were trained in Japan and then came back to Taiwan. The Japanese-trained Taiwanese musicians then prospered and greatly influenced the development of Western classical music in Taiwan after their return.<sup>21</sup>

The Japanese colonial period made Western classical music formally rooted and propagated in Taiwan. From higher education at teacher- training schools to general school education in elementary and high schools, all students in Taiwan learnt Western classical music, including recognizing Western instruments and composers, singing Western songs and reading staff notation. This mainstream status of Western classical music continues even today. Most importantly, since the status of Taiwan was a colony and under the control of Japan, there was no choice for Taiwan. There was no possibility of resistance or acceptance in a gradual progress to an alien culture. As a colony, there was no much space for suspicion or hesitation to Western classical music. Taiwan just entirely and immediately accepted Western classical music because of the political reality.<sup>22</sup>

#### **I.i.iv The current condition – 1945 to the present**

The restoration of Taiwan occurred in 1945, when Japan was defeated in the Second World War. Shortly afterwards, the civil war in China between the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party became feverish. The Chinese Nationalist Party had lost more and more provinces and retreated to Taiwan in 1949. Taiwan was now apart from of China, which was dominated by the Chinese

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> In Taiwan, music education during the Japanese colonial period focused on the development and execution of Western music in Taiwanese schools. The possibility of resisting Western music education has seldom been proposed in Taiwan and thus could be an area for future study.

Communist Party.<sup>23</sup> From that time on, Taiwan started to develop its own governmental, political, economical, educational systems, pursued modernity and gradually implemented democracy. One of the pieces of democratic evidence is that elections in Taiwan gradually became prevalent; this means that the authorities are directly determined by people's votes, not just by the ruling government. More and more officers are directly elected by adults: the local councillors were elected from 1950, the legislators from 1989 and the president from 1996.<sup>24</sup>

After those unstable times due to wars and politics, Taiwanese musicians born in 1940s started to go abroad to the USA and Europe to study Western classical music.<sup>25</sup> Western classical music has continued to develop and occupy a mainstream status in the Taiwanese music field. Western classical music was still the major component of music courses and textbooks and taught at every level in schools. In addition, the first local professional music training schools were eventually established. The first three music departments at universities were established in 1946, 1957 and 1962.<sup>26</sup> Now, there are twenty-two Western classical music departments in Taiwan and only five departments of traditional Chinese and Taiwanese music.

The evidence of the prosperity of Western classical music is that not only were the music departments continually established, but there were also specially designed “music classes (*yinyue ban*, 音樂班)” in Taiwan. The establishment of music classes is for intensely instructing students who study music in elementary, junior high and senior high schools. In 1963, the first music class in the elementary school was

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>24</sup> National Policy Foundation, “Review on the Democratic Election System in Taiwan,” <http://www.npf.org.tw/post/1/4060> (accessed August 30, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Hsu, *Yinyue shi lunshu gao*, 100, 101.

<sup>26</sup> The first three music departments at universities in Taiwan: The National Taiwan Normal University (1946), The National Taiwan Academy of Arts (1957) and The Chinese Culture University (1962). See Hsu, *Yinyue shi lunshu gao*, 110.

established, then the junior high school in 1977 and the senior high school in 1980.<sup>27</sup> Other than the ordinary courses like other students, the students in the music classes have major and minor instruments in performance. Every student has one major and one minor instrument. Whether the student major or minor in vocal, composition or any instrument, one of her/his major and minor need to be piano. The music class usually hires numerous part-time performing teachers to do one-to-one mentoring according to the instruments which the current students major and minor in. Additionally, the students of the music class take other professional music courses, such as musical appreciation, music theory, musical history, sight-singing and listening and writing.

The “music class” exists in many elementary schools, junior high schools and senior high schools. Music classes gather those students who want to study Western classical music into one “class” to learn all of the disciplines together until they graduate from this school.<sup>28</sup> Even in elementary school, they will not be divided into different classes from the age when they start the class at the third grade (9 years old); meanwhile, other non-music students in the general classes will be divided into different classes every two years. The same situation was kept in junior and senior high schools. The music students thus only know a very limited number of people during their school days. Since most Taiwanese cities and counties have their own regional “music classes,” the music students who stay in their home city will know the

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<sup>27</sup> According to the statistics for 2005, there were 138, 139 and 98 music classes respectively located at primary, junior high and senior high schools in Taiwan. See Yen and Shyu, *Taiwan de yinyue*, 122.

<sup>28</sup> Music classes in Taiwan, at some level, are similar to the specialist music schools, such as Chethams or the Yehudi Menuhin School, in the United Kingdom, where the students are immersed in various music training courses; other subjects are certainly also included. Compared to the situation in the United Kingdom, where the talented young performers often attend a music conservatoire on a Saturday to receive intensive tuition and engage in ensemble playing, the students in the music class in Taiwan are gathered into one class to learn all subjects and music courses together. The music classes are often affiliated to the state schools, so the tuition fees are not excessively higher than that of the general student. Nonetheless, apart from the music training provided by the music class, parents in Taiwan often spend a lot of money on extra private music lessons for their children, to enhance their competitive ability.

same few people until they start university. Because of the national exam for starting university, the students will attend music departments at different universities depending on their national ranking. This unique cultivation would have a tremendous influence on the music students' character formation. A report in the *Business Weekly* once analyzed the condition: "The environment of music class is very special and is run by its own rules. It is just like a feverishly competitive miniature society. A graduate of music class commented: 'the students of music class have superiority complex from a very young age. The huge pressure on schoolwork and the limited opportunities of entering the music class of higher education easily let them form a small circle and have strong exclusiveness.'"<sup>29</sup>

In summary, the development of Western classical music in Taiwan is as follows: in the first stage, it emerged in Taiwan along with the Western missionaries. Then, the Dutch were expelled and Western classical music was interrupted for approximately two hundred years. In the second stage, Taiwan opened harbours to foreign countries and Western classical music entered Taiwan again, still with the missionaries. From this period onwards, Western classical music never stopped its development in this Asian country. The Japanese colonial period was the decisive stage in the development of Western classical music. The Japanese feverishly propagated and established the absolutely dominant status of Western classical music in Taiwan. The Japanese settled a solid foundation of Western classical music for the following development after Taiwan was restored.<sup>30</sup> After 1945, Taiwanese musicians went abroad to study Western classical music in Western countries instead of Japan. Their return fostered the subsequent development of Western classical music in Taiwan. Furthermore, along

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<sup>29</sup> Yin-chui Lin et al., "Diyi xifu Huang Rui-jin de jingshi bianzouqu (The daughter-in-law in the first family Rui-jin Huang's astonishing variation – Piano and Prison)," *Business Weekly* 1085 (September 8, 2008), [http://www1.businessweekly.com.tw/web/webarticle\\_34302\\_p3.php](http://www1.businessweekly.com.tw/web/webarticle_34302_p3.php) (accessed 30 August, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Chen, *Taiwan xin yinyue shi*, 55.

with Taiwanese society became stable and affluent, Western classical music became prevalent in the life of Taiwanese people.

Until now, Western classical music is still the mainstream formal music in Taiwanese society. This situation draws many young students who devote themselves to the special music education system in Taiwan to compete with each other in a relatively confined environment to gain the precious chance to attend prestigious music departments at universities for cultivating their profession.

## **I.2 The Career of Female musicians in Taiwan**

Hence, studying Western classical music is very competitive in Taiwan. What kind of reasons or motivations make these music students willing to devote themselves so much to a profession and make their families have such a solid determination to support them for such a long time? Yoshihara analyzed the condition in Asia: “[...] parents of girls tend to regard studying music at a conservatory or university as a desirable form of social capital that will raise their value in the marriage market.”<sup>31</sup> In Taiwan, this kind of situation seems to exist, too. The advantages and social capital of female musicians in the marriage market could be analyzed in two aspects.

First, what they engage in is related to a high social class. “[...] the Taiwanese believe in the connection between classical music and social class. Thus, things related to classical music easily become a symbol of social status in most people’s minds.”<sup>32</sup> As for the public, getting involved in Western classical music is seen as a kind of high class leisure activity. People listening to Western classical music are usually “the white-collar middle class with high education, high salaries and high

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<sup>31</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 103.

<sup>32</sup> Lee, “Classical Music in Taiwan,” 92.

consuming capability. Besides, most of them are professional personnel in specific fields or the social elite who travel abroad often and lead decent lives.”<sup>33</sup> It could easily be argued that Western classical music has a close connection with the image of the upper classes, the social elite and a good education. Since Taiwanese people have such a fixed image of Western classical music, female musicians are seen to engage in a high-status career.

Studying Western classical music is expensive and tirelessly competitive. It is expensive to buy and fix instruments and take private lessons. The expenditure will increase along with the students upgrading their learning level. The “music class” system has made the competition for studying Western classical music much more serious. In order to enter a renowned “music class” and a high-ranking music department, almost every music student pays for taking extra private lessons in their major and minor instrument, musical history, music theory, sight-singing and listening and writing. All of these long-term expenditures make the Taiwanese realize that studying Western classical music is definitely related to “class.” That is to say, “classical music becomes an important status marker or status symbol. It can strengthen the position of the class and make clear the boundary against other classes.”<sup>34</sup>

Second, since many music departments are located in teachers’ universities, music teachers are what most music students finally become. These music departments are thus not only for the discipline of music teachers, but also for the cultivation of professional musicians. Nonetheless, in the realistic sense in Taiwan, music students could hardly make a living from concerts as soloists.<sup>35</sup> Being a music

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>34</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 97.

<sup>35</sup> The detailed information on work opportunities and career development will be further discussed through the experiences of several female Taiwanese musicians in Chapter VII.1.

teacher is a more anticipated profession for a music student. There is another benefit of being a teacher regarding marriage opportunities for female music students. The simple working environment and stable lifestyle of female teachers makes them more attractive partners for men when they consider marriage. This may partly explain why Western classical music is an overwhelmingly feminized profession in Taiwan. In all music departments, there are far more women than men.<sup>36</sup> It is even quite usual for the whole class to be female. Parents consider becoming a music teacher is an advantage for daughters in the marriage market.

Most students who study music want to attend teachers' universities and want to be music teachers. For most female musicians, they are meant to be teachers, no matter whether in schools or through private lessons. Graduating from good music departments mostly guarantees a better job in schools and much better pay from private lessons. Nonetheless, only those music students who get high scores from the university entrance exams can attend well-known music departments. As a result, female music students who successfully attend good music departments are more outstanding and gain more opportunities in marriage which could lead them into a higher social status. This marriage benefit becomes a strong advantage for upward mobility.<sup>37</sup>

### **I.3 The Social Condition of Taiwanese Women**

Following the previous illustration and analysis of the social status of Western classical music and the background of female musicians in Taiwan, it is revealed that Taiwanese people might have a specific impression and stereotypical image of female

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<sup>36</sup> Take the Music Department of the National Normal University as an example. According to the statistics, on 10 June 2014, the number of female students was 268, and there were 27 males. The ratio of men in the music department is about 10 percent.

<sup>37</sup> The relationship between the education level/job status of female musicians and their marriage was discussed by participant E. This can be further checked in VII.4 The Male Attitude to Female

musicians. This fixed image may lead female musicians to experience different treatment and life plans in many circumstances compared to other Taiwanese women. A fuller understanding of the special condition of female musicians in Taiwan requires a grasp of the society in which the female musicians live, as well as the real life of Taiwanese women. Through investigating the living environment and social status of women in Taiwan, the social settings which produce the image of the female musicians will be displayed. The unique situation of female musicians will also be clarified. The following sections will first illustrate women's lives in old Taiwan and then trace the origins of some of the traditional ideologies which are rooted in people's minds and deeply influence women's lives in modern Taiwan. Moreover, the current living condition of Taiwanese women will be also sketched by exploring the progress of women's rights and the women's movement. It will further clarify the differences between ordinary Taiwanese women and female musicians and analyze the current difficulties they face respectively.

### **I.3.i Women's lives in old Taiwan**

As mentioned in the section on the development of Western classical music in Taiwan, there were just a few aborigines in Taiwan until the first immigration directed by the Dutch colonial government for business purposes in the mid-seventeenth century. In 1684, Taiwan was officially subdued to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) and immigration became more frequent and was much larger than that of the Dutch colonial period.<sup>38</sup> Along with the continual immigration from China, the Chinese tradition and ideologies had also been totally integrated in Taiwanese culture.

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Musicians.

<sup>38</sup> Hsien-his Tseng, "From the Viewpoint of Immigrant Society to Analyze the Women's Role in Qing Dynasty in Taiwan," p.103, [http://acade.must.edu.tw/upfiles/ADUupload/c23\\_downmul1268674132.pdf](http://acade.must.edu.tw/upfiles/ADUupload/c23_downmul1268674132.pdf) (accessed September 16, 2010).



In Chinese history, women had always been subordinate to men. The idea that “men are noble and women are humble (*nanzun nuibei*, 男尊女卑)” and “men are superior and women are inferior (*nangao nuidi*, 男高女低)” are rooted in Chinese culture.<sup>39</sup> As early as the Han Dynasty (B.C. 202- A.D. 220), “husband guides wife (*fuwei chikan*, 夫為妻綱)” had settled women’s inferior social status and meant that women were appendages to men.<sup>40</sup> In Chinese history, no matter under which dynasty, women and men were very unequal and the examples are listed below. In the marital system, men can have one wife and numerous mistresses (the system of *yifu dochi*, 一夫多妻制) and women were instructed to “have one man in a whole lifetime (*tsongyi erzhang*, 從一而終)” and were encouraged and even forced to remain single till death after their husband died.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, women’s role in marriage is to be seen as being an instrument to reproduce a son (*chuanzon giedai*, 傳宗接代). Since the traditional Chinese culture is “value men and despise women (*zongnan tsingnu*, 重男輕女)”, it is useless to give birth to daughters. Only having sons will be seen as fulfilling a wife’s assignment and her status in the family can be stable.<sup>42</sup> That is the reason why so many Taiwanese women were named “*Zhaodi* (inviting younger brothers)” or “*Laidi* (coming younger brothers)”. “*Mongchi* (Raising without concern)” and “*Mongyo* (Taking care at random)” were also common names for women.<sup>43</sup> These names are becoming rare along with the declining birthrate in recent

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<sup>39</sup> Sue-wen Chang, “A Study of the Anti-foot-binding Movement in Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Period,” (Master thesis, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, 2008), 39; Chiu-hsin Kuo, “Xian qin dao lianghan zhiji nuxing tezhi de jiangou yu shishi (From the construction and truth of women’s traits from pre-Qing to Han dynasty),” (Master thesis, National Cheng Kung University, 2002), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Shiao-zeng Hsieh, “The Gender Education in Taiwan: Reviewing and Foreseeing,” *The Sixth Conference for Women in National Issues*, 2001, <http://taiwan.yam.org.tw/nwc/nwc6/education/08.htm> (accessed September 16, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> In Yuan Dynasty, the law forbade a widow to remarry after her husband’s death, see Hui-ching Chou, “You shuiwen nubu jian gudai nuxing de shehui dewei (From female meaning words in ‘annotation words’ see the social status of ancient women),” (Master thesis, Hsuan Chuang University, 2005), 28.

<sup>42</sup> Tseng, “Women’s Role in Qing Dynasty in Taiwan,” 94.

<sup>43</sup> “Raising without concern (*mongchi*)” and “Taking care at random (*mongyo*)” are from the pronunciation in Taiwanese dialect.

years, but they have not disappeared. “To have a son to carry on the family line (*chuanzon jiedai*)” is a strong notion in Chinese culture, and has influenced Chinese people for thousands of years, extending into modern Chinese and Taiwanese societies.<sup>44</sup>

In education, women and men were directed to very different places. In Chinese history, men were supposed to study and pass local and national exams to show their ability and obtain posts in the governmental systems. In Chinese culture, nonetheless, women’s virtue relies on their incapability (*nuzi wucai bianshide*, 女子無才便是德). Throughout Chinese history, the essential purpose of women’s education is to let them possess “three obediences and four virtues (*santsong shide*, 三從四德).”<sup>45</sup> The three obediences indicate that unmarried women should obey their fathers, married women should obey their husbands, and widows should obey their sons.<sup>46</sup> The four virtues mean that women should have morality and chastity, agreeable speech, a submissive bearing and embroidery skills.<sup>47</sup> All that women are required to do is to obey men and stay at home. Women from normal, good families cannot go into the streets, to do any business, work or study.

The status of women had declined to its lowest position under the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).<sup>48</sup> Given the appreciation of beauty during this period, women were forced to break the bones in their feet and bind them with cloth in order to make them smaller, just because men thought it is sexy for women’s unstable walk. To satisfy men’s erotic fantasies, foot-binding made it more difficult for women to move;

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<sup>44</sup> Hsieh, “The Gender Education in Taiwan,” (accessed September 16, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid; three obedience and four virtues (*santsong shide*) first appeared in the Confusion classics in Pre-Qin dynasty (before the year of BC 221 in Chinese history, called Pre-Qin dynasty), it is the upmost direction for women and the regulation which good wives and mothers have to obey in Chinese culture, see Yu-juan We, “Zouchu chuantong de dianfan: wanqing nuzuoqia xiaoshui tuibian de licheng (Stepping Out the Traditional Paradigm: The Process of Women’s Transformation in Female Writers’ Novels in Late Qing),” *Tunghai University Mandarin Review* 19, (July, 2007): 242.

<sup>46</sup> Chou, “Gudai nuxing,” 34.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 28.

women were completely restricted to their houses because of the deformity of their feet and unsteady gait.<sup>49</sup> As most Taiwanese immigrants were from Qing dynasty China, not only the custom of foot-binding, but also the discriminatory treatment of women and unequal gender ideologies that had existed for thousands of years in China were also transported and embedded in Taiwanese society.

In the colonial period (1895-1945), nonetheless, Taiwanese women's lives drastically changed. Considering the health and hygiene concerns, the Japanese colonial government forbade foot-binding, because they wanted their people to remain healthy and make an economic contribution. This liberated women from the home, enabling them to go out. Another huge revolutionary change is that Taiwanese girls were finally able to attend school, just like boys of the same age. In 1943, two years before Japan retreated from Taiwan, the colonial government forced all children to undergo elementary education, despite the fact that its main purpose was to propagate Japanese.<sup>50</sup>

Then, in 1949, the Nationalist Party government moved into Taiwan. It followed the school and education system established by the Japanese government but adjusted the curricula and contents. The enrolment ratio of elementary schools had been increasing year by year and reached 97.52% in 1967. In 1968, compulsory education was extended to nine years (elementary and junior high school) and the enrolment ratio was above 99% in 1981.<sup>51</sup> In this rapid popularization of education, women's enrolment ratio was largely increased. In 1950-1951, female students took 37% of the total in elementary schools, 27% in high schools and 10% in colleges. In 1992-1993, women already constituted half of the pupils of every level in schools. In 2000, female

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<sup>49</sup> Sue-wen Chang, "Anti-foot-binding Movement in Taiwan," 39.

<sup>50</sup> Chu-ing Chou, "Taiwan chiaoyu (Taiwanese Education)," in *Chinese Education Large Serious*, ed. Min-yuan Gu (Chinese Hubei: Hubei Education Publish), p. 11, <http://nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/38884/1/%E5%8F%B0%E7%81%A3%E6%95%99%E8%82%B2.pdf>.

students even constituted 56.15% of those in college level education.<sup>52</sup> However, in the same year, the ratio of women studying for a doctoral degree was less than 22%.<sup>53</sup> This was one of the results of the tradition that “women are marrying up and men are marrying down.” Men prefer not to marry women who have higher education. This social climate had caused many Taiwanese women not to pursue a doctoral degree for fear of marital difficulty.<sup>54</sup>

Although the nine years of compulsory education was launched in 1968, the chance for women to gain higher education at that time was extremely restricted. Because of the traditional Chinese ideology of “value men and despise women,” Taiwanese parents always centralized all resources on their sons and sacrificed their daughters’ interests. This unequal treatment underwent a monumental change and women have gradually entered higher education since contraception has been more easily available. In the 1950s, on average, every woman of childbearing age generated seven children in Taiwan.<sup>55</sup> Then, in the 1960s, the government comprehensively carried out the “Family Planning Scheme” for women’s contraception, which was directed by the United States.<sup>56</sup> The USAID (the United States Agency for International Development, at the United States International Development Cooperation Agency, USIDCA) provided funding, techniques and devices for

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ai-ruo Hu, “Taiwan funu renquan yundong zhi yanjiu yi canzhenquan weili (1949-2000) (The studies on women’s rights in Taiwan - as political participation for example),” (PhD thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2004), 112.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 112, 113.

<sup>54</sup> Xuan-yi Hwang, “Baidang zai chuantong yu xiandai jian waijie nuxing jiaoyu renyuan zhiya fazhan zhi fenxi: yi miaolixian weili (An inquiry into high stratum female educators’ career evelopment, swinging between tradition and contemporary: case study on Miao-Li county),” (Master thesis, National United University, 2009), 83, 89-93.

<sup>55</sup> Chiu-yen Li, “Woguo renkou guimo yu chengchang cushi zhi tantao (Discussion on Population Scale and Progress Inclination),” p.1, <http://www.bas-association.org.tw/catalog/arts/09411058.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Hung-jeng Tsai, “Taiwan renkou zhengce de lishi xingou (Historical Formation of Population Policy in Taiwan),” *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology* 39, (2007): 74, 80, 81, 82, 85.

Taiwan.<sup>57</sup> From 1965, the goal of family planning was to fit a Lippes Loop (intrauterine contraceptive device) in 600,000 women of childbearing aged over five years.<sup>58</sup> The effect of the Family Planning was extraordinarily clear. From 1965 to 1974, the birth rate declined by 49.2%.<sup>59</sup> The birth rate was 7% of that in the 1950s to 5% of that in the 1960s, and continually declined in the 1970s. In 1983, the birth rate was 2.1%, about the population replacement level. At the same time, the women's labour rate was over 40%.<sup>60</sup> The reduction in the number of children greatly influenced the life of Taiwanese women. Their time spent in pregnancy and raising children was greatly reduced, and they had more time to participate in social activities and work. Furthermore, Taiwanese parents started to invest their resources in their daughters, since they may now just have one or two children.

### **I.3.ii The influence of Chinese culture**

Although it is clear that Taiwanese women's lives have been significantly altered and their rights to education and political participation have been improved in the past few decades, the old traditional ideologies did not diminish along with the pace of social reform and remain widely rooted in people's minds at some levels. For example, "value men and despise women" and "having a son to carry on the family line" made many Taiwanese people want to have sons instead of daughters. According to figures from the Department of Health, at least 4000 baby girls have been aborted every year because of sex-selective abortion and some hospitals even guarantee that they can help women to have baby boys.<sup>61</sup> From the statistics in 2009 of the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>60</sup> See note 18 above.

<sup>61</sup> "Value men and despise women! The ratio is one hundred baby girls to one hundred and twenty-two baby boys," *Broadcasting Corporation of China*, August 21, 2010, <http://tw.news.yahoo.com/article/url/d/a/100821/1/2bjf0>.

Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan was ranked as the ninth country in the world which has serious gender imbalance.<sup>62</sup> This condition is more serious in wealthy families and the women in this kind of family usually have to continue giving birth until they have a son; otherwise, their status might become unstable, similar to women in ancient society.<sup>63</sup>

Besides, from the previous introduction, it is clear that obedience and incompetence are the most important requirements of women in Chinese history. Naturally, if a woman is untrained professionally and cannot leave her house for study or work, there are few choices she can make apart from being obedient to and relying on men, since her husband is the only financial supplier. In this situation, therefore, what kind of husband a woman marries dictates what kind of life quality and social status she will have. Although this social reality has changed in Taiwan in the past few decades, this kind of notion not only has not vanished, but has become part of the marital concept in women's minds. For better living quality and the influence of traditional ideology, most women are inclined to "marry up."

Following the gendered image formed in Chinese culture, men in Taiwan are still supposed to be strong, capable and reliable. The traits of women are still assumed to be weak, lovely and submissive. Living under such an old-established custom, it is easy for people to internalize the gendered image and values and naturally follow

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Html (accessed September 16, 2010); "Babies' gender ratio lost balance 'Guarantee having baby boy' would be punished!" *Chinese Television Service*, August 29, <http://tw.news.yahoo.com/article/url/d/a/100829/69/2c06i.html> (accessed September 16, 2010); "Guarantee having son by fetal gender testing? Department of Health plan to punish 59 doctors," *NOWnews*, August 29, 2010, <http://tw.news.yahoo.com/article/url/d/a/100829/17/2c0c6.html> (accessed September 16, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> "The birthrate declined to the lowest record gender imbalance is the most serious in past six years," *NOWnews*, August 31, 2010, <http://www.nownews.com/2010/08/31/11490-2641412.htm> (accessed September 16, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Jin-hua Chu, "Shu-jen Chiu delivery a baby girl again it is her third girl her husband is angry she will try her most to pregnant her fourth child for a boy!" *NOWnews*, September 7, 2010, <http://www.nownews.com/2010/09/07/390-2644063.htm> (accessed September 16, 2010); "The plan of promoting her status in family by delivering baby boy was fail! Small S pregnant a girl she is hoping that her daughter and this upcoming girl will be good sisters," *China Times*, June 21, 2007.

them when seeking a partner. This might be the main reason why the ideology of “women marrying up and men marrying down (*shangjia xiaqu*, 上嫁下娶)” still widely exists and affects modern Taiwanese people. The extremely different and unequal treatment of men and women respectively over thousands of years has already become the cultural sediment in Taiwanese society. Like women in ancient times, many Taiwanese women still think that what kind of life they can live depends on how rich are the men whom they marry; they also deem their husbands’ achievements their own. “Marrying a rooster is to live with a rooster; marrying a dog is to live with a dog (*chiagi sueichi chiago sueigo*)” was a common slang expression describing women’s marriage in modern Taiwan.

This ideology of gender and marriage has a great influence on many phases in the lives of Taiwanese people and has resulted in many difficulties for modern Taiwanese women and men. These difficulties and social problems, related to the traditional Chinese culture, will be analyzed in later sections.

### **I.3.iii Women’s Legal Rights and the Women’s Movement in Taiwan**

In 1987, the Nationalist Party government ended the martial law which had operated in Taiwan since 1949. This was a crucial event for Taiwanese social reform and democracy. Since the abolition of martial law, Taiwan has been undergoing a drastic and rapid process of democratization and modernization. As well as the flourishing of the construction industry and the many reforms in the fields of politics and economics, issues relating to personal rights and freedom started to be raised and were gradually incorporated within the law. In particular, there has been a remarkable promotion of women’s legal status and rights, in politics and the labour market, in the equality of education and the work place, and in the protection of their personal

safety.<sup>64</sup> Due to the progress of women's rights, Taiwanese women have much more liberty and autonomy to develop their career and self-achievement than women in most other Asian countries do. Therefore, many women enjoy independence and make considerable contributions in their professions.

The reason why Taiwan so quickly transformed into a society which has undergone notable advancement in terms of gender equality in just two decades can be attributed to the efforts of the women's movement. Among the vigorous activities of the social movements in Taiwan, the women's movement is distinctive, having made an unusually large advancement and considerable legal progress. Instead of taking to the streets or arranging parades to seek change, like most of the other Taiwanese social movements, women activists have applied revisions of the law and created decrees directly. They usually seek an alliance with the legislators who have cared about gender issues for a long time or who are interested in some specific decrees, because the lawmaking or law revisions rely on the legislators' propositions in the legislative assembly. This difference in the reforming approach from other social movements is due to the background of the community members. Most Taiwanese women activists are from academic circles; most of them are scholars and some are lawyers and legal professionals. Consequently, they adopted this uncommon but efficient way to elevate women's rights in Taiwan. The process of the Taiwanese women's movement will be briefly illustrated below in three periods.<sup>65</sup> The demarcation of the Taiwanese women's movement is not identical in each scholar's work, but the establishment of the magazine publishing house of *Awakening* in 1982 is generally seen as the most important event and a watershed for women's rights.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Hsiao-chin Hsieh and Chueh Chang, "The Development of the Women's Movement and Women's/Gender Studies in Taiwan," in *Gender, Culture and Society: Women's Studies in Taiwan*, eds. Wei-hung Lin and Hsiao-chin Hsieh (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>66</sup> Ya-ke Wang, *Taiwai Funui jiefang yundongshi* (A History of Taiwanese Women's Liberation



Before 1982, the most significant event in the Taiwanese women's movement was the publication of a book by Annette Lu (1944- ) entitled *New Feminism* in 1974.<sup>67</sup> Lu had returned to Taiwan three years after studying abroad in the United States.<sup>68</sup> She advocated feminist beliefs and invented the slogan: "Being a human before being a woman". Although this beginning of Taiwanese feminist activities was soon interrupted, since Lu was imprisoned for her involvement in an anti-governmental democracy movement, her efforts have usually been seen as the first appearance of feminism in Taiwan and had been influential at that time.<sup>69</sup>

After Lu's imprisonment, Yuan-chen Lee (1946- ), a college instructor, established the publishing house of *Awakening (Funu Xinzhi)* in 1982 to continue the propagation of feminism.<sup>70</sup> Due to the conservative atmosphere under martial law in Taiwanese society at that time, any social movement had been seriously restricted. Setting up a publishing house, therefore, was a more flexible approach. As Hsia-chin Hsieh and Chueh Chang observe, "[t]hrough the monthly *Awakening*, they introduced feminist thoughts from the West, discussed women's issues, [...] raising and developing women's consciousness."<sup>71</sup>

Five years later, the martial law was terminated. The ending of martial law made the year 1987 a watershed for Taiwanese democratization.<sup>72</sup> The energy of social reformation, which had been long oppressed, became an outburst, including the women's movement. In 1987, the pioneering women's group that ran the *Awakening* magazine changed its name to the Awakening Foundation. It began to concentrate on

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Movement) (Taipei: Juliu Books Company, 1996), 296.

<sup>67</sup> Hsiu-lien Annette Lu, *Xin nuxingzhuyi* (New Feminism) (Taipei: Youshi, 1974).

Lu was a candidate for the vice presidency of the Democratic Progressive Party and the first woman to win the Taiwanese presidential election. Hsiu-lien Lu and Shui-bian Chen were the vice president and president of Taiwan in 2000 and 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Hsieh and Chang, "Women's Movement," 25; Wang, *Taiwai Funui jiefang yundongshi*, 28.

<sup>69</sup> Hsieh and Chang, "Women's Movement," 25.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

the political innovation and legislation for women's rights. The Awakening Foundation has been guiding the trends in women's issues in Taiwan up to today. Furthermore, many women's groups and organizations have been established one after one, like the Taipei Warm Life Association for Women and the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation, both founded in 1988, and the Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights in 1994.<sup>73</sup> Every women's organization has its own emphasis and areas of concern, including child prostitutes, and women's equal rights in school systems and participation in the labour market. Of these women's groups, the Awakening Foundation has attracted most women professionals and scholars at universities. Its priority is to promote women's status and rights through legislation. It is also engaged in the education of gender equality. "In most cases, the Awakening Foundation took the initiative, and various women's groups and organizations joined the fight for gender related social issues."<sup>74</sup> The most significant gain was the Children's Welfare Law which was passed in 1988 to promote the rights and interest of children, especially of girls. The purpose of this law is to ban child prostitution, human trafficking and the pornography industry.<sup>75</sup> It marked the start of the following extraordinary period of the legislative process regarding women's rights.

In this period, the women's movement and legislative progress flourished. Numerous laws about women's rights and gender equality were drafted and passed. Although women would not be clearly written into the laws as the protected object, it is women who are the victims or disadvantaged in most realistic social conditions. The

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid. Currently, there are sixty-seven women's groups in Taiwan. The important ones and their concerns are: The Awakening Foundation has been devoted to legislative revisions and issues of transnational immigrant wives; the main concern of the Taipei Warm Life Association for Women is to help divorced people and single parents; the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation is for women who have suffered from violent marriages; and the Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights has been focusing on women's health issues. This information is from the website of Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights (TAPWR): [http://www.tapwr.org.tw/news\\_deta.asp?newsid=53](http://www.tapwr.org.tw/news_deta.asp?newsid=53) (accessed July 31, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> Hsieh and Chang, "Women's Movement," 27.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 28

enactment of these laws contributed to the remarkable advancement of women's rights. Some of them are illustrated here to highlight the changes that promoted women's status. In the area of safety and freedom of women's bodies, there were the Prevention of Child and Youth Prostitution Law passed in 1995, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Law in 1998, and Revisions of the Criminal Code on Rape (revised from complaint to public prosecution) in 1999. With regard to the general rights in women's daily lives, the Gender Equality in Employment Law was enacted in 2002, forbidding discrimination in work places and instituting parental leave, the Gender Equity Education Act in 2004, implementing gender equality in curricula and resources at all levels of schools, and the Sexual Harassment Prevention Act in 2006, confirming that any kinds of sexual behaviours or words violating others' intentions is a kind of criminal behaviour.<sup>76</sup>

These decrees have been deeply influential on and changed women's lives in Taiwan. Because of the legislative progress, Taiwanese women have started to have official and fair access to seek protection and to demand their rights when facing harmful situations. The key achievement of this legislation is that it brought what used to be seen as private issues in old Taiwanese society into the public sphere.<sup>77</sup> Currently, through the efforts and leadership of the Awakening Foundation and other feminist activists, some issues have also been discussed and a common consensus has been sought, such as abolishing the criminal law on adultery.

### **I.3.iv Women's Studies in Taiwan**

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.; Hsiao-tan Wang, "Sinbie yufalui (Gender and Law)," in *Sinbie sianduyu Taiwan sehui* (Gender Dimensions in Taiwanese Society), eds. Su-ling Hwang and Mei-hui You (Taipei: Juliu Books Company, 2007), 162; the information about sexual harassment is from the following webpage: <http://forum.yam.org.tw/bongchhi/old/light/light205-1.htm> (accessed July 31, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> I-weng Peng, "Funui yundonhan jenji (The Women's Movement and Politics)," in *Sinbie sianduyu Taiwan sehui* (Gender Dimensions in Taiwanese Society), eds. Su-ling Hwang and Mei-hui You (Taipei:

Like the women's movement, the development of women's/gender studies in Taiwan moved from being barren to fruitful in just two decades. Along with the rapid development of the women's movement, women's/gender studies also flourished in the 1990s. Gender studies and the women's movement mutually nurtured each other. In 1985, the first women's research centre was founded. Hsieh and Chang pointed out that "[t]he establishment of the Women's Research Program at the National Taiwan University in 1985 became the model for the development of women's studies in Taiwan's universities."<sup>78</sup> In 1995, there were four research units for women's studies built, all based at universities.<sup>79</sup> Currently, there are ten programmes, institutes and research centres on gender/women's studies in academic organizations and on university campuses.<sup>80</sup> Each of them has its own specially developing emphasis and these various research concerns composed a thriving environment for women's studies in Taiwan.<sup>81</sup>

### **I.3.v Women's Political Participation in Taiwan**

In the dimension of women's rights, other than legislating laws to protect women, women's political participation is another crucial concern for the feminist

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Juliu Books Company, 2007), 191-193.

<sup>78</sup> Hsieh and Chang, "Women's Movement," 22.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>81</sup> These academic units and their concerns and time of establishment are briefly listed here: Research Center on Gender Studies at Kaohsiung Medical University (Promoting gender equity education, 1991); Research project and group on women's history in modern China at the Institute of Modern History at Academia Sinica (women's history in modern China, 1992); Taiwanese Feminist Scholars Association (supporting cooperation for feminist scholars, 1993); Graduate Institute of Building and Planning Gender and Space Programme at National Taiwan University (gender and space teaching, 1995); Center for the Studies of Sexualities at National Central University (sexualities and gender minorities, 1995); Women and Gender Programme at National Cheng Kung University (providing gender studies courses, 1995); Center for Gender and Communication Studies at Shih Hsin University (offering gender studies courses, 1995); Gender and Culture Program at Tung Hai University (offering gender studies courses, 1995); Chinese Women's Literature Program at Tamkang University (organizing study groups, 1998); Graduate Institute of Gender Education at National Kaohsiung Normal University (offering MA degree program, 2000) and Research Center on Gender and Family at National Changhua Normal University (offering gender education workshops and courses, 2007). This information is mainly extracted from Hsieh and Chang, "Women's Movement," page 48 and 49 and has been checked and updated by the author.

groups. Women and men gained voting rights simultaneously in 1947 in both China and Taiwan. This was just a year after the constitution of the Republic of China (ROC) had been passed. Afterwards, in 1949, the Chinese Nationalist Party government was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party in civil war and retreated to Taiwan. The government in Taiwan still followed the constitution, national name (ROC) and voting regulations which had been enacted while they ruled China.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to voting rights, the constitution also instituted the reserve-seats system for women because of the personal influence of the first lady, Mei-ling Song (1897-2003, President Kai-shek Chiang's wife).<sup>83</sup> It was a very unusual measure in Asia and made Taiwan a country where women participated in the governmental structure and legislative bodies far earlier than they did in other Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea.<sup>84</sup> Because of the reserve-seats system practised in Taiwan, as Chang-ling Huang analyzed, "[c]ompared to most Asian countries, Taiwan has a higher percentage of women holding elected office."<sup>85</sup> Moreover, in recent years, women's groups successfully ensured that the old reserve-seats system transferred to the new gender quota system in the nominations for every political election. This aims to promote gender justice and benefit both genders. Therefore, the essence of the gender quota system seeks a gender balance, instead of using reserve-seats as a protective measure of seeing women as a disadvantaged group.<sup>86</sup>

Although being a woman does not necessarily mean that she has consciousness of gender equality, the "presence" of different groups is still important.<sup>87</sup> The heterogeneous parts composed in one group are a reflection of a real society.

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<sup>82</sup>Chang-ling Huang, "Strength in Numbers: Increasing Women's Political Participation in Taiwan," in *Gender, Culture and Society: Women's Studies in Taiwan*, eds. Wei-hung Lin and Hsiao-chin Hsieh (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2005), 279.

<sup>83</sup> Peng, "Funui yundonhan jenji," 184.

<sup>84</sup> Huang, "Strength in Numbers", 274.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 275, 287.

### I.3.vi Brief Comparison with Other Asian Countries

In general, women's rights and social status in Taiwan are much better than in most Asian countries. Due to the economical disadvantages, many women in other Asian countries traveled to Taiwan to be workers or wives. Most of them are from Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia.<sup>88</sup> They come to Taiwan as domestic helpers in wealthy families and as wives in poor families.<sup>89</sup> In Taiwan, according to the statistics for 2006 from the Council of Labor Affairs, over 60% of foreign workers are Asian women. The number of transnational married people is also overwhelmingly centered on women. No matter of which status they are, many of them have an inferior social status and have difficulties with integrating into Taiwanese society because of the problems of language and social values.<sup>90</sup> The reasons why they chose to go to foreign countries are mainly linked to the low social status and adverse living conditions of women in their home countries, such as violent marriages and economical pressure.<sup>91</sup>

Other than these countries, women's rights in some aspects in Taiwan are also better than in other industrialised Asian countries. Considering political participation, Chang-ling Huang illustrated that "[in] the current Legislative Yuan, the highest legislative body in Taiwan's political system, 50 out of the 225 members are women. By comparison, the percentage of women in legislative bodies in Taiwan's neighboring Asian countries is significantly lower: Women currently hold only 6% of

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<sup>87</sup> Peng, "Funui yundonhan jenzi," 191.

<sup>88</sup> Pei-chia Lan, "Sinbie yu quaquo shienyi (Gender and Transnational Migration)," in *Sinbie sianduyu Taiwan sehui* (Gender Dimensions in Taiwanese Society), eds. Su-ling Hwang and Mei-hui You (Taipei: Juliu Books Company, 2007), 227, 239.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 232, 233.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 233, 234.

the seats in the South Korean National Assembly and 7% in the Japanese Diet.”<sup>92</sup> The high percentage of women in the political system shows not only that the rights of women’s political participation are well instituted but it also partly enables women’s rights to be well discussed and legislated.

Regarding the general life of women, most modern Taiwanese women usually continue to work and develop their professions after getting married or having children. In some cases, women might decide to stay at home for several years to take care of their children before they start school age, since the childcare costs for two or more children is too expensive and might already exceed their salary. In other industrialised Asian countries, like Japan and South Korea, it is also taken for granted that women work before they get married, but after that they are strongly expected to stay at home and be housewives to take care of their husbands’ and children’s daily needs. In the book of comparing women’s status in Japan and Taiwan, *Gendered Trajectories: Women, Work and Social Change in Japan and Taiwan*, the author Wei-hsin Yu noted that “the demand for married women’s time and labor at home is generally higher in Japan than in Taiwan.”<sup>93</sup> In most Asian countries, the patriarchal hegemony is still prevalent and women are expected to be subservient to their husbands. Since the social condition of seeing women as belonging to the family and that they should obey their husbands, as Yu comments, the “[...] workplace climate has been more hostile and job conditions less flexible for married women in Japan. In turn, Taiwanese women are argued to have perceived a higher level of compatibility between work and family than their Japanese counterparts.”<sup>94</sup> The social condition means Taiwanese women have more chances to attain self-achievement.

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<sup>92</sup> Huang, “Strength in Numbers,” 274. In the election of 2001, 50 out of the 225 (22.2%) members were women and 47 out of the 225 (20.9%) were women in 2005 in the highest legislative body in Taiwan. This data is from Peng, “Funui yundonhan jenji,” 185.

<sup>93</sup> Wei-hsin Yu, *Gendered Trajectories: Women, Work and Social Change in Japan and Taiwan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 95.

### **I.3.vii Conclusion**

From reviewing women's rights and social status in Taiwan, we can see that it has undergone a considerable advancement in the past two decades. In a limited time period, the legislation and propagation of gender equality has obtained admirable results. Although it was initiated comparatively late, women's rights and living conditions in Taiwan are far ahead those in other Asian countries currently. The women activists' status and specialty is the reason why the women's movement can achieve what the other Taiwanese social movements and reforms cannot. Unlike the approaches that the other social movements usually adopted, women activists built foundations or associations as their agency and made efforts directly in the field of legislation.

Moreover, sometimes, the laws even attracted public attention and inspired discussion after they had been passed. The advantage of this kind of approach is that it is the fastest way to change the realistic condition. It does not need a long period of waiting for the public to form a common consensus or for the protest voice to become loud enough to be heard by the government. In addition, the feminist activists are familiar with and have expertise in gender related issues and women's problems. Their efforts changed the status of Taiwanese women in the fields of politics, the family, the work place, economics, education and many other living situations. The endeavours and performance of individual woman in every sphere also modified the old impression held by Taiwanese people of women. Now, modern Taiwanese women can dream and believe that they could do many things which were impeded prior to the advent of the women's movement.

Currently, women's organizations and groups are continually engaged in

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 70.



promoting gender equality. Through the efforts mainly by The Awakening Foundation, in April 2010, the civil law about adults who change their surname was passed. Afterwards, adults can freely choose their surname following each of their parents, instead of using father's surname for their whole lifetime.<sup>95</sup> In addition, the Awakening and many women activists have been trying to abolish the adultery crime. However, it has induced serious protestations for many years, since most Taiwanese wives thought that this law is a useful instrument to protect their marriage. Therefore, The Awakening Foundation has frequently held lectures to air their opinions. The appeal of the Awakening is that human feelings should not be punished by criminal law. Women activists consider that it would bring more respect and an equal relationship between the genders.<sup>96</sup>

## **I.4 The Difficulties Faced by Women in Contemporary Taiwan**

### **I.4.i Marriage**

Enjoying the abundant achievements of the women's movement and sharing the rights and opportunities which were mainly available to men, modern Taiwanese women have many more chances and increased independence than before. Through the legislation and propagation of gender equality, women's position in education, the family, the work place, political participation and economic status, have undergone great advancement. In present day Taiwan, however, some problems have been created and these have changed the picture of women's lives.

One of the main problems for modern Taiwanese women is marriage. The traditional ideology of "women marrying up and men marrying down" (*shiangia*

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<sup>95</sup> The Awakening Foundation, "Cong muxing cong fuxing chengnianren ziji jue ding (Adults Can Freely Choose Their Surname Following Each of Their Parents)," [http://www.awakening.org.tw/chhtml/news\\_dtl.asp?id=509](http://www.awakening.org.tw/chhtml/news_dtl.asp?id=509) (accessed July 31, 2010).

<sup>96</sup> The Awakening Foundation, "Petition the Public for Abolishing the Adultery Crime,"

*shiachu*) and “men are superior and women are inferior” (*nangao nuidi*) influence the patterns of marriage of Taiwanese men and women.<sup>97</sup> The result is that women who have a higher level of education, achievement and age have restricted marriage opportunities.<sup>98</sup> This traditional marriage model has contributed to many Taiwanese women, who have good social capital, remaining unmarried.<sup>99</sup> As Pei-chia Lan demonstrate in her article, “Over three tenths of Taiwanese women aged from 30 to 40 are unmarried, and a quarter of those aged 35 to 40 are unmarried. This ratio is the highest in the world, except for France.”<sup>100</sup> Along with the progress of women’s rights in many aspects, women are now more equal and share similar resources to men in numerous aspects. Nonetheless, most Taiwanese women still, like women in the past, want to “marry up”. At least, they want to marry equal; it is still hard to accept marrying down, so many women cannot find proper marital partners. They expect their husbands have more social capital and advantages than themselves, such as a higher salary, taller figure, better job, better education and a better family background.<sup>101</sup> This has made marriage more difficult than before. In ancient Taiwan,

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[http://www.awakening.org.tw/chhtml/news\\_dtl.asp?id=647](http://www.awakening.org.tw/chhtml/news_dtl.asp?id=647) (accessed July 31, 2010).

<sup>97</sup> Lan, “Sinbie yu quaquo shienyi,” 231; Pei-chia Lan, “Busen Buwhen yoezeyoung (No Marriage, No Children, So What?),” in *Common Wealth Magazine* 440 (January, 2010), <http://www.cw.com.tw/article/index.jsp?id=40106> (accessed July 22 2010) ; Ying-duan Li, “Qianshou chutoutian - kuaguo hunyin zhong Taiwan nanxing hunyin diaoshi yu xiaoxi xuqiu zhi yanjiu (A Study on the Adjustment and Learning Needs of Taiwanese Husbands in Cross-cultural Marriage),” (Master thesis, National Chi Nan University, 2006) 2, 10, 11.

<sup>98</sup> According to a survey conducted by Xuan-yi Hwang, female professors and doctors find it hard to find husbands; even if they could accept to marry male masters, those men who have master’s degree still want to follow the tradition of “marring down” and do not want to marry female doctors. Those married women whom Hwang interviewed, who have a PhD degree, met their husbands while they were young and had not studied for a PhD yet. In addition, their husbands are professionals and have a much higher salary, so these men can feel balanced and get compensation for their masculinity. Even so, one of them was forced to study for a PhD because his parents could not accept that their daughter-in-law has a higher education than their son, see Hwang, “Waijie nuxing,” 51, 52, 83, 89-93.

<sup>99</sup> Lan, “Sinbie yu quaquo shienyi,” 231.

<sup>100</sup> Lan, “Busen Buwhen yoezeyoung,” (accessed July 22 2010).

<sup>101</sup> For example, the data demonstrate that 76.27% of female university students want their future husbands to be older than them (6.14 year on average), 93.07% of them want men who are taller than them (11-20 cm on average), and about 70% of them want men to have better economical ability than them. As for educational background, 44.00% of them want men have with more qualifications than them and 42.4% can accept men who are equally qualified to them, but just 0.27% can accept husbands with a lower education than them, see Shin-di Shiu, “Taipei xianshi daixuesheng zeou tiaojian zhi yanjiu (The study of mating preferences of the university students in Taipei city and Taipei county),”

it seemed easy for women to marry men who had more advantages than themselves, since the social constitution gives men more vested interests and benefits than women.

Also, this kind of social climate has made it difficult for a lot of Taiwanese men who have an inferior salary and class to find a wife. Consequently, these men who are disadvantaged in the Taiwanese marriage market have been seeking the opportunity to marry Chinese or Southeast Asian women who are still inferior to them in economical ability.<sup>102</sup> In 2009, 15% of brides in Taiwan were from foreign countries, mainly from Southeast Asia.<sup>103</sup> The commercialized international marriage has provided these men who are less competitive in the local marriage market with another solution.<sup>104</sup>

The information from the Council for Economic Planning and Development demonstrates that “only 32.15% of Taiwanese women aged from twenty-five to twenty-nine have spouses. This means that as many as seven-tenths of women are unmarried during the traditional marital age. The same age range’s marriage rate is far lower than in South Korea (49.55%) and Japan (39%)”.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, a third of Taiwanese women aged from 30 to 35 remain unmarried.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, the age of Taiwanese first marriage has continually risen and reached its highest level for the past forty years. In 2009, the average age of first marriage of bridegrooms is 31.6 and for brides is 28.9.<sup>107</sup> The number of those getting married for the first time in 2009

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(Master thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2004), 5, 6, 20, 21, 82-90, 96.

<sup>102</sup> See note 37 above; Ya-zhen Chen, “Waiji peiou xiansheng de hunyin guan yu hunyin shenghuo (Marital experiences of the husbands with foreign wives),” (Master thesis, Tzu Chi University, 2006).

<sup>103</sup> This data is from Dr. Daniele Belanger at the University of Western Ontario. See Nin-kang Wu, “Research: More and More Asian Men are Forced to Marry Foreign Wives,” *Radio Taiwan International*, July 26, 2010. [http://news.rti.org.tw/index\\_newsContent.aspx?id=8&id2=2&nid=251529](http://news.rti.org.tw/index_newsContent.aspx?id=8&id2=2&nid=251529) (accessed July 26, 2010).

<sup>104</sup> See note 36 above.

<sup>105</sup> Jung-fu Chang and Hui-mei Fan, “The Availability Index of unmarried men and women in Taiwan” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Demography, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, April 29-30, 2010).

<sup>106</sup> Shio-mei Lin, “Only Have One Child on Average Taiwan has the Lowest Birthrate in the World,” *United Daily News*, Nov. 28, 2009.

<sup>107</sup> Chia-jen Hsien, “Married People are Reduced Age of First marriage has Reached its Highest Level,” *Central News Agency*, June 27, 2010. <http://www.cna.com.tw/SearchNews/doDetail.aspx?id=201006270062&q=> (accessed July 10, 2010).

has also declined to the smallest amount in the past twenty years.<sup>108</sup>

Following the late marriage and high unmarried rate, in 2009, Taiwan had the lowest birthrate in the world.<sup>109</sup> The Ministry of the Interior claimed that the birthrate in Taiwan has continually fallen over the past ten years and reached its lowest rate of 0.87%.<sup>110</sup> The average number of children that each woman generates is less than one. In Hong Kong and Japan, the average number is 1.3 and 1.4 respectively.<sup>111</sup>

Economical concern is another crucial reason why Taiwanese people tend not to get married and have children.<sup>112</sup> In the social climate of Taiwan, as Catherine Farris discussed in her research on Taiwan, “[m]en are still considered the main providers for their families, and women’s work in the labor force is seen as supplemental household income.”<sup>113</sup> Due to Taiwanese traditional values, raising a family is the financial responsibility of men. This phenomenon also reflects that “women are marrying up.” The duty of the financial burden makes many single men who just have an ordinary salary and struggle to maintain a living afraid to get married or have children.<sup>114</sup> Although the double-income family is a common condition currently, men are still supposed to take the main responsibility for sustaining a family.

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<sup>108</sup> I-ping Tzeng, “Don’t get married First marriage people declined to the smallest amount in the past twenty years,” *China Times*, June 27, 2010. <http://www.cna.com.tw/SearchNews/doDetail.aspx?id=201006270062&q=> (accessed July 10, 2010).

<sup>109</sup> Shio-mei Lin, “Only Have One Child on Average Taiwan has the Lowest Birthrate in the World,” *United Daily News*, Nov. 28, 2009.

<sup>110</sup> Nan-sun Lin, “Taiwanese birthrate Declined to the lowest level in the world,” *BBC Chinese Website*, Feb. 6, 2010. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/business/2010/02/100206\\_taiwan\\_birthrate.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/business/2010/02/100206_taiwan_birthrate.shtml) (accessed July 10, 2010).

<sup>111</sup> Pi-hua Hsu and Yu-jun Shu, “The birthrate in Taiwan the lowest in the world in the last year,” *United Daily News*, Jan. 14, 2010; Ho-zhi Hsan, “Taiwan zero population growth in 2017,” *Chinatimes*, May 14, 2010, <http://life.chinatimes.com/2009Cti/Channel/Life/life-article/0,5047,11051801+112010051400076,00.html> (accessed 10 July).

<sup>112</sup> Chia-jen Hsien, “Scholars: Social values and economical pressure Late marriage became common,” *Central News Agency*, June 27, 2010. <http://www.cna.com.tw/SearchNews/doDetail.aspx?id=201006270085&q=> (accessed July 10, 2010).

<sup>113</sup> Catherine S. P. Farris, “Women’s Liberation Under ‘East Asian Modernity’ in China and Taiwan: Historical, Cultural, and Comparative Perspectives,” in *Women in the New Taiwan: Gender Roles and Gender Consciousness in a Changing Society*, eds. Catherine Farris, Anru Lee and Murray Rubinstein (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 362.

<sup>114</sup> Chien-lin Shi, “Modernization leads people to dare to marry and have children,” *Taiwan Lihpao*, July 7, 2010.

These analyses show that the difficulties that Taiwanese women face regarding getting married and having children result from realistic conditions. Most Taiwanese women still deem that getting married is a necessary thing to do in their lives. A survey conducted by Academia Sinica indicates that over half of Taiwanese people consider that a bad marriage is better than remaining unmarried. The ratio is the highest in the world and far exceeds the rate in the second highest country, the Philippines (27%).<sup>115</sup> “Most Taiwanese women did not ‘choose’ or ‘decide’ not to get married. They cannot get married because there are no proper men.”<sup>116</sup>

#### **I.4.ii Physical Appearance**

In women’s lives, the concern about appearance has continually attracted much attention. Jennifer Saul, in her book *Feminism*, indicates the efforts that modern women make towards their appearance: “Women [...] spend enormous amounts of time, energy, and money trying to achieve the right appearance for their faces—even if the current look is ‘natural’.”<sup>117</sup> She also points out that women today are under pressure to achieve a “culturally desirable body”<sup>118</sup> and are anxious to perfect their image through their bodies, faces, clothes, and movements.<sup>119</sup> Saul’s discussion is mainly located in the UK and the US.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, the trend of emphasizing and perfecting the appearance of women is not just restricted in these regions, but is a common difficulty which women confront and prevails in many modernized and capitalistic countries, including Taiwan.

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<sup>115</sup> Lan, “Busen Buwhen yoezeyoung.” (accessed July 22 2010).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Jennifer M. Saul, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 148, 149.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-151.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

In Taiwan, recently, the social climate of concentrating on women's appearance is getting stronger. In addition, the huge numbers of unmarried women who are of traditional marital age have strong driving forces and motives to sustain their attractive appearance. According to the statistics, the beauty treatment market in Taiwan makes annual profits of 7 hundred billion New Taiwan Dollars (about £14 billion) and the yearly growth rate of cosmetic surgery is over 20%.<sup>121</sup> Women in Taiwan are encouraged to devote themselves to make-up, dressing up and small scale cosmetic surgery. The proverb frequently heard in Taiwan, "no ugly women, only lazy women", demonstrates the common value that women are the ones who can decide whether their images are glamorous or not and should take full responsibility for presenting a beautiful image. Surrounded by the atmosphere of pursuing beauty, women have been following the trend and fashion of perfecting their image. Susie Orbach indicates the pressure on women: "It is the individual woman who feels herself to be at fault for not matching up to the current imagery."<sup>122</sup> Beauty is a capital which is easily noticed and may be a relatively easy one to obtain compared to other capitals, like academic background or work qualifications. Beauty is thus becoming critical capital, no matter whether in the marriage market or in the work place.

The climate of overwhelmingly focusing on appearance in Taiwan can be clearly illustrated from some social events which provoked a fierce controversy as I will shortly describe.<sup>123</sup> In recent years, women's bodies and beautiful faces have become useful instruments in commercial pursuits. Show girls have an exposed

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<sup>121</sup> Sih-jie Li, "Zhongnian nuxing weizhengxing juanti shijian zhi yanjiu - yi dataibei diqu weili (From a study of petit cosmetic surgery practices for the middle-aged women in Taipei area)," (Master thesis, Shih Hsin University, 2010), 4.

<sup>122</sup> Orbach, *Bodies*, 92.

<sup>123</sup> " 'Beauty's devotion is not less than Professors' devotion' Xue-hen Ju criticized the president of National Taiwan University," *The Liberty Times*, June 5, 2010, <http://iservice.libertytimes.com.tw/liveNews/news.php?no=373200> (accessed July 10, 2010).

dressing style at various selling exhibitions of food, furniture, cars, houses, electric appliances and computers to promote commercial products.<sup>124</sup> Local governments have even held beauty contests or beauty shows for marketing vegetables.<sup>125</sup> It seems that beauty is the main concern in many activities in Taiwan. In recent years, a woman engaged in any occupation could become a popular news event if she is beautiful. On TV or other media, it has been frequently reported that a beauty was doing her job, such as a beautiful teacher, students, nurse, doctor, cook, police officer, prosecutor, etc.<sup>126</sup> These women would be news not because they work harder than other women or men in the same occupations, but merely because they are beautiful. A new noun which means (young) beautiful women, *zhengmei*, was even invented as part of this trend.<sup>127</sup> The new noun, *zhengmei*, has been employed in the everyday media and is widely used in numerous kinds of activities in modern Taiwan.<sup>128</sup> This *zhengmei* phenomenon partly represents the frenzied atmosphere of emphasizing women's physicality.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Wei-ju Zi and Jen-pei Liu, "Show girls dare to abandon the title of students of National Taiwan University?" *United Daily News*, June 7, 2010. <http://www.udn.com/2010/6/7/NEWS/OPINION/X1/5647512.shtml> (accessed July 10, 2010).

<sup>125</sup> Zao-xiang Liao, "Attractive women exposed their beautiful legs Advertising the sprout of wild rice stem from Nantou county," *China Times*, August 27, 2010, <http://news.chinatimes.com/domestic/0,5248,11050610x112010082700057,00.html> (accessed September 4, 2010); Jing-li Pong, "Chiensan rice noodles Chuchien Princess recommend," *The Liberty Times*, June 27, 2010; Jin-min Chen, "Changhua county the Princess Grape election Ask for beauty by a lot of money," *The Liberty Times*, April, 29, <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2010/new/apr/29/today-taipei7.htm> (accessed September 4, 2010).

<sup>126</sup> " 'Five belles in National Taiwan University' are not enough? People use internet for overwhelmingly searching 'thirteen babes in NTU'! " *NOWnews*, April 4, 2010. <http://www.nownews.com/2010/04/04/11490-2587641.htm> (accessed September 1, 2010); Min-hong Chou and Zheng-quo Hsu, "Zhengmei police flower Hot in the internet," *The Liberty Times*, December 17, 2008. <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2008/new/dec/17/today-so11.htm> (accessed September 1, 2010); Hsu-lei Hwang, "Anti-bribery Beauty prosecutor sing it for you," *The Liberty Times*, August 7, 2010, <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2010/new/aug/7/today-south11.htm> (accessed September 1, 2010).

<sup>127</sup> Fu-min Yen, "News profile/Zengmei is simple, cute and sweet," *United Daily News*, September 1, 2010, <http://www.udn.com/2010/9/1/NEWS/NATIONAL/NATS3/5821685.shtml> (accessed September 2, 2010).

<sup>128</sup> Fu-min Yeh, "Zengmei is popular and enchanting Wow! The business benefits are 8000 billion dollars," *United Daily News*, September 1, 2010, <http://www.udn.com/2010/9/1/NEWS/NATIONAL/NATS3/5821889.shtml> (accessed September 2, 2010).

<sup>129</sup> Nuwang, "Zhengmei economics," *Women* (November 20, 2009), <http://www.women.com.tw/blog/detail.aspx?cid=37&id=1505> (accessed September 2, 2010); Shia-chin Wang, "Chia-rui Chu yu

This trend of emphasizing the appearance of young women and female students is becoming feverish and unresisting in current Taiwan. This phenomenon mainly resulted from and continues to be inflamed by the prevalence of web-photo albums in Taiwan. An increasing amount of female college students have been uploading their photos to their own on-line photo albums.<sup>130</sup> Taking the biggest photo album website, wretch, as an example, beauty photos occupy about seventy percent of the wretch on-line album and over fifty percent of these beauty photos have sexual implications.<sup>131</sup> By 2009, it had been accumulated thirty billion photos in total and six million photos were being uploaded every day.<sup>132</sup> There are over a million clicks and views of the five most popular beauty albums per month and over a thousand a day.<sup>133</sup> Viewing these beauty albums has becoming a common leisure activity for Taiwanese men.<sup>134</sup> Following this fevered trend for showing one's self-image as a cute, sweet or sexy woman on the internet, many female students have been voted for by male viewers, such as "the five belles at the National Taiwan University", "thirteen babes at the National Taiwan University" and "five beauties at National Chengchi University".<sup>135</sup> Many beauty students who are famous in the internet world have

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Weng-hwa Wang: Xiongbu shi bama geide, xiong jinshi ziji geide (Chia-ruì Chu and Weng-hwa Wang: Breasts are given by parents, views are given by selves)," Cheers (August, 2010), <http://www.cheers.com.tw/doc/page.jsp?id=40288abc2a35f04b012a374cd7c701c6> (accessed September 2, 2010).

<sup>130</sup> Fu-min Yen, "Everyone loves zengmei Sweet zengmei is the most eye-attracting," United Daily News, September 1, 2010, <http://udn.com/NEWS/FASHION/FAS2/5821953.shtml> (accessed September 2, 2010).

<sup>131</sup> Yu-pei Chang and Mon-ruì Yeh, "Meimou dezuchou: nansin ninshizai wanglu xiangbude quanli tansuo (The curse of beautiful face: the powerful viewing of male gaze on web-photo albums)," *Research of Information and Society* 15 (July, 2008): 253. Hui-jie Pang, "Meili rensheng: Wanglu xiangbu shequn de hudong hangwei yanjiu (From beautiful life: Study on interaction among web-photo-album community)," (Master thesis, Chengchi University, 2005), 9.

<sup>132</sup> "Wretch website by social network service Registered members over six and a half millions," Business times, October 9, 2009, <http://www.businesstimes.com.hk/a-20091009-37576/internet100922> (accessed September 2, 2010); Zhong-yuan Hwang, "Facebook and plurk arising Wretch's grow slow down," China Times, October 9, 2009, <http://blog.chinatimes.com/blognews/archive/2009/10/09/439792.html> (accessed September 2, 2010).

<sup>133</sup> Chang and Yeh, "Meimou dezuchou," 254.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 256, 259, 260.

<sup>135</sup> "Five belles in NTU become famous Four beauties in NCU become advertising starts," *Sina news*, July 10, 2010, <http://news.sina.com.tw/article/20100710/347169.html>;



opportunities to appear at public events or on TV.

In addition, many TV advertisements were full of fetish, sexual implications and highlight women's exposed bodies, from selling video games, green tea and numerous products.<sup>136</sup> Although these ads provoke protestations from feminists and feverish discussions among the public,<sup>137</sup> focusing on women's appearance is still an ongoing tendency in current Taiwan.

As part of this trend, more and more women not only pay attention and devote energy to their appearance; they even take jobs which mainly show their faces and exposed body, including many female students from the best universities in Taiwan. In June 2010, the most well-known news item and dispute was that the president of the National Taiwan University, Si-chen Lee, indicated that it was a pity that so many female students from this outstanding university, who enjoyed first-rate educational resources, chose to be show girls and only exploit their appearance.<sup>138</sup> Some universities even held beauty student elections that led to serious concern from the Ministry of Education.<sup>139</sup>

The anxiety about obtaining updated information about fashion and make-up is also serious. In recent years, more and more make-up programmes have emerged on

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<sup>136</sup> Nanfanshue, "Childish face and huge breast Sexual worship culture," *United Daily News*, April 16, 2009; Jen-fu Zhan, "Childish face and huge breast Men can't refuse?" *United Daily News*, March 15, 2009.

<sup>137</sup> Zhen-nin Wang, "'Huge breast' video game advertisement penalty fine one million?" *United Evening News*, April 2, 2009.

<sup>138</sup> Chin-fan Chen, "Beauty of National Taiwan University President said it's a pity," *Central News Agency*, June 5, 2010, [http://www.cna.com.tw/ShowNews/WebNews\\_Detail.aspx?Type=FirstNews&ID=201006050023](http://www.cna.com.tw/ShowNews/WebNews_Detail.aspx?Type=FirstNews&ID=201006050023) (accessed July 10, 2010); Chin-fan Chen, "It's a pity to be show girls? NTU students don't think so," *Central News Agency*, June 5, 2010, [http://www.cna.com.tw/ShowNews/WebNews\\_Detail.aspx?Type=Popular&TNo=1347&ID=201006060004](http://www.cna.com.tw/ShowNews/WebNews_Detail.aspx?Type=Popular&TNo=1347&ID=201006060004) (accessed July 10, 2010).

<sup>139</sup> Hui-chi Yang and Quei-hwa Yang, "Female students exposed breasts for beauty contests Ministry of Education: Not proper," *Apple Daily*, April 9, 2009, [http://tw.nextmedia.com/applenews/article/art\\_id/31533337/IssueID/20090409](http://tw.nextmedia.com/applenews/article/art_id/31533337/IssueID/20090409) (accessed July 10, 2010); Min-rong Hsu et al., "Beauty contests of fruits girls National Taiwan University stopped," *Apple Daily*, April 30, 2010, [http://tw.nextmedia.com/applenews/article/art\\_id/32476807/IssueID/20100430](http://tw.nextmedia.com/applenews/article/art_id/32476807/IssueID/20100430) (accessed July 10, 2010).

TV.<sup>140</sup> These programmes have been promoting the beauty myth but are usually disguised as feminism.<sup>141</sup> For instance, one programme's title is "We women are the Greatest (*Nuizhen wozhuida*)"; the programme's content is full of ideas about how women should treat themselves well and show their independence by choosing suitable cosmetic products and dresses. There are huge business profits behind these high audience rating programmes. The cosmetic products introduced on the programmes often undergo astonishing sales effects.<sup>142</sup>

These programmes do not just teach women how to use make-up; the most vital thing they instruct women in is how to dress and wear make up through men's eyes.<sup>143</sup> In the narrative structure of these programmes and numerous other media about fashion and beauty, women are meant to learn about and conform to men's favourite images. The driving force behind this trend is possibly that they build a connection between being beautiful and marrying a rich man.<sup>144</sup> For that reason, "please men and obtain men's gaze"<sup>145</sup> seems a guarantee of a thriving future and thus becomes the purpose of beautifying one's own image.

Although women spend much of their energy on their appearance, the images which they pursue are various and changeable, since they follow the favourite images from the popular trends and media. The images which women present are thus not stable, but chase the vogue, because fashion is also an important criterion of beauty. This anxiety to pursue fashion is similar in many modernized capitalist countries.

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<sup>140</sup> In 2005, the first beauty/make-up programme "We women are the greatest (*Nuizhen wozhuida*)" emerged on the TVBS-G channel. This programme is still on TV now from Monday to Friday and continually achieves high audience ratings. Its popularity has made many other similar programmes emerge, such as "Beautiful Arts World (*Meili yinengjie*)" and "My Beauty Strategy (*wode meizhenji*)" on CTI TV Entertainment channel and "Fashion in House (*Liushin in House*)" on Channel V. See Ting-ting Lin, "From Fetishism to Beauty Worshipping: Decoding of the Narrative Strategy and Construction of Beauty Myth in Make-Up/Beauty Programs," (Master thesis, Shih Hsin University, 2009), 1.

<sup>141</sup> Ting-ting Lin, "From Fetishism to Beauty Worshipping," 1, 3, 4.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

Orbach mentioned this phenomenon in *Bodies*: “We are continually updating ourselves to become a part of what is fresh and contemporary.”<sup>146</sup> To be a fashion follower might be beneficial because of conforming to the trendy standard and the appreciation of beauty, but the production on a large scale made these women’s images common and featureless, no matter in what kind of profession they engaged. In Taiwan, in addition, there is rarely a fixed image related to a profession. There are clear images of some occupations because of the uniform, such as nurses, but these images do not have a direct relationship with these women’s ordinary lives in people’s minds. The case of female musicians is probably an unusual phenomenon in Taiwan, because people think that female musicians should present a specific image even in their daily life. In the following section, the differences and similarities of the images of female musicians from the image of ordinary women will be analyzed. The advantages and difficulties that accompany the female musician image for female musicians will also be discussed.

## **I.5 The Difficulties for Female Musicians**

### **I.5.1 Image**

Jennifer Saul has indicated the pressure of conforming to the “correct image” which Western women face: “By ‘norms of feminine appearance’ I do not mean the way that it is normal for women to appear. Rather, I mean the standards that women feel they should be living up to.”<sup>147</sup> This kind of anxiety is also prevalently rooted in Taiwanese women’s minds. As most Taiwanese women, female musicians have anxiety about presenting a particular image and fitting in with the standard. In fact,

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 131.

<sup>146</sup> Orbach, *Bodies*, 93.

<sup>147</sup> Saul, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, 144.

this anxiety may be much more serious than the situation which most women confront. The image which most women pursue is selectable and changeable, according to their own preferences and fashion, but the image attached to female musicians seems more fixed and stereotypical. For example, the media portrayed the “piano teacher” who had an affair with legislator Wu as classy, beautiful, well-dressed and well-behaved. The public even usually have detailed expectations of female musicians which have also been seen in the news reports about Wu’s mistress, such as gentle, big eyes and long, straight hair. This romance partly reflects the attitude which most Taiwanese men have towards female musicians: Wu’s deep wish was to marry a female musician, and many other male celebrities also admired her and praised her special qualities because of her occupation.

It is an unusual phenomenon that Taiwanese people have such a definite image of an occupation. To begin with the realistic aspect, as the previous sections mentioned, studying Western classical music needs huge financial investment in the long-term. It also needs parents’ devotion in terms of time and energy and the whole family’s co-operation or even sacrifices. In addition, the special educational system for cultivating musicians of the “music class” enhanced the uniqueness of musicians among Taiwanese people. For instance, one journalist recalled the “music class” of her school days, reflecting most students’ impression: “When I was at junior high school, the classroom of the music class is far from all of the other ordinary classes. The number of students in the music class is even less than thirty people; it is even less than half the size of an ordinary class. It is very hard to meet music students. For us, the students of the music class are always mysterious and very superior. In the summer, only they can use air conditioning while taking classes”.<sup>148</sup>

All of these practical conditions made female musicians seem high-class and to

occupy a privileged position. The public thus gradually developed a stereotypical image of female musicians. Fitting into the image might reinforce female musicians' status, make them distinctive and even bring them advantages. The potential benefits and advantages could further motivate and influence female musicians to follow this existing image. The image thus became an easy way to be recognized as a female musician with a specific social status. Being a female musician in Taiwan, therefore, does not mean merely engaging in a music circle, but also living in a complicated mechanism full of stereotypical images; female musicians not only have to learn about the music profession, but also about the image to which they are supposed to conform.

### **I.5.ii Marriage**

Unlike the current prevalent situation of late marriage and marital difficulty of Taiwanese women, most female musicians usually get married and have children at childbearing age. This condition can be easily testified by my personal experience. Most of my women friends who are not musicians remain unmarried and many of them do not have a boyfriend. In fact, in their experience, it is very difficult to find a man who is willing to get married or have a stable relationship, due to the economic pressure and the traditional ideology of "men marrying down and women marrying up". In Taiwan, accordingly, many men who are in an inferior social position have started to marry women from other Asian countries.

However, the difficulty of getting married seems less for female musicians. Take my female music colleagues as an example. Most of them are married and have children when they are of childbearing age. There are some possible reasons for this special condition. First, female musicians' supposed classy, beautiful appearance is rooted in Taiwanese people's minds. This attractive image is an advantage and might

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<sup>148</sup> Lin et al., "Diyi xifu," (accessed September 16, 2010).

make it easier to find a male partner. According to a poll, “the priority when seeking a wife for most Taiwanese men is to find someone who is young and beautiful.”<sup>149</sup> Second, since Western classical music is seen as a luxury profession and the representation of high class, female musicians are also seen as engaged in an extraordinary and noble specialty. Third, according to surveys in recent years, a teacher is usually men’s favourite occupation for a wife in Taiwan.<sup>150</sup> In the Taiwanese music environment, most music students become teachers. No matter whether female musicians are teachers in schools or give private lessons, in Taiwanese people’s opinions, their working environment is simple and the payment stable. That condition gives them more time at home to help with the housework. All of these qualities imply that teachers can be a good wife and could devote more time and energy to taking care of the family. In addition, the classy image make music teachers even more popular in the marriage market than other teachers. Female musicians thus have more competitive advantages in the marriage market and have more chances to marry men with a higher social status.

Ironically, a male musician or male music teacher has a completely different and comparatively low evaluation in Taiwan. If Western classical music and people who engage in this profession are both seen as high social status, then why do the different genders of the musicians attract opposite opinions from the public? The crucial points may rest on “marriage” and “social expectation.” Female musicians are expected to marry rich men after their education and have upward class mobility, so the music profession is a good occupation for women. However, a teacher is also what most

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<sup>149</sup> Xiang-mei Lin, “Blind date Teachers and civil servants are the most popular occupations,” *The Liberty Times*, June 12, 2010; Zhen-quan Wu, “Female teachers are the super ideal wives to modern men?” *Epaper*, (September 29, 2004), <http://epaper.pccu.edu.tw/newsDetail.asp?NewsNo=5536> (accessed August 30, 2010); “Rich men engaging in high tech are the women’s favourite Female teachers are men’s favourite,” *China Times*, August 2, 2003.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

male musicians are meant to be and it is uncommon for them to marry up to rich women for class mobility, since the social climate is for men to marry down. Hence, what they are engaged in is what their status rests on. In Taiwan, men engaged in music and teaching children are often seen as having an unambitious career, which does not suit traditional Taiwanese values for men. This can explain why so few men choose to study music and go to teachers college. Consequently, the advantages for female musicians, such as the simple (or limited) working conditions, a stable income and more time in the home and for taking care of the family, are disadvantages for male musicians according to traditional social expectations. The different standards for women and men musicians show that the public has very dissimilar expectations of them. The definition of success for women is not success for men. This demonstrates that Taiwanese society has much lower career expectations for women and takes it for granted that women's upward mobility relies on marriage to men.

Therefore, studying music itself is not the true reason that makes these women "high class." It may be the implication and possible future through their marriage that makes it a promising career. The status of "musician" is like a useful instrument for marrying up for women. In Taiwan, hence, to be a musician is not simply about a profession, but more about the musician's gender. Due to the "rewards" of being a female musician, the fastest way to announce or reinforce this status is to fit it in with the public's imagined image of female musicians. In this mechanism, a woman who chooses to be a musician will experience pressure to conform to the typical image from numerous sources. If a female musician does not fit into a typical image, she might not be able to get the potential benefits as easily as her female musician fellows. This kind of situation thus might restrict or influence a female musician's development in both her career and life. Her possibilities might be limited because of the typical image and then she might duplicate a similar life path as her colleagues.

This study intends to unravel the complicated condition under which female musicians study, live and work. Moreover, the relationship between female musicians and the image which they are supposed to present will also be analyzed.

### **I.5.iii The necessity of this study**

In Taiwan, many women's studies have focused on those women who are in disadvantaged groups, because their welfare, rights, status or living conditions are poor and need to be improved. The studies of women's image usually centre on the exposed body image and dressing style, or apparently using women's bodies for obtaining benefits. Women who are of high status in the general view, such as female musicians, have been neglected because these women already take advantage of the common values and seem to have no problems. However, she is not really free or independent if a woman is restricted and expected to conform to a fixed image because of her specialty. Therefore, it is desirable to investigate how the stereotypical image influences female musicians' daily lives and career.

This study aims to trace how this image is formed and what messages are released from the female musicians' image by analyzing relevant textual and visual materials. It intends to clarify the influence on the image of the life and career of female musicians and on the development of Western classical music in Taiwan. Through these analyses, it hopes to affect the way in which Taiwanese female musicians think and conduct themselves by understanding the mechanism operation of image and class mobility and seeing their own choices of motives and presentations. Furthermore, this research will develop a theory that could be used in other contexts about image, class and women who are of similar status to that of female musicians.



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Figure I-1 Sample of Music textbook.

## II. Literature Review

The effect of image on female musicians has been widely examined and recognized by scholars. As Lucy Green states in *Music, Gender, Education*, “When we listen to a woman sing or play, [...] we do not just listen to the inherent meanings of the music, but we are also aware of her discursive position in a nexus of gender and sexuality.”<sup>1</sup> Historically, maintaining the appearance of beauty was a decisive factor regarding which repertoire and musical instruments women could choose to play. Even in contemporary culture, according to Noola Griffiths’s research, the female musician’s on-stage appearance has still conformed to stereotypes. A female performer often chooses her concert dresses according to the possible responses and expectations of the audience. In modern Taiwan, the influence of stereotypes seems appear not only to affect female musicians’ on-stage appearance, but also to extend into their daily lives. Hence, this study broadens the research scope to the influence of image on women musicians’ career and life. This chapter will review the relevant literature according to theme and research method. In general, the studies tend to pay attention to the stereotype and its influence, usually without undertaking a comprehensive examination of the elements of an image. The present study investigates the main compositional elements by placing them in historical and cultural context. It seeks not only to demonstrate a detailed pictorial analysis of Taiwanese female musicians’ image, but also to examine the interactive influence between the musician and the image.

### II.1 The Image of Female Performers - Background

Numerous Western studies have proved that the conceived “ideal image”

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<sup>1</sup> Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16.

influences the way in which female performers participate in musical activities. Some of them will be reviewed by theme in this section for a better understanding of the relationship between women and music. As Susan McClary mentions, “Women on the stage are viewed as sexual commodities [...]”<sup>2</sup> Through examining historical material, Jennifer Post describes the prevailing image criteria in her article “Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women’s Performance Traditions”: “Restrictions on women’s participation in instrumental music in European classical traditions have been discussed in relation to sexual stereotyping that began in the Renaissance. ‘Feminine’ instruments in Western classical traditions, such as the keyboard, guitar, and harp, demanded ‘no alteration in facial expression or physical demeanor.’”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, this is not a phenomenon that is restricted to Europe or any particular period. As Post argues, although every society has its cultural setting, the requirements for female images related to playing music have often been shared.<sup>4</sup>

Tia DeNora also states, in her 2002 study, the importance of maintaining an elegant image for female performers. She describes nineteenth-century Vienna, in which “[...] women did not play wind instruments of any kind, nor did they play the cello. Women avoided these instruments because their playing interrupted notions about bodily decorum [...]”<sup>5</sup> Veronica Doubleday also investigated the relationship between musical instruments and gender: “In many different parts of the world there are numerous instruments that girls and women are expected not to touch or play [...]”<sup>6</sup> In her 2008 research, she pointed out that female allure and the sexual

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<sup>2</sup> Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer C. Post, “Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women’s Performance Traditions,” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, eds. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 40.

<sup>4</sup> Post, “Erasing the Boundaries,” 40.

<sup>5</sup> Tia DeNora, “Music into Action: Performing Gender on the Viennese Concert Stage, 1790-1810,” *Poetic* 30:1-2 (May, 2002): 28.

<sup>6</sup> Veronica Doubleday, “Sounds of Power: An Overview of Musical Instruments and Gender,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 17, no.1 (June, 2008), 5.

symbolism of instruments were considerations which decided which instruments women can access. The use of some gendered instruments may interrupt the decent image of women performers, such as “the phallic associations of wind instruments.”<sup>7</sup> As she argues, “[...] certain instruments have been seen as unsightly for women to play, either because their presence interferes with men’s enjoyment of the female face or body, or because a playing position is judged to be indecorous. In Victorian Britain female cellists were expected to adopt awkward ‘side-saddle’ positions so as to avoid holding their instrument between opened legs.”<sup>8</sup> The femininity and graceful appearance are fundamental for women’s musical performance. Hence, women often sang or played keyboards, for this would not challenge female propriety.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the instruments, the repertoire was also limited, excluding, for example, Beethoven’s works. The technical requirements related to performing Beethoven could ruin the performance of femininity. DeNora notes that “[t]o be a woman and to play Beethoven was to risk one’s decorum as a feminine being.”<sup>10</sup> As she notes, Beethoven’s piano music needs “[...] leaps from one range to another, double octave statements of themes, extreme dynamic contrasts, legato articulation, abrupt changes of mood or tempo, startling rhythmic figures and broken phrases [...]. Beethoven’s music called upon a pianist to engage in often abrupt, changeable and disconnected physical activities [...].”<sup>11</sup> Playing Beethoven at that time, therefore, was not deemed “a gentle, delicate, and graceful pianistic performing style.”<sup>12</sup>

Clothing was another reason why Beethoven’s music was unobtainable for women. Usually, what a woman wears is one of the chief factors in her image composition. The delicate, close-fitting women’s clothes of that time were unsuitable

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<sup>7</sup> Doubleday, “Sounds of Power,” 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Tia DeNora, “Music into Action,” 28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

for someone wishing to play Beethoven's piano repertoire. DeNora illustrates this: "The [...] movement called for by Beethoven's works would have posed practical difficulties for women, perhaps especially at a time when women's fashions featured low cut and figure revealing muslin gowns."<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, men's clothing allows more room for physical movement. Keyboard repertoires, DeNora states, were thus segregated by the gender-oriented image in the nineteenth century and Beethoven's music gradually became connected with masculinity.<sup>14</sup>

In summary, whether a woman engaged in musical or other activities, she was usually framed within a scope which required her to remain beautiful. Due to the patriarchal nature of institutions, women relied on men for their livelihoods. Hence, there was a prerequisite to fulfill men's looking pleasure and this reality forced women constantly to take the position of being viewed. The demand for the graceful image defined the "proper" places and acts for women. Conforming to the contemporary ideal image thus confined women's activities and shaped their life and career, including their music performance.

The pressure of stereotypes is not merely imposed on women performers of the past. Contemporary women's looks remain fundamental in classical music performance. As Marcia J. Citron states, "[i]n art music one doesn't have to go far to see beauty culture on display."<sup>15</sup> The assumed image would even affect the judgment of the performance. An experiment conducted by Charlene Ryan and Eugenia Costa-Giomi investigates how musicians' appearance leads to different assessments by the audience. In the test, the audience, including members of the public and professional musicians, were asked to rate the soloists. The research result showed

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 30, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Marcia J. Citron, "Feminist Waves and Classical Music: Pedagogy, Performance, Research," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 8, (2004), 49.

that looks are decisive in the raters' evaluations of women performers, especially with regard to the attractive ones: "Attractive performers receive higher ratings than less attractive musicians, suggesting that appearance influences raters' judgments of musical performances."<sup>16</sup>

For the male performers, on the contrary, unless they are excessively unattractive, their external appearance tends to be of little concern to the audience. For a female musician, therefore, appearance is significant, while that of her male colleagues is less so.<sup>17</sup> This demonstrates that the visual factor plays a crucial role for female musicians. As Citron observes, "Anne-Sophie Mutter, for instance, enjoys clingy strapless gowns and resembles a pop star or movie actress more than our traditional notions of what a classical violinist looks like. Upcoming female performers are also stressing their sexuality."<sup>18</sup> Green also points out that femininity is now "more forefronted" for many contemporary women musicians: "Recently a few women classical instrumentalists have begun to market their display-delineations in a more overt way."<sup>19</sup>

The importance of the visual attractiveness of female musicians has been continually mentioned, but a sustained study on this topic is yet to be undertaken with only a few isolated efforts contributing to this area. Before discussing some representative examples of these in the following section, the politics of women's bodies which shape the conventions of female appearance and behaviour will be briefly reviewed through the works of several important feminist scholars.

Numerous feminist scholarships have focused on the control and standardization of women's bodies and appearance in patriarchal societies. As Susan

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<sup>16</sup> Charlene Ryan, and Eugenia Costa-Giomi, "Attractiveness Bias in the Evaluation of Young Pianists' Performances," in *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition*, edited by S.D. Lipscomb and others (Adelaide, Australia: Causal Productions, 2004), 667.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Citron, "Feminist Waves and Classical Music," 49.

Bordo comments on the beautification of the female body in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, “for women, associated with the body and largely confined to a life centered *on* the body [...], culture’s grip on the body is a constant, intimate fact of everyday life.”<sup>20</sup> Bell Hooks, author of “Beauty Within and Without,” also points out that the judgments based of women’s appearance apply to all ages and “grip the cultural imagination.”<sup>21</sup>

As Rose Weitz states, the body is “laden with political meanings.”<sup>22</sup> Through studying women’s hair, Weitz explores how women negotiate with the beauty standard and what their considerations are. In “Women and Their Hair: Seeking Power through Resistance and Accommodation,” she interviewed women about their experiences related to hair and attempts to discuss the relationship between conforming to the socially-recognised image and its corresponding benefits. For hair, blonde is usually related to sexuality and beauty in American culture.<sup>23</sup> Her findings demonstrate that a woman who fits in with “the mainstream norms for female attractiveness” is more likely “to marry men of higher socioeconomic status” and to be hired and promoted in the job market.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, pursuing conventional attractiveness is fragile and unpleasant, she concludes. It is fragile, because “a woman who seeks attention and power through her appearance cannot control who will respond, when, or how [...]”<sup>25</sup> It is also unpleasant, because “if it requires a woman to abandon what she considers her true self, which by definition is alienating.”<sup>26</sup>

In addition to hair, the breasts, in Iris Marion Young’s analysis are usually “the

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<sup>19</sup> Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, P.17

<sup>21</sup> Bell Hooks, p.33

<sup>22</sup> Rose Weitz, “Women and their Hair: Seeking Power through Resistance and Accommodation,” in *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behaviour*, edited by Rose Weitz. Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 136.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

signifier of womanliness.”<sup>27</sup> In “Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling,” Young mentions that the breasts, an organ of women, have been defined, valued, appreciated, and functioned based on the patriarchal culture. “In the total scheme of the objectification of women, breasts are the primary things,”<sup>28</sup> as Young states. The shape, size, and contours of a woman’s breasts are all the items to be viewed, examined and criticized by male-gazed eyes. She further indicates that the so-called “standard” breasts are an unrealistic product, but most women internalize it and thus become alienated from their own bodies. Self-hatred, for women, becomes their common thought about their bodies.<sup>29</sup>

This “sexist-defined” beauty is a result of the “patriarchal fashion and cosmetic industry,”<sup>30</sup> as Hooks suggests. The meticulous scrutiny of female bodies and the aspiration to seek the possible benefits in a male-dominated culture make the relationship between women and their bodies difficult. Serious eating disorders and plastic surgery have also been accompanied by a desire for “unrealistic” beauty. Bordo and Hook indicate that the principal sources for building patriarchal beauty is the mass media, including films, television, and public advertisements. Hence, investigating female images in the mass media has become a critical research direction. Bordo’s study is a highlight in this respect. The present study also examines the most popular media for presenting female musicians to demonstrate what their “standard” image is in Taiwan.

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<sup>27</sup> Iris Marion Young, “Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling,” in *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behaviour*, edited by Rose Weitz. Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 152.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>30</sup> Hooks, 34.



## II.2 The Western Literature on Female Musicians and Their Images

Katharine Ellis's 1997 research demonstrates that women in nineteenth-century Paris had a limited choice of performance style and repertoire because of the demands of the ideal image. In "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," Ellis states that the newly-emerged professional women pianists posed difficulties for the male critics, because the concert stage had previously been occupied only by male pianists.<sup>31</sup> To evaluate women's performances, a judging criterion which was dissimilar to that for male pianists had thus come into being. A woman pianist's dress and body, in this different commentary pattern, were the focus while she was examined during her performance.

For women, at that time, playing the piano could become a public activity rather than solely a familial activity.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the mechanism of the male gaze also extended its power from the living room to the concert hall. The methods of reviewing female musicians had thus been developed according to the phallogocentric custom. Ellis illustrates the condition by quoting the review of the time: "her playing could be fuller, but it is sweet, even, limpid, and feminine: to play like a woman is a grace [...]."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, a female pianist's on-stage performance was described by critics as an act of seduction: "[...] this expansive and fine style gradually seduced every ear and every heart; [...] the whole hall had yielded to the irresistible power exercised by this beautiful and charming woman [...]."<sup>34</sup> In addition, another quote from a review from 1851 clearly depicts the beauty of the body. Ellis stresses that this kind of sensual portrayal was not prevalent, but unlikely to appear in any review of a male pianist: "Her pink dress, in the style of Classical nymphs, revealed the entire naked length of a

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<sup>31</sup> Katharine Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol.50: 2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1997), 355, 367, 368.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis, "Female Pianists," 355.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

very pretty arm, [...].”<sup>35</sup> These reviews demonstrate that women’s musical achievements were overshadowed by their visual aspects.

In modern times, clothes remain a vital aspect for female musicians. Noola Griffiths has continually focused on the relationship between concert dresses and female soloists in Western classical music. In a particular society, what can be deemed “proper” dress for a group is often a commonly-held view between its members. In her article “‘Posh music should equal posh dress’: an investigation into the concert dress and physical appearance of female soloists,” Griffiths concludes that the audience’s perceptions would be seriously affected by what the performers wear. In her experiment, the observers gave the performances played by the performers of similar proficiency very different ratings because of the performer’s clothes. This evidences that every type of music has its own appropriate clothes according to the standards set by different groups or societies. For instance, her research result shows that “[j]eans were found significantly more appropriate in the jazz or folk pieces than in the classical piece. The concert dress [...] was seen as significantly more appropriate in the classical piece than in the jazz or folk pieces.”<sup>36</sup> Through her experiment, it can be found that escaping the social norms will lead to a negative assessment of performance. As Griffiths states, “[d]ifferent styles of music have different cultural values, and so it was not surprising that one style of dress would embody the values of a particular musical genre.”<sup>37</sup>

In a further paper by Griffiths, “The fabric of performance: values and social practices of classical music expressed through concert dress choice,” by interviewing female instrumentalists, Griffiths deduces what dresses they choose and why, and how

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>36</sup> Noola K. Griffiths, “‘Posh music should equal posh dress’: an investigation into the concert dress and physical appearance of female soloists,” *Psychology of Music* 38: 2 (2010): 173.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

these, in the musicians' view, can be a communicative tool with the audience. Her interviewees wish to present a stereotypical or "safe" image on stage in order to avoid any question about their professionalism. Despite the consideration of comfortable body movement for effective playing, Griffiths finds that the visual effect is a central concern for female performers when choosing clothes.<sup>38</sup> All of her interviewees convey that they would wear a "proper" concert dress which conforms to the ideal image of classical women performers in the public's eye. They are aware that their concert dress will influence the relationship between themselves and their audience. Thus the audience's reaction and judgment are highly valued by the performers.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the written and spoken evidence of critics and performers, visual artefacts can also provide insight into prevailing images for female performers. The imagery usually reflects the common views and ideologies of the era and place. It can be regarded as a product which involves the past's sediment and contemporary elements. Hence, through interpreting the semiotics of an image, the historical and cultural information can be partly uncovered. No matter whether in ancient paintings or modern prints, women's image is that of the gazed object for patriarchal looking pleasure. There has been much research on female images in paintings to illuminate the condition of femininity in the past. Nevertheless, the study of female musicians has been comparatively neglected. In this field, Richard Leppert's studies of body, gender and music in paintings have made a significant contribution.

Leppert's studies analyse female performer's eroticism by considering facial expression, pose, body angle, dress, and interaction with her musical instrument. As Leppert argues, "[t]he semiotics of musical imagery develop not only from instruments employed as props but also from the representation of gestures and other

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<sup>38</sup> Noola K. Griffiths, "The Fabric of Performance: Values and Social Practices of Classical Music Expressed Through Concert Dress Choice," *Music Performance Research* 4 (2011): 38.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 42.

expressive qualities of the human body as these relate to musical activity.”<sup>40</sup> In these paintings, music is a visual metaphor. Why a particular instrument appears and how it is played by the woman reveal multiple meanings about the female performer’s situation and social status. Other units in paintings, such as furniture, compositional arrangement, and shading techniques, also help to decode the signs about her, including as an individual and the beauty standard of an era.<sup>41</sup>

A similar approach to visual analysis is also useful for reviewing modern images. In *Musicians from a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music*, Mari Yoshihara contends that visual factor occupy a significant position in the career of modern musicians. She describes the phenomenon as follows: “The visual appeal of musicians as displayed on CD jackets, posters, and magazine photos plays an increasingly important role in today’s market.”<sup>42</sup> Through succinctly interpreting these images, her book discusses the images of Asian musicians in the West, especially in American society. She states that, when female Asian musicians are engaged in Western classical music in Western societies, the design of their image is usually formulated to tally with the Western view of sexy Asian femininity. The purpose of presenting an exotic, seductive Asian woman is to enhance her attraction and promote her career and fame. Yoshihara’s analysis points out not only the importance of the image, but also the trend to match the imagined or ideal image for career development.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to Yoshihara, in *Ruth Gipps: Anti-Modernism, Nationalism and*

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 155.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-cultural Formation in Eighteenth-century England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Leppert’s principal studies on female images and musical instruments in paintings can be found in these two books.

<sup>42</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 116.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-130.

*Difference in English Music*, Jill Halstead presents a brief analysis of a concert poster related to Ruth Gipps (1921-1999), a female composer and orchestral conductor in twentieth-century Britain. Halstead indicates that Gipps designed her own poster image to contain traits of both a decisive, authoritative conductor and an attractive woman. Through analysing the details of her evening gown and posture, Halstead indicates that Gipps “ [...] purposefully created a persona that was intentionally and simultaneously ‘feminine’ and ‘controlling.’”<sup>44</sup> The poster was used to build an image which Gipps considered suitable for her status and for promoting the concert. It can be seen that the concert poster is used as a medium to present the image that the musician in particular desired.<sup>45</sup>

Despite their different analytical objects and research methods, these studies show that the visual image plays a critical role in women’s musical participation. What they assess includes how the visual image affects and/or limits female musicians’ careers or physical presentation, and how music is used as a tool for enhancing their attraction. Nonetheless, this theme has only been addressed in isolated studies and further, most of them allot a relatively small section to image analysis. The limited length restricts in-depth discussion or the possible development of theories. Take the studies mentioned in this chapter for example: Image occupies only a few pages of Yoshihara and Halstead’s work. As for Leppert’s work, it opens a window on the relationship between women’s image and the musical instrument, but its focus is historical paintings. The modern image of the female musician requires its own explanation, and this area awaits further contributions.

Griffiths’ papers on modern women musicians have focused on this field.

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<sup>44</sup> Jill Halstead, “ ‘The Night Mrs Baker Made History’: Conducting, Display and the Interruption of Masculinity,” *Women: A Cultural Review*, 16 (2), 231.

<sup>45</sup> Jill Halstead, *Ruth Gipps: Anti-modernist, Nationalist and Difference in English Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 41-56.

According to her conclusions, the female musician hopes to portray a professional image by choosing the “proper” concert dress. Griffiths suggests that future study might investigate two important issues: one is the extent to which “performers’ choices about their appearance are governed by perceived social expectations and by individual differences [...],” and the other is how the image of the female musician has been represented in promotional materials.<sup>46</sup> Since Griffiths only discusses image in relation to concerts, she thinks that studying these two aspects will make it possible to “gain a complete picture.”<sup>47</sup> This study embraces her proposals. The question of how the social norm influences female musicians to present themselves will be scrutinized in detail by interviewing musicians and examining the social context. The most common promotional material in Taiwan is the concert poster; therefore, it will be one of the principal research objects employed in this study.

Both Ellis and Griffiths demonstrate that image is decisive for women musicians while on stage. Their on-stage image is an issue that matters to female performers, and the criterion by which they will be valued. In Taiwan, the image pressure on women musicians is not limited to the stage, but is a serious aspect of their daily life. How people reacted to the mistress of legislator Yu-sheng Wu illustrates how the stereotype is firmly rooted in Taiwanese society. This fixed image is assumed to be the natural appearance of female musicians. The restraints and influences of this stereotype are thus prevalent and profound. The image issue has becoming a critical aspect in the life and career of female Taiwanese musicians.

Image construction is a common way to highlight the sexual attraction and bodily charm and this phenomenon appears ripe for research, but has been largely neglected. Hence, this study will explore this important, as yet undeveloped research

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<sup>46</sup> Griffiths, *The Fabric of Performance*, 46.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

area. By examining the abundant visual-related materials on Taiwanese female musicians, the interaction between women musicians and their images will be demonstrated in critical dimensions in order to improve our understanding of how and to what extent their image influences women musicians' lives and career, and what features of Taiwanese music have thus been shaped.

### **II.3 The Study of Taiwanese Women's Image**

The literature outlined above mentioned the crucial role of image in women's musical activities. The influence of the visual image on contemporary Taiwanese female musicians is excessively prevalent. Descriptions of their appearance are commonly found in newspaper and music magazine reports and articles. A charming exterior is considered an advantage and a characteristic of female musicians that must be mentioned. In the renowned Taiwanese music magazine, *Muzik*, for example; the term "beauty" appears frequently. In the October 2011 edition, an article entitled "Listening to the Violin Music from a Beauty – Chee-yun Kim's visiting concert tour in Taiwan," noted that, although music is an art form that involves listening, if the performer is good-looking, the appreciation will be increased.<sup>48</sup> Similar views appear frequently in this magazine as well as other publications. In addition to the literal texts, the pictures also stress visual attraction, such as concert posters, and the photos accompanying the reports. On the posters, women musicians often appear shy or with exposed bodies. Whether the expressions of the women are sexy or bashful, they are all typically feminine presentations, as will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>48</sup> Muzik. "Tin meuin lai laqin – Chee-yun Kim fantai yinyuehui (Listen to the violin music from a beauty - Chee-yun Kim's visiting concert tour in Taiwan)," *Muzik*, October 31, 2011, [http://www.muzik-online.com/#!article\\_2\\_1330](http://www.muzik-online.com/#!article_2_1330) (accessed January 24, 2013).

However, related study of this phenomenon is scarce in Taiwan. Hsiao's "Female Discipline in the Male Art World: The Images Sculptured for Female Conductors" is probably the only work on this topic to date. Even though music performers in Taiwan are mostly women, conducting has usually been considered a male realm in Taiwan. Female conductors have thus been comparatively easily noticed, due to the unbalanced participation between the genders. Hsiao's paper, however, is not a very significant contribution to the subject. As she herself admits, this paper is only a preliminary analysis, and most of the contents are not centred on the formation of the image, although its title leads one to expect this. The majority of this paper is an introduction to a few Taiwanese female conductors' lives and learning processes. Through personal interviews and reports, Hsiao briefly discusses how these female conductors imitate the body language and clothing style of their male colleagues. She concludes that, both on the podium and in daily life, the female conductor tries to display androgynous gestures in order to establish and confirm her authenticity as a conductor.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, the feminine image of Taiwanese women "performers" has been prevalent and gradually become the accustomed view. In general, the image of the female performer has been broadened to most women who are engaged in Western classical music. The specific image itself, as a stereotype, needs to be scrutinized, but the related analysis or discussion has not yet appeared in the academic field or the general reviews. Hence, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the formation and influence of the hegemonic image.

Although research on the image of female musicians remains scarce, there have

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<sup>49</sup> Chin-shih Hsiao, "Lun nanxing yishu zhiye zhongde nuxing guixun – yuetuan nuxing zhihui de xingxiang suzao: yi lushuling weili (Female Discipline in the the Male Art World: The Images Sculptured for Female Conductors)." in *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Difference, Identity and Hybrid*, edited by Yu-ling Chao (Banqiao: National Taiwan University of Arts, 2007).



been plenty of studies on female images in Taiwan, especially women's occupational images. The vast majority of these have focused on women in an inferior social position. These studies are aimed at making the public notice their situation or empower them at some level. Nevertheless, most of these studies are master's theses, since there are few doctoral students in the humanities and the professors of women's studies have diverse interests. The depth of these works may not be impressive, but their valuable output on this theme reflects the mainstream research intention and preference in Taiwan. The subsequent paragraphs will illustrate representative works in this area.

The gendered image is one of the factors shaping workplace culture and social relationships. It not merely forms the scene of the working environment, but also builds the self-identification of the workers. As Zong-jan Xie states in her thesis "Showgirls as A Marketing Strategy at Taipei World Trade Center," on many occupations, the female image is used as a tool to invite attention.<sup>50</sup> Considering this trait of easily being exploited, the Taiwanese studies on the relationship between women's occupation and their image have usually centred on those women who possess fewer resources and flaunt their body to make a profit. The research on the betel nut beauty is a popular topic; the second is the showgirl promoting commodities.

The betel nut is a processed vegetable, chewed as a mild stimulant. The betel nut is promoted by young women who dressed revealing. The shops are usually located at the roadside; the glass-fronted shop allows people to view the betel nut beauty without any barriers. These betel nut beauties often wear various lingerie-style outfits.<sup>51</sup> Their image is boldly sexual, to attract the male lookers who are the

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<sup>50</sup> Zong-jan Xie, "Jiedu taipei shimao zhanchang showgirl de jueuse yu yihan (Showgirls as A Marketing Strategy at Taipei World Trade Center)," (Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Some photos of betel nut beauties can be found in photographer Chin-pao Chen's webpage. At the time of writing, it was available at [http://www.chinpaochen.com/betelnutgirls\\_c.html](http://www.chinpaochen.com/betelnutgirls_c.html)

potential buyers. The male consumer usually purchases the product according to the women's clothes. The act of trade lets him get near to the beauty who wears his preferred costume. In this condition, the transparent wall creates a consuming space for male fantasy and sexuality; the female body itself is a commodity.

In the related academic discourse, Xin-nan Xiao's "The Sign and Social Meanings of the Taiwanese Betel Nut Beauty" points out that the images of the young women are standardized, such as their body and age. Their body image becomes the most critical aspect of promoting the commodities.<sup>52</sup> Xiao briefly discusses the variations in the beauties' clothing, such as the difference between the north and south of Taiwan, and the various types of gauze, corsets, and short skirts. These elements are visual codes that provoke sexual desire. The female bodies are commercialized; the delicately-built image is designed for men's sensual satisfaction in the male-gazed mechanism.<sup>53</sup> According to Yi-zhi Su's investigation, the business profits are directly related to how revealing the clothes are. Nonetheless, these excessively revealing costumes also concern the police, and these betel nut beauties have encountered a negative reaction from their family and the general public.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the betel nut beauty, the showgirl displaying her body at a business fair is another popular theme. Xie notes that, now, the showgirl is an indispensable part of large-scale promotional activities. The image of young women at a trade show generates the male consumer's interest and their function is similar to that of the betel nut beauty. In addition to the goods for purchase, women are objectified as another article for sensual consumption. How the showgirl has been presented is simple and unitary; her individuality is blurred under the male gaze at a

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<sup>52</sup> Xin-nan Xiao, "Taiwan binlan xishi de fuhao yu shehui yiyi (The Sign and Social Meanings of the Taiwanese Betel Nut Beauty)," (Master thesis, Go Guang University, 2004), 36, 37, 41.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 36, 37, 45, 46, 47.

<sup>54</sup> Yi-zhi Su, "Pianke nongzhuang yu changyu yapo: yi taoyuan county binlang xishi weili (Momentarily Heavy Make-up and Field Oppression: A Case Study of the Betel-nut Beauty in Taoyuan

fair.<sup>55</sup>

In these occupations, the presentation of the image does not merely follow the abstract mechanism of phallogentrism; it is actually for men's looking in reality. The design and display of the revealed female body is chiefly for men's viewing pleasure, and unsuitable for the general public. This is why the image of the betel nut beauty and the showgirl have often been questioned and criticized in the public arena. Despite the negative comments, according to Su's interview, family members also disapprove of this type of work. Moreover, Su notes that these women are often from destitute families; the ravishing image composed of scanty clothes and heavy make-up only generates meagre wages. The requirements of age, body, and dressing style for this specific image are clear. Only young women who conform to this image can enter this occupation.

Due to the disadvantageous situation, the issues around these female images have justifiably become research concerns. Contrarily, the image of the female musician has seldom been deemed a problem to the same extent. Even though it has been considered a high-class, elegant representation, it is still a kind of stereotype or hegemony, controlling musicians in diverse aspects. The differences between these two types of image do not free the image of female musicians from the realm of the stereotype. Both of them merely obey phallo-centrism in different approaches, but both have a negative impact on women. How the image of female musicians functions awaits a proper answer, and will be one of the issues discussed in this study.

For the betel nut beauty and showgirl, what they wear applies only during their working hours. Besides, it is usually short-term work, for only young women can undertake this role. It is the low-skilled occupation, with a high requirement in terms

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County),” (Master thesis, Yuan Ze University, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Xie, “zhanchang showgirl.”

of the body and clothing style. Being a musician, on the contrary, requires long training, and is thus often a life-long career. It cannot be directly engaged in merely due to having the “proper” look. Nonetheless, being a female musician is bound to the standardized image, which involves adopting particular clothes, a specific appearance, and even behaving in a certain way. Devotion to music is, by its nature, a professional engagement, but image has become a crucial way to appraise a female musician in Taiwan. The pressure imposed on her about her image is probably more profound than on the betel nut beauty or the showgirl, since the assumed image is tied to her general standing in society, not restricted to her work time.

Although image plays such an important role for the female musician, the related research on this field is completely lacking. Since the great majority of musicians in Taiwan are women, the image of female musicians has also partly incorporated the features of Western classical music. This study will add to the research on historical female images because even though the critical status of the image has been highlighted occasionally, a study of how image is built culturally and historically and how it exerts power over women musicians has not yet materialised. Hence, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how image functions in female musicians’ life and career.

## **II.4 Review of the Research Methods**

The previously-mentioned literature explored various aspects of the female musician’s image by different methods. Each of these studies adopts the method appropriate to its own research focus. Since these works and this study share similar themes, the research paths used in these works are also relevant to this study. To demonstrate the relationship between image and Taiwanese female musicians, the

principal materials for analysis will be the objects directly under discussion. Each of them will be accessed by selecting an appropriate research method, such as analyzing newspaper reports about the social impression of female musicians, interviewing women musicians to find out the constrictions and benefits they gain from their particular image construction, and decoding the concert posters which directly show the imagery to the public. The subsequent discussion will review how these methods can be appropriately used and what the differences will be between the previous works and this study.

First, Ellis's paper on nineteenth-century female pianists quotes from numerous reports and concert reviews. The extracts make up her central evidence to illustrate the situation of female pianists. According to the descriptions contained in these reviews, women were clearly the object of the male gaze, because of the emphasis on their appearance. Nonetheless, this way of portraying female pianists rarely appeared in the reviews of their male counterparts. The situation which Ellis examined in nineteenth-century Paris is also happening in current Taiwan, but is far more devastating and prevalent. In Taiwan, reviewing female musicians in a boldly physical way that encompasses their sexuality has become a common phenomenon. The exterior is often the focus when they are reported.

The image in the mass media usually reflects the general impression of the female musician in society. Ellis chooses some extracts to illustrate the past situation, based on her opinion. These passages are employed to prove and illustrate her arguments. The present study, similar to Ellis's, adopts newspaper reports as the material for displaying how female musicians have been viewed and constructed in the mass media. The dissimilarity is located around how to select and arrange these sources. In the present study, first, the reports on several renowned musicians during a certain period in the selected media will be reviewed and then categorized. A

systematic, large-scaled analysis will highlight the most fundamental topics, and also aims to avoid the neglect of the critical messages. This extensive sample size will help to significantly diminish biased interpretation on account of the researcher's partiality. Second, 18 representative excerpts from the reports will be examined in detail to uncover how the image has been constructed. Reports on male musicians will also be employed for a comparison.

In addition to the written sources, the picture itself is a direct, primary material for studying the image. The concert poster, in Taiwan, is the most universal medium for displaying the image of the female musician. It is often found in concert halls, on university bulletin boards and in other public spaces, such as in metro stations in Taipei. The concert poster is a template indicating which image the female musicians should aspire to. It occupies a decisive position in constructing and reflecting the accustomed image among Taiwanese people. The current image is not an isolated product, but comes into being for multiple reasons. To interpret the cultural signs on concert posters appropriately, related ancient Chinese paintings will be explored, especially those of beauties with musical instruments.

In this respect, Leppert's abundant work on exploring women and instruments in ancient Western paintings is a significant reference for this study. He generally decoded the messages by reading the woman's facial expressions, poses, dress, props, furniture, or interactions with her instrument. Leppert's research avenue provides numerous instances for this study of how to investigate a painting along similar themes. His analyses, nonetheless, are usually short explanations. Although a lot of paintings are mentioned in a discussion of a large topic, each painting and the specific issue that arises from it are only allocated a brief analysis. In general, Leppert examines the significance of some compositions only briefly and points out whether these units are common or not in the paintings of that era. In this study, although the

research object is the modern image, the examination will be more detailed than that of Leppert. This study traces the cultural origin from the historical material, and also scrutinizes several contemporary images in order to interpret the poster semiotics. The detailed analysis of women and music in this study contributes to and builds on Leppert's critical work.

Regarding the literature on modern prints, Yoshiraha has made some primary investigations of a selection of musicians' images. She describes the composition, standing angle, facial expression, and clothes. In her book, the research object is Asian musicians in Western societies. Yoshihara points out that Asian female musicians usually stress their eastern traits to enhance their sexuality. This study, on the contrary, researches Taiwanese women musician - Asian musicians playing Western classical music in an Asian country. Owing to the historical and cultural background of Taiwan, Western classical music has often been deemed the embodiment of civilization and progress, which has enhanced the status of female musicians. Hence, the Western-related items that appear in the image are usually connected with the ideologies and values linked to the West. How the different cultures are negotiated in a specific image will be explored in this study.

Like Yoshihara, Halstead briefly interprets the layout of a print – Gipps's concert poster. She treats it from various angles, such as the dress, hand pose, body posture, and the looking relationship with the viewer. Halstead also notes how Gipps has designed her own concert poster: Gipps adopted both elements which have been usually considered distinctly feminine, and masculine elements. According to Halstead, Gipps's intention is to build a woman's sexuality and a conductor's authority and power into a single image. Gipps's views were also used to explain why the image is the ideal one in her mind. Through using past interviews, Gipps's motivation and purpose regarding how to build a public image are deployed to enrich

the textual analysis of posters. Halstead's succinct work provides this study with useful ideas about how to proceed to an image analysis from various aspects, but the length of Halstead's study necessarily limits the possibility of an in-depth analysis.

Studies on women's experiences usually embrace in-depth interviews as a research method. Griffiths's research reveals that social custom is crucial to the female musician's image. In her paper, "The fabric of performance: values and social practices of classical music expressed through concert dress choice," Griffiths obtained the female musicians' personal experiences through one-to-one conversations. Through this first-hand information, the female performers' thoughts about presenting their on-stage image were disclosed in depth. A possible defect of Griffiths's study, however, is that she conducted most of her interviews by telephone. She admits that this undoubtedly restricted the abundance of data at some level. This is inevitable because many of her interviewees were in a foreign country, on a concert tour.<sup>56</sup>

In Taiwan, it is rare for musicians to make a living only by giving concerts. Thus most Taiwanese female musicians teach and are resident in Taiwan. The face-to-face interview will be feasible and the discussion will have more freedom in terms of both time and content. A deeper discussion thus can be reasonably expected. Unlike Halstead's work on Gipps, which used existing documentation, this study employs the words of the musicians themselves to complement the image analysis, without relying too heavily on existing extracts or previously recorded material. The interview content can certainly be more focused.

Interviews are advantageous for finding out about the significant issues in women's experiences, since they can directly collect women's thoughts on a specific topic. In Taiwan, studies on women have also frequently used interview data as the principal component, including the work on the betel nut beauty's image. For instance,



Xiao interviewed betel nut beauties and their families to discuss their attitude toward this job. Xiao also categorized and coded the different styles of revealing clothing based on the interview content.<sup>57</sup> Similar to Xiao, Su used interview data to discover the betel nut beauty's multiple pressures, such as their image presentation, the competition regarding clothes with other girls in the same trade, and family disapproval.<sup>58</sup> Hsiu-hua Chang explored how the betel nut beauties treat these negative values because of the occupation's image.<sup>59</sup>

Through individual discussions with each woman, the researcher collects first-hand messages from insiders. Although insiders may have a limited understanding of their own actions and motivations, this method is still helpful especially when the topic is covered by scant literature, such as this study. The interviewees are not always reliable as informants on every aspect of their behavior, but the information which they provide will be the useful materials for analysis. Hence, for the present study, personal, one-to-one interviews will be an efficient method for collecting information about the influence of image on female musicians in Taiwan. The interviews will also help to explore why the modern image manifests itself in such a way. The theories of gender and body, mainly on Judith Butler, will also be assessed in the subsequent chapters for the relative discussion.

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<sup>56</sup> Griffiths, *The Fabric of Performance*, 35, 36.

<sup>57</sup> Xiao, "Taiwan binlan xishi."

<sup>58</sup> Su, "Pianke nongzhuang."

<sup>59</sup> Hsiu-hua Chang, "Binlan xishi de laodong yu ziwo xingxiang (Betel Nut Beautys' Labor and Self-image: Examples in the Areas of Chiayi and Chungli)," (Master thesis, National Chung Cheng University, 2007).

### **III. The Image Construction of Female Musicians in Newspaper Reports**

In today's society, mass media has a profound and tremendous influence on people, not only in reporting news, issuing and commenting on government policy, and circulating information, but also in forming and reflecting ideology. At some level, the media decide what events the public should know, what facets they should see and even implicate the way how people should think. In this mechanism, what information has been repeatedly reported would easily constitute the idea of what is "normal" and also to be thought of reflecting the common social value. In Taiwan, newspaper is one of the significant media which has long-term history, so the approach of representing female musicians in newspaper reports is analyzed in this study.

Newspaper reports are one of the main avenues which deliver the image of female musicians to the public, including musicians and general readers. If the newspaper reports continually represent female musicians in some fixed figures for a long period of time, stereotypes would be constructed and have influence on the public, including on female musicians themselves and the general people. The questions about which events had been selected and which aspects of an event that journalists decided to report would influence the public's knowledge of the female musician. In fact, the newspaper articles not only build the figures of some kinds of people, but also reflect the public's opinion at some level. Since the journalists are also members of society, so their opinions sometimes reflect part of the public's.

As for the readership in Taiwan, there was a long period of time almost every family ordered newspapers before Internet became popular. Now, subscriptions to newspapers have declined dramatically along with prevalent electronic newspapers. In this study, China Times was chosen to be the principal analyzed source. According to

Asian Business Readership Survey (ABRS), a survey of newspaper readership among influential or elite people, China Times held the first-rank position for six years (2001-2006) in daily newspapers.<sup>1</sup> In ABRS of 2006, the readership of China Times was 57.2%; the second was United Daily News in 39.2%.<sup>2</sup> The report excerpts on female musicians from United Daily News and other newspapers (Min Sheng Daily News, Commercial Times and United Evening News) are also selected for analysis. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate what images of female musicians have been constructed through newspaper reports. How they have been constructed? Has any specific description or topic frequently appeared along with female musicians? Through the analyses, it can be found which aspects of female musicians are considered worth reporting in Taiwanese society.

Concerning the analyzed subjects in this study, other than female musicians, male musicians are also adopted for the comparative purpose to see if there is any difference when they are reported. Both of Eastern and Western female musicians who had been reported often in Taiwan are selected in the present study. Because of the frequent appearance in newspapers, the images of these female musicians would participate in constructing people's understanding of female musicians.

### **III.1 Word-Texts Analysis**

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<sup>1</sup> The detailed information about the organization, including how it carries out the survey and the countries they focus on, can be checked in the following website.

<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/media/abrs.shtml> (accessed December 09, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> The survey period was from September 2005 to January 2006. The people who were qualified to be the surveyed subjects were senior managers/policymakers of the middle or large-sized firms. There were 586 samples in total.

<http://fychao.wordpress.com/2007/02/13/%E5%B8%82%E5%A0%B4%E5%88%86%E6%9E%90%E6%A8%A3%E6%9C%AC-%E4%BB%A5%E4%B8%AD%E5%9C%8B%E6%99%82%E5%A0%B1%E7%82%BA%E4%BE%8B/> (accessed May 27, 2014).

<http://consumer.chinatimes.com/event/chinatimes/2006/chinese/index.html> (accessed December 09, 2007); this website also has a concise version in English:

<http://consumer.chinatimes.com/event/chinatimes/2006/english/index.html> (accessed December 09, 2007).

### III.1.i Ellie Lai

The principal analysed subject is flutist Ellie Lai. Whether in reports or in the media broadcasting, Ellie Lai is the female musician who had attracted attention in Taiwan for many years; consequently, she is supposed to influence how the image of female musician is defined. In the analysis of Lai, many excerpts of newspaper articles from several newspapers in Taiwan are quoted. In Document 1, the influence of Lai was confirmed. The headline of every report is shown in boldface type.

#### *Document 1*

United Daily News

2004/12/05

#### **The best instrument for helping you to be a person with class: Flute**

Probably because of the influence from the flute beauty Ellie Lai, there are dramatic increases in the number of students majoring in flute and almost close to the number of those majoring in piano. Following piano, consequently, flute has adopted the role of being a quasi-national Taiwanese instrument. Many good-looking people turn to learning *flute* to pursue a beautiful and classy image. According to the statistics, the Taiwanese domestic flute factories make about thirty five thousand flutes a year to fulfill the gradually increasing needs of the market.

As a flutist, Ellie Lai has influenced how female musicians are conceived of by her image. She also popularized the trend of playing flute in Taiwan. Hence, Ellie Lai is adopted as an example for analysis. The present study analyses two categories of female musicians' image which prevail in most reports regarding female musicians. The first category relates to their appearance, including their dress, hairstyle and behavior. The second category is reporting on the status of their marriages or

romances. In many reports, these two categories are interweaved and appeared in the same article.

The three excerpts (Documents 2, 3 and 4) from newspaper reports show a strong connection between Lai and the signifiers of beauty, such as new hairstyle, perfume, and sumptuous formal dresses. All the descriptions (about beauty, fashion, grace) and things (perfume, expensive dresses) will easily enable readers to imagine that female musicians are women who are familiar with these “feminine” and “high-quality” objects.

*Document 2*

Min Sheng Daily News

1992/03/24

**Fragrance of a Noted French perfume**

**—The Title of Ellie Lai’s New Album: *Serenade* Spread Fragrance**

This CD releasing fragrance is the first collaboration between the record company and a famous French perfume company. [...] They sprinkled the French perfume – Anais – on a card showing Lai’s image herewith the CD. [...]

Currently, Lai is active in preparing her series of recitals started at the end of next month, so her fans will have chances to see this beautiful flutist again.

*Document 3*

United Daily News

1994/09/28

**Tender like Water — Ellie Lai the representation of beauty**

Flutist Ellie Lai is easily to be nervous while she faces the camera, but now she is willing to overcome this obstacle and be the heroine of a TV advertisement for a cosmetic. Why? Lai said, “Every woman wants to be beautiful, and I think cosmetics commercial ads would always make people look very beautiful.” [...]

Lai’s new album *Tender like Water* is coming soon in the middle of October. The record company hopes that she can take this TV advertisement for integrating her new image on ads and the cover of album to highlight Lai’s new image in the public’s minds.

Yesterday, Ellie Lai had trimmed short hair that makes her more energetic and fashionable than before.

*Serenade* is the title of Lai’s third flute album, released in 1992 (see Table III-1). Although this album was going to be released, no information about music was mentioned in this report. Instead, the report merely focuses on her appearance. They put emphasis on the construction of Lai’s image instead of introducing her music. According to the appeal of this report, Lai’s fans can “see this beautiful flutist,” but not “hear” her music. *Tender like Water* is the title of Lai’s album which was released in 1994. Although the promotional activities are for the newly released music album, the whole report still did not mention anything about her music. The intention of the record company is to feature her attractive and brand-new image, not her music. For the readers and Lai’s fans, the only information they can obtain about her newly released recording from this report is the breakthrough of her image.

Ostensibly, these two reports are about releasing the music album. The record company also held some relative commercial activities to introduce the album to the public. However, the readers did not receive any message about Lai’s music, such as

an introduction of repertoire or professional development; only her new exterior design for every album was exposed specifically.

Table III-1 A list of the titles of Ellie Lai's albums

	Title	Publisher	Year
1	Love for Flute: Wait Today	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1989
2	Love for Flute: Mystical Zone	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1991
3	Serenade	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1992
4	The Best Collection Of Love For Flute (selected album)	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1994
5	Tender Like Water	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1994
6	Dreaming A Dream	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1996
7	Absolutely Beautiful	Elite Entertainment Taiwan Inc.	1997
8	The Ocean	Zrudenmusic CO., LTD.	1999

*Document 4*

**Making the concert have pleasant sound and be gorgeous looking, Jamei Chen designed formal dresses for Ellie Lai**

1997/11/10 China Times

Ellie Lai's flute recital on tomorrow is very "costly," because the famous Taiwanese haute couture designer, Jamei Chen, made four formal costumes for her. Each one of these costumes with accessories at least cost hundreds of thousands of New Taiwan Dollars, and they make Lai even more brilliant in her concert tour this time.

Here are these dresses: *Soprano Maria Callas's high-pitched voice* is a puffy skirt decorated with black and white lint; *wine-red tango* is a wine-red silk suit; *lily with dew* is decorated with shiny silver shining pieces outside and with diamonds on a French lint shoulder belt inside; *a night star in galaxy* is a suit with a v-neck decorated with crystal beads

which were manually stitched on black gauze. People who saw Lai in these new dresses were all surprised and thought that Jamei Chen did catch Ellie Lai's grace and feminine beauty.

This report narrated all of the details of these sumptuous dresses made by Jamei Chen<sup>3</sup> for the concert tour, but it did not have a word to introduce the repertoire or any special part of music of this concert. Obviously, the appeal of this report is to arouse the readers' desire to "see" her brilliant image, for every luxurious dress she wore even has its own "name." In this report, what Lai attentively prepared is her dresses, not her musical performance. The concert is like an event for Lai showing her splendid dresses rather than demonstrating her musical skills; the function of her flute is like an "instrument" for displaying her elaborately glamorous image rather than a "music instrument."

Readers could not know whether Lai had worked hard on preparing her concert or not, but they can easily feel she had really paid much attention to figure out what image that she planned to present. It is also worth noticing that it is a lengthy report compared to other reports about concerts; however, the journalist only emphasized Lai's clothes. According to the above three reports, it can be easily found while a renowned female musician like Ellie Lai was reported, the main concern is their exterior looks rather than their professional ability.

*Document 5*

Min Sheng Daily News

1998/11/11

**Ellie Lai and Isabella Wen Disclosed the Secret of how to be a**

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<sup>3</sup> Jamei Chen has her own costume brand named "Jamei Chen." Chen founded it in 1987 with formal dresses; nowadays, she has serials for men's clothing and designed for movies' costumes; the information is from the official site of Jamei Chen, <http://www.jamei-chen.com/> (accessed June 2, 2008).



## **Classy Woman**

Nowadays, the most popular topic is that how to behave with “class.”

Ellie Lai and Isabella Wen have much in common. Both of them are smart women and have successful careers; more importantly, they are women with “class.” Yesterday, they attended a broadcast interview – Xiao Yan Window – to disclose the vital secrets of “making yourself beautiful enough to be a person with class,” [...]

1. Speaking in a low volume: both of them speak in a low volume. In fact, they even don’t like to speak. [...]
2. High Emotional Quotient: Lai said that even when she is furious, she still won’t destroy the look of her face and gestures in order to shout or blame others.
3. Fantastic and gracious dressing style [...]
4. Using cosmetics as little as possible: [...] But in the process of the interview, Lai did not stop touching up on her make-up.
5. The ability to understand music [...]
6. A gentlemanlike partner: Wen said her husband makes breakfast for her everyday; as for Lai, she hopes that her husband could understand music well [...]

In Taiwan, people usually think that female musicians always behave with “class.” Despite the numerous reports mentioning female musicians possess the quality of “class,” as a female musician, Ellie Lai herself even directly taught women how to behave with “class (qi-zhi).” The ways of how to be a classy woman with class

stated in Lai and Wen's (a costume designer)<sup>4</sup> instructions partly reflect the image of female musicians which Taiwanese people think they should present. Qi-zhi is a common word of Madarin when Taiwanese people talk about female musicians. It is similar to classiness in English. From the fifth it can be seen that a woman with class has been connected to a women studying Western classical music. The sixth implies that an "ideal" husband is a prerequisite for a classy woman. It also reflects the idea that a female musician will usually marry a rich man.

These characteristics for behaving with "class" were mainly taught by a famous flutist and they are similar to people's impression of female musicians. Usually, if a female musician's behavior conflicts with these features, she would be often considered that she is "unlike" a female musician. The experiences of Taiwanese female musicians will be interrogated further in later chapters. In such a condition, a main component of being like a female musician is to behave and demonstrate these traits of "class" which could be easily recognized. The image of female musicians rests on what is presented outward, not simply on their professional ability.

*Document 6*

Commercial Times

2000/03/13

**Ellie Lai Has Been Attracted Towards the Music World**

[...] After Lai had engaged in music career for a long period of time, she could easily be pleasant even that she just listen to the sounds of wind, bird chirping, and water flowing; in the meantime, she became more and more sensitive. At every stage of her life, from dating men,

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<sup>4</sup> Isabella Wen is a well-known costume designer in Taiwan. She has her own branded costume from her name: "Isabella Wen." Her name has appeared on media very often for designing the celebrities' clothes; the information is from the official site of Isabella Wen, <http://www.isabelle-wen.com/> (accessed June 2, 2008).

going abroad and entering into married life, the principle she has always kept is that “women should treasure and love themselves before having enough energy to care about others.” [...]

*Document 7*

China Times

**Confidence is the origin of beauty** 1998/10/21

[...] despite the great shape of her body, her skin is also delicate. [...]

Every woman always has her own unique way of looking beautiful; to flutist Ellie Lai, the secret of staying young and good-looking is music. [...] Mentioning love lives, Lai said if she could not find a soul mate, she would be reluctant to get married again.

*Document 8*

United Evening News 1998/08/08

**Ellie: people could always have a friend in the opposite sex**

**—Her close relationship with Chen-yang Tsai and his company would not be destroyed by rumor**

For the perfection of Ellie Lai’s concert, Mr. Tsai even commanded a subsidiary company in his enterprise group to be responsible for the design of advertising and the publicity material. Through intensive works on dressing up, Ellie Lai just looks like a Greek Goddess on the concert posters.

The reports above focus on Elli Lai’s beautiful appearance and her attitude towards men and romances. In Document 6, from 13 March 2000, it appears that Lai

had been presented like a fairy or princess snow white in a forest, and she taught women what kind of principle is correct for them to follow. This report excerpt makes a female musician a very elegant and sensitive image, because it portrayed Lai as a woman with subtle feeling and connections to the nature. Considering the number of newspaper reports regarding women musicians of Western classical music are much less than those on pop stars, this kind of newspaper article would greatly influence the readers' impression of female musicians. Also, the last sentence of Document 6 shows that Lai was acting as an advisory role, teaching women again about how to live their lives.

Document 7 is a typical report highlighting factors that usually show up in reports about female musicians: beautiful appearance, romances and marriage. Moreover, this impression is further intensified by Lai's statement: music is a tool for "keeping young and good-looking." Around the time when this report featured in Document 8 was published, Ellie Lai's relationship with the noted entrepreneur Chen-Yang Tsai<sup>5</sup> was a popular topic in Taiwan. First, in Document 8, it makes a direct connection between a female musician and a wealthy man: a wealthy man benefits her by publicity which was contributive to her career development. Additionally, Tsai made intensive efforts for Lai's concert, but it seems likely that the elaborations were principally related to her image-making. The result was a brilliant image – a Greek Goddess – shown on the concert poster. In this article, the assistance of a wealthy man and the appealing image are the only information which the readers could receive for Lai's concert.

Through these reports, it can be seen that even though the reports are about the formal music events, such as the release of an album or a concert appearance, the main

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<sup>5</sup> Chen-Yang Tsai is the head of My Humble House Group and owns the famous five-star Sheraton Taipei Hotel.

issues in the reports still focus on her dress, appearance and relationship. It was rare for Lai to talk about her career development. In the reports, she was like a role model, sharing her thoughts and experiences on how to be a classy, ideal female musician.

### **III.1.ii Analysis of Foreign Female Musicians**

The tendency to focus on female musicians' appearance and relationship in reports is not restricted to local ones, but also to musicians from other countries who are famous in Taiwan. Take Akiko Suwanai (1972- ) as an instance. She is a renowned Japanese violinist and has come to Taiwan several times. The following items are the headlines of all newspaper articles in China Times for Akiko Suwanai from 1999 to 2007. The emphasis on her is similar in these headlines over the past many years.

#### *Document 9*

China Times 2007/06/23

**The Youngest Violin Winner of International Tchaikovsky Competition Akiko Suwanai — An Elegant Beauty Loves Water Activities**

China Times 2005/09/21

**Inviting a Beauty to Hold a Concert, National Concert Hall has a Good Box Office**

China Times 2002/09/15

**Japanese Beauty Violinist has Arrived in Taiwan Twice, whose Skills and Emotion of Performance has Matured**

China Times 1999/03/13

**Female Violinist Akiko Suwanai would rather be a Queen in the Realm of Violin Performance rather than the Wife of Japanese**

**crown prince. “Who I am is more important,” She said While the Beautiful and Talented Violinist Arrived in Taiwan.**

China Times 1999/02/13

**Violinist Star Akiko Suwanai, who was once a Candidate for Japanese Crown Princess**

Although she obtained many awards from international music competitions and has had achievements in her performance career, Taiwanese newspapers only emphasized her beautiful appearance and relationship. The most frequently mentioned topic in these reports was that she was once a candidate for becoming the Japanese crown princess. This phenomenon exposes that even a female music performer has already attained accomplishments in her profession, those achievements just seem to enhance her odds for a good marriage. Repeatedly reporting on the relationship between female musicians and beautiful icons, romances, and rich/powerful men would easily lead readers to believe that there is an undoubted link between them.

However, the Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai, the winner of the International Tchaikovsky Competition, is undoubtedly a professional female music performer with considerable ability and has earned great reputation through international awards and music activities. She is a guest performer at renowned festivals and has also collaborated with the Boston Symphony, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, National Symphony Orchestra of Washington.<sup>6</sup>

According to all the headlines during the period of this study for Suwanai, nevertheless, the topics continually focused on her appearance and her status as once a Japanese princess candidate. Similarly, professional performance was absent in these

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<sup>6</sup> The information on Akiko Suwanai can be found in the website below.  
<http://www.cincinnati-symphony.org/Musicians/GuestArtists/Suwanai.asp> (accessed December 09, 2007).

reports, but the bond amongst beauty, powerful men and female musicians are strengthened.

Another example is Anne-Sophie Mutter, since she is popular in Taiwan and thus there have been many newspaper reports about her, especially while she gave concerts in Taiwan. Most reports reiterated her style of dress, beautiful appearance and marital status: they are still the similar focal points while reporting about Taiwanese and Japanese female musicians. The only difference is that the different depictions of their appearances according to their features. The following excerpts and headlines of some newspaper reports are the example of the category of the appearance.

*Document 10*

China Times

2006/06/20

**Beauty Violinists Gained Big Successes**

Could female violinists use their beauty and talent to compete with male violinists in the music world ruled by men? [...] Female violinists exerted their attractions and confidence to compete with male musicians. [...]

Along with growing up, Anne-Sophie Mutter gradually realized her womanly traits and started to demonstrate this kind of delicate feminine property in performing music. Her style of dress on the recording cover was no longer a loose sweater but a ceremonial dress boldly exposing her shoulders and highlighting her good body. Music fans all enjoy her “sexy” style of wearing clothes and mature performance. [...] Because of Mutter’s talent, beauty and the good selling records, the field of violin performance started to notice female

musicians' achievements more than before. This kind of achievement is from the efforts of female musicians and the support of master conductors.

*Document 11*

China Times

2006/06/24

**Violin Goddess Mutter Comes to Taiwan**

*Document 12*

China Times

2005/12/12

**Beauty and Talent Mutter has Both**

[...] Mutter is regarded as a precious star in violin performance for her unique style of musical interpretation, beautiful face, and charming actions on stage.

In Document 10, the report excerpt shows that the journalist attributes female musicians' success to "their attraction." In this discourse, what a female musician uses to prove her ability is her womanly trait, her attraction, not her professional performance. In this report, furthermore, it appears that it is Mutter's responsibility to realize her womanly traits and that she should perform that feminine property in music. This comment indicates that women and men would play differently because of their genders. In Document 12, the journalist depicted Mutter "as a precious star" majorly because of her "beautiful face and charming actions." Although her musical interpretation was also mentioned, the main points are obviously her appearance, charm and dress style. In Taiwan, the title – Violin Goddess – appears very often in connection with Mutter. This feminine and lofty title is probably related to her impressive image of wearing in a tight formal dress on posters. All things mentioned



in the reports on Mutter emphasize her feminine status and charm. This shows that idea that her status of woman is more critical than her musician status. Other than appearance, the reports on Mutter also focus on her marital status, as those on Ellie Lai.

*Document 13*

China Times

2006/08/22

**Violin Goddess is at Her Zenith      Great Conductor Withered  
Mutter and Previn      The Couple Composed by Young and Old  
are Broken**

The so-called “the goddess of violin,” German violinist Mutter was divorced the famous conductor Andre Previn in Mutter’s home city of Munich, ending the four-year marriage. The reason for the divorce is that Mutter is 34 years younger than Previn, so he could not keep pace with Mutter in many aspects of life. [...]

Mutter is at her pinnacle as a 43-year-old woman; social activities and music performances filled her schedule while the golden time in the life of Previn had already passed by and there are few things left in his life which he can do. [...]

*Document 14*

China times

2006/06/23

**Mutter and Previn      Musicians Admire and Envy Their Love**

[...] Most musicians believe that Mutter has an Electra complex for she had been a protégé of the renowned conductor, Karajan, for 13 years. [...]

Because of the agreeable relationship between Mutter and Previn, no wonder Mutter is full of sweetness while discussing her husband.

In these two reports about Mutter, Document 13 pictured Mutter's marriage in a tabloid way. In Document 14, the journalist acts like on behalf of Mutter to express her inner thoughts about her husband. More importantly, this kind of reports, which did no interview but made a lengthy story, on female music performers were from the authoritative Taiwanese newspaper: China Times. These reports present the typical approach adopted by journalists to introduce Mutter and other female music performers to the public. Concerning Mutter's private life, the report did not do interview or cite from any credible source. Apparently, most contents were written by conjecture in Document 13. It is ironic that Document 14 appeared just two months before Document 13. Since no evidence had been proposed, it seems that the journalist knitted a story about why Mutter loved Previn (her Electra complex) and the condition of her married life.

In Taiwan, female musicians were framed in a way, the journalists suppose that readers only want to know about beautiful musicians and their private lives. After reviewing these Taiwanese newspaper reports on Ellie Lai, Akiko Suwanai and Anne-Sophie Mutter, it is obvious that this medium always places the principal importance on female musicians' appearances and personal romances, no matter what their nationalities are. Gender, when reporting musicians, is a much more important issue than where they are from.

### **III.1.iii More Cases of Taiwanese Female Musicians**

After reviewing the representative female musicians who had been reported frequently, some other reports are also adopted to illustrate the general condition about the image of female musicians in newspapers.

*Document 15*

China Times

2002/05/22

**Advertising a concert with beauties Prelude a l'Apresmidi d'un  
Faune**

The Taichung County Philharmonic Association is holding a concert on 24<sup>th</sup> May; the Association advertised the concert through beauty performers and advertising photos on which the performers wear evening dresses with spaghetti straps. The Philharmonic Association emphasized that, besides the attractive faces, these female musicians also have a professional background and numerous performance experiences.

Document 15 shows that “clothes” is still the main component when the image of female music performers mentioned. the clothes have been thoroughly described. This report shows that even for a concert held by a Philharmonic Association the appeal is still the female musicians’ desirable dresses with “spaghetti straps” and their pretty faces. In the last sentence, professionalism was finally mentioned, but only by a kind of by-product to female musicians’ outward attractions.

In Document 16, the pianist Wei-jen Hsiao’s appearance and marriage takes a large part of the report:

*Document 16*

China Times

1999/05/23

**Wei-Jen Shiao has an Unhappy marriage and Splendid Career**

**The news about her husband’s betrayal and affair shocked the musical community. To ease her broken heart, female musician**

### **Shiao decides to pursue her career overseas**

Hsiao is a so-called “piano beauty” for her long hanging hair, white skin, and charming flower-like smile. For her fans, they had never thought that one day Shiao would be connected to topics about a pinpoint camera, betrayed marriage, and extramarital affair. [...] musicians’ marriages catch the public’s eyes again. [...]

Hsiao was born into a musical family. The circle of Western classical music deemed that Shiao is an earnest musician in pursuing the achievements in music, especially in frequently collaborating with Eastern European and Russian musicians. [...]

[...] gained an honorary PhD degree [...] held her concert in Carnegie Hall. [...] At that period of time, she had been highly reported by some Taiwanese media, and most members of the music circle admired her initiative. Nowadays, however, we finally understood that Hsiao’s initiative is possibly not only from her self-expectations in music career but also from a product of her unhappy marriage.

As mentioned in the last sentence of Document 16, the conclusion of the report implies that women might be ambitious and pursue career success only while they are depressed or fail in their marriages. Hsiao’s achievements in music are illustrated in this article; any one of these accomplishments would certainly be cultivated by long-term efforts and planning, however, the journalist attributes her achievements in music to the failure of her marriage.

In Document 16, it makes a big point of Hsiao’s appearance and turns the whole report into a novel-like story about her marriage. To deal with a female musician’s struggle to make progress and achieve a breakthrough in profession, the journalist

chose to make a connection which is simple and filled with stereotypes about her endeavors and unpleasant married life. The implication of this kind of thinking is considering women would rely on men and those who lose the dependence of men will turn to seek their own career attainments.

### **III.2 Tabular Analysis Approach**

For revealing the general principles in reporting female musicians, in this section, some female music performers had been selected to be analyzed by examining all reports about them for a specific period in China Times. In order to objectively clarify the main topics of reports about female music performers, a systematic approach was adopted to analyze the data from newspaper reports and illustrated the results in tabular format to explore the following issues. It aims to explore whether there is any difference between reports about female and male musicians. Throughout the survey, the general phenomenon and habitual approach in reporting female music performers will be explored.

In order to objectively present the images constituted from the contents of newspaper reports for female music performers, a tabular analysis approach is proposed. The data are mainly from the electronic archives of China Times: China Times Database.<sup>7</sup> China Times is a newspaper which has well-established and longstanding readership. The China Times Database includes all published reports in China Times since 1994.

The tabular analysis approach for analyzing reports is a way of qualitative researches for content analysis. Content analysis is one of the common methods for

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<sup>7</sup> *China Times* database and UDN database (collecting newspaper reports from United Daily News Group) are the only two electronic newspaper databases in Taiwan. They are also the most authentic and prestigious newspaper groups. In *China Times* database, every report in *China Times*, *China Times Express* and *Commercial Times* are collected from 1994 to current.

analyzing information from newspaper reports; as the definition of this method in *The Sage Dictionary of Sociology*: “At its simplest, content analysis is the reduction of freely occurring text (e.g. a speech or a newspaper article) to a summary that can be analysed statistically. One may try to capture the essence of a text by counting certain words.”<sup>8</sup>

In *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, there is a completed explanation about the usage and application of this research method: content analysis is “a research technique for the objective, quantitative and systematic study of communication content. It involves charting or counting the incidence, or coincidence, of particular items belonging to a set of (usually) predetermined categories. It has been used, for example, to explore political balance and bias in communication by counting the number of references [...]”<sup>9</sup>

The methodology is to “create a set of categories which illuminate the issues under study and then classify content according to these predetermined categories.”<sup>10</sup> Through this procedure, the concerns and main issues of the newspaper articles could be presented. This study adopted the spirit of content analysis and developed an approach. Instead of using specific words as categories, this study used specific topics as categories for some words of describing female music performers have similar function and could be categorized to one topic. After a preliminary survey of these reports from the selected musicians, three prominent topics – appearance, dress and marriage/romance – for female music performers are identified. These categories were produced through reading every report of the selected musicians during the analysed period of years. By counting the descriptive contents of the reports, these popular

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<sup>8</sup> Steve Bruce and Steven Yearley, “Content Analysis,” in *The Sage Dictionary of Sociology* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2006), 48.

<sup>9</sup> David Jary and Julia Jary, “Content Analysis” in *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1995), 119.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bray S. Turner, “Content Analysis,” in *The Penguin*

topics/categories belong to female and male musicians were shown up. They were the cores of the reports and made up of the main body of the reports.

In the reports of female musicians, although the aim of most reports is to promote concerts or recordings, it can be found that the content of the reports have often been centered on these non-musical issues (appearance, clothes and marriage) and devote relatively small parts to mention professional ability or features of concerts and recordings. These topics are adopted as the possible main body for female music performers to be analyzed for the reports. The dissimilar concerns in their reports could also be clearly identified by comparing the apparent different categories presented in the analysis tables for female and male music performers.

The procedure for formatting the categories in the table usually follows the general instructions: “content analysis consists of word counts, using the frequency with which words appear as a measure of their significance in the meaning of the message.”<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, as mentioned in *The Sage Dictionary of Sociology*: “The problem, of course, is that the meaning of words is rarely simple and the meaning of a text is rarely apparent from its words taken in isolation.”<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, the present study adopts topical categories rather than counting words to eliminate the problem aforementioned. For example, in the category of appearance, all descriptions about appearance will be counted, such as the beautiful musician, her face, skin, hair etc. In the clothes category, contents of clothes and dress style would be included. In the category of marriage and romance, whether the contents were about married life, husband, boyfriend will all be included. Through the rate of appearance in these three categories, the importance and the frequency of the

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*Dictionary of Sociology*, 5th Edition (New York: Penguin, 2006), 52.

<sup>11</sup> John Scott and Gordon Marshall, “Content Analysis,” in *A Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce and Yearley, “Content Analysis,” 48.

occurrence of specific topics can be clarified for the main components in reports on female and male music performers.

The musicians selected for sample analysis should be those who were well-known and reported on frequently, so they have influence on the image configuration in readers' minds. Therefore, the representative sample adopted is Ellie Lai, Nai-yuan Hu and Yo-yo Ma. The reports used in the tabular analysis approach are those that take the musician as the topic of the report rather than a passing reference. Hence, two kinds of reports about musicians will be discarded in this study. First, when the musician was a participant in an event and not the main topic in the report. Taking Ellie Lai for example, as a popular musician in Taiwan, she often attended many celebrity events or charity bazaars. The reports about these kinds of activities would mention her name as one of the members who had participated.<sup>13</sup> Second, when the musician is the focus of the report but only with respect to brief information about concerts (e.g. dates, sites or prices), recordings or other related musical activities. Since reports having descriptive contents would have a greater possibility of influencing the constructed image of female music performers for readers, only this kind of report has been used for analysis.

### **III.2.i Analysis on the Female Musician: Ellie Lai**

Ellie Lai was born in 1963; she was once the chief flutist in the National Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan. As a celebrated female music performer in Taiwan, she had given many concerts and produced eight recordings from 1989 to 1999.<sup>14</sup> In

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, some specific activities could also influence the construction of the image of female musicians if female musicians attended them frequently. Since the reports present female musicians attending luxurious events (like fashion show) quite often, a bond would be easily constructed between luxurious stuffs and female musicians.

<sup>14</sup> The personal details of Lai is referenced from one of her main fan sites which still exist while most others were faded after she renounced her status of a flutist, <http://www.taconet.com.tw/Enter/> (accessed May 30, 2008).



2000, she married a wealthy and renowned entrepreneur, Chen-Yang Tsai, the owner of My Humble House Group and the five-star Sheraton Taipei Hotel in Taiwan. After her marriage, Ellie Lai renounced her career as a music performer and started to engage in Tsai's business. Lai has participated in the works of hotel decorations, clothes design of the attendants and background music in hotel.<sup>15</sup> Currently, she is the vice-president of this hotel. Therefore, the statistics table analyzed for Lai ends in 2000 when her marriage effectively ended her career as a music performer.

From 1994 to 2000 in *China Times*, 145 reports mention Ellie Lai; 31 of them meet the analysis standard: They take Ellie Lai as the focus of the report which features relevant details about her. After examining the content, 23 items of the 31 reports (74.2%) showed at least one of the three topics: appearance, clothes, and marriage/romance. The statistics of the reports on Ellie Lai is illustrated in Table III-2 below.

- The total number of reports mentioning Ellie Lai from 1994 to 2000: 145 items
- The number of reports for analysis from 145 items: 31 items

The three main topics appearing in newspaper reports about female music performers are categorized as follows.

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<sup>15</sup> The references about Ellie Lai's engagement in hotel operation are from following newspaper articles: "She has High Emotional Quotient Tolerate His Outspoken and Naughty," *United Daily News*, Oct. 4, 2005, [http://mag.udn.com/mag/people/storypage.jsp?f\\_ART\\_ID=19933](http://mag.udn.com/mag/people/storypage.jsp?f_ART_ID=19933).

"Prices of Hotels, Taking Responsibility by Their Professions," *Liberty Times*, Nov. 2, 2003, <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2003/new/nov/2/today-e6.htm>.

Table III-2 The statistics of main topics reported on Ellie Lai

Year	The number of reports including topic(s) (topic A, B, C)			Reports including the categorized topic(s) in a year	Total reports in a year	Ratio of RT to RY (%)
	One	Two	Three			
1994	2			2	3	66.7
1995	5	2		7	7	100
1996	2			2	3	66.7
1997	2	2		4	7	57.1
1998			3	3	3	100
1999	4			4	7	57.1
2000	1			1	1	100
total	16	4	3	23	31	74.2

(A) Appearance, (B) Clothes (C) Marriage/romance.

RT: Reports including the categorized topic(s) in a year

RY: Reports in a year

Through this table, it can be seen that in 1994, the total number of reports mentioning Ellie Lai in that year is three; two reports include only one of the three specific topics (this one topic could be physical appearance, clothes, or marriage/romance). Thus, the rate of reports including the specific topics in 1994 is 66.7%. As for the year of 1995, there are seven reports focusing Ellie Lai with descriptive contents: five of them cover one topic and two of them simultaneously cover two topics. Therefore, reports on Elli Lai in this year had all focused on her physical appearance, clothes, or marriage/romance. The same analytical approach is applied to the reports in the other years and the results are as shown in the table.

Through Table III-2, it demonstrates that these three themes are the most

common ones of the reports on Ellie Lai for a long period of time. Table III-3 shows the number of the reports belonging to each topic of each year.

Table III-3 The number of reports on each of the three topics

Year	The number of the reports on each topic			Reports including the topic(s) in a year
	A	B	C	
1994	2			2
1995	7	1	1	7
1996	2			2
1997	4	2		4
1998	3	3	3	3
1999	4			4
2000			1	1
Total reports	22	6	5	23
Ratio	95.7%	26%	21.7%	100%

Three main topics in newspaper reports on Ellie Lai

(A) Appearance, (B) Clothes, and (C) Marriage/romance

Since a report may involve two or more topics simultaneously, the production of Table III-3 reveals that which theme is the most common one amongst these three topics. It means that a report including topic A can also include topic B, C or both of them. Therefore, in Table III-3, a report would be counted repeatedly if it has more than one specific topics (topics A, B and C).

For example, there are 7 reports in 1995 mentioning the specific topics; all of

them mention Lai's appearance (topic A, 7 reports), one of these reports also note Lai's wearing style (topic B, 1 report), and another one of the seven reports mention romance (topic C, 1 report). The importance of each topic thus can be shown in the ratio. As shown in the bottom two rows of Table III-3, there are 22 reports out of the total 23 reports mentioned the appearance of Ellie Lai (topic A), so the ratio is as high as 95.7%. Consequently, for all the reports mentioning the specific topics, Ellie Lai's appearance the issue which had been discussed most often; the contents usually around her face, skin, and beauty.

Although the analyses end in 2000 because of the cessation of Lai's musician status, Lai's name and news still occasionally appeared in newspapers, TV and other media. After she became the wife of Tsai in 2000, many Lai's interviews focused on the luxurious lifestyle of an entrepreneur's wife and chronicle her attendance at many magnificent activities with other celebrities. The news around her marital life and luxurious life style has the potential to significantly influence how and what people think of female musicians.

### **III.2.ii Analysis of Male Music Performers: Nai-yuan Hu and Yo-yo Ma**

To investigate whether there is any difference of concerns in newspaper reports between male and female music performers, two male musicians are selected as examples for analysis in this section: violinist Nai-yuan Hu and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. How to analyze the reports on male music performers is the same as that applied to female music performers. Through the tabular analysis approach, the popular issues mentioned in reports about male music performers will be clearly identified. The study period is from 2002 to 2007 for reference<sup>16</sup>. Evident differences could be

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<sup>16</sup> Since the reports on male music performers has showed extremely high similarity in topics and contents for years and the function of illustrating them is for reference to those of female musicians. A five-year statistics already could clearly demonstrate and easily be observed the reported inclination of

apparently exposed in the five-year statistics. Through examining and reviewing all the reports on these selected male music performers in the particular period, three popular topics – his recordings, concert, and career – are identified. These topics are named as topics A, B and C in the analysis tables.

Nai-Yuan Hu, a Taiwanese violinist born in 1961, is the Grand Prize winner of the 1985 Queen Elizabeth International Competition in Belgium. Since he obtained the professional recognition, he began his musical career on the world's stages and also in cooperation with many prestigious orchestras and musicians, including the Toronto Symphony, Seattle Symphony, the Netherland and Rotterdam Philharmonic, Belgium National Orchestra, Austro-Hungarian Hydan Chamber Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, Hong Kong Philharmonic. Aside from the numerous performances in foreign countries, he has also continually engaged in diverse musical activities in Taiwan. He had recorded albums for Taiwan's Chi-Mei Foundation and unaccompanied violin music for EMI.<sup>17</sup>

From the year of 2004, Hu organized a series of musical activities known as "Taiwan Connection" for giving concerts and master classes to Taiwanese people. This music festival holds every December and draws much attention each year.<sup>18</sup> Due to his fame and popularity, Hu has been selected as one of the typical male musicians whose media representation would influence the image of male musicians

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reports on male music performers.

<sup>17</sup> Chi Mei Culture Foundation was founded by Chi Mei Industrial Corporation. Chi Mei Industrial Corporation is renowned for its concerns in arts, especially in music and painting. Chi Mei has its own museum, orchestra and the culture foundation for musical activities, such as recording albums by Taiwanese musicians and lending sumptuous and precious instruments, mainly violins, to music performers. The reference material is from the official site of Chi Mei Culture Foundation. Below is the site in Mandarin: [http://www.chimeimuseum.com/\\_chinese/a01\\_foundation/foundation.aspx](http://www.chimeimuseum.com/_chinese/a01_foundation/foundation.aspx) (accessed May 29, 2008); the official site in English version: [http://www.chimeimuseum.com/english/a01\\_foundation/foundation.aspx](http://www.chimeimuseum.com/english/a01_foundation/foundation.aspx) (accessed May 29, 2008); the discographical information on Hu's recordings: Nai-Yuan Hu, *Nicolo Paganini: Variations on the G String on Rossini's "Moses,"* Chi Mei Culture VN 01003; Nai-Yuan Hu, *Unaccompanied,* EMI Classics 82659327.

<sup>18</sup> "Taiwan Connection, Nai-Yuan-Hu: Young Musicians Encourage Me to Do This," *China Times*, July

in Taiwan. The statistics of the collected reports on Nai-Yuan Hu are listed as follows.

- The number of reports mentioning Hu (Dates:2002/Jan.~2007/Apr.): 67
- Reports in which he was the main focus with descriptive contents: 20

Three main topics appearing often in newspaper reports about male music performers are categorized as follows.

Table III-4 The statistics of main topics reported on Nai-Yuan Hu

Year	The number of reports including the specific topic(s) (topic A, B, C)			Reports including the specific topic(s) in a year	Reports in a year	Ratio of RT to RY (%)
	One	Two	Three			
2003	4	1		5	5	100
2004	1	4		5	5	100
2005	2	3		5	5	100
2006		5		5	5	100
Total	7	13	---	20	20	100

(A) Recordings, (B) Concerts, and (C) Career

RT: Reports including the topic(s) in a year

RY: Reports in a year

From the table, it is clear that the number of reports is stable every year, so do the contents of the reports. Usually, musicians would be reported when they have concerts, new recordings or other musical activities. From 2003, Hu visited Taiwan every year to give concerts; from 2004, most reports about Hu were published in December and focused on the music festival “Taiwan Connection”.

There were many reports on Hu in this period of time. Through the table, it is obvious that all of them focus on his recordings, concerts, and career development. The ratio of reports on these “male music performers’ topics” is 100%. The topics of appearance, clothes and marriage which appear often in reports on female musicians are never mentioned in reports on Hu. Obviously, the journalists constructed the different images and presented the dissimilar dimensions of male and female musicians.

The similar ratio can be found in that of another male musician Yo-yo Ma. Yo-yo Ma is an American of Chinese lineage. It is uncommon for a music performer to be mentioned so frequently in newspaper reports. Ma’s wide media coverage could be ascribed to his kinship with Taiwan and his successful career on the international stage. His father, Hiao-tsiun Ma<sup>19</sup>, had once lived in Taiwan; Hiao-tsiun Ma and his wife also came back to Taiwan occasionally even after they settled down in the USA.<sup>20</sup> For years, Yo-yo Ma himself also visited Taiwan frequently for his recordings and concerts. His every new plan on recording usually makes the increase of the number of reports and it would get more reports, especially if he pays visits to Taiwan.

- The number of reports mentioning Yo-Yo Ma: 234 (2002/Jan.-2007/Apr.)
- Reports which took Yo-Yo Ma as the focus and have descriptive contents: **39** items

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<sup>19</sup> Hiao-Tsiun Ma was also a musician and supervised Yo-Yo Ma’s early music education. When Yo-Yo Ma was four years old, Hiao-Tsiun Ma and his family migrated to the United States. The resources of bio information are listed:  
[http://www.sonymusic.com.tw/artist/artist\\_info.php?ar\\_index=76](http://www.sonymusic.com.tw/artist/artist_info.php?ar_index=76) (accessed May 29, 2008),  
<http://www.yo-yoma.com/> (accessed May 29, 2008).  
Marina Ma and John A. Rallo, *My Son, Yo-Yo* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1995).  
Richard Dyer and Margaret Campbell, “Ma, Yo-Yo,” *Grove Music Online* edited by Laura Macy

Table III-5 The statistics of main topics reported on Yo-Yo Ma

Year	The number of reports including topic(s) (topic A, B, C)			Reports including the categorized topic(s) in a year	Reports in a year	Ratio of RT to RY (%)
	One	Two	Three			
2002		1	1	2	2	100
2003		1	1	2	2	100
2004	10	4	5	19	23	82.6
2005	5	4	1	10	10	100
2006				0	0	----
2007		1		1	1	100
Total	15	11	8	34	38	89.5

(A) Recordings, (B) Concerts, and (C) Career/Profession

RT: Reports including the topic(s) in a year

RY: Reports in a year

In 2004 and 2005, the numbers of reports on Yo-Yo Ma are significantly higher than other years, for Ma visited Taiwan in these two consecutive years. The table demonstrates that whether the number of the reports, and whether the length of each report, almost all the reports centre on the three topics which focus upon the musician's career and professional status. Even though he has become something like a super-star musician in the field of Western classical music because of his many associations with popular and crossover music and film music soundtracks, the reports still fundamentally focused on his professional performances, like most other male musicians.

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(accessed June 1, 2008), <http://www.grovemusic.com>.



### **III.3 Discussion of the Analyzed Results**

The content of this chapter is to examine what kinds of images of female musicians are presented in newspaper reports. The statistics in the present study show that, when female musicians are discussed in newspapers, most topics centre on their marriage and appearance. In Taiwanese newspaper reports, female pianist Shiao's hardwork and significant accomplishment is represented as a way to compensate for her unhappy marriage. Mutter's marital life was reported without interviewing or quoting any person involved. Lai's appearance and marriage is invariably the focal point of media reports, and not her playing. For female musicians, the concern is not only their beautiful clothes, but also their attractive appearance. There have been a lot of details portraying their face, body, hair, skin, clothes and accessories. This kind of image construction is implicated in the creation of stereotypes and risks inducing and misguiding readers in its representation of female music performers as objects of physical desire.

Ellis's research demonstrates how female pianists in nineteenth century Paris had been reviewed differently from male musicians. Women pianists' dress and body were sometimes the focus while she was commented. Ellis points out that although this kind of portrayal was not prevalent, but unlikely to appear in any review of a male pianist. In contemporary Taiwan, however, the way of how to portray female musician almost entirely focus on their appearance and dress, but this kind of discourse did not happen on male musicians. Through the statistics in this chapter, it can be found that focusing on female musicians' appearance, clothes, and even marital status is the mainstream topics in Taiwanese newspaper reports. This result reflects how most people think of female musicians and which aspects of female musicians are considered important in Taiwanese society.

## IV. The Chinese Tradition of Representing the Female Image

In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger states that, in the history of images, “men act, women appear.”<sup>1</sup> Due to the unequal social status of the two genders, in most periods during the history of Western countries and China, women have relied on men for their economic and living conditions. In this circumstance, women were usually the appendages, while men had power and authority. Considering their lower social position and financial dependency, women have tended to seek men’s affections in return for better maintenance. This realistic condition has influenced the production of the female image and representation. Lynda Nead suggests: “Through the procedures of art, woman can become culture; seen through the screen, she is framed, she becomes image [...]”<sup>2</sup> In *Practices of Looking*, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright also point out: “In the history of art, [...] paintings were for the most part geared toward male viewers, [...]”<sup>3</sup> Many images of women were designed on the premise that men are the principal viewers. What kind of images and how to demonstrate the images of women are decided by men and the male gaze. Considering that women have usually been living in a condition built on male-centered visualisation, Nead draws the following conclusion about the phenomenon of women’s image: “[...] the female body is caught in a perpetual cycle of judgement and categorization.”<sup>4</sup> This “constantly judgemental gaze,”<sup>5</sup> as she says, confines women to the role of the desired object, as men are the viewers, painters, and patrons in reality.

As Berger analyses the condition of gender and image: “He is the spectator in

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<sup>1</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 47.

<sup>2</sup> Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 123.

<sup>4</sup> Nead, *The Female Nude*, 81.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man. Everything is addressed to him.”<sup>6</sup>

The main purpose of women’s images, in Berger’s view, is to evoke and satisfy the viewing pleasure of men. The characteristics of women’s image in each time period have been represented in its paintings. Through viewing the art works, the beauty appreciation in a culture can be demonstrated. Hence, before analysing female musicians’ posters in modern Taiwan, the tradition of representing women’s image in Chinese culture must firstly be illustrated. This is because in different civilizations, an image may not attract identical interpretations, due to their different cultural sediments and histories. Through examining the historical context, the influence and transformation of the past upon current images will be explored.

Although the modern image of women in many capitalistic countries display many common characteristics, because of the wave of globalization, many traditional notions have still affected how people see and think of women’s role, status and image in Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> As a group of women in Taiwan, female musicians also live in this social climate; in many cases, they even have a more stereotypical image among the public than ordinary women. Hence, in order to properly analyse the elements and meaning of the modern female musicians’ image, the image development in Chinese history and the construction of the capitalistic woman’s image in current Taiwan will both be assessed. The traditional image will be firstly discussed below.

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<sup>6</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> Under the influence of mainstream Western culture, most female images in modern Taiwan follow the Western beauty standard and thus usually highlight women’s body and sexiness. Although the sexy image is prevalent and seems considerably dissimilar to the image of traditional culture, some traits of the traditional image persist along with the traditional ideology about the ideal role of women, such as shyness, passivity and obedience. These characteristics can easily be found on concert posters and in wedding photos. In modern Taiwan, traditional ideologies about gender still have their effect on people’s daily lives. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, for example, the ideologies of “women are marrying up and men are marrying down” and “value men and despise women” have continually affected women’s lives and career.

## IV.1 Beauty Painting

In the tradition of representing the female image in Chinese culture, paintings of women are a long-established sub-category and have usually been called “beauty paintings (*shinu hwa*).” Their origin can be traced back to the Pre-Qin period.<sup>8</sup> Women are the subject matter in beauty paintings, but they have been mostly drawn by men and the contents of these paintings are decided by male patrons. Their representations are mainly according to men’s intentions and preferences. Consequently, the two genders played different roles and had an unequal status in composing the paintings.<sup>9</sup> Women’s social status in each time period was also reflected in the production of these beauty paintings. Although a few women painted, they did not paint the female image but usually plants. In ancient China, the dynasties before and including the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), painting was a skill for women to use to please men, like concubines to entertain their cultivated husbands, not aiming for women’s self expression or achievement.<sup>10</sup>

Because of the conservative atmosphere and strictly social regulations between the two genders in ancient China, it was impossible for male painters to have women models. The characteristics and feminine image in beauty paintings are the results of the male painters’ subjective interpretation and construction according to the contemporary beauty standards. There is no room for women to illustrate or negotiate their image in the production. As Mary Fong notes: “In traditional China artistic creativity was gender-specific, exclusively masculine, and the female image that emerged is not what it purports to represent but rather a signification of male

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<sup>8</sup> The Qin dynasty was established in B.C. 221. The period before the Qin is called the Pre-Qin period.

<sup>9</sup> Fei-yi Liang, “Cong nuxing zhuyi de guandian kan qingdai shinu hua (From examining the beauty painting from the feminist perspective),” (Master thesis, Taipei National University of the Arts, 2000), 22.

<sup>10</sup> The detailed discussion would be illustrated later in the part of IV.5 “the position of female artists.”

power.”<sup>11</sup> The two main divisions of beauty painting, to be discussed in greater detail below, are the didactic painting and the “belle painting.”<sup>12</sup> The “didactic painting” reflected the patriarchal values and further consolidated their order and social system. The aim of the “belle painting”, a division which focuses on the depiction of women’s beauty, is to serve men’s needs and visual pleasure.<sup>13</sup>

The standards of beauty sometimes had differences in each epoch. Nonetheless, women’s appearance in the paintings of a particular dynasty did not contain individual feature, instead, they merely demonstrate the desired beauty according to the common beauty image of specific times. Fong points out this phenomenon: “Once the ideational convention for the depiction of the female was established, it was transmitted through the ages essentially the same but with accommodations to the cultural specifics of each period.”<sup>14</sup> They are just “beautiful women” created under the mainstream criteria of beauty in the male-centered society and for patriarchal service, like satisfying male visual pleasure in beauty paintings or coaching women to be self-sacrificing in didactic painting.

#### **IV.1.i Didactic painting**

Didactic painting was a mean of propagating political ideologies and of maintaining social systems in ancient times, when most people were illiterate.<sup>15</sup> These paintings followed the ideal gendered roles and gave pictorial personification of well-known didactic literatures. Mary Fong mentions that the literature often advocates “loyalty and filial piety for men, and self-immolation and chastity for

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<sup>11</sup> Mary H. Fong, “Image of Women in Traditional Chinese Painting,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 17, no.1 (Spring- Summer, 1996): 22.

<sup>12</sup> Concerning the researches on women in Chinese painting history, the focus is usually on female painters; see Liang, “Shinu hua,” 11.

<sup>13</sup> Liang, “Shinu hua,” 21.

<sup>14</sup> Fong, “Image of Women” 23.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

women.”<sup>16</sup> The didactic paintings, Fong indicates, were mostly of the female image.<sup>17</sup> From the Han dynasty (B.C. 202 – A.D. 220) to the Wei-Jin period and the Six dynasties (A.D. 220-589), most female imagery was for the purpose of educating women about politeness, moral principles and standards of behaviour. The huge amounts of didactic paintings are like textbooks, teaching women how to be virtuous wives and mothers.<sup>18</sup> The classical literature on educating women was often accompanied by many didactic paintings. The reason for this is that most women were illiterate, since “for women to have no ability or talent is a virtue (*nuzi wutsai bein shide*)” was a widespread belief in ancient China. Hence, these didactic books not only pursue simple literary descriptions, but also use many paintings for better instruction.<sup>19</sup>

Some of these books and paintings about related issues and some selected women who were seen as exemplary role models are *Lessons for Women* (Nu jie), *Biographies of Eminent Women* (Lieh nu chuan), and the *Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety*.<sup>20</sup> For male painters, nonetheless, the focus is not the attributes of each exemplary woman, although they have concrete names and happenings. As Fong observes, “[...] the illustrations of selected biographies show that the women are types, not specific individuals.”<sup>21</sup> The focus is the universalism of their ideal deeds and the noble roles they portray.<sup>22</sup> These male creators strongly implied that women readers should possess similar virtues as the women in the paintings. Julia Murray mentions

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<sup>16</sup> Fong, “Image of Women,” 22.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>19</sup> Mon-jin Ma, “Lienu, tsainu, chinu (Exemplary women, talented Women, weaving women: The Cultural image of women’s lives),” *Gugong wenwu yuekan* (The national palace museum monthly of Chinese art) 21:2, (May, 2003): 6.

<sup>20</sup> *The Lesson for Women* (Nu jie) was written under the Han dynasty (B.C. 202 – A.D. 220) by a woman named Ban, Zhao (circa A.D. 45-117). The book of *Biographies of Eminent Women* (Lieh nu chuan) was written by a male author named Xiang Liu in the West Han Dynasty (B.C. 206 – A.D. 9). *Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety* (Nu Hsiao ching) was written under the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907) by a woman whose surname was Zheng.

<sup>21</sup> Fong, “Image of Women,” 23.

this Chinese tradition: “[...] the prevailing view was that women could better understand their proper roles by learning about virtuous women of the past and by studying admonitory tracts. The *Ladies’ Classic of Filial Piety* (Nu hsiao ching) is a classic example of feminine instructional literature; and like the better known *Biographies of Eminent Women* (Lieh nu chuan), it has been much illustrated by artists over the centuries.”<sup>23</sup>

The first didactic painting, “Admonitions of the Instructress to the Palace Ladies,” was created by Kai-zhi Gu (about A.D. 345-406).<sup>24</sup> Passing through the long-term development, the didactic painting became more and more popular and reached its summit under the Six dynasties. Murray notes that “[t]he Six Dynasties period (A.D. 220-589) witnessed a great increase in the popularity of textual illustrations, and didactic paintings for women proliferated.”<sup>25</sup> Intended to be circulated prevalently among women, these paintings are reproduced largely using flagstone or wood engravings.<sup>26</sup> In these paintings, the daily activities in which the women are usually involved are spinning and weaving;<sup>27</sup> they work industriously and look after the elderly and children in the family.<sup>28</sup> As for the topics in the *Biographies of Eminent Women*, the paintings emphasize chastity and even glorify women’s suicide following their husband’s death.<sup>29</sup> “Mothers urge their sons to read” is another popular theme, since women’s achievement and status were completely based on

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<sup>22</sup> Ma, “Lienu, tsainu, chinu,” 4.

<sup>23</sup> Julia K. Murray, “Didactic Art for Women: The Ladies’ Classic of Filial Piety,” *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 27.

<sup>24</sup> This painting is in the British Museum now; see the relative webpage of the British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/asia/t/admonitions\\_scroll.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/t/admonitions_scroll.aspx)

<sup>25</sup> Murray, “Didactic Art of Women,” 28.

<sup>26</sup> Liang, “Shinu hua,” 33.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 30, 43, 44.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 129, 130, 131.

men's (father, husband and son) success.<sup>30</sup>

In Chinese traditional culture, as Murray states, "Women were expected to be humble and self-sacrificing and to devote their energies to the family rather than to personal ambition."<sup>31</sup> Consequently, although the presumed viewers of the didactic painting are women, it is in fact a painting category produced for men's benefit and aimed to deepen this social climate.<sup>32</sup> Male creators and the phallogocentrism-based society delivered their expectations of "virtuous" women in female figure paintings. The common idea that "men are noble and women are humble (*nanzun nubei*)" had been strengthened by the concrete images in the didactic paintings. The male power which controlled the image construction built the women myth and their "ideal" performance. Apparently, at the initiation of forming the female image in China, women's figure painting was just a way of didacticism and women were obviously the objects to be educated.

The purpose of the didactic painting is the hope that women will learn to be "good" by imitating and internalising the images represented in the paintings. It is a persuasive method to let people accept ideologies within the images. These images demonstrate which behaviour women should adopt and the activities that were considered suitable for their status. For female musicians in modern Taiwan, there might be a similar situation. The images on concert posters represent a fixed image of femininity and imply certain social expectations. During the long period of studying music and participating in musical activities, it would have a great influence on female students' identity through repeatedly seeing these images of their teachers and other musicians. As for women who are not musicians, they were also educated to recognize the "ideal" image of female musicians. Nonetheless, unlike didactic painting produced

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 40, 41; Murray, "Didactic Art of Women," 27.

<sup>31</sup> Murray, "Didactic Art of Women," 27.

<sup>32</sup> Liang, "Shinu hua," 35.



by men, female musicians' posters have been constructed by women in the current concert environment in Taiwan. Hence, the reasons for letting them choose to portray the fixed images might be more complicated than in the didactic paintings and this will be further discussed in the present study.

No matter which roles the female subjects played, the basic traits are "feminine beauty and charm;" what Fong specifies as the "ideal women in Chinese patriarchal society."<sup>33</sup> She states that women in Chinese paintings are "ideological construct within a male system" and "beautiful but submissive, demure and amiable, unassertive and pleasant, agreeable and good-natured."<sup>34</sup> The physical standards of beauty may change, but the submissive, passive demeanor does not. Other than the typical portraits, women were speechless in the production. Their image was decided by men and conformed to the rule of the male gaze. Following the subsequent radical change in China in the early twentieth century, the female image had an unprecedented, wide-spreading influence into people's lives and provided a more comprehensive service for patriarchal interests in the fields of politics and economics. This will be addressed below.

## **IV.2 The Western Influence on the Female Image**

After the Opium War with Britain in 1842, the Nan-jing Treaty was formed. According to this treaty, the Qing dynasty was forced to open up five cities for business with Western countries. In 1845, Britain firstly settled a concession in Shanghai, followed by the United States and France. In the concessions, all buildings, public affairs, and legal systems were segregated from China. These regions were like colonies and continually expanded. It made Shanghai became an international city

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

where a lot of Westerners lived.<sup>35</sup>

The final days of the Qing dynasty were a devastating period because of the consecutive civil and international wars. The concessions thus became a comparatively stable area. Considerable Western funds were gradually imported and foreign merchants gathered. It was the first time that Western culture had been brought on a large scale into China and been integrated with Eastern culture. Under such a special condition, the poster-calendar, or called monthly-calendar, which demonstrated new female imagery, was created in Shanghai and then spread throughout the whole country.<sup>36</sup>

In 1896, foreign merchants firstly introduced the poster-calendar to China for advertising their commodities. The poster-calendar was a pleasant picture with a calendar, provided to the public for free. Nonetheless, the Western masterpieces shown on the posters did not arouse much interest among the Chinese, so local painters were hired to paint topics and styles suitable for Chinese consumers. Soon, beauties became the most popular and almost the only subject matter.<sup>37</sup>

The poster-calendar had its origins in and had inherited the tradition of the beauty painting, but it was much more prevalent. The newly imported printing skill of lithography enabled it to proliferate greatly,<sup>38</sup> boom period was 1896 to 1945, especially in the 1930s.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes, the images of products were also on the posters

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<sup>35</sup> Pei-chi Lou, "Xifeng dongjian – cong yuefenpai haibao kan zhongguo jindai pingmian sheji de xifang wenhua yingxiang (From the influence of the western culture on graphic design in modern China – based on the image of Monthly Calendar)," (Master thesis, National Kaoshiung Normal University, 2008), 18; Chao-ying Wu, "Cong Shanghai yuefenpai kan jindai zhongguo nuxing zhuangshi yu nuxing yishi de yanbian (From a look at the evolution of modern Chinese women's fashion and consciousness from Shanghai's calendar picture)," (Master thesis, National Pingtung University of Education, 2010), 1, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Wu, "Shanghai yuefenpai," 1, 16.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18; Lou, "Xifeng dongjian," 18; Yi-wen Wang, "Zhongguo yuefenpai meinu haibao tuxiang yanjiu (From a research of Chinese beauty image of 'Yue-Fen-Pai' poster)," (Master thesis, National Cheng Kung University, 1998), 60.

<sup>39</sup> Chia-chen Guo, "Yuefenpai yu shanghai minzu rentong (Poster-calendar and national identity of Shanghai)," *Wenhua yanjiu yuebao* (Cultural Studies Monthly Journal) 33, (November, 2003),

with beauties since the initial purpose of poster-calendar was business promotion (Figure IV-1). In later stages, most poster-calendars did not have a calendar or the image of products, just posters of beautiful women, for free or for sale. The image of beauty itself was a product. In the first half of the twentieth century, almost every Chinese family had this kind of poster-calendar hanging on the wall.<sup>40</sup>

Like the beauty painting of each era, the female imagery on the poster-calendar also reflected what was happening at the time. The image was a combination of Western and Chinese attributes. It is a record of how Western culture influences the traditional Chinese one and is a mixed result of the two dissimilar civilizations. Through analysing the poster-calendar, the transition of female images from traditional types to modern Western ones can be clearly demonstrated. The two main types of beauties on poster-calendar were “traditional Chinese beauty” and “modern beauty,” but the modern beauty had appeared more often reflecting the admiration of Western progress in China.<sup>41</sup> In the 1930s, the “modern beauty” who wore the revised and fitted *cheongsam* (qipao) prevailed.<sup>42</sup> In the following, the westernized beauty criteria can also be seen in women’s facial features, not only their dresses and the background of posters, see Figure IV-2.

In the long history of Chinese art, the facial expression and body gesture were unclear because of the conservative culture, as was the body exposure.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the way in which Western art values the physical beauty, as Jing Wu asserts, “[n]aked body portraiture which could be seen in Western painting was [...] a taboo in

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[http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/33/journal\\_park274.htm](http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/33/journal_park274.htm) (accessed February 3, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> Wu, “Shanghai yuefenpai,” 2.

<sup>41</sup> Lou, “Xifeng dongjian,” 41; Wang, “Zhongguo yuefenpai,” 70.

<sup>42</sup> Cheongsam was the clothing of the Qing Dynasty, which was originally loose and large, but altered to fit because of the influence of the west.

<sup>43</sup> Jing Wu, *A Comparison between Chinese and Western Paintings* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2008), 49.

traditional Chinese paintings.”<sup>44</sup> In Western painting, to represent the ratio and appearance of the human body realistically required adhering to scientific conditions, like anatomy and imitating real people as models. By contrast, the conservative attitude towards the body caused Chinese figure painting to lack realism.<sup>45</sup> Western painting emphasized three-dimensional skills, scenography and symmetry, while Chinese painting focused on two-dimension skills and lines.<sup>46</sup> The focus on lines was related to the use of the Chinese writing brush, which was used in calligraphy. Beauty painting, therefore, mainly emphasized lines, such as the flowing lines of dresses. The delicate design of dresses are also the focused upon.<sup>47</sup> As Jing Wu states, “[w]hen representing bodily beauty [Chinese painters] have the aid of dresses and adornments.”<sup>48</sup> However, the deep-rooted performance of beauty had been greatly changed at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poster-calendar for example.

The semi-nude or sexualised female body started to appear in the poster-calendar (Figure IV-3).<sup>49</sup> This demonstrated that the beauty standards had been greatly influenced by Western culture. The tight-fitting cheongsam highlight the curves of a woman’s body. The traditional image of overly thin, and effete women was not considered proper for bodily exposition, so healthy ones became the mainstream<sup>50</sup>. This change partly resulted from the admiration on the powerfully national strength. For this reason, healthy women going out and engaging in sports were popular topics. Due to the victories in the wars of Western countries, items and activities from the West came to symbolize progress and high-class to Chinese people.<sup>51</sup> For instance,

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<sup>44</sup> Wu, *Chinese and Western Paintings*, p.81.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>46</sup> Lou, “Xifeng dongjian,” 68.

<sup>47</sup> Mei-ju Fan, “A Study of Creating Chinese Elaborate-style (gongbi) Female Figures Painting,” (Master thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2002), 65-68.

<sup>48</sup> Wu, *Chinese and Western Paintings*, 81.

<sup>49</sup> Wang, “Zhongguo yuefenpai,” 58.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

music playing was still a favorite theme on the poster-calendars, since the subject matter was woman in most cases. Despite the fact that many of the women in the poster-calendars played Chinese instruments at that time, the Western instruments had also started to appear.<sup>52</sup> (see Figure IV-4 and Figure IV-5).

Although the representation of women's appearance had been altered to the Western style, the most popular topics for the depiction of women on the poster-calendars were still instrument playing, admiring flowers, holding mirrors or fans, and freely doing leisure activities, as in Chinese traditional beauty painting. Through these popular topics, artists were able to show women's charm and related to their beauty. The image of being "beautiful" mothers with their children is also popular as in the didactic painting.<sup>53</sup> Whatever their status and activities, the most essential aspect remains that they have to be "beautiful women." All of the beauties on the poster-calendars are created by male painters. The women on the poster-calendars reflect men's expectation of what an ideal woman of that era should be like at that time. In addition, poster-calendars are like an early-phased advertisement; their purpose was to encourage purchases. Female imagery was used to suit male desire and started systematically to produce commercial interests.<sup>54</sup>

The changes in pleasing the male gaze and the transformation of the beauty criteria can be seen in the poster-calendar, from wearing breast-binding to create a flat breast, which symbolized naivety and chastity in the Chinese tradition, to plump breasts, which were from Western culture, and from foot-binding to wearing high-heeled shoes. These female image changes show that women's bodies were deployed to meet patriarchal-built beauty standards and that women were speechless and could only obey them, not to mention the fact that these beauty criteria sometimes

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<sup>52</sup> Lou, "Xifeng dongjian," 47.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 42; Wang, "Zhongguo yuefenpai," 58.

<sup>54</sup> Wang, "Zhongguo yuefenpai," 69, 70, 71.

relied on torturing and causing pain to women's bodies. As Berger indicates, "[h]er body is made to appeal to his sexuality. It has nothing to do with her sexuality."<sup>55</sup> In modern times, the exploitation of women's bodies became much more serious, since the female image was combined with goods and could make a profit. From the poster-calendar, it can be shown that female imagery became the site where the patriarchy, capitalism and national power were exerted. Following the fully developed capitalism and almost everything-advertised society in modern times, the use and exploitation of the female image has been becoming more complete.

### **IV.3 The Female Image of the Communist Party**

By analysing the period from ancient times to the twentieth century, it can be shown that the female image has been constructed in part by contemporary events and environments. Influenced from Western politics and economics, the poster-calendar was a decisive point of modification of the female image. In 1949, the Chinese female imagery entered a phase of drastic change because of the establishment of the communist government.

Emily Honig mentions that "Mao's slogan 'The times have changed, men and women are the same' was propagated and the Iron Girls – strong, robust, muscular women [...] - were celebrated in newspapers, pamphlets, and posters."<sup>56</sup> Under the control of the communist party in the last half of the twentieth century, female imagery became very different and had never been seen in Chinese history. The image of working women and revolutionarily young women had been immensely promulgated; the items shown in the images were no longer musical instruments,

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<sup>55</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 55.

<sup>56</sup> Emily Honig, "Maoist Mappings of Gender: Reassessing the Red Guards," in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, eds. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 255.

mirrors, butterflies or other beautiful, fragile adornments, as before, but items for work or revolution. These images demonstrate that the environment was tough and difficult, but the people's faces and spirit were optimistic. Even the flowers that appeared on the posters had no relation to admiring flowers, but were for planting or picking. It was the first time that the image of working women became the highly-respected and widely-broadcasted object. The promotion of women's status contributed to women's feverish devotion to political reformation, and their zealous participation also led to the massive output of women's image, making it an important category.<sup>57</sup>

One woman, who had once participated in the Red Guard, recalled that their outfits were "army uniforms with long sleeves and long pants."<sup>58</sup> She adds that "[a]nything that would make girls look like girls was bourgeois. We covered up our bodies so completely that I almost forgot I was a girl."<sup>59</sup> This demonstrates the neutralized women image of that time. The intention of the Communist Party was to build an ideal image of cheerful, positive, rural and austere farmer-like people. This image implied that every one is equal and has similar working and living conditions under the rule of the Communist Party. However, the seeming "neutral" image was not really gender-free. It was de-feminine and gave everyone a manly appearance.<sup>60</sup> It demolished the traditionally feminine appearance and made both men and women appear similar.

Women's image was used to serve the political intentions of this period. The poster-calendar was no exception. After 1949, the government of the Communist Party wanted to eradicate the Western colonial culture and to control ideologies

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<sup>57</sup> Yan Shue, "The Study on Female Image in the Paintings of the Cultural Revolution (Wenga heihwa zoned nushin shinsian)," <http://www.Douban.com/group/topic /8639981/> (accessed November 12, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Honig, "Maoist Mappings of Gender," 257

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

comprehensively. In art, therefore, it closed all painting publishing companies and established an official one to oversee all production. As a popular medium, the poster-calendar had not been cancelled, but was reconstructed to serve as political propaganda for the Communist Party.<sup>61</sup>

The male painters adopted a compromised approach to present beauty and propagate political ideas simultaneously through the poster-calendars. These beauties meet the official requirements for reflecting working people's lives but are still good-looking to enhance the public's enjoyment. Hence, pig and silkworm rearing, and flower-planting beauties were produced.<sup>62</sup> This revolution shows that female imagery is a negotiation filled with the contemporarily patriarchal and political power. No matter how a woman looks, her appearance is an ingratiation to these authorities.

Every year, several hundred million poster-calendars were produced. The poster-calendar was the hugest publishing work in China at that time. Nevertheless, it suffered two periods of decline. One was the Great Leap Forward in 1958 which generated a disastrous famine and mass death. The second decline was during 1966 to 1977 of the Cultural Revolution. In these ten years, the hung paintings were only portraits of Mao and some political propaganda paintings. They used the skills of poster-calendars and thus had good quality and high popularity.<sup>63</sup>

Awakening from the darkness of the Cultural Revolution, the beauty poster-calendar returned and became highly accepted, especially beauties wearing vintage costumes. It was probably an attitude of compensation resulting from the devastating destruction of traditional culture during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>64</sup> Although the poster-calendar beauties wear traditional clothes, their looks remain

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<sup>60</sup> See note 75 above.

<sup>61</sup> Shou-zhi Wang, "Dalu yuefenpai de fazhan han shuailuo (The development and decline of poster-calendar in China)," *United Literature* 10:3, (January, 1994): 130, 131.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 134, 135.



modern types, not as in the ancient beauty paintings.

After the mid-1980s, following the reform and opening-up policy that dominated by the communist government, the female stars on delicate-printed posters overseas were brought into China and replaced the old-fashioned female image on the poster-calendars.<sup>65</sup> The poster-calendars, which witnessed the pivotal change in the female image, just became a remnant of the history of women's image. In recent years, even as a communist country, modern China cannot depart from the trend of potent capitalism and globalization, including the representation of the female image.

#### **IV. 4 The Female Image in Taiwan**

In Taiwan, female image in the twentieth century was relatively undeveloped. From 1895 to 1945, Taiwan was a colony of Japan. The society had been rigorously supervised and the social climate was austere. Furthermore, the population of Taiwan at that time was small. Despite this, the female image in limited paintings also demonstrated a style of synthesis of the Western and traditional Chinese representation, since Japan advocated and implemented Westernization in both its land and Taiwan.<sup>66</sup> In 1949, the Chinese Nationalist Party government lost its sovereignty over China and moved to Taiwan. A lot of Chinese people migrated to Taiwan with the government. These immigrants made up of a large part of the current population of Taiwan. Additionally, the Chinese Nationalist Party government claimed its legitimacy of China, so Chinese culture had been well preserved and developed in Taiwan.

In the 1950s, to consolidate the political power, the government strengthened the rule of society and every aspect of Taiwan thus became even more conservative.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Mei-fan Liu, "Rizhi shiqi taiwan dongyang huajia de nuxing tical huazuo yanjiu (From study on female figure painting of the Japanese colonial period)," (Master thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 1998,) i.

The appreciation of beauty had also been excessively oppressed.<sup>67</sup> The government had forbidden the import of foreign cosmetics and levied a high tax on domestic ones.<sup>68</sup> In addition, most women at that era only had restricted social space and limited outdoor activities, so the female image and appearance was simple and sober in general.<sup>69</sup>

In the 1970s, the golden era of Taiwanese literary and romantic films created a few female stars. Their images and dresses started to be introduced sometimes in magazines, but in general the discussion on women's appearance in society was still rare.<sup>70</sup> Accompanying the abolishment of martial law in 1987, the social climate has been vivacious and thus the internal and overseas information has been communicated speedily. The swiftly developed economics even accelerated capitalization. The assimilation and identity of Western culture made the female image closely connected to capitalism.

#### **IV.5 The Position of Women Artists**

Due to the patriarchal constitution of society, whatever her age and status, a woman must obey the men in her family, as the guiding principle of the “three obediences (*santsong*)” for women over two thousand years: obey her father before marriage, obey her husband after marriage and obey her son when widowed.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, women had very limited power over decision-making. It was often difficult for women to be patrons or painters. As Tseng Yuho points out, “Chinese women lived within a narrow social world with obligations inside the family only and

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<sup>67</sup> Jui-shan Liang, “Zhanhou taiwan huazhuangpin chanxiao yu nuxing zhuangban wenhua (From the relationship between the marketing of cosmetics and make-up culture of women from 1950 to 1980 in Taiwan),” (Master thesis, National Chi Nan University, 2005), 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 8.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 144.

<sup>71</sup> See both page 11 and endnote 39 on page 30 of Introduction Chapter; Tseng Yuho, “Women Painter

had no rights in the community.”<sup>72</sup> That is the reason why almost no female patrons are recognized in Chinese history, which is different from the Western social structure, when rich women can be benefactors, such as Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864-1953) and Princesse de Polignac (1865-1943).

In addition, foot-binding, initiated from the tenth century, further restrained women’s activity and opportunity. Yuho analyses this damage to women’s development: “The procedure crippled women physically and greatly reduced their creative faculties.”<sup>73</sup> In addition, the inferior status led to women’s works being ignored and rarely been handed down. As Yuho concludes, “The number of women painters remained small in comparison with their male contemporaries, and an even smaller percentage of their art works survives”.<sup>74</sup>

Women who had the opportunity to paint in traditional Chinese society were usually courtesans and concubines. For entertaining male literati and consumers, high-level courtesans were skilled at painting, musical instrument playing, singing and even poetry-writing. For the same reason, concubines also used their painting ability to please their cultivated husbands, because art was a subject they could chat about and a leisure activity which they could engage in together. In ancient China, usually, deciding which woman was to be a wife was based on her family background, class origin and financial resources, rather than her painting ability.<sup>75</sup>

The relationship between women and painting shows that not only was the female image designed for male visual pleasure, but that women’s own painting endeavours were designed to attract men. No matter whether a passive object to be represented or the active creator, women have always lived in a male-centered

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of the Ming Dynasty,” in *Artibus Asiae* Vol.53, no.1/2, (1993):249.

<sup>72</sup> Tseng, “Women Painter,” 249.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

mechanism which had been devoted to satisfying men. The subject matter which women painted was mostly landscapes and plants. The reason why they did not paint themselves or other women might have been to avoid making men feel threatened. Women who painted female figures seem like they can speak for themselves. It is like depriving men of their status as an image maker and their control over women, which happened in reality.

However, can women really express their subjectivity if they can paint the female image? Living in such a deeply gendered and stereotypical society, it is possible that women act according to the standards set up by men. They use men's eyes and thoughts to picture themselves, and conjecture the preferred image of themselves in the patriarchal society. This idea will be analysed in the section about the poster production of Taiwanese female musicians, since Taiwan female musicians usually make their own posters nowadays. Their situation was unique from the contexts of traditional Chinese women, who do not have the right to decide their image.

Even in recent Taiwan, women artists still do not own much room for development. In the Japanese colonial period, very few women became painters. Just five women students went abroad to Japan to study and one of them became a painter. Most of them abandoned their career because of marriage or pregnancy.<sup>76</sup> In the 1980s, only a few women artists competed in the art field. Their works said almost nothing about women's self-consciousness. At the end of the 1990s, accompanying the political liberation, some voices about women's bodies and sexual desire had started to be heard from women artists.<sup>77</sup> In general, female imagery as a topic in the artistic

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<sup>76</sup> Min-chu Lai, *Liuchuande nushin fuhau* (Transitional female signs: Arts of female image in Taiwan before war) (Taipei: Artists Press, 2009), 85, 88, 89, 107.

<sup>77</sup> Shin-chin Lai, "Yijiujulin niandai Taiwan nuxing yishu yanjiu (From the study on Taiwanese women's arts of 1990s)," (Master thesis, National Chung Cheng University, 2004), 49, 53, 55; Man-hua Chen, "Zai yinni yu xianjuan zhijian: jieyan hou taiwan nuxing yishu de shenti shuxie (From moving

field did not flourish. In 2011, the women artists association finally obtained the official funds to rent a place for their meetings and for female artists' exhibitions. By providing the exhibition site, they hope that it can encourage Taiwanese women artists, who usually gave up their talent after marriage or pregnancy, to continue to create artworks.<sup>78</sup> This shows that there are similar conflicts between marriage and a career for Taiwanese female artists during the past century and even now, and women often choose to leave art.

## IV.6 Chinese Culture and Female Musicians' Image

### IV.6.1 Musical Instruments

After didactic painting began to wane and beauty painting developed into "belle painting", "ladies (*gui xiu*)" and "prostitutes" became the two principal subjects. Ladies are a special group in traditional Chinese society; they are educated and from the upper class. The common subjects for lady paintings are playing musical instruments, admiring or twisting flowers, holding a fan, looking in a mirror, and creating poems. In the prostitute paintings, other than the beautiful image, the body's attractiveness is also important. Nonetheless, because of the conservative Chinese culture, sexuality is expressed through exceptionally dainty and charming gestures.<sup>79</sup> Like the lady paintings, a familiar theme in the prostitute paintings is instrument playing, including the Chinese instruments, the *qin* and the *pipa*, as music playing is the most fundamental skill among prostitutes for entertaining customers.<sup>80</sup> From the lady and prostitute paintings, it is clear that playing music instruments is seen as a very attractive activity for women in Chinese culture.

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between absence and presence: The body writing of Taiwanese women's art in the post-Martial law era," (Master thesis, Tainan National University of the Arts, 2005), 1, 20, 24, 29.

<sup>78</sup> Chien-lin Shi, "Women Artists Association have a Site Resources will be more Plentiful," *Taiwan Lipao*, January 23, 2011, <http://www.lihpao.com/?action-viewnews-itemid-103853>

<sup>79</sup> Liang, "Shinu hua," 83.

Hence, belle paintings, a painting category that existed mainly for male visual pleasure, used this topic frequently. Musical instruments thus became necessary items to accompany beauties in Chinese culture. Even in the westernized poster-calendar at the start of the twentieth century, instruments still frequently appeared to show women's cultivation. Not only Chinese instruments but also Western ones, like violins, pianos, and guitars, were presented to signify an elite class.<sup>81</sup> Western instruments were signifiers of Western values at that time, such as progress, fashion, and luxury. Hence, the emergence and connotation of these images have both historical traces and contemporary meanings. This deep-rooted tradition and culture of connecting beauty with instruments might also influence Taiwanese people's opinions about female musicians, especially through seeing their beautiful images with their instruments on posters.

#### **IV.6.2 The Female Image and the Viewer**

Due to the strict demarcation between the two genders in Chinese tradition, it was impossible that women would be male painters' models. Prostitute painting was an exception. The male literati socialized with prostitutes often, so they could paint these women from memory.<sup>82</sup> From the middle of the Qing dynasty, in a few cases, male painters started directly to portray prostitutes.<sup>83</sup> The portraits of individual prostitutes at that time acted as a guidebook for men to search for women whom they admired. The background of the painting is usually a delicate bedroom, and sometimes the clothes and body postures are erotically attractive. In the prostitute paintings, therefore, women have been thoroughly objectified and commercialized.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>81</sup> Lou, "Xifeng dongjian," 45.

<sup>82</sup> Liang, "Shinu hua," 73.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 91.

As for the modern Taiwanese female musicians' poster images, there are some similarities with this kind of prostitute paintings. It shows that the alluring aura can be made under the same condition, despite the fact that time has passed. Some of the backgrounds of the posters imply that it is a bedroom and the female musicians wear inviting but expensive dresses (Figures IV-6, IV-7, IV-8 and IV-9). They also display seductive gestures and poses, whether the settings are like a bedroom, a glorious living room or just with the musical instruments. These poses strongly imply that the viewer is in a bedroom with the female musician and that the viewer may have a close relationship with her, because these sexy poses are only supposed to be seen in a private space (Figures IV-10, IV-11, IV-12 and IV-13). This kind of poster further implies that the expected viewer is a man, if heterosexuality is the supposed condition.

However, opposed to the bold body pose and sexy clothes, the facial appearance of the female musicians' images on the posters is very shy. Many of them slightly lower or bend their heads to convey their bashfulness and submission, as does their expression in their eyes (Figures IV-14, IV-15, IV-16, IV-17, IV-18, IV-19, IV-20, IV-21, IV-22, IV-23 and IV-24). Their eyes do not see the viewers directly. This is inherited from the tradition of beauty painting. Before the western-influenced poster-calendar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women's eyes in the history of Chinese female figure painting seldom look at the viewers.<sup>85</sup> On the poster-calendars, it is the first time in Chinese art history that women look straight at the viewer and smile. The angle of the eyes at the same level usually manifests a more equal relationship. On the contrary, the shy expression of eyes in Chinese painting convey the passive, subservient, and obedient attitude of women which is the normal image of women in ancient China.

This trait, however, has been brought into the modern Taiwanese female

musicians' posters on a wide scale. It appears that the female musicians collect the most attractive elements simultaneously for Taiwanese men, though the image suggests two different categories, the prostitute and the "belle." They have the sensual body poses and dresses to arouse men's interest. On the other hand, they are still shy, simple, and conservative in their facial expressions. This implies that they have virtue and chastity, but are no threat to men. Their downcast eyes indicate that they are submissive, just like the women in ancient China. The major difference is that the makers of the ancient female image are men, but the posters are made by the musicians themselves. This mechanism is like what Berger analyses in *Ways of Seeing*: "It is the expression of a woman responding with calculated charm to the man whom she imagines looking at her – although she doesn't know him. She is offering up her femininity as the surveyed."<sup>86</sup>

### **IV.6.3 Adornments**

In general, no matter whether it is the prostitute, lady or the later-period didactic painting, and even the poster-calendar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all of them share certain characteristics. First, the women in the portraits have to be conventionally beautiful and since the most crucial element in paintings is beauty, the status of the women is no longer an important factor. As part of this trend, the beauty painting was gradually presenting a fixed pattern.<sup>87</sup> The painters simply drew pretty women conforming to contemporary ideas of beauty. Other than the popular topic of musical instruments to symbolize class and charm, some items have also been repeatedly painted over thousands of years as symbols of beauty, such as flowers and mirrors.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Lou, "Xifeng dongjian," 71; Wang, "Zhongguo yuefenpai," 62.

<sup>86</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 55.

<sup>87</sup> Liang, "Shinu hua," 119.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 121, 123.



The relationship between attractive women and flowers has a long tradition in Chinese culture. In some literature, beauties and flowers are even seen as identical objects, or women are described as flowers.<sup>89</sup> There are also many widely-known idioms associating beauty and flowers, such as “fair as a flower and beautiful as the moon (*hwarong yuemaο*),” “the person is more charming than flowers (*renbi hwajiao*),” “shy moon and bashful flower (*biyue xiuhwa*).”<sup>90</sup> Consequently, a flower is a common item in female imagery, whether the beauties are admiring or twisting flowers or wearing them as adornment.

A mirror is another object frequently shown in paintings. In countless beauty paintings, women are looking in a mirror in order to beautify themselves.<sup>91</sup> In the tradition of Western art, the mirror is also a code for beauty. As Berger observes, “[t]he function of the mirror was [...] to make the woman connive in treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight.”<sup>92</sup> Sturken and Cartwright also note: “There has been throughout the history of art a convention of depicting women gazing at themselves in mirror, [...] The mirror is also a code for femininity.”<sup>93</sup>

Taiwanese female musicians’ posters also have these signifiers which are connected to entralling women in art history. In the posters, other than taking a photo with real flowers or using flowers as adornments, the women musicians also frequently include flower images on posters through using computer graphics (Figures IV-10, IV-22, IV-23, IV-24, IV-25, IV-26 and IV-27). The mirror effect is also a photographic skill on some posters (Figures IV-28 and IV-29). Consequently, from the background space and the objects included, it can be found that modern Taiwanese

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>90</sup> Shu-chi Shen, “Zhongguo yuefenpai meinu haibao (1896 - 1945) zhi yan jiu (From the study of Chinese ‘Poster-calendars’ from 1896-1945),” (Master thesis, Tainan National University of the Arts, 2000), 52.

<sup>91</sup> Liang, “Shinu hua,” 123.

<sup>92</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 39.

<sup>93</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 124.

female musicians' poster images share some similarities with ancient Chinese beauty paintings. This does not mean that female musicians imitate the paintings directly or check the paintings before they made their own posters. As one of the Chinese lineages, Taiwanese people have been educated in and are familiar with Chinese culture. The tradition of using some signifiers may be rooted in a culture and influence and form the modern usage of image representation at some level.

#### **IV.7 Conclusion**

By reviewing and analysing the female image throughout the whole of Chinese history, the chronological context of the image of modern Taiwanese female musicians has been demonstrated. Due to their unequal position in traditional society, the image of women had been used to serve patriarchy, whether by pleasing the male gaze or in instructing women. Over thousands of years, the images have continually been constructed by men. However, although the images of modern Taiwanese women musicians are made by themselves, it is clear that they use a lot of cultural signifiers to build posters that entertain male gaze. Maybe even though the time passed, the male-centered discourse has not been altered much. As Berger concludes: “[...] the essential way of seeing women, the essential use to which their images are put, has not changed. [...] because the ‘ideal’ spectator is always assumed to be man and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him.”

Following the advances in technology, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is much more a period of ocularcentrism. The visual media fill our everyday lives. The female image has become a site for numerous desires. Before further analyzing the image of Taiwanese women musicians, in the following two chapters, three kinds of modern Taiwanese female images will be scrutinized in order to illustrate the contemporary context. They

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are advertising, magazines and wedding photos. The investigation of the contexts of tradition and modernism will provide a reliable standpoint for presenting a detailed discussion of the codes and meanings of the female musicians' posters.



Figure IV-1 Woman Singer in Xunyang, Circa 1920's, Commercial Brand Cigarettes.  
The woman in the painting is playing the Chinese string instrument, pipa.  
The product, a cigarette box, is on the right corner. From Yen Gao, *Monthly Caleners of the Era* (Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House, 2003), 99.



Figure IV-2 1930's, Painter: Mei-sheng Jin. (Gao, *Monthly Caleners of the Era*, 59.)



Figure IV-3 Date Unknown, Painter: Zhi-ying Hang. (Gao, *Monthly Calenders of the Era*, 69.)

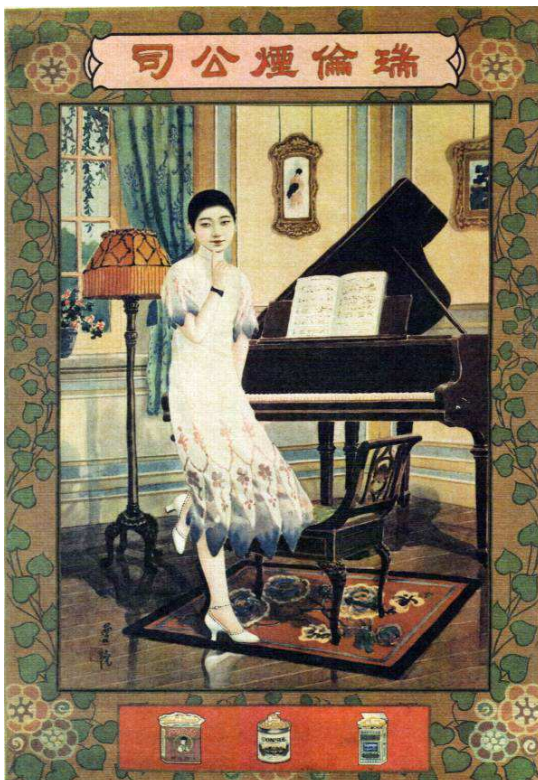


Figure IV-4 Say Lun Cigarette Company, Painter: Mantuo Zheng (1885-1959), 1929. From Pei-chun Lian, *Modern Times: Chinese Women in Advertising* (Macao: Macao Art Museum, 2009), 26.





Figure IV-5 Beauty in Four Seasons. (Gao, *Monthly Calenders of the Era*, 35.)

## V. Female Musicians' Image and Modern Female Images: Advertising and Magazines

“Every day, we engage in practices of looking to make sense of the world.”<sup>1</sup> With this opening remark in *Practices of Looking*, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, point out the centrality of visuality to modern society. John Berger also states that “[i]n no other form of society in history has there been such a concentration of images, such a density of visual messages.”<sup>2</sup> Through the agency of technologies, diverse visual forms have permeated into our daily lives, such as advertisements, billboards, television programmes, films, screens, photos, magazines, newspapers, books and arts. All of these different images, as Gillian Rose suggests in *Visual Methodologies*, “offer views of the world; they render the world in visual terms. But this redering, even by photographs, is never innocent. These images are never transparent windows onto the world.”<sup>3</sup> Most images are made for specific purposes or commercial pursuits. Living in a circumstance which is fully surrounded by images, looking has become an activity over which people do not have much control regarding what they want or do not want to see.<sup>4</sup>

As a modern and capitalistic country, Taiwan is also filled with visual circulation. In modern Taiwan, nonetheless, the female image is closely intertwined with visual media. Women’s bodies and appearance are the highlight in various kinds of activities and sites. Not only in advertisements, television programmes and magazines, but also in large commercial exhibitions of personal computers, electric appliances, cars, food, furniture or promoting the government’s activities, all feature

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<sup>1</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 129.

<sup>3</sup> Gillian, Rose. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2012), 2.

sexy women. Show girls wearing suggestive clothing often feature in these situations. Tsung-huei Huang, a professor at the National Taiwan University, argues that the “beauty economy” is a fevered phenomenon in Taiwan, boosting economic selling and profits. The vision of the exposed female body is at the core of this trend. Initially, Huang points out, the beauty economy was limited to the activities of profit-oriented selling and it obviously aimed at provoking male customers’ gaze and attention, but it eventually turned into a general social climate of laying emphases on women’s attractions. Aside from the female image being exploited and consumed for marketing, under the social climate of the “beauty economy,” it might contribute towards women making their image charming in order to gain more advantages in their life and career.<sup>5</sup>

In this sense, the definition of a womanly beauty has thus been narrowed. What can be called “beauty” would gradually become standardized. Beauty is a constructed product and a standardized criterion. As Green indicates, “Attractiveness is to some extent discursively constructed, not possessed. The degree of attention paid to displaying the body can be understood in terms of the construction of ‘attractiveness.’”<sup>6</sup> The numerous magazines, advertisements, television programmes and other media featuring typical beauties have provided models for women and desired objects for men. Women have interiorized the image and used it to examine themselves; men also use these criteria to look at women. Other than the general prototype for women’s image, female musicians also have stereotypes concerning their appearance, but the latter is naturally influenced by the former, since the former

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<sup>4</sup> See note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Chia-fong Chang, “Tsung-huei Huang: Wuhua haishi zizhu (Tsung-huei Huang: Is it Consumption or Fashion for Beauties? Fetishism or Libertarianism),” *Taiwan News Weekly*, (27<sup>th</sup> April, 2006): 46, 47; Yi-jing Zhou, “Meili rancaifu chong fenpei (Beauty let Money Reallocated),” *Taiwan News Weekly*, (27<sup>th</sup> April, 2006): 40; Jie yang, “Nuxing injijue (Ruei-suei Sung: Women should be Self-conscious to Avoid Following Blindly),” *Taiwan News Weekly*, (27<sup>th</sup> April, 2006): 45, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Green, *Music Gender, Education*, 39.



is prevalently circulated and both of them are generated in the same context.

Sturken and Cartwright note that “[...] transnational cultural flows create a homogenization of culture yet they also foster diversification, hybridity, and new global audiences.”<sup>7</sup> This illustrates the compromising position of many countries under the wave of globalization, including Taiwan. The powerful Westernized influence and traditional culture that simultaneously existed in modern Taiwan have blended in many areas and then created new scenes. The image of Taiwanese female musicians is an example of this. It has incorporated both socio-historical elements and global beauty standards; moreover, it has also reflected the unique context of Western classical music in Taiwan. Hence, after the previous chapter’s analyses of women’s image as inherited from the Chinese tradition and its imprint on contemporary female musicians’ imagery, this and the next chapters will scrutinize three types of the most widespread and significant modern printed female images in Taiwan and their relation to female musicians’ image. The selected images are women in advertisements, magazines, and wedding photos. This will place female musicians’ images in context.

## **V.1 Photography and Paintings**

Instead of representing women in paintings, the invention of photography has had a more extensive influence on women’s lives for two reasons – its realism and the capability for mass duplication.<sup>8</sup> The substance of reflecting the reality of photography is just as Berger states in *Uses of Photography*, “[u]nlike any other visual image, a photograph is not rendering, an imitation or an interpretation of its subject, but actually a trace of it. No painting or drawing [...] belongs to its subject in the way

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<sup>7</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 389.

<sup>8</sup> Lin-may Hung, “Ying xiang ning shi zhi qing se zai xian (From the erotic gaze of photographic

that a photograph does.”<sup>9</sup> The photograph has usually been seen as a record of reality and thus possesses authenticity.<sup>10</sup> Susan Sontag also notes: “A photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real: it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.”<sup>11</sup> These traits of photography can easily lead to the idea that images in photos are objective presentations, at least more convincing than in paintings.

Berger indicates the general impression which most people hold: “Photographs are relics of the past, traces of what has happened.” A photo, nonetheless, is in fact made of a series of intentional choices.<sup>12</sup> The subject displayed or deleted and the figure which takes the leading or subordinate role in a photo are decided by conscious actions. In addition to the photographer’s scheme, these actions also mirror the ideologies in a society from which this photo is derived. Consequently, as in the paintings of ancient times, women in photos also reveal to the viewer the role which women play in society.

Before the emergence of photography, few people were wealthy or powerful enough in terms of time and expenditure to hire painters to preserve their own or their family’s image.<sup>13</sup> In Chinese history, most of the women in paintings were ladies of high social status, such as the relatives or concubines of emperors or those of prestigious rank. Other than the women from well-bred circles, prostitutes, fairies, female figures in novels and even anonymous women created by male painters’ imagination had all followed the beauty criteria which were built under

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representation),” (Master thesis, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, 2003), 1.

<sup>9</sup> John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 54.

<sup>10</sup> Hui-ching Lo, “Jianzheng aiqing - taiwan dangdai hunsha sheying zhi shehuixiao fenxi (1970 nian ~) (From witness love: A sociological analysis of contemporary bridal photography in Taiwan (since 1970~),” (Master thesis, Yuan Ze University, 2006), 59, 60.

<sup>11</sup> Berger, *About Looking*, 54.

<sup>12</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Yu-ying Lee, “Shixian nide minxing mong (Dreams Come True – Wedding Photography in

phallogocentrism and aimed at pleasing men. Women themselves were silent in the image-making process, since the majority of painters and sponsors were male.

Due to photography, in contemporary society, making an image is no longer a highly consuming task, as it was before. The rise of digital photography especially and its related apparatus makes it even easier and cheaper. In Taiwan, the wide use of these technologies allow people, including women, to conveniently create and possess their own and others' images. Due to the change of social environment and the progress of technology, the relationship between the image and women has finally been changed. Photography is not only a common feature in people's daily lives, but is also applied extensively for business purposes. As Berger mentions, "[p]hotographs have often been used as a radical weapon in posters, newspapers, pamphlets, and so on."<sup>14</sup> Other than men, women are now also users and consumers. Many products and their relevant images are designed to attract women's attention and satisfy their visual pleasure, such as women's magazines and the advertising of women's commodities. Furthermore, many women control their own image-making by autodyne or go to professional photo studios. Aside from being looked at, it might be the first time that women can also be the creators, patrons and viewers of what was previously principally designed only for men.

In Taiwan, nonetheless, no matter the category of female image, most female imageries are still presented as if designed for the male gaze; they are merely mixed with modern elements and portrayed in a Westernized style. This looking mechanism between men and women is analysed by Berger: "[...] the essential way of seeing women, the essential use to which their images are put, has not changed. Women are depicted in a quite different way from men [...] because the 'ideal' spectator is always

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Contemporary Taiwan)," *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* 36, (December, 1999): 157.

assumed to be man and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him.”<sup>15</sup> Due to the technology of the internet and printing industry of this generation, the stereotypical women’s image will be prevalent and thus influential upon people’s recognition of gender. Growing up in Taiwan, the posters of female musicians would have scarce chance not to be affected by the popular women’s images. However, adopting which element in concert posters is still related to the special position of Western classical music in Taiwanese society. Through the following analyses, the modern context for female musicians’ image in Taiwan will be demonstrated.

## V.2 Women’s Image in Advertising

Among the images we encounter every day, advertising might be the most ubiquitous category for most people. As Berger states, “[i]n the cities in which we live, all of us see hundreds of publicity images every day of our lives.”<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon has also been vividly described in *Practices of Looking* by Sturken and Cartwright: “We are confronted with advertising images constantly through the course of our daily lives, in newspapers and magazines, on television, in movie theaters, on billboards, on public transportation. On clothing, on websites, and in many other contexts in which we may not even notice them.”<sup>17</sup> Countless publicity emerges around us and past us every day. Hence, to impress people within a limited time is becoming one of the most fundamental purposes of advertising.<sup>18</sup>

Advertising is a tool for swiftly conveying messages, values and desire for

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<sup>14</sup> Berger, *About Looking*, 60.

<sup>15</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 64.

<sup>16</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 129.

<sup>17</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 265.

<sup>18</sup> Ping Shaw, “Meijieyu Xingbie (Media and Gender)” in *Xingbie sianduyu Taiwan shehui* (Gender Dimensions in Taiwanese Society), eds. Su-ling Hwang and Mei-hui You (Taipei: Juliu Books Company, 2007), 74.

products. According to this basis, it usually uses and simplifies existing elements, because the conventional and commonly-used units can quickly help people to comprehend what the advert wants to express. In the process of communication, the transmitter certainly wishes to ensure that the message has been accepted accurately and avoid divergent interpretations. Advertising, for this reason, often uses categorized signs which are familiar to its audiences.<sup>19</sup> Ya-shing Shieh, Ding-bang Luh and Shiann-far Kung point out this manipulation of advertising: “Metaphors make ads more creative and their idea and communication more effective.”<sup>20</sup> Repeatedly displaying the metaphors and social stereotypes, however, would make the conventions more deep-rooted. In these stereotypes, gender is a frequently used element. The gendered images in advertising have spread across many countries through global enterprises, such as the ads for cosmetics, clothes, adornments and perfume.<sup>21</sup> Advertising has thus reinforced and played a part in creating ideologies among the people who see the gendered images.

### **V.2.1 Gender and Advertising**

The typically gendered roles that repeatedly appear in advertising would legitimize these images as natural ones for women and men. As Chyong-ling Lin and Jin-tsann Yeh argue: “These depictions of context and imagery, with the purpose of selling something, create and propel modern-day myths of what [...] it means to be ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ [...]”<sup>22</sup> In real life, it is easy for any person to be deemed

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<sup>19</sup> Dong-ju Yoo, “Consuming Modernity: Women, Food and Promotional Culture in Contemporary Korea,” (PhD thesis, Loughborough University, 1996), 48.

<sup>20</sup> Ya-shing Shieh, Dingbang Luh, and C. Shiann-far Kung, “Fashion Magazine Advertisements in Taiwan: Applying Conceptual Metaphors in Delineating Creative Service Ideas,” <http://140.116.240.46/ISAD/files/PA8971014-a.pdf> (accessed October 5th, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Katherine Toland Frith, Hong Cheng, and Ping Shaw, “Race and Beauty: A Comparison of Asian and Western Models in Women’s Magazine Advertisements,” *Sex Roles* 50:1/2, (January, 2004): 54.

<sup>22</sup> Chyong-ling Lin and Jin-tsann Yeh, “Comparing Society’s Awareness of Women: Media-Portrayed Idealized Images and Physical Attractiveness,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 90 (2009): 61.

“abnormal” if she/he acts differently from the group to which she/he belongs in the mass media. As Dong-ju Yoo indicates, “[...] advertising in a modern capitalist society plays a role as an agent of identity formation [...].”<sup>23</sup> Advertising teaches people what kind of image tallies with the social standards and expectations.<sup>24</sup> It provides prototypes for specific groups, so people can choose the “correct” image to which they belong.

In Chinese culture, the ideal images of men and women are summarized by Chyong-ling Lin and Jin-tsann Yeh as follows, “[...] masculinity in traditional contexts includes achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and success in careers. Conversely, femininity includes gentler, more peaceful characteristics such as modesty [...] and family centeredness.”<sup>25</sup> Modern advertising in Taiwan simply reflects that it has inherited some of the traditional ideologies about gender. Taiwanese research on advertising and gender indicate similar results: the locations in which women appear in advertising most often are the kitchen and spaces that need domestic carers.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, men are usually in the work place; when men appear at home, they are in their study or living room. Women are inclined to sell cleaning appliances, cosmetics and articles for daily use, while men are the brand representatives for cars, buildings, high technological products and sports items.<sup>27</sup>

Although women are often the protagonists in household electronics adverts, the instructors are always male. In television advertising, no matter which kind of product is being sold, men are mostly the professionals who rationally introduce the

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<sup>23</sup> Dong-ju Yoo, “Consuming Modernity,” 45.

<sup>24</sup> Lin and Yeh, “Comparing Society’s Awareness of Women,” 62.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>26</sup> Lin-chiao Hwang, “Dianshi xiangshui guanggao zhong de xingbie yihan (From gender meaning in perfume advertising on television),” (Master thesis, National Kaohsiung Normal University, 2009), 2, 6, 91; Shi-yun Hsu, “Zazhi guanggao zhong de wenhua jiazhi yu xingbie jiaose yanjiu 1978 – 2003 (From the cultural values and gendered roles in magazine Advertisements: 1978-2003),” (Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2004), 84.

<sup>27</sup> Hwang, “Dianshi xiangshui guanggao,” 2, 17, 19.

commodity and teach the female consumers how to use it.<sup>28</sup> Even in the advertising of cosmetics, the role of explaining the ingredients and effects is usually played by a male voice-over and male authorities, such as males with a PhD in chemistry, male dermatologists and make-up artists.<sup>29</sup> Aside from the housewife, the other common role of women is as a sex object.<sup>30</sup> Their suggestive body poses or partial nakedness have been highlighted in the advertising of diverse commodities. In most advertisements, women are also the passive ones, waiting for men's gifts, such as diamond engagement rings, marital homes and birthday presents.<sup>31</sup> Being housewives cleaning the house, or alluring beauties, the fixed female roles in advertising reflect the social expectations of women. In advertising, whether in print or on television, the images of the two genders are firm: men are the professionals, protectors, economic providers or gazers; their representations are specialized, strong-minded and independent.<sup>32</sup> Women are the product testers or beauties; they need to be taught, protected or present themselves as desirable.<sup>33</sup> Advertising thus reinforces the gender binary.

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<sup>28</sup> Chia-hsuan Chang, "Guanggao xunxi, guanggao jiedou yu meili xiaofei (From ad message, ad interpretation and beauty consumption – a study of higher education female and cosmetic ad)," (Master thesis, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2006), 9; Chin-hwa Chang, "Dazhong Chuanbo Yanjiu Lingyu Zongde Nuxing Yanjiu (The Women's Studies in the Research Field of Mass Media: Taking Advertising as the Study Case)," *Funyu Lianxing Yanjiu Jikan* (The Quarterly Journal of Women and Genders) no.1 (1993): 6, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Yu-zong Tu, "Shei zai sushui nuren de juanti? – yi shoujuan lei zixun shi guanggao weili (From who is telling women's body? – a study case on advertising of slenderness)," (Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2004), 10, 100, 102; Hwang, "Dianshi xiangshui guanggao," 18.

<sup>30</sup> Chih-chiao Chen, "Meishuxi nannu xiaosheng dui guanggao zhong nuxing xingxiang jiedou zhi yanjiu (From a study of fine art students' interpretations and perceptions of female image in the advertisements: Using 16 male and female undergraduate students as participants)," (Master thesis, National Chiayi University, 2004), 34.

<sup>31</sup> Chun-liang, Lin, "Yuedou qiche guanggao: guanggao wenen de xingbie yu kongjian fenxi (From reading automobile advertisement: Analysis of gender and space in advertising text)," (Master thesis, National Taiwan University, 2002), 52.

<sup>32</sup> Lin, "Yuedou qiche guanggao," 36-51.

<sup>33</sup> Hsiu-hui Sun, "Guangaoyu Lianxing (Advertising and Two Genders)," in *Xingzhu Guanxi* (Gender and its Relationships), ed. Ya-ko Wang, (Taipei: Xinli Publishing House, 1999), 65; Pey-fang Tsai, "Wo shi nusheng, piaoliang de nusheng?! guanggao zhong de meimao misi yu qingshaonu de xingbie rentong (From I am a girl, a beautiful girl?! The adolescent girls' gender identification and beauty myth in advertising)," (Master thesis, National Sun Yat-sen University, 2004), 23; Hwang, "Dianshi xiangshui guanggao," 91.

Any advertisement has its expected readers and consumers. How to attract possible buyers is a consideration from the initial design of each advertisement. Along with women's rising education level and labour participation rate, career women have been targeted as a potential group because of their income and consumption power. Catering to these career women, some advertisements in Taiwan have started to use different images to fit in with their self-image. In these new advertisements on television or in printed format, it is no longer only the typically frugal housekeeper image of women that sells household electronics. Women doing the housework do not wear austere, casual clothes, but sumptuous evening dresses and have elegant hair styles.<sup>34</sup>

Instead of the stereotype of housewives in Taiwan, the nobly dressed women's image is easily associated with a well-educated and high social status. The Western gown symbolizes the civil and elegant elements which also elevate the image of the commodities. However, even in this kind of advertising, women are still not qualified to introduce the functions of these machines. Men steadfastly play the instructors to teach women how to use the electronics and explain the mechanical structure.<sup>35</sup> After all, other than being a sex object, the manifest change in the female image is that women can finally take off their dirty leisure wear and then switch to wearing beautiful clothes in the house. Perhaps it is not even progress for women, but more requirements regarding their appearance. This kind of advertising has demonstrated that it is still women who are the assumed users of vacuum cleaners and washing machines, even though she is now a nobly dressed woman.

Contrary to the old female image, the newly-emerged advertisements present a different female image to attract modern women who have academic degrees and their

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<sup>34</sup> At the time of writing, the advertisement were available online at <http://www.hsct.com.tw/>

<sup>35</sup> Hwang, "Dianshi xiangshui guanggao," 18.



own job and income. Other than the changed clothing style, the appeal of these adverts has focused on women's autonomy. It advocates that women can buy things for themselves and do not need men's gifts. These designs in advertising of women's gorgeous appearance as well as narrative plots based on their independent character are just tools to encourage women to make purchases.<sup>36</sup> Female empowerment has been deliberately translated to commodity feminism.<sup>37</sup> This sort of advertising uses quasi-feminist language to communicate with women who approve of these values.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the advertising makers just followed the change in women's status of the day. The aim is to attract female consumers whose situation or identity is similar to the female roles in advertising, such as single, working and economically independent. The advertising stimulates the consumerist desire based on the concept of independency and liberation which are attached to the commodities.

Another strategy that will be analysed is the looking relationship constituted in advertising. As Katherine Frith, Ping Shaw, and Hong Cheng state, "[...] the predominant 'gaze' in Western art and advertising has historically been the male gaze."<sup>39</sup> Naomi Wolf, the author of the well-known book, *Beauty Myth*, also points out that "[...] the advertisements, photo features, and beauty copy in the glossies [...] tell women what men truly want, what faces and bodies provoke men's fickle attentions [...]."<sup>40</sup> Since most female images are created for men's viewing pleasure, Frith mentions that "[...] when women pose for the camera, they often assume or are asked to assume submissive or passive stance with 'lowered eyes, head down'.<sup>41</sup> This pose makes women the one to be looked at by the viewers and represents an

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<sup>36</sup> Chang, "Guanggao xunxi," 11; Chen, "Nuxing xingxiang," 34-37.

<sup>37</sup> Fang-ji Yang, "Liuxing wenhua lide xingbie (Gender in popular culture)," in *Singbie Xiangduyu Taiwan Shehui* (Gender Dimensions in Taiwanese Society), eds. Su-ling Hwang and Mei-hui You (Taipei: Juliu Books Company, 2007), 98.

<sup>38</sup> Hwang, "Dianshi xiangshui guanggao," 6.

<sup>39</sup> Frith et al. "Race and Beauty," 54.

<sup>40</sup> Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 73.

obedient, shy and unthreatening image.

Additionally, there is another common relationship between women in advertising and the viewers. It is as Frith, Cheng and Shaw describe: “[...] the model makes eye contact with the camera, engaging the viewer with seductive eye contact or a sexually seductive look.”<sup>42</sup> In advertising, creating this looking relationship with the viewers aims for attracting men’s attention and arousing women’s desire to buy the commodities. The purpose is to make male consumers feel that they possess the enticing women at some level and female consumers hope that they can possess the model’s enchantment by purchasing the goods. It is a measure to bond the goods, charming imagery and the consumers’ desire.

As Katherine Frith, Shaw, and Cheng state, “[e]ach culture has a set of general beliefs about what constitutes femininity and beauty.”<sup>43</sup> To analyse precisely the image of women musicians, both the contexts of traditional and modern beauty norms in Taiwan should be considered. Advertising is a useful approach to discovering the beauty standard in modern culture, because it is inclined to magnify the ideal image and reinforce the beauty features.<sup>44</sup> Overall, the beauties shown in contemporary advertisements do not look very different in capitalistic societies.<sup>45</sup> Under the trend of globalization and the dominance of the multinational enterprises, beauty norms mostly refer to Westernized ones.<sup>46</sup> From the instances and analyses below, it can be seen that there is no exception in Taiwan. The following parts will illustrate two of the most fundamental and popular types of women’s imagery in Taiwanese society, cute beauty type and Westernized beauty type.

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<sup>41</sup> Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 54.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 56.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>45</sup> Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, Kalliopi Mathioudaki, Pavlos Dimitratos and Yorgos Zotos, “Images of Women in Online Advertisements of Global Products: Does Sexism Exist?” *Journal of Business Ethics* 83 (2008): 102.

As a Japanese colony in the first half of the twentieth century, female imagery has absorbed ideas from Japan. The Japanese beauty image has usually been seen as the cute style.<sup>47</sup> As Frith, Cheng and Shaw indicate, “[...] the higher percentage of ads for the Cute beauty type in Taiwanese ads is most probably related to their close proximity to Japan [...]”<sup>48</sup> The image of cute girls is easily deemed to please the viewers by their affable smile and childlike poses. Besides, depicting women in a childish way can lessen their independence and ease off threaten to men.<sup>49</sup> Usually, in advertising, they wear delightful or casual but not costly dresses; the settings are either the pretty interior space or the outdoors with sunshine, trees or meadows. The natural atmosphere and environment is suited to the cute beauty type. In this category, female models do not represent sexy, but perform a cute, girl-like image which is usually younger than their real age.

In most advertisements in Taiwan, no matter whether in printed format or on TV, women’s look in ads only has two possibilities: the use of Western models, and the use of Taiwanese/non-western models who conform to the Western beauty criteria. The definition of beauty is narrow in contemporary Taiwan; what is considered beauty is to “look like” a Westerner. This phenomenon can be evidenced by which plastic surgery Taiwanese women choose to have. The most common beauty surgeries in Taiwan are double-eyelid surgery, augmentation rhinoplasty and breast augmentation<sup>50</sup>: compared to Asian people’s appearance, these are the features of the Westerner. In addition,

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<sup>46</sup> Tsai, “Wo shi nusheng,” 26; Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 60.

<sup>47</sup> Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 59, 66.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>49</sup> Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 59.

<sup>50</sup> Da-zen Chen, “Online investigation – People in Asia Pacific Zone are crazing about micro plastic surgery, the most popular surgery in Taiwan is breast augmentation,” *China Times*, February 16, <http://life.chinatimes2011.com/2009Cti/Channel/Life/life-article/0,5047,11051801+112011021600077,00.html> (accessed October 5, 2011); “Plastic surgery for beautifying self is becoming the fever topic,” September 23, 2010, <http://beauty.pchome.com.tw/myroom/emmy25215606/article/1321455770> (accessed October 5, 2011), in this report, it mentioned that three most popular beauty surgeries in Taiwan are double-eyelid surgery, augmentation rhinoplasty and breast augmentation.

wearing eyelash extensions, whitening the skin and dyeing the hair brown are also popular among Taiwanese women. What Taiwanese women choose to change about their body involves copying the Western Caucasians' appearance. Especially whitening the skin demonstrates how people eagerly strive to look like Westerners. As Solomon Leong states, "[...] the deep-rooted belief in the intrinsic virtue of whiteness still prevails in Asia."<sup>51</sup> For most Asians, as Leong further explains, "whiteness" conforms to the modern, Westernized standard of beauty and is related to the appearance of the Caucasian.<sup>52</sup> In Taiwan, whitening products account for over 35 percent of the Taiwanese beauty care products market. The assumed business profit of whitening is NTD 22 billions (about £4.5 million) a year.<sup>53</sup> Taking the Caucasian appearance as the beauty criteria, Taiwanese women imitate the Westernized beauty imagery as a tendency, which includes female musicians. The Western beauty ideal is inclined to demonstrate the female body and sexual attraction.<sup>54</sup> Many resemblances can be discovered among the Western and Taiwanese advertising and concert posters.

## **V.2.ii Resemblances in Advertising and Concert Posters**

There are many similarities between concert posters and other kinds of advertising images. The beauty appreciation, attitudes towards women's role and other customs in this place all affect the image-making. Due to globalization, forceful Western culture also participates in the constitution of the female image in Taiwan. Hence, resemblances can often be found in Western and Taiwanese advertising and concert posters. However, the concert poster, being a minor and later-developed image

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<sup>51</sup> Solomon Leong, "Who's the Fairest of Them All? Television Ads for Skin-whitening Cosmetics in Hong Kong," *Asian Ethnicity*, 7:2 (June, 2006): 168.

<sup>52</sup> Solomon Leong, "Who's the Fairest of Them All?" 168, 177.

<sup>53</sup> Gui-wen Zheng, "Melaleuca quazhu meibai buyanpin zhingzhu 220 yishangji (Melaleuca is doing skin-whitening products, Competing with other companies for the business profits of 2.2 billions)," *Commercial Times*, April 10, 2009, <http://health.chinatimes.com/contents.aspx?cid=2%2C21&id=5678> (accessed October 5, 2011).

category might be the one which is influenced by the advertising and other dominant media.

The new image and concept of the independent women in advertising has also appeared on some music posters. These concert posters have easily been noticed because of their non-typical representation of female musicians. There are few posters in this style, but their conspicuousness made these posters worth mentioning. When most posters have represented the typical image of women musicians, for instance, in Figure V-1, the slogan of “I Hate Music, But I Like to Sing” is uncommon. This catchword seems to reveal that she has a definite will and cannot be categorized as the stereotyped image. However, she does not transgress the frame of female musicians’ image. She has the typical appearance: beautiful dress, long straight hair and a slender figure; she walks on a sandy beach, and the fair setting is composed of the blue sky and sea. She is looking into the distance and that makes herself a scene to be looked at by the viewers. Besides, she holds a teddy bear which infantilizes her. Accordingly, this poster still stays in a safe area of the standard women musicians’ image, but to some extent is amalgamated with the concept of the “new woman.” This approach to constitute female musicians does not overthrow the common image of them.

#### V.2.ii.1 Imageries

The identification between the posters and female musicians is similar to that between advertising and viewers. As advertising tells people what beautiful is, the concert posters also convey what image the musicians should have. In addition to the resembling selling approach mentioned above, advertising and Concert posters and other advertising images are also alike in terms of their image design. Yoo notes that

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<sup>54</sup> Frith et al., “Race and Beauty,” 65.

“[c]ontemporary advertising is basically image oriented.”<sup>55</sup> The images of advertising have many imprints in the music posters. In the looking relationship, most concert posters illustrate two compositions as the advertising does. The first one is that female musicians lowered or turned aside their heads, so they do not directly confront the viewers’ eyes. This pose hugely diminishes the threat to the viewers. It represents a bashful image of the female musician and makes her the one who is to be looked at (see Figures V-2, V-3, V-4 and V-5). The viewer thus takes a comparatively active position because of owing the power to gaze. Sometimes, it seems that the female musician is looking at something which is inside or outside the frame of the poster, so it builds the looking experience whereby the gazer has ample power, space and time to view the poster at ease. This composition of the poster produces a quasi-voyeuristic pleasure, because it presents that the woman does not know she is being gazed at (Figure V-6 and V-7).

Despite passively being gazed at, the other looking relationship is to contact with the viewer’s eyes. The female musicians usually have an alluring expression when they are looking directly at the expected viewers. Figures V-8 and V-9 are instances of this. Women in advertising and on a concert poster often have a highly similar compositional design and eye expression. It seems that Taiwanese female musicians also use this popular approach to make their own images more attractive, but their motive might not be the same as the producer of the advertising. The reason is that giving a concert in current Taiwan is barely related to making money. Most concert goers are the musicians’ relatives, friends, colleagues and students. In many cases, the tickets are even bought by the musicians themselves to give to their audiences. Holding a concert and making the posters are not much about raising commercial profits, but a consuming event at some level. The detailed situation about

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<sup>55</sup> Dong-ju Yoo, “Consuming Modernity,” 45.

the musical environment will be elaborated in the later chapters by interviewing the musicians. For female musicians, therefore, imitating the representation in advertising is more about following the general criteria of beauty. They want to perform a beautiful image which is prevalently circulated in society. In this condition, adopting the visual element from advertising is about beautifying the poster image, not about business.

The two principal women's images, the Western and Cute beauty types, appear not only in advertising, but also on concert posters. As an important beauty type in Taiwan, the cute beauty type of the Japanese style has appeared on female musicians' posters, although there are far fewer of these than the Western beauty type. The women in most of these posters display a child-like posture and amiable smile to convey their cute or naïve nature (Figures V-10 and V-11). With the Cute beauty type in advertisements, meadows and other natural settings are the common backgrounds, and the preferred clothing is not noble or sexy, but comfortable clothes. The category in the posters that uses the cute beauty type most often is the joint concert held by two or more women (Figures V-12 and V-13). Comparing most of the posters showing sexy and noble women musicians, the joint concert posters frequently present the cute style. Perhaps two seductive women appearing together would destroy the exclusive intimacy between the female musician on the poster and the expected men viewers in the male-gazed system. Hence, the cute style often explores the topic of friendship to connect two women, and the background and clothes are usually in the pastoral style.<sup>56</sup> The similar approaches to dealing with two female musicians can be repeatedly found on concert posters. Their body language shows their familiarity by holding hands or sitting shoulder to shoulder (see Figures V-14 and V-15).

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<sup>56</sup> At the time of writing, the example can be seen at [https://tw.buy.yahoo.com/gdsale/gdsale.asp?gdid=3345277&co\\_servername=14b424a3f4fbc223d4c0547de27c5982](https://tw.buy.yahoo.com/gdsale/gdsale.asp?gdid=3345277&co_servername=14b424a3f4fbc223d4c0547de27c5982)

As the contemporary female musicians' posters in Taiwan adopted some characteristics from the historical custom of Chinese culture, the present Western advertising also has its origin in the long-established image tradition. Berger observes: "There are many direct references in publicity to works of art from the past."<sup>57</sup> He also indicates that "[p]ublicity relies to a very large extent on the language of oil paintings."<sup>58</sup> For instance, the inviting body posture and elegant facial expression in *Venus of Urbino* created by Tiziano Vecellio in 1538 have been inherited with some alternations in other works of later generations, such as *The Toilet of Venus* finished between 1647 and 1651 by Diego Velazquez, and *Olympia* completed in 1863 by Edouard Manet. This approach to depicting women in paintings has been extended to modern advertising. Uma Thurman, a Western film actress, lying on the floor with a bag in the Louis Vuitton advertisement, demonstrates a common posture in Western advertising, and one that obviously has "a direct continuity"<sup>59</sup> with Western art. Taiwanese female musicians also used this classic design of body pose in the Western tradition to convey female glamour, as in Figures V-16 and V-17.

Generally, in the public's view, female musicians are more westernized than other women, because their profession is Western classical music. It is an art that has been deemed to be the fruit of Western civilization, so female musicians have been regarded to engage in a very "Westernized" occupation. Their image on posters and on stage is also very westernized, owing to their occidental evening gowns and instruments. The connection with westernization makes female musicians naturally represent themselves in a westernized manner and style. They simulate the popular imagery in Western advertising, not only because of their occidental image, but also because the Western commercial advertisements are one of the most popular and

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<sup>57</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 134.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.



powerful media in contemporary Taiwan. Accordingly, some Taiwanese local advertisements also adopt a similar approach to the portrayal of women. The popular posters of Chanel No. 5 perfume featuring Nicole Kidman and the Miss Dior Cherie perfume featuring Natalie Portman reflect a similar composition. Both of them look aside and display their nude back. These advertisements have analogies in Figures V-18, V-19, V-20, V-21 and V-22 of the posters. The advertisements and posters use the same composition and sexual elements. The resemblances do not mean that the posters directly copy these ads shown in this study, but prove that the female image of the posters have a deep connection with the principally contemporary images.

From the instances mentioned before, it is obvious that sexual attraction is a crucial appeal in modern women's image. Take these two advertisements as examples. They emphasize nakedness and sexual attraction. What perfume sells is the experience of olfaction, but these advertisements use vision as a substitute for the sense of smell to allure people. The posters have a similar function now in Taiwan. A poster is like the advertising of a concert. Originally, the highlight on a poster should be the information about the music performance, but now when the public see the posters, visual pleasure is the centre, not the message about the music. The importance of visuality takes the place of the sense of hearing and the appreciation of art. Female musicians' beauty and body become the focus.

### **V.2.iii The Female Musician Herself Becomes a Sign**

As Berger points out, "we are always looking at the relation between thing and ourselves."<sup>60</sup> The aim of advertising is to create a bond between people and things. Following the collapse of the feudal society, class is no longer destined by descent. Social status and identity are both fluid in modern society. Commodity, in a consumer

society, is thus becoming one of the crucial sites for displaying social status and individual identity.<sup>61</sup> As Yoo notes, “[...] consumption activities operate as a means of individuality, expressing of differentiating oneself from others [...]”<sup>62</sup> Through the manipulation of advertising, signs and their connotations can be attached to commodities. Advertising is a medium to tell people what kind of symbolic meaning they can have by consuming this product.<sup>63</sup> The commodity itself thus becomes a signifier to index some values or ideologies. Advertising delicately transfers the need in daily life to the level of desire. A sign that can be used in advertising must have its specific cultural meaning shared among the group members.<sup>64</sup> Advertising makes consumers buy an item not only for its utility, but sometimes even only for its signs.<sup>65</sup> What the consumer really wants to have is not the commodity, but the sign.<sup>66</sup> In this condition, the commodity itself becomes a sign.

This mechanism is similar to the looking relation between people and concert posters. Many items which frequently appear on posters are regarded as signs enhancing the status of female musicians. Flowers, mirrors, butterflies, and toys are signs which symbolize women’s beauty, fragility and naivete. Some repeatedly-appearing body poses are the signs which implicate that they are submissive, tender, bashful or sexy. Besides, their Western evening dress, musical instruments and status as a musician are all signs of a Westernized, civilized and noble meaning in the Taiwanese context. Since these signs accompany female musicians so

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>61</sup> Chia-hsien Chi, “Jiema nuxing zazhi de shishang bianzhi (From decoding the fashion edition of women’s magazines),” (Master thesis, Nan Hua University, 2004), 3, 12, 17; Ming-hwang Lin, “Qiche dianshi guanggao zhong qiche , jiating yu xingbie jiaose zhi bianqian: 1985-2004 (From the change of automobile, family and gender roles on automobile commercials in Taiwan: 1985-2004),” (Master thesis, National Chiao Tung University, 2005), 43.

<sup>62</sup> Dong-ju Yoo, “Consuming Modernity,” 40.

<sup>63</sup> Chi, “Jiema nuxing zazhi,” 13, 17; Hwang, “Dianshi xiangshui guanggao,” 93.

<sup>64</sup> Dong-ju Yoo, “Consuming Modernity,” 48; Hwang, “Dianshi xiangshui guanggao,” 8.

<sup>65</sup> Hwang, “Dianshi xiangshui guanggao,” 10, 93.

<sup>66</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 265.

often, the signs and their connotations are gradually becoming attached to the female musicians themselves to build an integrated impression. The female musician thus becomes a sign. When Taiwanese people think of female musicians, a sign of the beautiful, elegant, classy and educated women image appears. The title of being a women musician symbolizes a particular value and concept. The fixed impression would make it more difficult for the female musicians to get rid of the stereotype.

According to Simone de Beauvoir's renowned words in *The Second Sex*, "One is not born a woman, one becomes one." Advertising tells women what is "normal," and what images women should represent.<sup>67</sup> Repeatedly transmitting the limited types of beauty would restrict people's understanding of female images and also maintain the existing social order.<sup>68</sup> Female musicians are affected by the same mechanism. In current Taiwan, to be a female musician is not only through learning and getting professional training and approval, but also through presenting a recognisable image. The images on the concert posters also lead to a firm recognition about how female musicians should be thought of and looked at. The following part will analyse the magazine image in Taiwan. Through analyzing another popular female imagery type, the ways in which the image of female musicians has been constructed will become clearer and more detailed.

### **V.3 Women's Image in Magazines**

As Wah-shan Chou states: "Women's magazines are a complex site of ideological power struggle by which gender identities and social relations are produced, reproduced and contested."<sup>69</sup> Images shown on the mass media are a result

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<sup>67</sup> Shaw, "Meijieyu Xingbie," 72, 73.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>69</sup> Wah-shan Chou, "Construction of Women's Image in the Women's Magazines in Hong Kong (1988-1992)," (PhD thesis, University of York, 1996), 135.

of the compromises of many forces. Hence, how the public uses the media cannot be understood without considering the social and historical context.<sup>70</sup> Despite the shared culture among a group, an individual's differing type of capital can lead to a variety of receptions. This is the reason why the mass media usually adopt the most typical representations, as using a highly recognizable imagery in a community is helpful in reducing diverse interpretations. Magazines and advertising thus show many similarities in terms of female imagery. As an approach to continually producing and delivering women's image, concert posters also have deep connections with these modern media forms. This section will elaborate on the relationship between the images in magazines and those on concert posters.

The contemporary beauty standard is revealed in images in the mass media. Magazines are one of these; they formulate women's identity on their covers, inner contents and advertisements. As Wolf states, "[t]he magazine's message about the myth is determined by its advertisers."<sup>71</sup> Aside from commercial adverts, the contents are also advertising-oriented. Their plan is to arouse women's desire to purchase, as the advertisers are the principal sponsors and financial resource of the magazine.<sup>72</sup> The female imagery in magazines provides the ideal model of using various commodities for beautification. In magazines, as Chyong-ling Lin and Jin-tsann Yeh indicate: "These depictions of context and imagery, with the purpose of selling something, create and propel modern-day myths of what is 'needed,' of what it means to be 'feminine' or 'masculine' [...]."<sup>73</sup> The purpose is to let women absorb the messages delivered by magazines to build their self-image, so the commodities that

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<sup>70</sup> Meng-yen Xu, "Meili huajuan --liuhang shishang zazhi douzhe dui mei de jieshou yu quanshi (From the embodiment of beauty – the reception and interpretation on beauty of fashion magazines' readers)," (Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2007), 1.

<sup>71</sup> Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, 73, 74.

<sup>72</sup> Li-chen Chiu, "Nuxing zazhi zhong meirong meiti lunshu de jiegou (From deconstruction of beauty discourses in women's magazines)," (Master thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2001), 32.

<sup>73</sup> Lin and Yeh, "Comparing Society's Awareness of Women," 61.

appear in the magazine or products of the same kind will be promoted.<sup>74</sup> As Lin and Yeh further state, “[...] marketing practitioners can create idealized images [...] that the public falls in love with, thus instilling in consumers’ minds an ideal that they hope to make real.”<sup>75</sup>

Women are the expected readers of women’s magazine which aim to influence their choice of clothes, make-up, style and many aspects of life.<sup>76</sup> The function of magazines in a consumer society is similar to that of didactic paintings in ancient China. Both of them demonstrate their contemporary criteria of ideal women’s images for women to follow and imitate. When a woman understands images and their embodied values, she will realize and decide what kind of image she should represent. She will know that a specific image may possibly be categorized to which group, and what kind of judgment is attached to this group. It is a process of understanding and a series of choices regarding image identity. It is easy for female readers to use these norms to examine themselves and others.

Behind every representation is the exertion of many kinds of political and social forces, such as gender, economics, tradition, and ideologies. The mainstream beauty imagery can be seen as a container of numerous cultural codes and meanings. In contemporary Taiwanese society, many cultural signs and visual codes have been borrowed from Westernized style. The international Chinese versions of magazines are instances of this phenomenon. There are many foreign women’s magazines which are published in a Mandarin edition in Taiwan. These magazines have their own characteristics according to where they come from: The magazines from Europe and

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<sup>74</sup> Xu, “Meili huajuan,” 8.

<sup>75</sup> Lin and Yeh, “Comparing Society’s Awareness of Women,” 61.

<sup>76</sup> Chi, “Jiema nuxing zazhi,” (Master thesis, Nan Hua University, 2004), 67; Yu-pei Pai, “Shishang zazhi zhong de xingbie jiaose quge --- nanxing zazhi yu nuxing zazhi zhi bijiao (From the differentiation of sex roles in fashion magazines – the comparison on men and women’s magazines),” (Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2004), 13; Pei-ling Chen, “Cong sanleixing tongshu zazhi jianshi nuti de zaixian (From a study on the representations of female body in three popular

the United States provide a female imagery with independence, decisiveness and sex appeal; the Japanese system highlights the girl-next-door image, which is cute, sweet-natured, and easy-going. These traits of each region are represented in much of the mass media, including advertising and magazines. Taiwanese local magazines, by contrast, mostly just focus on the information of beauty treatments and have no specific genre of female image.<sup>77</sup>

Since these international Chinese version magazines take the leading position and form the majority of the Taiwanese magazine market, this analysis of magazine images will place emphasis on them. Currently, the most popular women's magazines of the international Chinese versions are from the United States and Europe, such as *Harper's Bazaar* from 1990, *Cosmopolitan* from 1992, *Marie Claire* from 1993, *Vogue* from 1996 and *Elle* from 2003. In general, the Chinese-version magazines completely adhere to the style of their original Western editions. The most fundamental aspect to be analysed here is the magazine cover, as it is a tool for promotion and is responsible for attracting people's attention. A cover shows the principal style of the magazine through the selected image; the headlines on the cover also reveal the focal inner contents.<sup>78</sup> Indeed magazines are always displayed in the most conspicuous place in book shops where a lot of people pass by.<sup>79</sup> Whether purchased or not, the public have many chances to appreciate or skim the cover images. Covers are also circulated prevalently in online websites. In magazines, consequently, the cover is the part which has the most chance of being looked at and influencing people. Covers thus have the opportunity to reflect and also reinforce the ideal femininity and masculinity.

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magazines),” (Master thesis, National Chung Cheng University, 2007), 13.

<sup>77</sup> Xu, “Meili huajuan,” 4.

<sup>78</sup> Yuan-rong Zheng, “Taiwan nanxing shishang zazhi neirong chanzhi zhi yanjiu, yi ‘COOL liuhang kubao’ weili (From the production study of Taiwan men's fashion magazine - take cool as example),” (Master thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2009), 50, 51.

Most female images in Taiwan have been represented by the occidental beauty standard and the heterosexual frame, which are now the most dominant and politically correct institutions, no matter the role played by the Western or Taiwanese model.<sup>80</sup> Under the tendency towards Westernization, images still have variety, mainly according to the looking mechanism between images and their assumed viewers. The gender of the expected readers is a pivotal point which will influence the exterior of the models: the female imageries in women and men's magazines are considerably dissimilar; how men and women are represented is even more opposed.

### **V.3.i Female Images in Women's Magazines**

On the cover of women's magazines, it is common to see a female character standing boldly right in the centre of the picture and facing the readers with direct eye contact.<sup>81</sup> Instead of lowering or elevating the head, the eyes at the same level can avoid an unequal position between herself and her viewers.<sup>82</sup> As Sturken and Cartwright point out, "[t]he act of looking is commonly regarded as awarding more power to the person who is looking than to the person who is the object of the look."<sup>83</sup> The mutually horizontal looking thus releases some power to the cover women in the gazing relationship.<sup>84</sup> In addition, the standing position and the right side convey a strong individuality. Lin and Yeh note: "The standing pose best shows women's independence."<sup>85</sup> Take the cover of the *Cosmopolitan* Taiwan International Edition

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<sup>79</sup> Yuan, "Nanse shidai," 51, 52.

<sup>80</sup> Wei-chou Huang, "Yong xipuxiao nei de xing quanliguan jiexi nuxing liuxing zazhi zhong fushi yu juanti zhi xing lunshu yi ta ELLE zhongwen ban weili (From the analysis of clothings and body discussions within Chinese ELLE fashion magazines based upon concepts of sexual rights from genealogy)," (Master thesis, Shih Chien University, 2002), 26, 55, 58, 70, 79.

<sup>81</sup> Lin and Yeh, "Comparing Society's Awareness of Women," 74; Chen, "Nuti de zaixian," 16.

<sup>82</sup> Chen, "Nuti de zaixian," 22.

<sup>83</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 111.

<sup>84</sup> Chen, "Nuti de zaixian," 18.

<sup>85</sup> Lin and Yeh, "Comparing Society's Awareness of Women," 74.

for example.<sup>86</sup> The half-length photo usually frames her knee as the demarcation line; in this kind of composition, putting her hands at her waist is like a standard act. This arrangement has the visual effect of magnifying her body, so it highlights her individuality and independency. The cover woman seems confident and decided in this design.<sup>87</sup> In addition to their self-assured body language, the female figures in women's magazines often have a smile on their faces to build a friendly connection with their women readers.<sup>88</sup>

Occasionally, elements symbolizing female sexuality or submission, used often in men's magazines, also appear in women's magazines, such as inviting gestures or revealing clothes. Although women are the target readers, the signs representing beauty and sex appeal in contemporary society are still applied to women's magazines to fit in with the general beauty standard. In women's magazines, however, these elements have usually been exerted and mixed with other traits which reflect women's individuality.<sup>89</sup> For example *Cosmopolitan* originated in the United Kingdom and the international Chinese version was published in Taiwan in January 1992.<sup>90</sup> In most covers of the *Cosmopolitan* international Mandarin edition, for instance, the exposed thigh conveys a sensual meaning, but the direct and equal vision line, and the composition of body ratio in this photo make a male-gazed image difficult. Even so, the headlines on the covers usually reveal that the core aim of these magazines was to teach women how to be sexy and to obtain men's attraction

There is a tendency in Taiwan: the media have inclined to attribute women's success and happy lives to their fine appearances.<sup>91</sup> Even women's magazines still put women in the frame of socially standard and unitary beauty. They instruct women

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<sup>86</sup> At the time of writing, the magazine covers were available online at [www.cosmopolitan.com.tw](http://www.cosmopolitan.com.tw)

<sup>87</sup> Chen, "Nuti de zaixian," 20.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 26.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.



about how to use make-up properly and how to conform to fashion in order to attain advantages in the workplace and in relationships.<sup>92</sup> It seems that there is little room for women to have singularity in their own appearance. The result is that female images in most media have a very similar appearance. In Taiwan, the commonly-known idiom – “no ugly women, only lazy women” – shows the social climate that it is women’s responsibility to make efforts to keep beautiful. Despite the promotion of women’s power in modern times, the participation of capitalism is one of the crucial factors that make the pressure and exploitation of women’s bodies no less than before.<sup>93</sup> The female body and image, in ancient times, were the instruments of patriarchal propaganda and for men’s appreciation. Nowadays, they have not only inherited the old functions, but are also used for serving capitalistically business benefits. The tradition-rooted values and modern consumer culture have jointly contributed to this situation. The plural controls on a woman’s body make possible revolutions or changes difficult.

### **V.3.ii Female Images in Men’s Magazines**

As male readers are the main marketing objects of men’s magazines, female images appear considerably different in women and men’s magazines. In Tzu-hsiang Yuan’s research on men’s magazine, from 1997 to 2006, it was found that seventeen female cover figures were shown in *GQ* magazine. All of the cover women were portrayed as the sexy type. They wore inviting clothes and assumed suggestive facial look and body poses. No other type of female image ever appeared on these front covers.<sup>94</sup> Chao-yu Weng also concludes in her thesis that the covers and contents of

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 78, 79, 80.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 91, 92.

<sup>93</sup> Pai, “Shishang zazhi,” 14.

<sup>94</sup> Yuan, “Nanse shidai,” 67.

*For Him Magazine (FHM)* have continually displayed voluptuous women. In most pictures in men's magazines, women's bodies are fragmented and some bodily regions which feature sex appeal have been made to stand out, such as the breasts and bottoms.<sup>95</sup>

Women in men's magazines have been simplified to become a sexual object that serves to satisfy or enhance the male viewing pleasure and act as a commercial instrument to arouse the desire to purchase.<sup>96</sup> Masculinity has been constructed when men are looking at the sexy and subservient women's image.<sup>97</sup> As gender equality has been eagerly preached and practised in the past twenty years in Taiwan, this kind of men's magazine can be argued to be a refuge for some men who indulge in the phallogocentric-based gender relationship. These magazines allow readers to act as voyeurs towards women and have used an old-fashioned approach to represent them.<sup>98</sup> In this study, the most popular, best-selling men's magazines issued every month are selected for analysis. *For Him Magazine (FHM)* is a primary instance. It originated from the United Kingdom and issued the international Chinese version in Taiwan from June 2005. Like most other men's magazines, *FHM* also represents female images from the male-gazed angle. How it portrays women easily makes male readers think that men are almighty and have authority over women, because the female bodies that appear on the magazine show signs of humbleness and sexual attractions.<sup>99</sup> Some of these elements will be examined item by item below.

Concerning the aspect of body poses, in *FHM* and other men's magazines,

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<sup>95</sup> Chen, "Nuti de zaixian," 56; Teng-hui Lu, "Qiche zazhi zhong tupian nuxing xingxiang fenxi: yi yishou chexun weili (1991-2003) (From the interpretation of the feminine image pictures in 'Car magazine' (1991-2003)," (Master thesis, National Kaohsiung Normal University, 2004), 20; Chao-yu Weng, "Xingbie chayi dui nanrenbang zazhi jiedou zhi yanjiu (From the interpretation of FHM by different genders)," (Master thesis, National Chiao Tung University, 2009), 5.

<sup>96</sup> Lu, "Qiche zazhi," 20; Chen, "The Representations of Female Body," 7.

<sup>97</sup> Chen, "The Representations of Female Body," 43.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 37; Weng, "Xingbie chayi," 6.

<sup>99</sup> Chen, "The Representations of Female Body," 9, 93.

women frequently bend or twist their bodies to make them look smaller and soft in order to deliver the message of obedience and no threat to the viewers.<sup>100</sup> Lying down, furthermore, can be deemed a fully vulnerable and defenceless position, as this kind of bodily condition generally happens in a private space. To lessen their individuality, female figures seldom occupy the centre of a picture and face readers with the obverse side which is adopted often in women's magazines to symbolize women's firm and resolute traits.<sup>101</sup> A sideways sitting or standing pose is a regular feature in men's magazines.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, it is rare to see a woman putting her hands on her waist or bottom to bring about the amplified effect of the body, as in women's magazines.<sup>103</sup> Her hands point out or stay near the part featuring sexuality, such as the mouth or breast.<sup>104</sup> The articles of men's magazines have responded to its imagery. The inside reports on the female cover figure are centred on her appearance rather than her ability and talent, not to mention the numerous photos showing the sexy body of the cover woman each month.<sup>105</sup> The value of every woman in men's magazines only remains her desirable body.

Reviewing various kinds of men's magazines in Taiwan, including fashion or car magazines, it can be found that the female figure is a beloved theme and her bodily attraction is a constant focus. In ancient China, female imagery, was both a paradigm for guiding women's behaviour and an amusement for cheering male viewers. Nowadays, despite the fact that women's status has been greatly transformed, these two functions still work. The representations are different because of the beauty appreciation of the day, but the essence is similar. From the early twentieth century, female imagery started to change from the conservative and stiff expressions in terms

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 21, 44.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 46, 47.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 52.

of clothes, body language, movement and facial expressions into a vivid and exposed style of Western performance. Initiated in poster-calendars, female imagery firstly showed laughter and uncovered body. Through the generations and due to the global capitalistic influence, Western style has permeated into numerous dimensions in Taiwan. Advertising and magazines are some representative imageries of the Euro-American manner. In this condition, as Lin and Yeh claim, “[...] public media can influence the overall conception of beauty.”<sup>106</sup> Under the general beauty criteria, there are many shared codes and customs for women’s image construction circulated in different communities in Taiwan. Some of the signs have also appeared frequently in Taiwanese female musicians’ images, while some have not.

### **V.iii.3 Similarities of Female Imagery in Posters and Magazines**

Concerning the aspect of the relationship between texts and their viewers, the concert poster is analogous to didactic paintings and magazines. The homogeneous women’s images that repeatedly appear on concert posters have constituted a model for female musicians. Not only the female musicians themselves, but also the public learn the “natural” images of female musicians. The similarities of female imageries between concert posters and women’s magazines are far fewer than those between posters and men’s magazines. Only in some female professors’ posters can the similarities with women’s magazines be found. The reason for this is probably that these women’s social status and age render them non-desirable objects. Figure V-23 is an instance of this. It is similar to images in women’s magazines. On the other hand, most posters and men’s magazines tend to portray women as the customary beauty and sexual object. The textual analyses of the elements in these media will be

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>106</sup> Lin and Yeh, “Comparing Society’s Awareness of Women,” 66.

discussed below.

First, the semiotics of lips in different contexts can produce different meanings and effects. In women's magazines, a smile expresses friendliness and congeniality. It fabricates an easy-going impression for female viewers and intends to show that the magazine is women's good companion. A smile in this context acts as a bridge to connect a magazine with its women readers.<sup>107</sup> On concert posters, a smile can be summarized into two principal categories. The first is close to that of a women's magazine, since the smile itself appears sweet-natured and amiable. The whole photo, nevertheless, represents an obedient and bashful woman who seems delicate due to her body language of bending her back and leaning on something to make her body soft and tender, or lying down on the floor, such as Figures V-24 and V-25.<sup>108</sup> The second is to arouse sexual association and to demonstrate erotic attraction. Take Figure V-18 as the example. The musician who slightly opens her mouth is usually seen to imply flirtation and a symbol of seduction.<sup>109</sup> In Figure V-18, the drum sticks were used as flirting tools to highlight the sexy lips. Using lip expression as a sign of sexuality has widely existed in men's magazines. The cover of the *FHM* magazine international Mandarin version of June 2008 was an instance of an obviously similar design.<sup>110</sup>

Signs symbolizing sexuality prevail in both men's magazines and on female musicians' poster images. The difference is that the women in posters are usually not so naked and in general do not adopt boldly the bewitching postures of those in men's magazines. The female musician is a combination that mixes the classy features through splendid clothes, a graceful hairstyle and expensive instruments which

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<sup>107</sup> Chen, "The Representations of Female Body," 55.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 54, 73.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, 55.

<sup>110</sup> At the time of writing, this cover image was available online at [www.fhm.com.tw/inner.php?i=405](http://www.fhm.com.tw/inner.php?i=405)

embody the high-level social status of Western classical music in Taiwan, and the voluptuous image which reveals alluring traits. Concerning the sexy part, what female musicians perform is like a “reserved” and “percolated” outcome of men’s magazines, but the essence remains. It can be seen in the associations between men’s magazine and posters.

First, the pliability and flexibility of a woman’s body are the properties in these two media. The cover of *FHM* international Mandarin version of December 2009 is a selected instance showing the curves of the female body. The similar manner is used extensively in posters to constitute female musicians’ docile character and body attraction. It is common for a female musician to bend her body and lean slightly against the piano (see Figures V-24, V-26, V-27 and V-28). Additionally, leaning on things not only softens their body, but also represents a frail character that is in need of protection (Figures V-29, V-30, V-31 and V-32). In Figures 30 and V-31, the straight arm extends the body-line. The ultimate defenceless body is lying down, and has no reason to be absent from men’s magazines and concert posters. As a common pose in men’s magazines, Figures V-34 and V-35 showing female musicians’ posters also adopt the posture of lateral lying to sketch the outline of the body. Lying face up can be seen on the cover of *FHM* magazine international mandarin edition of June 2006 and Figure V-33 and Figure V-34 of the posters. Through the demonstration of the lying women’s front bodies, the viewer can survey and appreciate them with exceeding power and superiority.

Generally, female models in both men’s magazines and on concert posters do not look at the viewer from the obverse side and are not situated at the centre of a photo. They usually have a tilted angle of visual line or bend their head to look at the scene or specific objects. It is a configuration, which not only conveys women’s tame

character, but also avoids demonstrating too much individuality.<sup>111</sup> Figure V-24 and Figure V-28 form a delicate design between the player and the piano. It demonstrates the position between the player and the piano, and the profile of the female musician's face. In men's magazines, visual stress is put on women's breasts and the other positions of women's bodies, as they are fragments. The female body has been displayed in a fetishistic way. This design is also used often in posters to underscore women's sexual body positions as the visual focus, such as the breasts (Figure V-35). In the example in Figure V-36, the woman's body is even cut into fragments which make her body line of breasts and bottoms clearer and hence more seductive. This approach to portraying women is, as Rose indicates: "[...] the female figure is represented simply as a beautiful object of display [...]. The obvious framing device is the use of close-up shots, that exclude everything from the viewer's gaze except the body, or parts of the body [of the woman]."<sup>112</sup>

Nudity itself is a sign of defencelessness and being unprotected. Being uncovered limits a person's activeness, so an undressed woman's power is surely lower than that of the gazer.<sup>113</sup> It might be one of the factors that the exposition of female body is continually the selling point in many media. Unable to display the completely naked women as some men's magazines do, posters use a technique to create the image of female musicians' nudity. Like the cover of *FHM* magazine international Mandarin edition of September 2011,<sup>114</sup> and Figure V-37 and Figure V-38 of the posters, the viewer's desire is aroused not just by the bare shoulder, but also by the fantasy about the position of the possibly uncovered body which does not appear in the photos.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 53, 54.

<sup>112</sup> Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 118.

<sup>113</sup> Chen, "The Representations of Female Body," 73, 76.

<sup>114</sup> At the time of writing, the cover were available online at <http://www.fhm.com.tw/inner.php?i=303>

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 53.

Through illustrating how female musicians have been represented on concert posters, which is currently the principal avenue for the public to “see” musicians, it can be found that a female musician is not treated as a respected professional, but rather degraded as a sexual object. Although not every poster cuts the body into small segments or shows a woman lying down, the sexual attraction of the female body has usually become the highlight. Female images are less exposed on concert posters than in men’s magazines, but women musicians delicately use the suggestive posture and the naked or unseen parts to create a sense of the erotic.

When the control of patriarchal looking becomes pervasive, it is difficult to distinguish to what extent this is women’s own wishes, the strong brainwashing by the media, or the social pressure to pursue a beautiful appearance. Female musicians probably face a more serious situation than other women. Due to the specific music cultivation and the status of Western classical music in Taiwan, the knowledge about female musicians’ exterior and behaviour have gradually acquired fixed patterns. The following section will examine the male musicians’ image in Taiwan to see how this has different or similar meanings to that of female musicians.

#### **V.3.iv Male Images in Men’s Magazines**

Through the analyses above, it is evident that female images in women and men’s magazines have disparate representations. Male images in men’s magazines are very different to the female ones. As Berger indicates, “the social presence of a woman is different in kind from that of a man. A man’s presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies.”<sup>116</sup> Berger further elucidates the reality that women face: “Her presence is manifest in her gestures, voice, opinions, expressions,

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<sup>116</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 45.



clothes, chosen surroundings, taste [...].”<sup>117</sup> In Berger’s view, a woman is a sight to be looked at; her appearance and behaviour are all components of her presence. A woman’s exterior is the focus when she appears. Nevertheless, in Taiwan, how people judge a man depends on his social capital, power and influence; his appearance is not considered a prerequisite of success.

Men’s magazines target men as the consumers and readers. Contrary to the female figures in women’s magazine that express friendliness, male cover figures often have serious facial expressions and strong eye contact. They frequently give a sidelong glance and even display contempt or doubt by frowning in order to manifest their individuality and strong-mindedness. The international Chinese edition of *Men’s Uno* and *Esquire* provided instances of this. According to the statistics about the covers of *GQ* from 1997 to 2006 by Tzu-hsiang Yuan, the main way of looking, which covers about 60 percent is when the male model looks obliquely at the camera/the position of the expected readers.<sup>118</sup> It creates the effect that the cover figure occupies a higher and superior position to the male readers. The objective is to present his power and authenticity. It lets the readers admire the figure’s status and then to identify with this high-class, professional image.

With regard to men’s fashion, Tai-hua Cheng and Yu-pei Pai’s researches respectively provide useful evidence: No matter whether on *Men’s Uno* or on *GQ*, most male cover figures on men’s magazines wear a full business suit.<sup>119</sup> Other magazines seldom provide exception. Adornments, which are necessary for female

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>118</sup> Tzu-hsiang Yuan, “Nanxing shidai: nanxing shishang zazhi suo jiangou de shishang nanxing qizhi yu xiaofei wenhua (From the era of men’s looks: The construction of stylish masculinity and consumer culture in men’s fashion magazine),” (Master thesis, National Sun Yat-sen University, 2007), 69.

<sup>119</sup> Tai-hua Cheng, “Men’s uno zazhi guanggao zhi nanxing xingxiang yanjiu (From male image on print ads of men’s Uno magazine),” (Master thesis, Southern Taiwan University, 2006), 68, 70; Pai, “Shishang zazhi,” 37, 76.

models to suggest femininity, rarely appear.<sup>120</sup> In Tai-hua Cheng's study of male models in the advertisements of *Men's Uno* from October 1997 to October 2005, the customary male image can be noticeably seen. First, he found that the male models always wear clothes of cold colours, which symbolizes calmness and rationality, such as blue, black and grey; the ratio of cold-colour clothes reached 80.5 percent. Only 4.1 percent of men wear warm-coloured suits, which traditionally mean warmth, softness and tender, which are just the colours that appear commonly in the female models' clothes.<sup>121</sup> The content analysis of another well-known men's magazine in Taiwan shows a result of similar meaning. Yuan-rong Zheng's research on *Cool* reveals that there was no sexy male model on the cover from November 1997 to November 2008. During this eleven year period, no cover man was naked, or even partly exposed.<sup>122</sup> Contrary to women's exposure in men's magazines, the common, acceptable images of men and women respectively are apparent. On the other side, when men appear in women's magazines, their images contain no observable differences, such as the international Chinese edition of *Vogue* in November 2011. No matter with regard to the eyes and facial expression, the clothing colour and format, and the level of nudity, all the designs of women and men on public prints display and reflect the contemporary values for the two genders' appearance.

### **V.3.v Male Musicians' Posters**

The styles of the models' appearance of men's magazines and male musicians' posters are similar. Many characteristics of the male images mentioned above have also appeared on concert posters. First, most of the male musicians wear formal Western suits, an absolute majority of which are in cold colours. Second, their

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<sup>120</sup> Pai, "Shishang zazhi," 37.

<sup>121</sup> Cheng, "Men's uno," 56, 66-68, 70-72.

<sup>122</sup> Zheng, "Taiwan nanxing shishang zazhi," 48, 66, 67.

gestures and body bearing tend to demonstrate specialty and prestige. It is difficult to see that they are exposed, sexy or cute, as are the female musicians. It would definitely be a spectacle in Taiwan if a male musician on a poster bent his body, lie down on the floor with his instrument, or even lie down on the piano to show his sexual attraction. Whether male musicians on the posters are smiling or serious, they always wear neat business suits and stand or sit upright, such as in Figures V-39, V-40 and V-41. The popular image composition is that they formally hold their instrument (Figure V-42) or attentively play on it (Figure V-43). On the posters, the visual focus is the relationship between men and their instruments. The image tries to convey that they are professional and credible musicians. The appearance and their image is a tool for highlighting their occupation and specialty, not becoming a visual stress or selling point.

### **V.3.vi Comparison between Men and Women's Magazines**

First, from reviewing the nudity of female and male images in magazines, it was found that men are seldom disrobed, whether the assumed viewers are men or women. Women are rarely wholly unveiled when the viewers are of the same sex, but are partly or completely naked in men's magazines. It seems that, according to current social customs, when women are situated in the context of being looked at by men, the principal attraction is the nakedness and beauty of their bodies. In men's magazines, nevertheless, men display their masculinity by facing the viewers on the front side with a serious expression. They wear a full business suit composed of a shirt and outer garment; no part of their body is exposed, not even their arm or shoulder. They often stand stiff and upright, and hence their body lines are straight. These components reflect official, dominating and initiative meanings, contrary to the women's submissive and passive imagery created by displaying their bending and soft bodies,

partly lateral sitting or standing pose, and suggestive facial expression.<sup>123</sup>

In magazines, the inner articles also portray similar images of men and women as the cover and inside images. In *GQ*, the reports on male celebrities are mostly related to their career performance. According to Yu-pei Pai's research on *GQ*, the career topic occupies 65 percent. The second most popular topic which occupies 10 percent; it is about men's thoughts and attitudes regarding their values in life. This theme favours the working men's image by conveying their decisiveness and thoughtfulness. In men's magazines, nevertheless, both the female imageries and reports are just as sexual objects. Take the same study on *GQ* as an instance. There is only one report on a female character's career performance. Others belong to three topics – appearance, body pose and facial expression, and relationships and family. The category of appearance occupies the highest ranking at 40 percent. These three most popular topics on women also reflect what kind of things people think are crucial to women.

Only in women's magazines do the themes multiple slightly. According to Yu-pei Pai's study on *Vogue*, career-related topics occupy a third of all articles; notwithstanding it is just a strategy for pandering to its consumers who are assumed to be career women. The contents which encourage women to dress brilliantly for dates and work are primarily for the benefit of advertisers and the sponsors of the magazines. Hence, it is predictable that the second most popular topic relates to appearance, body care and clothes, covering almost 30 percent.<sup>124</sup> An ideal image represented in women's magazines is thus a career woman who has an attractive face and fine body and dresses fashionably for work.

In fact, like the function of women's magazines for women, reading men's

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<sup>123</sup> Pai, "Shishang zazhi," 39, 40, 41.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 57, 58.

magazines is a way of learning to be a “normal” man.<sup>125</sup> Men’s magazines also aim at triggering consumption through men’s desire to acquire the ideal male image.<sup>126</sup> Hence, under capitalistic manipulation, masculinity is like femininity: both are constructions serving business promotion and reflecting the common values on two genders. The image constitution of magazines is like the representation of female and male musicians’ posters. While female musicians display their sexual attraction and revealing clothes, male musicians demonstrate their success through their professional image.

### **V.3.vii Conclusion**

In modern society, individual taste is formulated by social customs and institutions.<sup>127</sup> The media, like advertising and magazines, provide images for the public about how a person from a specific community or status “should” look. The stereotypical images supply an instant way for people to be recognized as a member of a particular group. Female musicians are living under such a social structure. Through the repeatedly similar poster images, it is inevitable that they consider or integrate the common impression of female musicians for properly displaying their “correct” image. Despite some small groups that represent diversity, most musicians still represent the most stereotypical, or so to say, the most “safe” and “recognizable” image. This image confirms to the public’s imagination about female musicians.

Lifestyle is a customary practice. Whether fashion or the style of behaviour, choices in people’s daily lives are no longer just about their needs, but more about what kind of a person he/she wants to be, in one’s inner mind and in other people’s

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<sup>125</sup> Kuan-liang Chen, “Xieshang nanxing qigai – nanxing shishang zazhi douzhe de jiedou yu xingbie shijian (From negotiating masculinity – the reading and the gender practices of the men’s fashion magazine male readers),” (Master thesis, National Sun Yet-sen University, 2008), ii.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., iv.

<sup>127</sup> Xu, “Meili huajuan,” 25.

vision. Since one's appearance is the result of a series of choices about how to build the self-image, it certainly contains variables.<sup>128</sup> If a female musician can realize how many pressures and social controls act on their appearances, she can be aware how much she has been defined and how much she can resist it. Concert posters do not "reflect" the real image of female musicians, because there are no "inborn" appearances or behaviours for the professionals of any occupation.

Female musicians can be recognized by people, because there are some characteristics which are deemed to belong to them. In Taiwan, Western classical music has been seen as the pure fruit of Western culture. It symbolizes, to Taiwanese people, the values of the West, such as progress and civilization. Nonetheless, the images of Taiwanese female musicians do not represent these ideologies. They just have a contemporary appearance, but conform to the traditional criteria of a good woman – beauty, submission and tenderness, partly overlapping with the qualities of the female image in men's magazines.

Through the analyses in this section, it is found that female images on concert posters have a stronger resemblance to men's magazines than in women's magazines. Nevertheless, the genders of the principal viewers of posters and men's magazines are not the same. Concerning the reality of the current musical environment in Taiwan, most audiences are the relatives, friends and students of the performer. In most cases, women form the majority of musicians and audiences, as most music learners and teachers are women. Hence, most female musicians and students see other female musicians' posters which are based on sexual attraction. This phenomenon inevitably raises the question of why Taiwanese female musicians choose to represent themselves as sexual objects in a male-gazed frame, while their principal viewers are women. The emphasis of a concert should be a musician's ability, talent and repertoire.

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 23.

The musician's gender should not be the variable to change the focus of a concert. Currently, nevertheless, it is not what happens in Taiwan. In the chapter on interviewing musicians, the motive and purpose of the image and poster production will be scrutinized. Female musicians' intention to please the unknown male viewers or simply act up to the general rules about the contemporary popular beauty image will also be clarified and further discussed.

## VI. The Relationship between Concert Posters and Wedding

### Photos

To newlyweds in present-day Taiwan, having a set of wedding photos taken in a professional studio is an essential part of the celebrations.<sup>1</sup> As Bonnie Adrian describes in her book, *Framing the Bride: Globalizing Beauty and Romance in Taiwan's Bridal Industry*, “[...] putting down a deposit on a bridal package is often a couple’s first public act declaring their intentions to marry in the near future.”<sup>2</sup> Having wedding pictures, however, is not solely a commemoration or a record to preserve the memory of the wedding day.<sup>3</sup> A basic wedding photo package consists of shots taken in several different costumes and settings. The wedding photo studio is responsible for the overall modeling of the bride and groom, including their clothes, make-up, and hair-styling.<sup>4</sup> Hence, taking wedding photos requires several days and usually occurs a few months ahead of the wedding day in order to ensure that all the procedures can be properly arranged.

The wedding photo industry is highly-developed in Taiwan today. There are approximately 20,000 people engaged in this industry and 1,000 professional wedding photographic studios. The usual price for wedding photos ranges from 30,000-60,000 New Taiwanese Dollars (about £650-£1,300). These diverse prices reflect the delicacy and production costs of the photos and the location of the studios. Based on the report in *Yazhou Zhoukan*, the annual output of wedding photos is as high as 10.8 billion

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<sup>1</sup> Lo, “Jianzheng aiqing,” (Master thesis, Yuan Ze University, 2006), 1; Pou-yun Hsiao, “Hunsha sheying changye yu xiaofeizhe jiti xiangxiang de ‘sheying zaixian’ zhi yanjiu (From a research on the photographic representation from consumer’s collective imaginary of bridal industries in Taiwan),” (Master thesis, Nanhua University, 2008), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bonnie Adrian, *Framing the Bride: Globalizing Beauty and Romance in Taiwan's Bridal Industry*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Yu-ying Lee, “Nuxing ningshi: Hunshazhao yu ziwo ningshi zhixi (The Female Gaze: Playing with Self-Image and Wedding Photography),” *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology* 33, (December, 2004): 4.

<sup>4</sup> Lee, “Nuxing ningshi,” 4, 5; Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 43.



NTD (about 240 million pounds).<sup>5</sup> These figures indicate that the wedding photo is a significant type of image which has penetrated deeply into Taiwanese people's lives. In addition to acting as an announcement of a forthcoming marriage, now the wedding photo also denotes social status, the myth of marital fantasy, an ability to consume, and the exhibits of the bride.<sup>6</sup>

In wedding photos, the bride is the main visual concern.<sup>7</sup> Whether in a photo or in person, the bride's dresses and beauty are consistently the focus.<sup>8</sup> The important status of the bride's image make the wedding photo also called the bridal/nuptial dress photo, and the photo studio is called the bridal salon. The wedding photo has inherited the tradition of judging women according to their appearance;<sup>9</sup> it has also kept the essence of phallogocentric visualism, which places women as an object of being gazed at. In this aspect, wedding photos and concert posters are similar, but their relationship is not confined to this level. In Taiwan, concert posters are also produced in bridal salons. This means that brides and female musicians employ the same clothes, photographers, hairdressers, modeling designers, makeup artists and background settings.

As such a large-scale business, the wedding photo industry has continually absorbed the latest fashions and merged them with the local culture to create a female image which tallies with the beauty standard in Taiwan. For female musicians, this industry of making female images provide a service to make their posters. The customary manner of building the image of brides has also been used for female

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<sup>5</sup> Ching-fon Tone, "Taiwan hunsha xiangyu chuencho de mimi (The Secret of the Success of Taiwanese Wedding Photos)," *Yazhou Zhoukan* 13, (4, April, 2010), [http://www.yzzk.com/cfm/Content\\_Archive.cfm?Channel=ax&Path=372762111/13ax1.cfm](http://www.yzzk.com/cfm/Content_Archive.cfm?Channel=ax&Path=372762111/13ax1.cfm) (accessed March 28th, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Yui-ying Lee, "Zhuangban xin niang: Dangdai Taiwan hunsha yeide xingqi yu fazhan (The Bride Maker: The Formation and Development of the Bridal Industry in Taiwan)," *Feng Chia Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 8, (May, 2004): 212.

<sup>7</sup> Lo, "Jianzheng aiqing," 2.

<sup>8</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 170.

<sup>9</sup> Lo, "Jianzheng aiqing," 10; Lee, "Shixian nide minxing mong," 180.

musicians. Similar images thus arise, although greatly divergent textual meaning and visual experiences also happened simultaneously. After all, the wedding photo studio/bridal salon turns out to play a crucial part in the formation of the image of Taiwanese female musicians. This chapter will elucidate the correlation between these two types of image and clarify the significance of their differences. Through the comparison, the elements involved in building the image of female musicians will be further demonstrated.

## **VI.1 The Background and Characteristics of Wedding Photos**

Consumer culture is formed in its society. The customs, fashion, ideologies and other social-historical factors guide people on how to consume and what should be consumed. The wedding photo is one of the results of this mechanism.<sup>10</sup> The consumption of wedding photos has become a ritualized event for Taiwanese couples.<sup>11</sup> It has formed a fundamental part of weddings. On the wedding day, the enlarged photo is placed at the entrance to the wedding reception.<sup>12</sup> Selected photos are manufactured as small thank you cards for every guest.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, each wedding photo is displayed in sequence on large screens on stage in the banqueting hall, so the guests can concurrently have their meals and view the photos.

Without these photos, a wedding seems incomplete.<sup>14</sup> The need for considerable quantities of wedding photos has contributed to the feverish expansion of the number of studios. Not only are there “wedding photo streets” consisting of numerous studios in the cities, but also large-scale showcases are regularly held.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lee, “Shixian nide minxing mong,” 149.

<sup>11</sup> Yui-ying Lee, “The Bride Maker,” 184.

<sup>12</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 73; Lee, “Nuxing ningshi,” 19.

<sup>13</sup> Lee, “Shixian nide minxing mong,” 159.

<sup>14</sup> Yui-ying Lee, “The Bride Maker,” 184.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 206, 207, 209; Hsiao, “Hunsha sheying,” 1.

The emphasis on wedding photos is a common trend in many Asian countries. As Selina Ching Chan and Simin Xu point out, “[i]n various places in Asia such as Taiwan, China, Singapore and Hong Kong, it is typical to find couples spending huge amounts of money from their wedding budgets on professional bridal photographs and keeping them in special wedding albums for their own enjoyment.”<sup>16</sup> The excessively exquisite productions of the wedding photo in Taiwanese bridal industry have attracted overseas Taiwanese and foreigners from other Asian countries, such as China, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Singapore, Vietnam to visit Taiwan. The wedding photo industry in Taiwan has gradually become a mature business over the past twenty years and has even been exported to China by establishing branches there.<sup>17</sup>

Photographs are usually considered evidence of what truly happened. In modern Taiwan, however, wedding photos have lost their authenticity. Despite the fact that they are taken by studios in different regions, their composition and style are increasingly uniform, so that the image has been standardized.<sup>18</sup> The wedding photo has turned into a massively produced commodity under capitalistic manipulation. The representation on a wedding photo is an artificial work and it exists primarily for making business profits. It has followed the trends to create an ideal image of the day and depicts a formalized beauty.<sup>19</sup> It is hard, for the couple to free themselves from the control and management of this visual operation.<sup>20</sup>

In wedding photos, the bride and groom have incomparable statuses. The visual focus is the bride.<sup>21</sup> The principal looking pleasure is focused on her. This is proved by the number of her individual photos. In a complete set of wedding photos, most

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<sup>16</sup> Selina Ching Chan and Simin Xu, “Wedding photographs and the Bridal Gaze in Singapore,” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 9, 2 (December, 2007): 61.

<sup>17</sup> Lo, “Jianzheng aiqing,” 2, 47; Hsiao, “Hunsha sheying,” 29.

<sup>18</sup> Yui-ying Lee, “The Bride Maker,” 184.

<sup>19</sup> Hsiao, “Hunsha sheying,” 95.

<sup>20</sup> Lo, “Jianzheng aiqing,” 95.

<sup>21</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 154, 174.

photos are of the couple and of the bride alone. Generally, the groom has only a few, if any, individual photos. He plays a subordinate role, matching and highlighting the bride's attractiveness.<sup>22</sup> The groom's role is as Adrian describes: "[...] when the man appears in a picture it doesn't matter what he's wearing because most people looking at the photo will only notice the bride."<sup>23</sup>

Bridal beauty has been constructed by the studios and is preserved in the photos. For most Taiwanese women, being a bride is a treasured opportunity to experience star-like modeling and clothes.<sup>24</sup> Adrian points out that "[b]ridal makeovers turn women into brides, transforming everyday women with their individual characteristics into generic look-alike beauties in three hours' time."<sup>25</sup> Hence, what the wedding photo industry really sells is fantasy. Adrian adds, "[t]he bridal salon workers' intention is not to produce 'realistic' images. [...] Rather, like advertising company stylists and photographers, they work to create fantastical, highly perfect, and idealistic images."<sup>26</sup> The wedding photo industry constitutes and gazes at the women within the frame of the mainstream beauty criteria.<sup>27</sup> There is little difference between it and the other image-making structures.

Despite showing a beautiful bride, another main task of wedding photos is to promote love.<sup>28</sup> As Adrian notes, "[i]n the photo shoot, the groom performs a ritual of romance where he makes a to-be-publicized expression of adoration for his bride."<sup>29</sup> One of the classical poses has the couple standing with their bodies and faces turned in the same direction, looking into the distance. It builds a feeling that they will face

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<sup>22</sup> Hsiao, "Hunsha sheying," 85, 86.

<sup>23</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 228.

<sup>24</sup> Lo, "Jianzheng aiqing," 10.

<sup>25</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 147.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>27</sup> Lee, "Shixian nide minxing mong," 169.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 152, 177; Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 181, 182; Hsiao, "Hunsha sheying," 89, 94, 98, 100.

<sup>29</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 204.

their future together (see Figure VI-1).<sup>30</sup> As a commonly seen gesture in wedding photos, “hand in hand” not only manifests closeness, but also responds to the meaning of the term “kanshu (marital partner)” in Taiwanese. The wedding photo is like a record that the bride is cherished by her husband.<sup>31</sup> What is demonstrated in the photos is as Adrian notes: “[The] bride and groom are actress and actor. The photographer directs their performance, helping them strike romantic poses and produce romantic facial expressions.”<sup>32</sup> The wedding photo embodies and visualizes the love fantasy. Figures VI-2 and VI-3 show examples of this. In this circumstance, the wedding photo industry not only produces but also sells a utopia about married life.

Nonetheless, the images of the happy, agreeable couple are truly rooted in an unequal gender relationship. They reflect the contrary values and judgments of men and women in Taiwanese society. First, whether the couple sits, stands or adopts any other pose, the groom will be higher than the bride. It is almost a rule in most photos. For instance, the large gap in height between the couple in Figures VI-4 and VI-5 clearly declares that the status of men is superior to that of women. The delicately-arranged composition of the height of the couple echoes their positions in reality. As mentioned in chapter one, “women marrying up and men marrying down” is a general ideology in Taiwan. Women are inclined to marry men who have a higher salary and academic degree, a better family background, and a taller stature than themselves, to ensure that the men whom they marry have a good social and economic position and thus can be relied on. Consequently, the groom is truly higher than the bride in most cases in reality; if not, he would still be presented as higher than the bride in photos.

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<sup>30</sup> The trademark on Figure 2 and other illustrations in this section are not printed on the wedding photos. It is only on some on-line photos from the official websites of the studios for the purpose of promotion.

<sup>31</sup> Lee, “Shixian nide minxing mong,” 158.

<sup>32</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 182.

The traditional female trait of obeying and deferring to men is shown in the photos. In Figures VI-1 and VI-2, from the orientation of the bodies of the couples, it can be seen that men walk before women on their road, implying that men guide and lead women. In Figure VI-3, the groom expresses a protective manner by placing his arm around the bride. The groom cherishes his bride by stroking her head as if she were a child in Figure VI-5; her squatting pose, gazing up at the groom, further reinforces her lower status. In Figure VI-6, this bride also poses lower than the groom. She looks downwards to present a typical shy expression, which frequently appears in Taiwanese female images, including concert posters. While the bashful bride is an object to be gazed at by the groom, she seems to look towards his feet. The direction of their gazes reveals the hierarchy of men and women. These representative instances which constitute the basic compositions of Taiwanese wedding photos, demonstrate that women and men do not share an equal relationship in the images. The bride is not accorded her individuality and activeness. Women present an image of beauty, tameness and obedience to win the affection and protection of men. The harmony and romance in wedding photos are thus based on the ideology of gender bias.

## **VI.2 Western Elements in Wedding Photos**

Another characteristic of wedding photos is the industry's westernization, as can be proved by the names of the studios, such as France Taipei, Greek Wedding, The Royal Wedding, Hollywood Delicate Wedding, Cinderella, Paris Fashion Wedding, White House, Milan Wedding, Cartier Wedding Delicate, Modern France, France Star, etc.<sup>33</sup> The occidental constituent in Taiwanese wedding photos symbolizes high-class quality and progress, which have been usually associated with Western societies. "The

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<sup>33</sup> Lo, "Jianzheng aiqing," 57, 58.

fantasy worlds depicted in bridal photographs,” as Adrian states, “[...] reflect not necessarily the bride and groom’s personal fantasies but rather the social fantasies the bridal industry expects all young people to share. Beauty, romance, upward mobility, and worldliness are widespread ideals, [...]”<sup>34</sup> While the beauty criteria of the Western type have been honoured, the Chinese ones have been depreciated. The trend is also displayed in wedding photos. As Adrian states, “[b]ridal stylists in Taipei similarly target facial features and body parts that [...] mark Chinese bodies as inferior [...]”<sup>35</sup> Hence, the modeling and clothing of the couple are deliberately Western in style.

In their western clothes, the groom often wears a formal business suit and the bride an evening gown. The bridal image is closely related to the ideal beauty constructed by the mass media, as seen in magazines and advertising. As Adrian indicates, “[t]hese same European and U.S. beauty magazines are consulted by bridal stylists and photographers as inspiration for their work in Taiwan.”<sup>36</sup> She adds that “[s]tylists’ work involves laborious, transformative processes that bring women’s bodies into compliance with the beauty standards of the mass media [...]”<sup>37</sup> The popular image in the Western media becomes the model for most women in Taiwan, including the bride.

In fashion terms, the gown is considered a very westernized item.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the custom in Western society, where women can wear formal dresses to attend parties, dinners, concerts and other official events, women in Taiwanese culture seldom wear formal dresses, even on these occasions.<sup>39</sup> There are few chances to wear formal dress in their whole lives, excepting when taking wedding photos and on their wedding

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<sup>34</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 69.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>38</sup> Lee, “Shixian nide minxing mong,” 164, 181.

day.<sup>40</sup> In Professor Yu-ying Lee's paper, "Dreams Come True - Wedding Photography in Contemporary Taiwan," Lee notes that many of her female interviewees stated that one of the most important aspects of the marital process is to wear western evening gowns. According to Lee's study, wearing gowns is regarded as being associated with celebrities or fashion models. While taking wedding photos, therefore, female Taiwanese consumers can experience the star-like dressing style.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, "[b]ridal costuming also connotes sexuality." Adrian states that, "bridal gowns often have open or off-shoulder necklines, lace backs, and tightly fitted bodices revealing the curves of breasts enlarged with padding [...]."<sup>42</sup> Currently, the definition of sexiness and how to perform and appreciate the sexy appeal is also influenced by the western culture. These western dresses which show attractive qualities not only obey the male-gaze standard, which view women as an object of desire, but are also admired and identified by the Taiwanese women themselves. As a result, although the wedding photo is exclusively a Taiwanese product, it is closely related to Western values and full of Westernized imagery. It is a hybrid that has arisen in an Asian country with Occidental elements.

To intensify the occidental aura of wedding photos, Western classical musical instruments, which are considered representative of western culture in Taiwan, are thus appropriate properties. They symbolise civilization, adding an atmosphere of high social standing to the photos, as shown in Figures VI-7 and VI-8. As well as posing close to the instruments, playing them is also a popular theme. The player is always the bride, whether in photos of herself or with her groom. Figures VI-9, VI-10 and VI-11 show examples of this. As for the groom, he is in charge of gazing at the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 161, 162.

<sup>40</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 236.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 179; Lee, "Shixian nide minxing mong," 152, 163.

<sup>42</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 163.



woman and her performance. It appears that the woman is playing for the groom; she is entertaining and pleasing him through music. Rarely, a groom plays an instrument and the bride just appreciates it.

This popular composition reveals the common belief in Taiwan that playing music is a charming skill for women. The typical image of a female musician is well-educated, gentle, classy and beautiful. These wedding photos reflect this social expectation of Taiwanese female musicians in real life – a good potential wife. This may explain why brides in wedding photos are usually depicted as musicians, no matter what their real occupation is. Whether the bride can play the instrument is not of concern; even if she cannot, in the photos, she can pretend to be playing by adopting simple poses. Through these photos, it can be seen why Rebecca Sun, mentioned in the Introduction chapter, who had an affair with the Taiwanese legislator Yu-sheng Wu pretended to be a piano teacher. The status of a musician is advantageous in suggesting the perfect female image.

To portray a bride as a musician, various Western classical musical instruments can be used as properties. Nevertheless, only specific instruments appear in wedding photos, usually the piano and harp. The piano is the most prevalent instrument in Taiwan, but the harp is rarely owned and learnt. Why these two instruments are favoured in photos might be because the brides can maintain their beautiful faces and poses even when they are playing either of these two instruments. This tallies with Jennifer C. Post's paper, "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions," where she indicates that "[f]eminine' instruments in Western classical tradition, such as the keyboard, guitar, and harp, demanded 'no alteration in facial expression or physical demeanor.' [...] [T]hese standards do not seem unique to Europe." She adds, "[w]hen women are seen with instruments, they are generally playing ones that do not alter their facial expressions or greatly change

their stance.” In order to maintain a gorgeous appearance, the categories of instrument which the women can play were restricted. Although there is no rule limiting the instruments that professional female musicians can play in Taiwan now, in wedding photos, the bride has still been presented with “feminine instruments” to promote her beautiful image. Since music is just a decoration for the ideal female image, risking other musical instruments is unnecessary.

### **VI.3 A Comparison of Wedding Photos and Concert Posters**

The images in concert posters and wedding photos share many similarities, not only because they share the definition of beauty in the same social context, but also because they enjoy identical apparel, photographers, studios and productions. In Taiwan, brides and female musicians share the same studios and photographers. Furthermore, which image is printed and displayed in public is also selected by the brides and female musicians themselves. Both of them are intended for both private and personal use, not for business profit. It makes them essentially different from the female image in advertisements and magazines. On concert posters and in wedding photos, women are simultaneously the object to be gazed at and the subject leading this act. Consequently, these images can be seen as a product of consumer culture for fulfilling the happiness and expectations of women, although ultimately they are still presented within the frame of the male gaze. Through directly scrutinizing wedding photos, the units and manners depicted on posters will be clearly presented. The importance of wedding photos in the image-formation of women musicians will also emerge.

Due to its being a supposed “once in a lifetime” experience, people usually devote considerable time and money to their wedding photos. The number of exterior

settings in wedding photos, therefore, is naturally more than that found on concert posters but, apart from this aspect, the popular filming sites in wedding photos and on concert posters are the same. Regarding outdoor backgrounds, green meadows and sandy beaches are the two most common locations.<sup>43</sup> Strolling along a beach with a blue sea and sky usually constitutes a brilliant picture, and these are illustrated in a wedding photo in Figure VI-12 and on a poster in Figure VI-13. As for indoor locations, the most popular are luxurious living rooms with pendant lamp, graceful drapes, delicate candelabras, large fireplaces, or costly sofas. Figure VI-14 is an instance of a wedding photo and Figure VI-15 of a poster.

While the bride imitates a musician in order to idealise her status in wedding photos, the female musician also adopts components from the bride's image to display her attraction on posters. These mutual borrowings emphasize their visual connection. Some typical approaches are particularised here, such as the flying skirt. In Figure VI-16 of a wedding photo and Figure VI-17 of a poster, the skirt is floating in the air. The waving silk-chiffon skirt claims the visual attention. The soft fabric of the elegant skirt heightens the feminine quality. In Figure VI-18 of the wedding photo and Figure VI-19 of the poster, the bride and musician adopt an identical pose to spotlight the widely-flared skirt. The composition in Figure VI-20 addresses the tall, slim bride, whose train flows down to the floor. The standing woman and the long, wide, almost circular train make up the principal structure of the photos. Figures VI-21 and VI-22 presented the same pose on posters. Stressing the skirt in these images is to highlight a feminine aesthetic.

Regarding properties, toys appear frequently, representing the cute, innocent, and childlike attributes of women. (see Figure VI-23 as an example of posters). As mentioned in the previous section on advertising and posters, cute women are often

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<sup>43</sup> Lee, "Nuxing ningshi," 5; Hsiao, "Hunsha sheying," 58.

regarded as one of the beauty types in Taiwan. In wedding photos, as well as illustrating the sweet, lovable nature of the bride, the appearance of toys also brings a delightful air, as in Figures VI-24 and VI-25. A balloon is another common item generally used to celebrate joyous occasions; this meaning is transferred to photos and thus creates a cheerful, romantic air (see the wedding photo in Figure VI-26 and the poster in Figures VI-27 and VI-28). The wedding photo in Figure VI-29 and the poster in Figure VI-30 are other samples of a similar compositional design.

In addition to the composition, how the wedding photos and posters have been circulated and viewed are also similar. Just as some wedding photos are made into small thank-you cards for every guest at the reception, musicians also print their images and concert information on invitation cards or flyers. These prints are thus like mini-posters for concert promotion and these cards are sent widely to the musician's relatives, friends, colleges, and students, while flyers are also been placed in concert halls, book shops and arts centres. Owing to the internet's popularization, now wedding photos and concert posters are often uploaded to social networking sites to attain a more extensive circulation. This makes the images far more widely prevalent than before and may be viewed by those who are unfamiliar with the people in the pictures.

The wedding photo and the concert poster are like tools. They illustrate a particular type of appearance a bride or female musician "should" present in the context of social aesthetics. Consequently, women who are familiar with the signs and definitions of attractiveness in specific conditions can play the role of a beauty in the public's eyes.<sup>44</sup> Compared to general women, female musicians have more chance to be seen in the spotlight and to be formally dressed, such as for poster shoots and for concert performances. It is thus easy to make the connection between a glamorous

image and female musicians. For female musicians who want to be recognized and identified as a musician, it will be convenient to perform their image.

## **VI.4 Ways of Seeing**

On account of the male role, women's sexy postures in wedding photos and on concert posters create dissimilar meanings. Men's presence in wedding photos and absence from female musicians' posters enable a different understanding of the pictures as a product and female gendered performances in general. In wedding photos, the male character is the one who responds to the bride's movements. For instance, in Figure VI-5, the bride crouches down to keep low, and looks up at her groom, beaming and looking attentively. She is like a child enjoying his caress, while the man stands looking down at his bride. Their height, posture and interaction reflect their unequal relationship. In the concert poster shown in Figure VI-31, the female musician adopts the same position as the bride in Figure VI-5. The musician is also dressed formally, squatting down and looking up with a smile and attentive eyes. According to the framing angle, nonetheless, who she is looking at is just the viewer. The viewer in front of the poster is assumed to answer the musician's look. Compared to the wedding photo, it is clear that the viewer is set as a man to be aroused by the female musician's movements and equaling to the status of a groom in wedding photos. "The spatial organization of an image" between the image and its viewer is as Rose analyses: "The elements 'inside' that photo are arranged in such a way that they construct a particular viewing position 'outside' the photo (and this makes the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' difficult to sustain.)"<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, the camera height is also "an important means of expression." "A

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<sup>44</sup> Lee, "Nuxing ningshi," 16, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 46.

high angle,” as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen suggest, “makes the subject look small and insignificant [...]”<sup>46</sup> They indicate that, if the subject in the image is seen from a high angle, then the interaction between the viewer and the subject is that the viewer has power over the subject. Consequently, regarding both the bride in Figure VI-5 and the female musician in Figure VI-33, women continually occupy a lower position and look up to men, who are in the more powerful stance. The design of the height of the women and men echoes the ideally imagined image of the two genders in real life.

The viewer can appreciate the couple in a wedding photo as an outsider, but be part of completing the poster, since the viewer is the expected object for whom the female musician performs. For instance, the wedding photo in Figure VI-14 shows a woman with her husband in a luxurious living room, implying that the couple is wealthy and lives an opulent life. In the poster in Figure VI-15, apart from the absence of the man, the settings are similar. Nevertheless, it suggests a different concept. The stately living room implies that the female musician is a noble woman in her affluent house. The male character is missing and the female musician looks at the viewer with an inviting smile. This composition suggests that the viewer might be the one whom she is waiting for. It is apparent that her supposed object of reciprocal action is the viewer. A similar condition also happens in the wedding photo in Figure VI-32 and the poster in Figure VI-33. Although these two pictures have a strong resemblance in terms of their setting and composition, they actually produce different meanings. While the focus of Figure VI-32 is the hand-in-hand couple, Figure VI-33 displays the female musician herself as an appealing, gazed object; the pink silk curtain further increases the sexy air of the poster.

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<sup>46</sup> Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 2006), 118.

Bashfulness is regarded as a womanly attribute in Chinese culture, which may be why the image of a shy woman has continually appeared on concert posters and in wedding photos. In wedding photos, the woman's shyness is a reaction to the man's gaze. To avoid looking back at the man, a bashful bride lowers her head and smiles timidly, as in Figure VI-34. In the poster, as in Figure VI-35, it clearly reserves space for the viewer to look at the woman. The angle of the female musician shows that she is shy due to the assumed male viewer's attention. Kress and Leeuwen analyse the compositional design about how the viewer is invited to interact with the person in the image. The direction of the person's gaze or gesture "demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with [her] [...]. Exactly what kind of relation is then signified by other means, for instance by the facial expression of [them]." They may smile, in which case the viewer is asked to enter into a relation of social affinity with them [...]. And in doing this, images define to some extent who the viewer is (e.g. male, [...]), and in that way exclude other viewers."<sup>47</sup> Figures VI-36 and VI-37 show other examples. In Figure VI-36, the bride is twisting and thus making her skirt whirl; the groom in the photo is appreciating her movements with applause. It seems that the bride is dancing for the man and winning his praise. Similarly in the poster in Figure VI-37, the female musician is also swirling her skirt, for the virtual viewer. It is like the female musician is doing this for the viewer. The virtual viewer fills in the vacancy occupied by the groom in the wedding photo.

The existence of the male role in wedding photos and on posters engenders different ways of seeing and visual experience, even though he is presented in an imagined position in the posters. Figures VI-38 and VI-39 show two examples. These two images are obviously similar in composition. However, the affectionate interaction between the couple in Figure VI-38 becomes as the female seduction in

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<sup>47</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 118.

Figure VI-39. On this concert poster, the female musician stretches her arm in the viewer's direction, like sending out an invitation. According to her sexy pose and alluring facial expression, she appears to be tempting an expected male viewer. In wedding photos, in fact, the presence of the groom makes it difficult to gaze at the woman in an erotic way. In Figure VI-40, for instance, an individual female musician who dresses glamorously and reclines near a lake to see herself reflected in the water easily arouses the viewers to appreciate her beauty. On the contrary, in Figure VI-41, although the bride also has a similar bearing, her sexy pose and the groom's action make the photo a self-contained image. There is a man to answer her sexiness, and little room for the viewer to intrude into the image. Their interactions are complete within the picture.

Figure VI-42 illustrates a typical posture adopted in concert posters. The female musician leans her soft body against things and affectionately smiles, gazing at the viewer; furthermore, her straight arm stretched towards the viewer reveals her open attitude and seems to invite an interaction. In the wedding photo in Figure VI-43, the bride also displays a similar pose. Nevertheless, while a viewer traces the line of her arm, there is a man kissing her hand to end the desired image. The poster shown in Figure VI-44 is a female musician, reclining and facing the viewer directly. This framing angle implies that the viewer is above and facing her. This assumed position of the viewer and the distance between her and the viewer pave the way for seeing it in an erotic frame. As Kress and Leeuwen argue, "the size of the frame, to the choice between close-up, medium shot and long shot" define the relationship between the subject in the image and the viewer. "[T]he selection of an angle [...] implies the possibility of expressing subjective attitudes toward [the viewer]." In their critique, the "subjective attitudes" are not "individual," but "are often socially determined



attitudes.”<sup>48</sup> “In everyday interaction,” as they specify, “social relations determine the distance (literally and figuratively) we keep from one another. [...] The location of these invisible boundaries is determined by configurations of sensory potentialities – by whether or not a certain distance allows us to smell or touch the other person [...].”<sup>49</sup> In the wedding photo in Figure VI-45, the bride is also lying down, but the groom is beside her. The image of a couple lying together creates considerably different meanings to the image of a reclining single woman.

Although the individual photo of the bride is similar to that of the female musician in the compositions, the awareness of its function – for the wedding – and the presence of the groom in other photos make it difficult for the viewer to regard the bride in a sexual manner. In the female musicians’ concert posters, the men are absent. Whether female musicians are sexy or shy, the expected position of the onlooker is the place occupied by the real viewer. As far as the heterosexual mechanism is concerned, female musicians’ beauty is reserved for the imaginary men outside the picture. Consequently, from the camera angle and the distance between the imagined viewer and the female musician, the questions posed by Kress and Leeuwen provide useful points for examining the purposeful message delivered by the compositional design of most concert posters of female musicians in Taiwan: “Who could see this scene in this way?” “Where would one have to be to see this scene in this way, and what sort of person would one have to be to occupy that space?”<sup>50</sup> While the flow of desire between the couple is limited to the wedding photos, the erotic dynamics is extending to outside the poster.

The formation of an image is not only restricted to its production, but also related to the ways of seeing. According to Berger’s analyses, seeing is an action

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<sup>48</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 129.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>50</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 143.

involving selections; we can only see what our culture allows us to see. What we see and what we do not see from a picture is through continual teaching by our society and the experiences of each person.<sup>51</sup> Hence, when people see wedding photos and concert posters, they will get different visual meanings according to the social convention and habits. When creating an image, the producer would predict what messages people will obtain through viewing. This is why they usually follow the common values and signs which are prevalently circulated among the expected viewers for attaining a proper visual conveyance. Women decide how to establish their image, thus, not just founded on their own intentions. It is also based on their education about what is beautiful and what is “normal.” It can be seen in wedding photos and on posters. The brides and female musicians seem to take a comparatively active role in the process of making and showing their own images due to the status of patronage. However, their choices are still limited by the conventions of their society. In wedding photos and on concert posters, women just became the subject to pay the cost of objectifying their own images.

## **VI.5 Conclusion on Wedding Photos and Posters**

The female images in both wedding photos and on concert posters have followed the models of beauty within the social norms. As Adrian points out, “[...] the bride wants to preserve images of herself that are more beautiful than she really is.”<sup>52</sup> What the bride cares most about may be whether she conforms successfully to social criteria of beauty, such as the images in magazines or advertisements, not the resemblance between herself and her image.<sup>53</sup> Adrian adds that, “[i]n this sense,

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 13, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 236.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 204, 205, 225, 226; Hsiao, “Hunsha sheying,” 86.

Taiwanese bridal photographs tell the truth about the constructedness of images even as they revel in artifice.”<sup>54</sup> How much the bride and her image are alike, or not, has even become an ordinary topic in Taiwan when people look at wedding photos.<sup>55</sup>

Taking photos and choosing images for display is a process of construction of self-image and self-identity. What will be filmed is not the real person, but the imagined self. Whether a picture is taken by the self or others, each photo is examined through multiple standards. A photo that does not fulfill the norms of its category would have little chance of being shown. Confirming the socially-recognized image is fundamental, because it affects whether the women can be appropriately grouped into the “right” community to which they belong or of which they want to be part. The female musician is one instance of this. There might be a stereotypical or pre-existing “ideal” image in the female musicians’ minds, which they think can appropriately represent their identity, so a considerable number of similar posters have continued to appear in diverse districts in Taiwan.

In some researches, it has been deemed a celebration that women are now no longer solely the gazed objects, nor voiceless in building their own images. Women are the sponsors or producers in some cases, so being gazed is also a power of display.<sup>56</sup> When creating wedding photos and concert posters, women are often the ones who decide the style, gowns and background setting of the image. Women are also the ones who can ask the photographer to re-take the photos until they are satisfied. They usually play the role of a decision maker who chooses which image to present in wedding photos or on concert posters.<sup>57</sup>

However, this does not overturn the objectification of women. Through the

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<sup>54</sup> Adrian, *Framing the Bride*, 237.

<sup>55</sup> Lee, “Nuxing ningshi,” 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 18; Lo, “Jianzheng aiqing,” 81.

<sup>57</sup> Further information on the detailed procedures for making a concert poster is presented in the personal experiences of female musicians in VIII.4.

above analyses, it can be found that women just adopt the male-gazed position to view themselves. Most women and female musicians do not use their power to change their image or invent a new one, but actively present it to please phallogentric eyes. The difference is that the images were made by men previously, but are also made by women now.

As Berger states, “[m]en look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyour of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female.”<sup>58</sup> The phallogentric visuality regulates the place of women: how they should be looked at and what they should look like. Through seeing magazines, advertisements, and other mass media, women learn how to be a member of the male-gazed mechanism. They imbibe and perform the “correct” image for their status. As a specific group of women, female musicians not only adopt the general women’s image, but also need to consider the image specifically for themselves. The similar appearances of female musicians reveal their limited freedom over their image construction. This condition is as Berger suggests: “[...] she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.”<sup>59</sup>

Nonetheless, while looking at a wedding photo, even if it creates a perfect bride or romantic image, life experience will make people aware of its mythical components. The concert poster is a different matter. For most people in Taiwan, the concert poster is the principal avenue by which to “see” female musicians. How the posters depict the female musicians, thus, influences and constitutes people’s understanding of them. Amongst the female musicians themselves, the poster is also a site providing a model

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<sup>58</sup> Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 47.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

for imitation and reference. Hence, the poster becomes the proper medium for researching the image, identity, ideology and stereotypes of female musicians.

## **VI.6 Conclusion on Modern Women's Images and Posters**

The Taiwanese public has a particular image of female musicians in the public sphere, as is highlighted by the previously discussed case of legislator Yu-sheng Wu's affair. The major concerns outlined in the previous chapters thus focus on the components and mechanisms of both the image as a product and the process of construction. The chapter on women's image in history and two chapters on the modern popular media examine the image's growing context, the citing of other images, compositional design, components and their significance, and the looking relationship with the viewers. Through these analyses, the background to this image and to the framework structured by numerous power and social regulations which limited women musicians' presentations have been unveiled.

Although performing oneself seems like a liberal act, it actually reflects the context in which a person is rooted. Constructing a self-image or identity does not entirely depend on one's intention, but is restricted according to the individual's status in society. Based on the thoughts of Judith Butler, Jill Jagger states that "[...] identity is the product of social and political regulation rather than an innate property of individuals [...]." <sup>60</sup> As Judith Butler herself argues in *Gender Trouble*, "[...] 'the body' appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself." <sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Jill Jagger, *Judith Butler: Sexual Politics, Social Change and the Power of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 48.

<sup>61</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 2nd edition. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

In the preceding discussion, it has been shown that each component displays parts of the image's trait and history; its existence reflects the social values of the era. The components' loaded cultural meanings make female musicians' images intelligible both to men and women. However, any image produced is actually a contingent result. It is produced by the interplay amongst multiple institutional powers. As Butler suggests in *Undoing Gender*, "[...] intelligibility is understood as that which is produced as a consequence of recognition according to prevailing social norms."<sup>62</sup> The diverse cultural apparatuses that meet in a specific place at a specific time will create a specific image. It will be never a "final" image. The formation of an image is always an on-going process and the image of female musicians is an example of this. The three popular women's images, the ancient paintings of women and musical instruments, and the high position of Western classical music in Taiwan, all partly contribute to the current image of Taiwanese women musicians.

Through analysing concert posters and other popular prints, an obvious characteristic has been discovered: men and women follow a distinct binary framework from a heterosexual angle. In these imageries, there are generally only "feminine women" and "masculine men," and the performance of each gender is fixed and stereotypical. These widely-circulated images may influence how viewers show themselves and examine themselves and others supposed on biological differences. In general a person is simultaneously a viewer and performer in the image construction process. When men are the expected viewers, this typical female image reveals not only the ideal norm of women, but also the expected qualities of men. The assumed ways of seeing women instruct as to how a man is conceived of in a society. The sexy female images implicatively teach men how they should look and judge women's appearances. As Butler states, the "masculine" and "feminine" have social histories

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<sup>62</sup> Anita Brady and Tony Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler* (Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE, 2011), 3.

“depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose.”<sup>63</sup>

As regards concert posters, the wedding photo is probably the most relevant women’s image. According to the analyses in the previous sections, both kinds of image have adopted plenty of elements from advertising and magazines. In wedding photos, a bride is continually performed as a beauty who sometimes cannot even be recognized by the people who know her. In this condition, it seems that being charming is a requirement for an ideal wife. Nevertheless, wedding photos have developed their own unique style. The postures and facial expressions, which are considered to please and flatter men, become the foundation of wedding photos. The bride is obedient, poses lower than and looks up to her husband. The wedding photo is a kind of declaration and a self-display that she is a “perfect” wife.

A similar depiction of women is found on posters, but the absence of men and the promotion of musical instruments make female musicians “play” a more charming wife role. Although women’s images in wedding photos and on concert posters share elements from advertising and magazines, they generally strengthen the aspects of passivity, tenderness and submissiveness. In many cases, these docile women ironically adopt bold poses, a seductive dress style or inviting facial expressions. She is a complex of signs, designed to satisfy male superiority and phallogocentric looking pleasure by her controllable, desirable body. This sexual attraction, nevertheless, is hugely weakened in wedding photos due to the existence of the groom, but is expressed unambiguously to the presumed male viewer of concert posters.

The intelligibility of female musicians’ image is based on the citation from its settings. The existence of citation occurs when, as Anita Brady and Toy Schirato point out, “[...] the arrival of a subject takes place within a network of meaning that has a

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<sup>63</sup> Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 10.

long and established history of citation. [...] it is this history of citation – where any citation echoes past citations – that gives performative its force.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, when Rebecca Sun proclaimed that she was a piano teacher, she deliberately used public knowledge of those who had played that role previously to her advantage. It is only due to citations, that society can understand which image or role is presented, and the subject understands how to perform.<sup>65</sup> A material which can be cited is certainly acknowledged or prevalently known in a community. Only in this situation is an act of citation meaningful. In the condition of female musicians’ images, ancient paintings, advertising, magazines and wedding photos are resources that provide abundant signs for citations, such as the pose of bowing head, shy expression, the mirror and flowers. An element cited or adopted frequently by female musicians may also adjust its former significance.

Nonetheless, the constitution of a female musician comes not only from what she cites, but also from what she does not cite, cannot cite, and does not even think of as able to be cited. As Brady and Schirato state, “[...] Butler points out that this process by which subjects are formed and disposed is dependent not just on what is allowed, but also on what is denied.”<sup>66</sup> They also summarise that “[e]very cultural field, for instance, not only determines what kinds of bodies are cognate with regard to its particular ethos, values and logics – it also ascribes cultural capital to certain types of bodies and denies it to others.”<sup>67</sup> Any “normal” image or performance is legitimised by social regulations and conventions. When some female musicians are deemed “normal” by the public, the standard which bestows them this normality simultaneously deprives others of membership who do not follow the norm. The

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<sup>64</sup> Brady and Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler*, 47.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 48

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



differentiation is thus made between those who are “like” female musicians and those who are not. An image, therefore, as Butler mentioned, “[...] becomes a site of power by which the human is differentially produced.”<sup>68</sup>

An “insider” will know what kind of image can be performed according to the individual’s specific status, gender, age, and occupation. Most female musicians in Taiwan know how to cite or adopt the “correct” ingredients to perform themselves, so high similarities are continually demonstrated on concert posters. Nonetheless, knowing how to cite which characteristics to attain a recognisable image is not a free-will decision or a completely self-aware act.<sup>69</sup> It is subjected to social power. Failing to achieve the intelligible image which marks the individual’s community will cause life and career difficulties. The degree of difficulty may relate to the stability of the image. Being grouped in the circle of “outsiders” will lead to the risk of a loss of interest.

Hence, after analysing women musicians’ image and tracing its components, the next question will be whether the similar appearances indicate any similar inherent qualities. Under the same surface, how women musicians put or hide their subjectivity and individuality in their bodies. Whether the framework is for them a kind of oppression, and what difficulties they confront, are both issues awaiting investigation. In the following chapters, these themes will be surveyed by interviewing female musicians. A few topics will also be elaborated: how the image has been made; how the image acts on female musicians’ social position, occupation, life, marriage, and self-identity; what the differences for musicians and Western classical music would be if there were no such fixed images. After all, a female musician is not just a “musician,” this status cannot express her completely. As a

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<sup>68</sup> Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Brady and Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler*, 47.

woman and a person in Taiwanese society, she also holds other positions. How she negotiates the social norm and her subjectivity amongst her several statuses and how much self-awareness she has with regard to these practices will also be discussed.

## **VII. The Study and Marriage of Taiwanese Female**

### **Musicians**

In the Introduction chapter, the social status of Western classical music in Taiwan was demonstrated by illustrating its development in this particular historical context. This western art had been systematically promoted in this Asian country during the past century, beginning under Japanese colonialism. Now, it is not merely rooted, but the mainstream highbrow musical style in Taiwanese society. An examination of the cultural setting of Western classical music in Taiwan helps us to define the position of female musicians. In addition, the preceding chapters also explore the conceptual image of Taiwanese female musicians by analysing media reports. The visual image is explored by tracing and comparing relevant elements of ancient and modern female images. In this chapter and the following one, interview methodology is utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation of Taiwanese female musicians. How these female musicians experience the influence of their image on their life and career and how they formulate their own image by negotiating the social stereotypes and self-consciousness will also be discussed in detail.

A total of 17 Taiwanese female musicians participated in this study. Eight were student musicians enrolled in different music institutes, while nine were professional musicians from a wide range of academic areas, including one composer, one musicologist, one piano accompanist, two orchestral instrumentalists, and four university professors teaching performance.<sup>1</sup> The primary criteria for selecting the subjects were that they had undergone a formal Taiwanese musical education and are currently engaged in the music profession in Taiwan. The selection criterion aims to

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<sup>1</sup> The need for confidentiality means that the instruments/voice of the participants cannot be disclosed.

reflect the common condition amongst most Taiwanese female musicians. The overwhelming majority of them learnt music from around four years old and attended “music classes” at each educational stage. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, music classes are a particular institution in Taiwan. They are analogous to the music departments of universities, but set up for younger stages, from elementary to senior high school. All students who enter music classes must pass the various professional musical exams. Schools approved by the government can offer music classes, and most of these are located in the larger cities.

The interviews were held over a period of 30 days, from mid-February to mid-March 2013. Apart from the interview with a female professor, which was limited to 30 minutes in consideration of her busy schedule, the other interviews lasted from two to five hours. In addition to the explanations of the present study and the interview process, the actual recordings lasted twenty-five hours in total. The recorded data were fully transcribed verbatim. In consideration of the privacy of the participants, the data presented in this study contain no identifying factors. Their names were kept anonymous, substituted by the first seventeen letters of the English alphabet. Their background information is listed in Table VII-1.

The subjects were interviewed individually and face to face in different cafes in Taiwan. A semi-structured interview method was chosen. The study used open-ended questions and in-depth discussions. Most of the interviews consisted of three themes: the study of music, partner selection/marriage, and image. These three themes also frame the structure of this and the next chapters. For ease and to ensure in-depth discussions, all of the interviews were undertaken in Mandarin. The aim was for the participants to provide thick descriptions of their individual experiences. Among the participants, only two had had occasional meetings with the researcher; as for the others, some were introduced by some participants and some were invited by the

researcher.

Table VII-1 The information of the participants.

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Participant A	50s	Doctor of Philosophy	University professor
Participant B	40s	Master	Composer/University lecturer
Participant C	40s	Master	University lecturer
Participant D	40s	Doctor of Philosophy	Associate university professor
Participant E	40s	Doctor of Philosophy	Assistant university professor
Participant F	30s	Master	Instrumentalist in orchestra
Participant G	30s	Master	Instrumentalist in orchestra
Participant H	30s	Doctor of Philosophy	Assistant university professor
Participant I	30s	Master	Music Teacher
Participant J	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant K	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant L	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant M	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant N	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant O	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant P	20s	Postgraduate Student	-
Participant Q	20s	Postgraduate Student	-

## VII.1 Motive for Studying Music

Through the interviews, this chapter demonstrates the reasons why the participants decided to pursue a musical career and why most musicians in Taiwan are female. It also investigates the difficulties which musicians usually confront and the role of gender in the Taiwanese musical business.

As Yoshihara states, in Asian countries, “[...] Western classical music carries additional value because of its Western-ness,”<sup>2</sup> adding that “[...] the familiarity with and training in Western classical music are associated with middle-class status and

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<sup>2</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 144.

Western-style modernity.”<sup>3</sup> Taiwan is no exception. As an art form in Western culture, classical music has usually been identified with the ideology of progress and civilization in Taiwanese society. In addition to purchasing instruments and private tuition costs, the required long-term economic investment makes classical music training intimately connected to the middle and upper classes.<sup>4</sup> Participant B indicated that it was the reason why her father bought her a piano; nearly forty years ago, a piano was regarded as being more of a luxury than today:

Because my father was a businessman, he wanted to show off his wealth. He told us that one of his colleagues bought a piano, so there should also be one in our house. He was not a music-lover. He considered that his colleague occupied a high-class status and position, because the colleague possessed a piano and his daughter was learning how to play. My father deemed the piano to be a symbol of wealth, because only rich people can afford to own and play one. My father grew up in an impoverished environment, so he wanted to achieve fame and wealth. One day, I told him that I wanted a piano, and he immediately brought one home; even the teacher had not yet been looked for. At the end of the day, my mother was angry; she just went out for the day, and a piano was standing there when she came back.

Even today, studying music still invariably represents a high-class activity in Taiwan. Yoshihara states that “[...] the desire of many Asian parents to have their children study music is at least driven partly by notions of symbolic distinction.”<sup>5</sup>

Participant K vividly described her own experience, appearing slightly agitated:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 144.

You do not have to go far to find examples; I am certainly one of them. My mother brought me up and she knew me very well. She saw every stage of my life and understood my strengths and shortcomings. However, she always told everyone that I am a music student to make her feel exceedingly proud. As for herself, she was a piano teacher when young, but has been a housewife for a very long time. She still continually tells everyone she meets that she is a piano teacher. She feels proud when people respond “You are so awesome!” She feels that the bond between classical music and herself would make her noble and classy. Even her daughter studying music became material for showing off.

The above comments reveal that participant K in the interview felt that being a musician is part of her. This is a critical aspect, but not the sole one. Nonetheless, she found that her identity had been simplified, and only had the title of female musician left. The high-level position of Western classical music brings honour to musicians and their parents. As participant I said, “Being the parents of a female musician is to share the limelight with your daughter. Here is a similar instance: Wouldn’t you proud to be Chien-ming Wang’s mother?<sup>6</sup> Having a piano teacher as a daughter brings a sense of satisfaction. This position belongs to upper society which is different from that of the general people.” The high-class quality of Western classical music thus becomes a driving force for Taiwanese musicians to begin their studies. Nevertheless, why are the vast majority of musicians in Taiwan women? Other than the class issue,

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<sup>6</sup> Chien-ming Wang (1980-) is a renowned Taiwanese baseball pitcher and now plays at the New York Yankees. He won 19 consecutive games in the seasons of 2006 and 2007 as the Yankees pitcher in the Major League Baseball. Due to his brilliant performance, he was selected as one of the “Time 100” in 2007. He is the only Taiwanese person to feature on the list twice. In Taiwan, Chien-ming Wang has often been called “the Honour of Taiwan.”

what accounts for the wide gap between the number of female and male musicians? Why are Taiwanese parents so keen to give their daughter an expansive musical education but not their son? The different judgments of women and men musicians respectively have led to musical learning becoming a gender issue in Taiwanese society. The following discussion will answer these questions.

Many of the informants mentioned that they were pushed onto the path towards becoming a musician as a small child. Their parents decided their career for them. They recalled that the majority of their classmates in the music classes were not even interested in music at all:

My classmates did not wish to be a musician; it was their parents. If you wish to start music classes in primary school, you have to start music training very early. I do not think anyone aged four or five would want to play the piano. It is obviously decided by their parents. (Participant E)

I think that no one in the music class would ever think about loving music or not. All of us studied music only because we have already started it. It seems like a very natural thing and you do not have much room for it. Then we studied quite hard to advance to the music class in junior high school when you were sixth grade in primary school. Some people would go abroad to study music at the junior high school stage, because their mothers were more ambitious. You did not ponder what you really wanted; you do not ask yourself this question. (Participant I)

This situation profoundly depressed participant P, who took up music classes in secondary school. Although she started later than most other students, she was



prompted to pursue a musical career by her own fondness for music. She thought that she would undoubtedly have friends who would share her appreciation of music. Nonetheless, “it was merely a dream,” she commented. “Not everyone was enrolled in the music classes because they loved music. The majority of them were forced into becoming musicians from an early age. Consequently, I had no idea at all where to find a friend.” Studying music requires continual economic investment and familial cooperation; the wholehearted dedication of the musician’s time and energy is also vital. Compared to this tremendous devotion, however, many female musicians showed little interest in music. They studied it because their parents wished them to do so.

In addition, earning one’s living from music is difficult in Taiwan. Musicians in Taiwan usually face a hard situation. Most of them earn a living as a part-time teacher/professor in music classes, personal studios, or universities. The unstable income of part-time music teachers/professors and the limited places in orchestras or schools are common problems for musicians. Besides, almost no musician can make a living by giving concerts alone in Taiwan. Concerts are often sponsored by the musicians themselves; the audiences are principally composed of their relatives, friends, and students. During the interviews, many participants also expressed their concerns. Participant H has a doctoral degree from a well-known university in the United States and prolific experience of international camps, festivals, and master classes. She is currently a part-time assistant professor teaching music classes and at universities; she found it difficult to maintain a stable living:

As a female musician, you hope that your husband’s job will be steady, because you are uncertain about the number of students you will have each academic year. You probably have four students this year, three next year, and suddenly

one the year after. Therefore, if you have a reliable source of students for your private lessons or successfully run a music studio, [then the problem would not seriously trouble you]. Otherwise, your situation will be tough if you are an adjunct music professor or teacher.

Participant L, a postgraduate student and slightly celebrated in her field, recalled that, as a teenager, she and her classmates had already been aware that there are few chances to work as a musician. Thus, they often talked about their future career negatively. Participant J, a postgraduate student who has performed outstandingly at one of the most renowned musical institutes in Taiwan, described how “studying music was no way out.” In her words, “what you devote and get in reward is extremely disproportionate.” She added, “Some Taiwanese parents may want their children to study medicine to become a doctor and then make huge profits; however, usually no parents provide their children with musical training in the hope that they will become wealthy through being a pianist in concert halls.”

Considering this situation, why are Taiwanese parents so willing to pay such costs, disregarding the realistic job market and their daughters’ possible preferences for other disciplines? According to the experiences of most of the informants, the answer is closely related to marriage. Being an ideal wife and marrying a rich husband was why most of the participants and, according to their observation, their classmates were encouraged to study music by their parents. Participants F and G shared their experience, which appeared common among female musicians. Both of them stated that their families were not wealthy when they were children, but their parents insisted on cultivating them to be musicians:

My father observed that music teachers always have an easy life and an enviable

marriage. Thus he wanted me study music; he considered that it will be a rewarding investment, so he was pleased to pay the money. ... Many of our teachers' husbands were doctors. It's true! When I was growing-up, when I went to the teachers' houses, you can definitely see that their husbands were all doctors or rich men. Some of them even had servants at home, twenty years ago in Taiwan! This phenomenon would really make people think that having a musician child was an incredible thing! (Participant F)

Actually, my father was merely a civil servant, so my mother worked very hard to run our home and fund my musical education. Studying music was my mother's idea. My two older brothers also played instruments well, but my parents followed the traditional values - men should be intellectuals and women should develop accomplishments. At school, my academic results were not inferior to my brothers, but my mother regarded the best way for a girl was to be a teacher. A music teacher would be a sought-after object of marriage. An *image* of a woman playing piano illustrated that she is a proper wife.<sup>7</sup> (Participant G)

Participant F is a free-lance instrumentalist working for several orchestras in Taiwan, who had graduated from a renowned musical academy in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, her parents' main expectation for her was, based on her status as a musician, that she would marry a rich man. What her father considered "a rewarding investment" was chiefly based on her marriage. If the definition of success is measured in terms of whether the initial objective of an endeavour has been reached or not, then being a professional, self-supporting musician probably does not count,

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<sup>7</sup> The English vocabulary which the informants occasionally use is presented in italic type.

although a prosperous marriage does.

Participant G's mother, like many Taiwanese female musicians' mothers, tried to make her daughter conform to the ideal "image" of a wife – a female pianist. Participant G's musicality was designed to be of benefit and advantage as a potential wife, not for herself as an independent individual. A musician's talent was narrowed and deposed to the level of merely an accessory; this talent was aimed at increasing her enticement and suitability as a potential wife. In the early stage of their studies, participant G and her brothers performed similarly in terms of their school work and musical performance, but were scheduled different life plans because of the gendered stereotype. While her brothers were expected to become doctors, participant G's success mainly depended on her husband's occupation.

As most of the participants stated, few of them and their classmates could deviate from the music classes. Since most music students have already spent so long practising their instruments and attending musical lessons, competing with other general students in common disciplines was an enormous challenge. Seeking to avoid uncertain results, the vast majority of them often remained in the music classes. As participant L recalled, she and her classmates always described being a member of the music classes as "a way of no return."

Nonetheless, participants O and E, having outstanding school grades, had considered leaving the music classes. At secondary school, participant O considered studying chemistry instead of music at university, but her mother deemed that it was too arduous for a woman to be an engineer in a chemistry factory. It was not female work. Participant O accepted her advice. Unlike participant O, participant E had a drastic struggle with her mother. In all academic and musical subjects, participant E always came top, throughout school. She even received an award at the Taiwan Science Fair for her research. Due to her deep enthusiasm for and excellence in the

subjects of science and engineering, she was eager to become a scientist, but finally yielded to her mother's strong belief in the stereotype.

PE: Sometimes I really wondered what kind of life I would have if I had switched to the general class at that time.

LM: Why did not you change path?

PE: Because of my mother. She firmly insisted that it was marvelous to be a music teacher, so there was no room for me to argue with her. ... Now I think, (short pause), Yes, my father told me just a few days ago, he thought that if I went to the general class and did my favourite experiments, since I was fond of biology at that time, maybe now I could have had a good life. However (long pause)...

LM: So you love doing experiments?

PE: Yes, in fact, I truly loved it (smiles). I would study science if I could have left the music class. To be honest, I really fancied science; I can learn extremely fast in those subjects.

LM: In this case, did you not think about arguing with your mother?

PE: In fact, I did. It was a huge conflict at that time. ...

LM: Why was your mother so captivated by the idea of pushing you to study music throughout your life?

PE: She thought that the best occupation for women was teaching. Amongst teachers, music teachers were the best. She always said that being a teacher was stable: You can take care of your family; besides, being a music teacher would be classy (laugh). It is a stereotype for women; it is why a female teacher was a popular object in mate-searching.

LM: But, in her opinion, taking care of a family would not be the priority for your brother's job.

PE: Yes, absolutely.

Participant E's mother provided her with a musical education and forced her to become a music teacher in order to cultivate her as an ideal potential wife. Due to the gendered stereotype, the primary wish of these parents is not to assist their daughters to become a doctor, but the wife of a doctor. In this situation, women's status as a wife is valued, not her individualism. If this is one of the main reasons why Taiwanese women engage in music, then the music industry has been significantly built on an unequal gendered value. This occupation thus can be regarded as work which aims to depend on men. Musical education does not aim to create independent human beings, but produce potential wives.

Nevertheless, if a female fails to marry a wealthy man, can the limited work opportunities and usually unstable earnings still be deemed successful in her parents' judgment? If her parents force her so firmly into a future marriage, then, to fulfill their motive, would they also push their daughter to marry a rich man to achieve their wish? What level of pressure and influence will female musicians be put under by their parents? Despite their parents, what do they themselves think about the perennial instillation of this gendered stereotype? What do they think about the connection between musicianship and marriage? All of these questions will be analyzed in the next section. The marital reality which the female musicians truly face will also be uncovered.

## **VII.2 Searching for a Partner and Marriage**

As the preceding section demonstrated, the Taiwanese females tended to engage in musical training mainly in compliance with their parents' wishes. The status of a

female musician has often been regarded as a means of accessing a wealthy husband. Numerous parents hope to enhance their daughter's attractiveness as an eligible bride and ideal wife through her status as a musician. Nonetheless, is this goal truly achievable by most female musicians in Taiwan? Based on observation of social life, what is the driving force that makes parents believe that this is a rewarding investment? To analyze these issues in greater depth, the general attitude of Taiwanese men towards female musicians and the process of searching for a partner in Taiwan will be elaborated in this section. The thoughts and intentions of the female musicians with regard to these matters will also be uncovered.

Due to the serious academic pressure in Taiwan, parents usually disapprove of their children dating before entering a university. The university period, therefore, has become the popular stage for searching for mates. Students often search for a partner through the cooperation between two departments which are almost totally composed of either male or female students. Since the gendered stereotype regarding occupation is deeply-rooted in Taiwan, most departments are associated with a specific gender. In each class, one or more student will be elected a social coordinator, who is responsible for contacting and organising activities between departments. Amongst Taiwanese university students, searching for a partner consists of two types: one is between small groups and the other is between whole year groups in the departments. Group activities are frequently held, such as riverside barbecues, overnight camps, and visits to restaurants. This is also called the "study partner," which pairs off the same number of students respectively from each of the two departments. The students can get the contact information of their study partners from the coordinator. The music students usually have many study partners, because the cooperation between the music department and other departments are close.

Since this is the principal avenue via which Taiwanese university students meet

their future marriage partner, choosing which departments to link becomes a serious consideration. Usually, the main factors are the ranking of the department and university. Especially the first factor tends to decide the occupation and corresponding status of the mate. With regard to searching for a partner, female students from the music department are continually an extremely popular group. All of the participants who were asked the related questions expressed this view, despite their age. Participant B recalled how partners were sought from the music department about 25 years ago:

I felt that people were really interested in female musicians, especially the male students from the departments of medicine. The social coordinators of our class invited students from several schools of medicine to participate in activities together. These medical students responded that they were very pleased to cooperate. Some of them said that students from their and our departments were study partners even before that....The male students from the medicine departments stated that they were willing to communicate with us because we were music students. If we were from other departments, such as the Department of Chinese Literature, there would have been less chance to meet them.

As the example brought up by participant B demonstrates, in Taiwan, male doctors and female musicians have displayed a strong connection through marriage for a long time. Medicine is considered an esteemed profession in Taiwan, and doctors have a high income and lofty social position. Departments of medicine perennially occupy the highest ranking in Taiwanese universities. Owing to its admired status, there is even an exclusive title for the wife of a doctor, *yi-sheng-niang*, which is



almost a synonym for a woman who does not need to work and enjoys a luxurious lifestyle. Since this term means “the wife of a doctor,” the trait of these women is based on their status as someone’s wife rather than on themselves as individuals. Their respectful appellation and status spring from their husband. This title lays stress on how to become the wife of a doctor. In this situation, to meet the requirements to qualify to be a doctor’s wife will be of higher concern than the need for self-expression. The informants who are now in their thirties had also had a similar experience to participant B. The following description by participant E reiterates the close relationship between musicians and doctors in Taiwan:

The students in the music department where I studied and the students of a prestigious medicine department were each other’s study-mates for consecutive years. It was like a custom between these two departments. Definitely, some people became a couple each year; after graduation, they got married and had children. Doctors usually live close to their workplace, so many of my classmates and alumnae became neighbours, living close to several of the large hospitals in Taiwan...A lot of my classmates married doctors. Since the south is comparatively traditional, every one of my musician friends from the south of Taiwan married a doctor! One of them told me that she did not aim to marry a doctor, but all the men introduced to her were doctors [since she is a musician]. Naturally, the man she finally married was, unsurprisingly, a doctor. I think that the condition in the north [of Taiwan] is less overwhelming, because the north is a region with diversity. (ponders and nods) I have friends whose husbands are engaged in different occupations here.

Along with social development, some newly-emerged industries have become prosperous in the past decade, such as electrical engineering and finance. In addition to doctors, these professions which have a high income and promising career prospects also provide desirable marriage partners for female musicians. While at university, participant F stated, their study partners were all students from the departments of medicine and electric engineering, which are commonly considered “good” departments. Recently, one of her musician friends reached marriageable age and up with numerous blind dates with electrical engineers. “Their status is well-matched with ours, in most people’s eyes,” participant F commented.

For female musicians, their status of being desirable marriage material extends even to today. The abundant experience of the informants reflected this phenomenon. As participant L commented, “The mate searching proceeded very smoothly every time for the music department. Sometimes, there were even several departments that wanted to go camping with us. We had to choose, because we did not have that much time.” Nonetheless, only the “good” departments had a chance to be selected by the music students. Participant K stated that “The departments which cooperated with the mate-searching activities with my department are always the good departments. I am not saying that the other departments are bad. I mean that these departments are usually seen as more promising because of the high income of the professions, such as the departments of electric engineering and medicine.”

Participant O’s boyfriend is a young lawyer. A few years ago, he was the law student and the social coordinator of the Law Department of the National Taiwan University, which is ranked first among the departments of humanities and social sciences in Taiwan, and the university is considered the best in Taiwan, since it has the most top ranked university departments. Participant O cited her boyfriend’s experience:

The social coordinator of a prestigious music department told my boyfriend that they only accepted mate-searching invitations from three departments at the National Taiwan University – medicine, electric engineering, and law. Those are the top ranked departments respectively in three academic categories for the Taiwanese University Entrance Exam. The exception is medicine departments; medical students from any university would be fine, since they will eventually be doctors. Besides, medicine departments demand a high score, to whichever university they are affiliated. For this reason, my boyfriend stated that he had a terrible impression of female musicians, because he felt that they were truly snobbish.

At their first meeting, as participant O recalled, she was also despised by her boyfriend because she belonged to the community which only accepted future lawyers, doctors, and electric engineers as potential marriage partners. Overall, the phenomenon corresponds to the observation of participant F, “few musicians marry a poor man...A lot of my musician friends have married a very rich man.” Participant J, a graduate student, noted that “about 80% of the full-time female professors in my department are married to a doctor.” In Taiwanese society, the reality is that most female musicians marry rich men. Nonetheless, what are their thoughts and experiences about this phenomenon? The advantages they have and the difficulties they confront in this marital convention will be demonstrated in the following analyses.

### **VII.3 The Thoughts and Experiences of the Female Musicians**

In most cases, as previously mentioned, female musicians marry a wealthy man. The informants also made the same observation, despite their diverse ages. Men have usually been sifted according to their profession, even before they meet them. Participant F commented that her musician friends regarded marrying a rich man “as a matter of course.” For many female musicians, this is a reasonable result and a legitimate aim, especially since this idea has been instilled into them by their parents, the media and the social climate ever since they started to study music. Participant O, a postgraduate student, complained that this widely-held value caused her problems while at university. As someone with numerous male friends at medicine departments, she stated that her classmates always intentionally kept near her and wanted her to introduce future doctors to them:

As soon as they knew that I had a lot of male doctor friends, they immediately fawned on me and acted in a friendly manner. It felt awful! I also have a lot of female friends who are not musicians; none of them do this, but only musician friends do...They think this way mainly because this way of thinking has been instilled in them by their parents. I heard some classmates talking about how hard they have worked since childhood and the huge amount that their parents have spent on them, so their parents feel that they should find a long-term provider of material goods (a husband) as a kind of reward.

Participant O further indicated that “in music circles, everyone seems extremely concerned about who courts you and who your boyfriend is, because they want to know how rich he is. It is really weird since students from other departments are less interested in this issue.” As mentioned above, the motive of many parents in nurturing their daughter’s musical education is that she will make a “successful” marriage. The

difficulty for musicians to earn a living makes this even more critical. Participant H, an assistant professor, who had had a brilliant career in the profession, expressed a similar idea. In her opinion, constant hard work and investment earn a class and marital advantage for female musicians. Since she regularly gives concerts to upgrade her teaching status (such as upgrading from a lecturer to a professor), the expenses for each concert are high. Besides, being a part-time professor in several far-off cities is also a heavy burden because of the travel costs. Many friends have suggested that she should marry a rich man. The following demonstrates the typical thoughts of participant H and many others of the female musicians:

PH: One of my musician friends is a yi-sheng-niang (wife of a doctor). Her husband runs a clinic, so she has a luxurious lifestyle. She suggested that I should marry a rich man. You know, when a woman has a wealthy husband, she can assume a fine social position. Then you will have no fear in life and can do whatever you like. Your rich husband can *support* you in giving concerts; this friend said that it is truly a small cost for a doctor. You do not need to make money for the rest of your life. In fact, it is nearly impossible to make a living by giving musical performances in Taiwan.

LM: However, if, today, we were general low-salaried women, probably no one would imagine us marrying a wealthy husband. Why we have heard this suggestion so often is because we are musicians. What do you think of this difference?

PH: The reason is that studying music requires a huge investment in terms of money and time...For instance, if two potted plants of the identical Chinese evergreen have been nurtured with different fertilizers, they will look completely different. The price of the fertilizer will certainly influence the

appearance of the plants. Consequently, the plant that has been well-nourished should be sold for a higher price than the other one. Is this not normal? Some carps can sell for \$10,000 and others for \$1,000 [because of the different strains]! We musicians have been cultivated. Of course, you can say that everyone has been cultivated, but our cultivation process is completely different to that of others!

What participant H conveyed is similar to the comments made by participant F about the well-matched marriages between female musicians and wealthy men. However, this “well-matched” status does not specifically mean that the couple has an equal income, degree, or similar work. It means that the aura surrounding the title of female musicians is another kind of value which is equivalent to a substantial profit. For most female musicians, the music profession does not give them the ability to earn money themselves but to become the appendage of a wealthy man.

The different criteria related to the roles of women and men partly reveal the gendered stereotype and unequal relationship between the two genders in Taiwan. Hence, a woman studying music is engaging in a high-class activity; her dependency on a wealthy man is regarded as a reasonable and admirable result. On the contrary, for men, the unstable income associated with working as a musician has made this career come to be regarded as inferior in the Taiwanese social climate. This is why men who seek to pursue a musical career will often be opposed by their parents, since the “ideal” male role is that he should be independent, earn a living by himself and support his family. He should be the person on whom his wife depends.

A prosperous marriage is thus a common purpose or resolution for many female musicians, including professors and students. Participant J, a postgraduate student in her early 20s, indicated that one of her classmates suspended from university recently

and is about to marry a wealthy financier. Participant J and her classmates all believed that she would not return to resume her study, because her degree is no longer of much importance to her. It appears that she has already achieved one of the principal goals of studying music. Participant J and her family also regard marriage as the settlement of the unstable working environment associated with musicians: “My grandma said that it is time for me to think about marrying a doctor, because it is so exhausting to teach in private studios. We earn money by the hundreds and doctors earn money by the tens of thousands...Therefore, sometimes, she wants me to find a doctor to marry; then he can support me to go abroad or do anything I want.”

For the female musicians, marrying a rich man is simply the “natural” result of their search for a partner. They are clearly aware of their advantageous position and thus sometimes use it as a tool. Participant H complained that one of her college classmates did not play the violin often, but frequently participated in seeking a partner and emphasized her status as a violinist. The informants agreed that the title of a female musician can be beneficial in the marriage market, if someone wishes to exploit it. The affair of the legislator Yu-sheng Wu and the fake piano teacher is a drastic example of this. “People would not want her to play the piano at present, anyway,” participant D commented.

Nevertheless, not every female musician wants to take advantage of the title; furthermore, not all of them want to date or marry a rich man, but this general trend has placed many musicians under pressure. Participant I was seriously worried that she was regarded as merely a “female musician” by the men during their blind dates, while admitting that this was the reason why she was able to meet these men with outstanding careers: “I am really afraid that these men only see the status and its aura. I hope that ‘I’ am the one who he admires, not the ‘female musician.’ Additionally, I sincerely hope that the introducers thought that I was outstanding, so they set up the

blind date for me with outstanding men, not because I have an outstanding ‘title.’”

Participant E had abundant experience of blind dates several years ago when she reached marriageable age. It was an unpleasant, stressful period for her because of the pressure put on her by her mother. Many of her dates were doctors and financiers. Every time an eligible bachelour appeared, her mother pushed her into getting married soon. As a music teacher, nonetheless, she is not like the stereotype of the male imagination nor likely to fill her mother’s and those men’s expectation that she will stay at home and take care of the family. She loves learning new skills, whether or not these are related to music. These men questioned why she wants to learn things at weekends. “Their attitude of inquiry was so apparent! They just expected you to stay at home and play the piano. That picture is very classy. In those conditions, however, will I stay shut up at home? I can take care of the family, but that should be at my own free will, not from a man’s regulation! I do not want someone bothering me when I’m learning!”

Participant E expressed that these men did not see “her” as an independent person but merely as their own image or the stereotype of a female music teacher. Hence, participant E chose a different path from most of her friends. She dated a man in secret from her mother and eventually married him. Although she sometimes admires the luxurious lifestyle of others, especially when she sees them flying first-class or sending their children to the top nurseries, she did not want to restrict her life to the path which most female musicians follow. Wealth is not a bad thing, she feels, but she wanted to choose a man who properly matched her, not just someone with an occupation that matched her own.

The individualism and liberty of any person will be diminished when she/he is dependent on another person. When a woman relies on a man, his preferences and intentions will inevitably influence her life and choices. This was common for women



in ancient times. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, however, women's rights and social status have had notable advancement in the past two decades in Taiwan due to the process of legislation and the achievement of women's movements. While most modern Taiwanese women enjoy the fruit of the elevation of women's status and have higher percentage of political participation than that of neighboring Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, many Taiwanese female musicians keep the old-fashioned attitude. For Taiwanese female musicians, the long-term hard work required by the profession leads them to a place where their title is more important to them and relying on others becomes the purpose of many of them.

Similar pressure was also placed on participant F. "All my life, I repeatedly heard that I should marry a doctor. I actually have a bad feeling about this, so do not want to marry to a doctor. Why must female musicians marry a doctor or a wealthy man? Why?" Participant K, a postgraduate student in her early twenties, has a steady boyfriend. In her words, he is clever, charming and studying electric engineering at a good university. "He is already advantaged," according to participant K. Her mother, nonetheless, still wishes her to find a better boyfriend. In her mother's eyes, her current boyfriend is not good enough for her musician daughter. Participant K has endured great pressure from her mother and relatives. She agitatedly illustrated this phenomenon from her personal experience:

Since I reached marriageable age, I have continually heard people praising me: "You have such great virtues. Especially as you study music!" That made me wonder what a music profession has to do with someone's virtues! People also commented: "Look! You are a student in the music department. I think that you will find a very good man!" or "You are independent and beautiful. See! Especially as you study music!" I can't help wondering what the word

“especially” means? ... According to my observation, since Taiwanese people think that wealth is good and an illustrious family is good, coincidentally, the members of these notable families pursue female musicians. They want the image of the female musician in their house. The flautist Ellie Lai is an example of this. Didn't she marry the president of a grand enterprise group? The public have the impression that celebrated people marry female musicians, doctors marry female musicians, and lawyers marry female musicians. For this reason, having a musician wife becomes the desire of all Taiwanese men. All Taiwanese people think that female musicians are superior and classy.

This impression has made it easy for female musicians to marry a wealthy man, but has also placed many restrictions on their search for a partner. For female musicians, the usual marital pattern has placed huge pressure on those who do not wish to marry a wealthy man, or not marry at all. It has also given weight to musicians who do not want to consider seriously whether a man is rich. Due to this marital stereotype, female musicians and even the women who pretend to be musicians have a tool by which to enhance their position. Nevertheless, this marital trend needs similar views from both sides; both the female musicians and the rich men. Why are Taiwanese men so fascinated by female musicians? Is this desire limited to wealthy men or is it only prevalent among Taiwanese men? Through the experiences of the female musicians during their interactions with men, the thoughts of the Taiwanese men have been revealed.

#### **VII.4 The Male Attitude towards Female Musicians**

Many participants in the present study have abundant experience of how

seriously men are attracted to female musicians. Participant D, an associate professor, described a typical instance:

A colleague asked me what I would do if my friend's boyfriend was interested in me. She had been out to dinner with her friend and a man who had dated her friend several times. While her friend went to the Ladies, the man asked her what she did for a living. My colleague responded that she teaches keyboard in a music department. "A music teacher!" The man astonishingly shouted, and then asked "Do I have a chance [to chase you]?"

This story had an unsurprising ending. The colleague's friend was angry because the man showed high interest in the female musician during their next date. He kept asking for information about the musician. The colleague of participant D received a phone call from her friend: "He was going too far! I won't see him again!" As participant D commented, "Doesn't this event reveal the typical fascination and normal reaction of many Taiwanese men towards female musicians?" This typical attitude of Taiwanese men is also displayed in the affair of Legislator Yu-sheng Wu, since he stated that he had always wanted a musician wife.

Despite their attraction for men, there is a hierarchy among female musicians. As the wife of a well-off financier, participant G stated her husband is proud that she is an instrumentalist in an orchestra. "This *image* of a female musician is better than merely that of a music teacher." As for participant E, she had abundant experiences of blind dates with male financiers and doctors. One of them told her that only a music teacher could be a potential wife for him, restricted to only those who have graduated from the top music department. Another confessed that he would only accept a full-time music teacher in a school; part-time teachers in private music studios had

been excluded.

“Do these men think that they are choosing fruit or vegetables at the market?” participant E asked, with a wry smile. Although it appears that Taiwanese men are enchanted by female musicians, many factors are still weighed by the men. For the female musicians, it seems that the more successful career you attain, the better marriage you make, if the definition of a “successful” marriage is based on the richness of the husband. In this situation, efforts to follow a musical career become a way to achieve a prosperous marriage, which explains the motive and initial purpose of many parents in encouraging their daughters to study music.

The popular status of female musicians in marriage also influences how other women see them. Participant Q proposed another example which struck her and also displays the general thoughts of the public with regard to female musicians. One day, she briefly met a couple who are the friends of one of her male friends. The couple and the male friend were studying at the National Taiwan University; the two men were students in the medicine department and the woman was from the finance department. Participant Q only glanced at the couple. After several months, her friend told her that they had discussed her frequently during the interval.

LM: Why did they talk about you for such a long time?

PQ: Yes! That’s the point (very agitated)! My friend said that the couple constantly discussed how advantaged I am. That woman concluded: Any female student from the music department is always a popular mate for men as long as she is not too ugly. I was so astonished when I heard this! This is how the public see us! Actually, this woman is studying in the department of finance! She is so elite as a future financier, but maybe she feels that she lacks the class that we have...From her point of view, she perhaps considered that a

lot of men are attracted to female musicians. It seems that such a tendency really exists...In fact, if we only reveal our title, most people will immediately think that we are superior. I feel that a lot of men do like female musicians very much!

As participant Q mentioned, “classy” has continually been considered a characteristic of female musicians. It has principally formulated the attractive image of female Taiwanese musicians. The other reason why female musicians are attractive to men is their connection to Western classical music. Many informants observed that the fascination with Western classical music is a fundamental reason why Taiwanese men are interested in female musicians. As Yoshihara remarked, “[...] classical music is considered the epitome of high culture. Unlike popular music that appeals to the masses, [...] the appreciation of classical music itself is a mark of distinction and of sophisticated taste in the modern world.”<sup>8</sup> Participant Q had also encountered this phenomenon. She used her uncle, a surgeon, as an example. “It is weird that the community of doctors is excessively fond of Western classical music. Every time my uncle finishes his surgical operations and returns home, he must listen to Western classical music...He considers popular music noisy and low-class.”

As Yoshihara argues, “classical music [...] is widely considered to be a form of elite culture.”<sup>9</sup> She further states that “the appreciation for and the practice of classical music are quintessential forms of cultural capital that both signify and enhance one’s place in the social hierarchy.”<sup>10</sup> Many participants conveyed that some men regard their musician wife or girlfriend as an avenue to the world of Western classical music. Both the informants and their friends had experienced this. The

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<sup>8</sup> Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore*, 131, 132.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

happening of participant Q supported this view. “My boyfriend is a doctor. His roommate and friends are all doctors. They can also play music, but they worship us musicians exceedingly. When his friends discover that I’m studying music, many of them ask me to fix them up with blind dates with my musician friends.”

According to the observation of participant Q, there is an aura surrounding female musicians: “Many of us are less outstanding than them at studying general subjects, but they glorify us so much only because we are musicians!” Participant G also described a similar situation. As the wife of a high-level manager in charge of a large, prestigious venture capital company in Taiwan, she has been frequently mentioned as an orchestral musician by her husband to his foreign clients. “He is a big fan of Western classical music. He himself has a profound understanding of classical music. For him, therefore, he is quite proud that his wife is a musician.”

There is another way in which female musicians are very attractive to men: that is, due to their image. Participant J mentioned a typical example. A male lecturer at her university declared that he had wished to marry a female musician. “He told us that every time he passed the music department while he was a university student, he felt that the female musicians were extremely classy and dressed very prettily. Having a musician wife was his life’s goal at that time.” The classy, beautiful image of female musicians has been prevalent and is even rooted in the consciousness of Taiwanese people.

Participant G, the wife of a considerably well-off man, felt that “the female musician is a byword of beauty. In general, people want to have a beautiful musician wife at home...For wealthy, busy men, what they marry is only an ‘image.’” Regarding her own situation, she spoke with some hesitation: “My husband is proud that he has a musician wife. Some men do not like their wife to dress up, because married women do not need to be pretty. However, my husband considers

that...(pauses and starts a new sentence) It is also what I expect. It would be better for me to keep the *image* of a female musician.” Obviously, she is saying that she expects the same thing as her husband. From her narration, it seems that she is also conscious about the necessity of retaining the image of a female musician in order to fulfill her role properly as the wife of a wealthy husband. From the data, clearly, “image” is the critical reason why Taiwanese men want to date and marry female musicians. As an ideal musician wife, for participant G and many others, retaining the standardized image is also an essential requirement.

The following instances occurred at the music department where participant K is studying. They show that image is an important element in Taiwanese men’s attraction to female musicians. Participant K illustrated these events with some agitation.

PK: It is true: A man is often playing an instrument outside our department. He plays terribly; no one can work out what tune he’s playing. Still, he stands there and plays all day. His purpose is to find a female teacher in our department.

LM: He can post an advertisement on the bulletin board.

PK: Yes, he can! However, if he did so, he could not choose the teacher based on her appearance! He wants to “see” us and then accost those whom he considers beautiful. He changes the instrument every one or two months and pretends to ask us questions about music. All of us are laughing at him in private...In fact, we noticed that numerous men came to see our posters and then we found that they really showed up at our concerts!...There have been a lot of male strangers at our concerts indeed! No one knows any of them; neither does the performer! They were not invited by the musician. The

strangers truly came because of the posters. These strangers are always men.

LM: So you think that a sexy or appealing image on the posters can attract people to go to concerts?

PK: Absolutely! From my own experience, once, when I was looking at the posters on the wall, a middle-aged male stranger pointed at a specific poster of a woman and asked me whether I am a music student. I replied 'Yes.' Then he asked: Can I enter the hall to attend this concert? And I felt terrified that there will be another male stranger I will meet at concerts.

These events demonstrated that the attractiveness of female musician in Taiwan has a strong visual connection. In the next chapter, how the female musicians build their image in the media/posters and in life will be analyzed. Through the in-depth interview data, what image they want to present and how this image influences their career and marriage will be elaborated. The possibility of changing the stereotype will also be explored.



## VIII. Female Musicians and Their Images

The stereotype of the Taiwanese female musician is closely associated with visuality. According to the participants' experiences, in Taiwan, when a female musician announces her occupation, she is seldom to be believed based on this verbal statement alone. Her appearance and behaviour are the convincing references for examining the legitimacy of her status. Through a visual investigation, the identity of a female musician will be primarily approved or discredited. Under this condition, if she intends to enjoy the benefits which usually befall female musicians, then she has little room for insisting on her preferred appearance, but must submit to the social norm.

For Taiwanese female musicians, the visual factor is thus apparently a critical concern. To secure the achievable benefits from her marriage and career, maintaining a visual image which can be effortlessly recognized as that of a female musician is thus of great significance. This intelligible image is composed of many elements, including hair, clothes, figure, and even behaviour. How she speaks and how she laughs are also considerations. By viewing her exterior performance, the degree to which she is "like" or "unlike" a female musician will be judged. The visual "performance," therefore, is even more fundamental than the musical performance on many occasions.

Visuality has reinforced its influence on the life and career of the female musician. Conforming to the stereotypical image becomes a critical way to manifest her authority as a female musician. The highly similar images of the female musician among Taiwanese people naturally make them consider that the stereotypical image is the only orthodox look for female musicians. The "standard" image thus removes the possibility of any other presentation.

Hence, it is also an easily-attainable way to get people's approval, compared to the long-term cultivation of and economic investment in a musical profession. As the interview data validate, a female musician's musicianship will be doubted if her image is far from the "normal" one, which is widely recognized by the majority, despite her academic background and professional career. On the contrary, it is also easy for a woman without musical training to pretend to be a musician as long as she shows the "normal" image, such as the third woman, Rebecca Sun, in legislator Yu-sheng Wu's affair.

This chapter aims to disclose how the stereotype may affect female musicians in their life and career, and how female musicians negotiate their individuality and the mainstream image. Furthermore, the principal sources of constituting and circulating the image are also elaborated. According to the interview data, the mass media and the concert poster are the most influential and popular sources in Taiwanese people's daily life, especially the poster, as it is produced by the female musicians themselves. How female musicians design their own posters and what functions they expect of their posters will also be demonstrated in this chapter.

### **VIII.1 The Stereotype of Female Musicians in Taiwan**

The intelligible image is like a model for Taiwanese female musicians. Which performance and image belong to a "normal" female musician is a general sense shared amongst the public. Participant B adduced some instances which manifest how deeply the stereotype exists in the public's knowledge. "One day, when I was at university, while my classmates and I were playing with a skipping rope in front of the music department building, several male students passed by and asked us 'How can music students play with a skipping rope?' My classmate responded reluctantly, 'Why

can't music students play with a skipping rope?" Participant B further mentioned another occurrence. "One day, one of my classmates walked onto the campus wearing casual clothes and carrying her instrument. She attracted suspicion and was questioned by a male stranger: 'Are not you a student of the music department? How can you dress like this?' My classmate and I wondered why we have no right to decide what we want to wear on our own body."

Participant F had a similar experience. She had been reminded often that she was not "like" a female musician because of her short hair, loud laugh and vivacious character, which are the opposite of the typical traits of the female musician, such as a quiet speaking voice and laugh, a shy expression, and a tender character. What cannot appear on the musicians' body and what should be found on their body indicates the social values and cultural customs. The body is a cultural site where various powers act. From these examples, it can be seen that the mechanism of stereotype constitution is "through the play of presence and absence on the body's surface, [...] through a series of exclusions and denials,"<sup>1</sup> as Butler suggested. To be categorized into the group of female musician or not "involves the display and recognition of socially regulated external insignia [...] – such as deportment, dress, and bearing [...]."<sup>2</sup> Candace West and Don Zimmerman indicate that, compatible with the "essential natures" of a group, is "an ongoing situated process, a 'doing' rather than a 'being.'"<sup>3</sup>

The instances which participants B and F proposed illustrate a particular phenomenon: the stereotype is so firmly rooted in Taiwanese people's minds that anyone can interrogate a female musician if her exterior does not tally with the typical one. For a female musician in Taiwan, according to the interview data, almost no

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 184.

<sup>2</sup> Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman. "Accounting for Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 23, 1 (February, 2009), 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 114

matter where she goes and what she does, as long as people know her specialty, she will be promptly valued based on how she “looks.” This situation will eventually lead to the self-surveillance described by Foucault in terms of panopticism.<sup>4</sup> The self-surveillance in Michel Foucault’s panopticism theory could be used to further explain this phenomenon about the details of how a subject controls and oversees his/her own performance. In *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*,<sup>5</sup> Foucault took Bentham’s design of prison, panopticon, as an example to expound his theory that the ultimate monitoring is everywhere by letting the prisoners watch themselves. Inasmuch as the special design of the prison: panopticon, the prisoners can’t make sure whether the overseer is watching them or not; that is, “the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so.”<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the prisoners would always obey the regulations, notice their own performances and demonstrate them in the proper way. Just as Foucault pointed out that the effect of panopticon is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.”<sup>7</sup> This mechanism makes the prisoner as his own watcher who is also the most severe one because he won’t have any time or in any place escaping from the watcher—himself/herself.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, if a female musician identifies and accepts an image as her own inner value, she would be the most severe overseer to herself. She would notify herself to follow the “normal and correct” image of female musicians which the public get used to, and perform the characteristics of this image in her outside behaviors and lets them to be recognizable. Consequently, to avoid the

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 195-230.

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 195-230.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Gary Gutting, “Crime and Punishment” in *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 79-90.

suspicion and negative judgments from the viewer, the female musician will oversee herself if her performance or image is not standard. She becomes the severest observer of herself; as a monitor, she is everywhere and at every moment. This ultimate form of self-monitoring disciplines her to the social regulation of what a “normal” female musician should look like.

The typical image is considered a natural and the only “legitimate” performance of the female musician. Hence, any deviation from this will easily invite suspicion about her status. This state of affairs reflects an assumption that any female musician has some inherited characteristics which are shared amongst all female musicians. In this supposition, the status of a female musician takes a higher position than the individual. The high homogeneity and coherence in the community has covered the diversity of each of them. What the Taiwanese think of the female musician’s image is akin to the gendered life in Butler’s analyses. Both of them are “foreclosed by certain habitual and violent presumptions.”<sup>9</sup> Hence, Butler’s gender theories will be adopted in this chapter for further discussion of the image of female musicians in Taiwan.

Clearly, only a minority of the public can meet female musicians in reality. How the majority examine the female musician is through the stereotypical image. This image cannot be scrutinized without mentioning *qi-zhi*. *Qi-zhi* is a trait which is the most common word when Taiwanese describe female musicians. It is close to the English word “classy,” but somewhat involves the denotation of beauty. Participant K actively asked about how to translate *qi-zhi* into English. As she said, “You do not say an ugly woman has *qi-zhi*.” Generally, *qi-zhi* embraces the qualities of beautiful, well-educated, and properly behaved.

In the interviews, 15 informants were asked what other people’s first reaction was when the musician status was disclosed. According to their histories, people’s

responses are almost the same. They always said to the female musician: “No wonder you are so classy (*qi-zhi*)!” In fact, it is hard to find another answer. Participant J’s analysis is a faithful description: “No matter what people’s age, gender, and occupation, the first sentence immediately uttered by everyone who heard that I study music is identical. They always say, ‘you are very classy!’” The following conversation shared by participant N is also a typical experience of the participants:

LM: What is the usual reaction when you tell people that you study music?

PN: “Wow! No wonder! [You are] very classy (*qi-zhi*)!”

LM: Do you think that the reply would be the same if you told them that you study another subject, such as history, literature, engineering or any other profession?

PN: No (shakes her head). I do not think that they will say it.

LM: So, they already saw you before you told them your specialty, but they would not say anything about classy (*qi-zhi*) if you did not study music. In your opinion, what is the reason for this?

PN: The stereotype! The stereotype is that all female musicians are beautiful, all female musicians are classy! Anyway, there is already a stereotype in everyone’s mind. The truth is that they saw you, and they found out that you study music in the conversation. Then they probably started to imagine the female musician’s image and then compared you with that image. If your image is not far from the stereotypical one, then you will hear “No wonder!”

The experience and analyses of participant N are similar to those of other

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<sup>9</sup> Butler, xxi.

informants. All of the informants considered that the image of female musicians is fixed in the mind of Taiwanese people. As participant D noted, when many of her mother's friends find out that she is a musician, all of them say "It can be seen! I can tell! You are certainly classier than ordinary women!" On another occasion, a cosmetics saleswoman who met her frequently asked her about her occupation. Participant D related how this woman's first response after learning of her profession was similar to that of most other people she has met: "Wow! Really? You are a piano teacher! No wonder you are so classy!"

Her long hair, big eyes, and beautiful clothes enable participant D easily to fit the ideal image. Nevertheless, she did not think that people would mention "classy" for her if she was not engaged in a musical profession. Not only participant D, but participant N and other participants expressed the same idea. This shows how serious the stereotype is in Taiwanese society. As participant J noted, "People will always praise us for being classy when they learn our status, as long as our appearance is not too far from what they imagine." Only if some aspect of their appearance and performativity can be associated with the stereotypical image, will the status of the female musician be legitimized by the viewers; participants D, J, N, and M all noted this.

The image is a prevalently-circulated myth in Taiwanese society. As participant L reflected "I think that all [Taiwanese] people who have no personal contact with female musicians imagine them as fairies, and dream-like beauties." According to the data of several participants, occasionally, people whom they meet are surprised at how they behave, especially their male study partners. Participant L noted an example: "Before we met our male study partners, they thought that we must be very classy. It can be observed in our internet contacts by typing word messages to each other. Apparently, they admired and looked up to female musicians very much. When they

met us, therefore, they were somewhat surprised at our behaviour. As they said, ‘So female musicians actually can laugh loudly?’ or ‘So female musicians will also do this?’”

The words that recurred frequently, such as “can” and “also,” reveal how ingrained is people’s stereotype of the female musician. “Can” means that, according to the stereotype, they do not believe that the female musician will act like this. The use of the word “also” shows that people think that the female musician is different. She will not do things which an ordinary person does. As participant L said, a female musician is like a fairy, not a normal woman. A similar situation also arose for participant J. She described how her non-musician friends reacted during their early meetings. “When you meet new friends, it is natural that you have few topics to chat together. However, people considered that I was very classy because I was quiet. Along with our acquaintances, sometimes I laughed loudly or spoke in a casual way and they were surprised and said ‘So a female musician would do this!’” In participant J’s experience, whether people know her, they always place her in the domain of the stereotype.

Nonetheless, as a community living in Taiwanese society, many female musicians also have a stereotype for themselves. Most participants noted that female musicians are very dissimilar to ordinary women. Participant M said that “We are calm and stable. Actually, we look different. You can see the differences. Every woman in the music department looks white and clean. We look better [than the general women].”<sup>10</sup> Ironically, many participants also mentioned that their *qi-zhi* is different from that of most other women. They considered that their *qi-zhi* is an interior trait, so their exterior will look different because of the expression of this

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<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 5, in Taiwan, the definition of beauty is to “look like” a Westerner. White skin is one of the features of the Westerner, so it is usually considered beautiful.



inner quality.

“*Qi-zhi* in the public’s eye only focuses on the exterior. I somewhat lay stress on the inner part when I say that we have *qi-zhi*, but *qi-zhi* also can be seen on our surface,” participant J suggested. Participant D, an associate university professor, also noted: “Probably because of our unique cultivation, we look different to others.” In fact, when the participants were asked to illustrate the difference in *qi-zhi* between what the public said and they said, most of them cannot confidently make it clear. What can be confirmed is that the *qi-zhi* stereotype not only exists in the public’s mind, but also lives in the female musicians’ thoughts. Only different dimensions are allowed.

## **VIII.2 The Sources of the Female Musicians’ Image**

Since the image is so firm and prevalent amongst Taiwanese people, the possible sources which distribute it should be discussed. The previous chapters investigate which sources constitute the female musician’s image by reviewing both historical and modern women’s images. This part intends to elaborate on every critical source which plants the image in Taiwanese people’s minds and thus contributes to its legitimate status. The power over her body will thus be demonstrated.

All of the crucial sources will be analysed to see their roles and importance for female musicians. They are the materials viewed on the music courses in Taiwanese schools, the mass media, the television, the newspaper reports, and the dramas on TV and in films. In addition, probably the most influential person in the formation of Taiwanese female musicians’ image is the flautist Ellie Lai. Numerous participants mentioned the key status of her emergence. Her images will thus be proposed for comparison with the ones examined in the present study. Finally, the analytical object

is the poster. The concert poster is an approach for people to see the musician. It is significant as the medium for displaying female musicians and directly produced by them.

For most people, the way to meet female musicians in person is at concerts. Participant P, a graduate student who started music classes at a comparatively late stage recalled her impression of female musicians before she became an insider of the musical circle: “Female musicians always wear fantastic dresses when they are on stage. I used to think that they are just the same as fairies!” When she studied in the music department, she herself became a fairy to outsiders. “After one of my recitals,” participant P said, “my aunt told me that her daughter admired me from the first minute to the last of the concert! My cousin was impressed that I can wear such a beautiful gown, present such a brilliant image, and then play the piano! As my aunt said, a lot of girls and women will excessively admire these things!”

Participant P’s status has transformed from a viewer who sees the female musician’s beautiful image with admiration into the object who is watched in the same way. No matter what position she is in, the fact is that the female musician is a beautiful image, attracting people’s praise and worship. Participant L analyzed why people are so enchanted with female musicians’ image: “When we are in front of them on stage, we always wear very beautiful clothes, very pretty makeup, say nothing and keep smiling. The key point is that what we wear is really, really glamorous! People will feel how classy we are!” Most Taiwanese women only wear a gown for their wedding photo and ceremony. On the contrary, the female musician often wears a gown when people approach them and their music, such as on posters and in concerts. It gives people a strong connection between the brilliant clothes and the female musician and thus builds an impression of beauty.

This charming on-stage image is not confined to concert halls. Participants L

and P pointed out that the musical course in schools is another avenue to “seeing” female musicians. “A musical course is the curriculum which students have to attend,” participant L stated. The distribution is so wide that “many Taiwanese people may watch the female musician’s fairy-like image in a musical textbook or on video,” as participant P noted. A second medium for female musicians’ image is television. Even if the concerts are held frequently outside the large cities, the image spreads without restraint. “The concerts have been broadcast on television channels frequently, especially on Taiwan’s Public Television. When the audience happens to flick through channels, the image will be instilled in their knowledge,” Participant L stated.

The media bring the image to the public by multiple avenues. The mass media are the source which most participants mentioned. Participants I, J, L, N, and K considered that television programmes and news are common sources. As participant L indicated, “I feel that it is because the public ‘see’ the image and most of them have no chance to meet female musicians in real life, so they have a lot of room to imagine us based on the mass media.”

Newspaper reports and magazine articles are other sources proposed by participants E, J and N. As they specified, the content and titles of the articles invariably use “classy (*qi-zhi*)” and “beautiful” to formulate the attractive image. Participant J commented that, “Whenever a female musician is reported, ‘beautiful’ is like a necessary word to add, such as a beautiful violinist, beautiful flautist.” Participant N also deemed that the news and reports from the television and publications are a main cause: “Every report of female musicians is absolutely attached to the title of ‘classy,’ such as a classy violinist or classy pianist. For the public, I think that their impression of female musicians will be like this. This ‘image’ will naturally exist in their mind.”

Moreover, participant B and J pointed out that the female musician is repeatedly

the heroine in the Taiwanese TV serials and films. “Even if the heroine is not a musician, the musical performance is still a popular plot to highlight the female role’s classy character,” participant B observed. The classy and beautiful image of the female musician, prevalently circulated in the mass media, not only has constituted the stereotype for the public but, as participant O argued, “It has also provided the reference for the self-image of the female musicians themselves!”

Other than these sources, there is a female musician whose image is nearly the first idol embodying the stereotypes of female musicians. For a lot of Taiwanese people, she has become the icon and the representative of the group of female musicians. In the interviews, participants C, D, F, and K spontaneously spoke of the decisive position of Ellie Lai in building the intelligible image of Taiwanese female musicians. In Taiwan, at first, she had been promoted as a popular flautist by releasing records. Many record stores and book shops displayed her record cover posters at that time while record stores were still prosperous. Ellie Lai released her albums in 1989 to 1999. She gave visual representation to the long-term ideologies about female musicians in Taiwan. In recent years, she has been reported frequently as the wife of a renowned entrepreneur.

Her reports in the mass media also reflect how the Taiwanese value female musicians. The reports continually emphasize her appearance and marital relationship, as the chapter on the analysis of the newspaper reports demonstrates. Her image became the foundation or model for that of current female musicians. Participant D, an associate university professor, made an incisive observation on the influential role of Ellie Lai:

When the record company built the image of Ellie Lai, the company must have wanted to present an easily-identifiable image. This image

should be recognized as a female musician by Taiwanese people at first glance. Consequently, the abstract stereotype which had been deeply seated in Taiwanese society was highlighted and visualized by Ellie Lai. Her image embodied the long-established image of female musicians. Therefore, people may see her image and think: “Oh! A female musician is actually like this!” This image of the female musician has probably lasted to now . . . Do you not think that any kind of popular trend will soon disappear if it has no roots in the cultural setting? However, if it is latent in the sediments of a culture, and it is only now pulled out into the spotlight, then I think that it will be firmer than others.

What participant D analyzed is reasonable. Viewing her early-stage album covers,<sup>11</sup> the close resemblance between Ellie Lai’s photos and current female musicians’ concert posters can be easily detected. Ellie Lai’s photos show some traits which are common in the current images, such as un-threatening, soft, tender, vulnerable, noble, and beautiful. This “classy” style image still occupies the most popular position on concert posters now and has been considered the “legitimate” presentation by many female musicians, as the informants noted. However, in later covers, the covers of the albums of 1997 and 1999, demonstrate a somewhat sexually-inclined image, which is different from her previous ones. The sexually-inclined images predicted a transformation of the popular women’s image in Taiwan. Now the sexy image is another common style for the current poster images, since it is also the mainstream mass culture at present.

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<sup>11</sup> See her 1989 album (*Love for Flute – Wait Today*) and 1991 albums (*Love for Flute: Mystical Zone*).

### VIII.3 Concert Posters

In all of the media, numerous informants regarded the concert poster to be the most influential, because it directly demonstrates the image of female musicians to the public. It is a model or reference for displaying an ideal look to Taiwanese people and female musicians. By viewing concert posters, it can be seen that the image which the female musician produces conforms to that in the other media in Taiwan. As the people involved, female musicians are sensitively aware of the surrounding information about themselves. How the mass media portrays them becomes one of the sources from which female musicians learn what their normal image is. The posters of other musicians are the references for teaching female musicians how to create a normal and acceptable image. Which purposes the posters should serve in the female musicians' plans will be demonstrated.

Its wide circulation is another reason why it is so significant. Other than posting it on the noticeboards of concert halls, cultural centres, and universities, its paths of distribution are various. Firstly, participants H, I, and L pointed out that many tube stations are common places to display the poster. As participant L stated, "Actually, you can see concert posters in every large subway station. It is common in Taiwan. You will see many posters while you are taking the escalator. It can be found that people really notice those images on their way up or down the escalator. And female musicians appear on the poster always wearing gorgeous clothes (laughs)!" Participant E, a senior high school teacher, noted that many musicians send their posters to schools: "Their posters will be put up on the board and then the students usually see and discuss which musician is most beautiful."

"The flyer is a way [for people to see female musicians]," participant I said. The flyer is like a mini-sized poster since it has the same photo as that on the poster.

Concert flyers are displayed in concert halls, box offices, and arts centres, and distributed to the concert audience by the people standing in front of the gate. As participant I noted, “You just need to go to one concert, then you will have a lot of concert flyers in your hand.” Similar to the flyer, the invitation card is another way of promoting a concert. Flyer viewers are usually strangers to the musicians. On the contrary, people receiving invitation cards are familiar to the musician or the musician’s friends. The size of an invitation card is similar to a postcard. It can be seen as a portable poster, since it shows the musician’s photo (see Figure VIII-1). Keeping the card means preserving the image.

The performer would write on the cards to show her sincerity and hand them to the friends face-to-face or by post. Participant Q described the standard procedure: “The paper-invitation cards are absolutely sent to as many people as possible, including your friends, teachers, students, your parents’ friends, and close and distant relatives. Classmates from primary school, high school, and university will surely not be omitted. Actually, almost every person you know will get a card. The members of your university clubs will also be included. Usually, we will leave a stack of cards with friends who know a lot of people, and ask them to give one to anyone who might be interested in coming.”

Among all the methods of image circulation, today the most powerful and influential one is the internet, especially Facebook. Facebook makes the female musician’s image able to be viewed much more widely than before. According to the statistics released by Facebook in 2013, comparing to other countries, Taiwan has the most users in the ratio of the population. In Taiwan, at least ten million people use Facebook every day which occupies 42.83 percent of the whole population.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Taiwanese people are addicted to Facebook The first prize in the world - Ten million people log in Facebook every day,” *Apple Daily*, Aug., 21, 2013. <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20130821/35235891/> (accessed Aug. 21, 2013).

Currently, Taiwanese musicians often held open activities on Facebook to promote their concerts and put their posters on it. Participant Q precisely depicted how the images are displayed on Facebook: “You just hold an open activity on Facebook for your concert and every Facebook user can see it. Usually, you choose to send invitation to all your Facebook friends, so they will be informed about your concert. They will see the information and poster, so they will come if they are interested in it.” Participant L also noted how the image has been distributed widely through Facebook:

The internet has enormously changed the image circulation. Even though a person has no relationship to musical circles and has no musician friends, this person will still see the concert posters as long as she/he has friends who have friends on Facebook who are a member of the musical circle, because friends are happy to post and share posters to promote the concert. Besides, the concert is always set as a public activity, so pressing “like” or registering to “attend” will make the event appear on the individual’s Facebook page.

On the plain page of Facebook activity, female musicians’ charming image is naturally the visual focus. They often put their poster on the activity page. The interaction between the musician and the users is as participant K stated: “Most discussions and messages left on the page are greatly centred on praise about how beautiful she and her poster are, such as classy beauty, beauty musician, and nice photo.” This act brings posters in front of many Facebook users’ eyes. Any one seeing the poster will naturally get another chance to deepen their knowledge and ideas about female musicians.



The prevalent circulation of poster images shows that visuality occupies a decisive position in musical activities for modern-day female musicians. Female musicians are aware of the trend and thus put a high emphasis on visuality. It can be seen that their photos appear not only on posters and invitation cards, but also on the cover and inside pages of the programmes. They build an attractive image and employ it to promote their concerts, and themselves. The image is used as a highlight. Hence, a poster image is not merely a poster any longer. For the public, it is also an announcement delivering what kind of image and presentation a female musician likes. For the female musician, it is also a proclamation to the viewers of what an attractive female musician she is. Since most posters are designed from a male-gazed perspective, as the previous chapters analysed, the relationship between female musicians and men will be scrutinized in the following discussion. Moreover, what considerations the female musicians have when they design and constitute their images will also be elaborated upon.

#### **VIII.4 Making an Image**

In Taiwan, making concert posters is a common experience amongst female musicians. For most of them, undoubtedly, the main standard for how to select the image is good-looking. As participant L noted about her choosing criterion, “The person! The image of the person must be pretty! Only a good-looking image can be the poster image (laugh loudly)!”

According to the participants’ experiences, the common procedure is continually to delete unsatisfactory photos from hundreds of photos until the final one is left. Among the 17 participants, only one has no experience of making a poster. All of the others noted that they saw a lot of concert posters for reference before they

decided to hire a photographer or photography studio. When they saw their favourite poster, they made inquiries about the studio. Then they took photos in the same studio to ensure they got their desired style. Two or three sets of gowns and the corresponding hairstyles and make-up are provided in a package which costs about £100; certainly, the price would vary slightly according to the level of the studio.

The musician and photographer will communicate with each other about the purpose and the style of the photos. Usually, the photographer will take pictures from diverse angles. The dissimilar designs are to ensure that the female musician can find a satisfying image. As participant K said, “The photographer will take photos in various styles and compositions, as many as possible. It lets you have the selectivity to choose which you want. Therefore, the final ones are definitely those you love most for your posters.” After the photos have been chosen, the design of the invitation card and the concert poster will be accomplished by the musician or the art designer. When they pass it on to the designer, the musicians will also inform the designer what the ideal style is; the designer will continue to revise them until the ideal effect has been attained. In most cases, therefore, the musicians certainly have control of their images.

For this reason, the great majority of female musicians were fairly satisfied with their own posters and invitation cards, including the informants. Which image is suitable for the programme, invitation card and poster are considered respectively according to the specific function. The female musicians not only display an image which is beneficial to their situation and status, but also achieve their ideal and preferred self-image on their posters. From participant J’s statement, it can be found that she was quite content with her photos. She thought that these photos present a woman who was what she wanted to look like. She mentioned her photo on her invitation cards with a bashful expression and blush: “In my mind, I thought that a good thing (the image) should be shared with my good friends (laugh)!”

Participant P also presented her ideal self on the posters: “I have always been praised for being very cute! However, my biggest dream is, as I told my friends, that I can look mature, even just once. I wanted to attain this wish on my invitation card and poster. I think that the delicate computer graphics flowers (points to the picture) will help to construct the mature style.” The white gown and artistic design actually make her look mature. Since the pictures are often taken in wedding photo studios, some female musicians choose to wear bridal-like white gowns to pre-experience the bridal appearance. Participants P and N are among these. Participant N bashfully said, “Since I have to wear a gown anyway, it will be interesting to pre-experience the feeling of being a bride (smile)!”

### **VIII.5 Making a *Standard* Image**

Since Taiwanese posters only present specific styles, any image that deviates from the mainstream will easily give rise to queries or criticism. Participant P offered an example: “Last time I went to the National Concert Hall to purchase a ticket, the female clerk in the box office surprisingly asked me: ‘What? You want to go to this concert? The female pianist on the poster looks horrific!’” According to participant P’s description, the pianist merely has short hair and looks at the viewer seriously. This case reveals how the stereotype is firmly ingrained in Taiwanese society. The stereotype has been taken for granted as the appearance of all female musicians. The legitimacy of this stereotype even made the staff of the National Concert Hall think it reasonable to interrogate the people who come to buy a ticket. On the other hand, the staff has continually seen many posters displayed in the atrium beside the box office, so the repeated stereotype may become the only acceptable appearance of female

musicians for her.

“People really thought that we (female musicians) are exactly as the same as the images on the posters,” participant C stated. She used her own experience to illustrate this phenomenon: “I took many photos at the same time of year and used each of them individually for my concerts in the past years. Therefore, my hair has a fixed length on every poster. Once, after a concert, my friend told me that she had heard the audience cry out in surprise when I appeared on the stage: ‘Why has she got longer hair (laugh)?’” The cases mentioned by participants P and C demonstrate that the poster may be a decisive factor in influencing the viewers’ intention to attend a concert. Creating a standard appearance is thus important for career promotion.

In Taiwan, the poster imagery visualizes the stereotype of the female musician. For numerous female musicians, the critical concern is whether their images are good-looking. Nonetheless, a good-looking image now means an image which follows the male-gazed principle and fits it with the stereotype of musicians’ beauty. Hence, catering to the contemporary beauty standard and the intelligible image of the female musician have become the principal concerns when the posters are produced. According to the interview data, the image of the female musician is not only connected to the phallogocentric looking pleasure in the cultural context, but also associated with the actual male viewers in numerous conditions. The analyses are initiated by participant K’s statements:

The reason why I presented such an image on the poster was to fit in with the impression of the female musician in everyone’s mind. . . .

When I chose the photos for my posters, the photos which I thought perfect for my posters were always those with typical poses. I think that the reason is the stereotype! I feel that those images conform to the

stereotype of female musicians. You make a poster that is not for your own eyes. You keep thinking what the viewers will think when they see the poster. Will they remember your poster or your concert?

Since the poster is considered a representation of the female musician, what participant K faced is as Cooley indicated in his looking glass mirror theory: a subject would construct the self image from other people's opinions. If the subject found the self presentation does not correspond to other's view, then the subject would adjust and alter self to resemble that image. This kind of adjustment is just like the way that people modify themselves according to the image which is reflected in the mirror. As mentioned in King-To Yeung and John Levi Martin's paper: "The Looking Glass Self: An Empirical Test and Elaboration," "[...] the self is a result of the social process whereby we learn to see ourselves as others see us."<sup>13</sup> No matter whether in daily life or on a poster, most Taiwanese female musicians continue to accept the messages and judgments about their image.

In the quotation given above, Participant K analysed her own thoughts on the selection criteria. Her words cited here reveal how the female musician is influenced by the stereotypical image when they produce their own poster. Participants D and H, having plentiful experience of making posters, also indicated the importance of presenting a "standard" poster. They gave the possible causes why the overwhelming majority of female musicians choose the classy or sexy style, the two most common images, to represent themselves. Both of them regarded one of the main functions of posters as being to publicize a concert or musician. They gave examples to show that only the typical images can legitimize a female musician in the blink of an eye.

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<sup>13</sup> King-To Yeung and John Levi Martin, "The Looking Glass Self: An Empirical Test and Elaboration," *Social Forces* 81.3 (Mar. 2003): 843.

Participant D, an associate professor, took the concert posters in tube stations as an example.

PD: Simply put, the poster is the publicity. The purpose of publicity is to draw attention, because you hope that people know what you are promoting. Take the posters alongside the escalator of the tube stations, for example. Do you think that you can read the words on the posters when you are on the escalator? It is impossible! So, tell the truth! What is the first thing attracting you?

LM: The imagery.

PD: Right! Then how can an image make you surely and quickly know what it is for? It needs to exaggerate the characteristics of the theme. For this reason, when I see a gown, elegant make-up, and a woman's photo on a poster, I immediately know that it is a poster about a classical music concert ... When you want a propaganda effect, you have to build an image which matches the public's impression of female musicians. Therefore, an image which is too far from our stereotype or needs you to look at it for two more seconds to realize what it conveys will easily be neglected, when you do not have those two more seconds.

What participant D stated is a faithful description of the realistic condition. The condition is as Kress and Leeuwen state: "Producers, if they want to see their work disseminated, must work within more or less rigidly defined conventions, and adhere to the more or less rigidly defined values and beliefs of the social institution within which their work is produced and circulated. Readers will at least recognize these communicative intentions and these values and attitudes for what they are

[...].”<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, the stereotypical images, as the analyses showed in the previous chapters, are the presentation following the male-gazed principle and designed for satisfying the phallogentric-looking pleasure. For the present, most female musicians choose to present themselves as either of the two most common images, classy or sexy. As the image maker, what are the thoughts and feelings of the female musicians? Do they just follow the trend without thinking or is it a decision taken after long consideration? Does she appreciate these images? Is she aware of how her image is being looked at? What is her purpose in showing herself in the typical image? The interview data supply the material for the analysis of the above questions.

#### **VIII.5.i Image and the Female Musician**

According to the interview data, female musicians who confirm to the typical images of the classy or sexy style are not merely obeying the beauty criteria of the male-gazed mechanism. Their experience and interaction with the real male viewer also significantly contributes to why many female musicians keep building their images in such “standard” styles. This part will demonstrate the possible motives and driving forces at work when female musicians make images.

The widely-circulated typical images of female musicians form the public’s knowledge of this group. They also influence the female musicians’ thoughts about how to perform their images. Participant Q is an example of this. She is one of the musicians using the standard classy style poster. On her graduation concert poster, she bends her head down, looking at some point below, shows a bashful expression and sweet smile, and wears a strapless dress exposing her naked shoulders. Like many

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<sup>14</sup> Kress and Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 115.

other female musicians, participant Q created a comfortable space for the viewer: She is an object to be gazed at in a phallogentric scheme. The viewer is under no threat of her returning their gaze. Her motive in making this poster reveals that she intended to present an image which will be recognized as a “standard” image by people.

PQ: My friends and roommates all recommended that I used this photo for my poster. The composition is just so suitable for a concert poster (pointing at her image)! So is my facial expression!

LM: What do you mean by “suitable”?

PQ: The bowed head (thinks and pause). She (pointing at her own image) does not look at the camera lens! In addition, it feels really classy. I am not a classy woman, but [the woman in] this photo is! I have heard that ordinary people will recognize you as a female musician, as soon as they see this kind of image ... It is what the stereotype is for us! I have actually heard that some people ask why all female musicians look like this.

In the interview, participant Q often said “she” instead of “I” to indicate her image, whether on her poster, invitation cards, or programmes, as if her image is not her, but another person who has been viewed and judged by participant Q. Participant Q used the stereotype of the female musician to examine whether “she” answers to the standard musician, as Cooley’s theory expresses. When an image has been made, conforming to the “normal” appearance is her main concern. Her friends also advised her according to their experiences of what the surface of a female musician is like, while others are curious why the images of female musicians always appear so much alike.



Eventually, the people who proposed the inquiry will still become accustomed to the images, because these images are the most common of female musicians. The musicians and the public are educated to know that the image is the normal one and then produce a “suitable” one. It is a cycle of the formation of the female musicians’ stereotypical images.

Participant K also follows the mainstream, even though she has had fleeting struggles. She pointed at her own poster and, slightly agitated, asked: “Why does a violin concert need a woman lying on the floor? I did it merely to conform to the stereotype, because the poster is to be looked at.” As for the photos on her resume page in the programme, she asked “Do not you think it looks like I’m naked?” There is only her face and a completely naked shoulder on the photo; this composition establishes the visual effect that she is not wearing any clothes. This design can be found frequently on female musicians’ posters.

It is rare to see that a female musician reflected her male-gazed image from a critical angle, although participant K later denied that she had expressed the above criticism and insisted that she adopted these images only because they are beautiful. Apparently, she was conscious of how the image is built to please the male-gazed looking pleasure. Nevertheless, she still yielded to create a very typical one which secured her continuance in the system. The patriarchal image is so influential that it covered her skeptical thinking, which emerged at times.

The possible reaction of the expected viewer is one of the most crucial considerations when the poster is being produced. Female musicians design their posters and invitation cards according to the real viewer whom they value. Participant Q’s experience clearly reveals this condition. Unlike her classy poster image, that on her invitation card is a sexy one. She wears a strapless, very low-cut white dress, lying on a white floor, smiling prettily at the camera. Her head is supported by her elbows,

her breasts are squeezed together into the centre, forming a visual focus. The card was widely praised and appreciated by her friends, especially the male ones. She confessed that she knew it would attract many men to attend. However, her poster demonstrates a very common classy image: a beautiful young woman holds her instrument, lowers her head and looks down, with a slight, shy smile. She elaborated on why she chose the sexy and classy styles for her invitation card and poster respectively:

PQ: My piano professor is very old. When she saw my invitation card, she promptly commented: “Oh! Why are you so exposed on the photo?” “Oh! You are very sexy on this photo! You are very like a Hawaii hula girl!” ... In my opinion, she and other aged professors will certainly not fail me just because of my photo, but I think that they will probably reduce my score more or less. I think that they will! The exposed and sexy image is not polite among people of their generation.

LM: Which part do you think is impolite?

PQ: My alluring pose may be somewhat unacceptable to them. I did not think about this issue carefully, so I slightly shocked by my professor’s words. Since the poster had not been produced yet, I immediately chose a classy image for it.

LM: Why did you select a classy one for the poster?

PQ: I wanted to give the panel the impression! The impression is that I’m diligent about preparing for this concert.

LM: Why does a classy image tell them that you are diligent?

PQ: Because it is the typical image of female musicians! When people see my poster, they will feel that I am a professional musician. When the panel members see my poster, they will think that I have discreet attitude about

my concert.

LM: So, do you think that this image is related to the musical professional in people's minds?

PQ: Yes! It is! Therefore, it is "safe" for me to present this image! I took the safe path and did the safe thing ... To present a "standard" image is pretty safe, whether the viewers are insiders or outsiders of the musical business. It is helpful to build my professional image. It is related to the musical specialization.

Despite her initial carelessness, participant Q's case reveals that she was capable of anticipating the viewer's feelings about specific images. This can also be found in other participants' experiences. As the insiders see posters and attend concerts frequently, it is easy for most female musicians to guess the viewer's reaction. Participant Q thought highly of her grades and her professors' judgment. She decided to follow the safest visual presentation to avoid any possible incident that might affect her score. The classy imagery is also the most common demonstration which frequently appears on the posters of female musicians of every age. This style is widely accepted, including amongst older professors and relatives.

Even though it is somewhat difficult for some older people to accept the sexy image, a lot of female musicians still prefer it. A sexy appearance is the prevailing image of young women in modern times. To follow the mainstream value, numerous female musicians embrace popular culture, which is often submitted to the rule of the patriarchal ideology. As participant H said, "I know that, nowadays, posters are becoming more and more over the top. The sexy parts have been excessively magnified! My university students also have these posters. When I pass the noticeboard, I really cannot recognize some of them."

Participant H, the assistant university professor, claimed that a desirable image is like “an approach of promotion, such as advertising. It is a way to catch people’s attention.” As Green analyses the critical function of image for women musicians in contemporary society, “Whilst this aspect of musical meaning is necessary for musical experience, it is only ever partial, and can in reality never occur on its own. We have become accustomed to the idea that the social or cultural images of performers make an important contribution to their commercial survival.”<sup>15</sup>

The poster is like most other media of the day which often delivers a sexy woman’s image. As participants F and L stated, a sexy image is the trendy one of our time. Participant L precisely pointed out the meaning of the two styles: “The classy image is built according to our original and traditional impression of a female musician, but the sexy one is fresh. It is an important image of this generation.”

Both the classy and sexy images are products formed by the phallogocentric culture. The female musicians learn to view themselves through the male gaze and examine their images according to the criteria of the stereotypes of the female musician and general beauty. As previously mentioned, many participants stated that the prerequisite of choosing the photo is whether they are good-looking. Nevertheless, from the high resemblance of the current posters, it is obvious that the definition of a good-looking musician is seriously restricted. Participant G used herself as an example to illustrate this condition:

I feel that we have already been confined by the stereotype. The *image* in your mind is so vivid, so you wish to present an image which is like it. ... For instance, I have shown my pictures to others. They told me

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<sup>15</sup> Green, *Music Gender, Education*, 6.

which one is good-looking and is thus appropriate for the posters. After a few times, I will learn which type is beautiful for me. I will feel that I am good-looking in this type, and I thought that it was my own thought.

What participant G thinks is good-looking involves what people think a beautiful musician should look like. According to her, her value of beauty is accumulated and formulated by others' judgments of what a good-looking musician should be. Eventually, she interiorized that the image is "correctly" beautiful. From the last sentence of the quote, it can be seen that she may even think that it is her own preference. The female musicians are well educated to view themselves according to the male gaze.

### **VIII.5.ii Image and the Male Viewer**

#### **VIII.5.ii.1 Posters as a Male-inviting Medium**

According to the interview data, the typically classy and sexy poster images are not only for the male-gaze mechanism, but also for real men's interest. As participant J suggested, "Through the act of looking at the poster, people will probably want to go to this concert to see the beautiful musician. Their purpose is not to appreciate the music, but to see what the real woman looks like." She then shared her observation on the poster and its viewers.

Her university noticeboard is attached to the wall of a building near the campus entrance, so people frequently pass by the board and turn their head to see these posters. As a student of the music department, participant J was as the same as many other music students: They often paid attention to how people commented on their posters. "People often gather in front of some posters and exchange their opinions regarding how beautiful the music student is. ... They will spend more time on posters

with a bride-like style and where the musicians are very beautiful. They will try to learn who she is. Most of the viewers are university students, but people from off campus are also present.”

Participant J’s experience is common amongst other participants. As mentioned in the preceding section, participant K stated how male strangers go to the concerts according to which posters they prefer. Since people usually expect to see that the musician is as beautiful as on the posters, the poster can really be a medium for inviting people. Participant P remarked on this phenomenon: “Men are a visual animal. A sexy poster is tempting bait, attracting them.” She further explained how the image influences men’s interest in female musicians:

The audiences at my concert are half women and half men. Since the collaborative departments of the study partners are always the [so-called] male departments, our friends outside the music department are usually male students. The male roommates, classmates, and friends of our study partners will also show up at our concerts as long as they see a sexy or beautiful image on our invitation cards or on Facebook. Besides, the student concerts are free. Why should they not come?

This phenomenon arises not only with regard to the student concerts, but also the concerts of professional musicians. Participant P did not join the music class until secondary school, so she has a lot of general classmates who study non-musical subjects. She noted how people value a concert: “I have asked my friends who are not from music departments about their experiences of and thoughts on attending a concert. They feel that it is truly classy to go to a concert at the National Concert Hall! How the general people think of a concert is so different to us. In their opinion,

although they cannot understand Western classical music, at least it is worth seeing the musician! If a concert is not worth “seeing,” then they might not go. Participant P’s cases illustrate that visuality is a significant reason for inviting people to attend a concert.

Besides, the high status of Western classical music in Taiwan makes the female musician not an ordinary beauty, but a glorified one. In the view of many participants, Taiwanese people’s worship of classical music enhances their adoration of the musician. The female musician who tallies with the stereotype thus easily attracts men’s admiration. What happened to participant D reflects this fact. Participant C described the following event:

Participant D and I have set up an association to host our concerts. One day, I got a phone call from a male stranger who had never met participant D or myself, nor listened to our music before. However, he wanted to hire participant D to play (raising tone and voice)! As you know, participant D’s poster image is also that [standard] kind of beauty. He kept repeating the same questions about participant D: “Participant D is very beautiful, right? She is so pretty on the poster!” This man merely saw participant D on the poster and was desirous to see her in person!”

This middle-aged man was enchanted by participant D’s poster. It seems that he developed an imaginary scenario based on the visual material. Numerous participants have similar experiences. As participant H related: “I put a poster on Facebook. On that photo, I smiled and bow my head. I am not sure what feeling this photo delivers, but it has been highly praised by many people. There were even some men who wanted to meet me because of this photo! It is true (laughing and raising tone)! They

are strangers whom I do not know. They told some of my male friends that I am amazingly beautiful on that photo.” Participant H conjectured that the male viewers liked the photo “because it provides space for them to imagine what kind of a person I am.”

The male strangers wanted to meet participant H due to seeing her poster on the internet. They are the friends of her male friends, so they coincidentally saw her poster on Facebook. On the other hand, many men come to see the printed posters in person to systematically decide which one is their favourite musician amongst a lot of posters. As participant K’s experienced, participants P and J were also asked for concert information by male strangers. Participant P stated: “He is middle-aged and seems to live near the university. He seriously asked me: ‘Are all your [students’] concert posters displayed here? I want to go to the concerts.’” Furthermore, she noted a similar event that happened at another university:

Once, I went to a concert by the music department of the National Normal University. I saw some people accosting the music students. These men said that they live near the campus and attend the students’ concerts frequently. ... One of the men explained to these students why he attends the concerts so often: He feels that the female musicians are always stunning. Looking at the beautiful musicians make him feels happy.

Hence, the “standard” image which is produced according to the male-gazed principle actually caters for the real men’s looking pleasure. Nevertheless, while men are pleased by viewing the image, some female musicians are also satisfied by the men’s gaze. This can be illustrated by two events which were described by participant P:



Recently, at each of my concerts, I found that some male names appeared in my memorial autograph books which were placed on the desk at the entrance to the concert hall. I always wondered who they are. I think that they attended my concerts because they were really fascinated by the posters ... As you know, the programme also contains our photo. Once, the programmes were all given away. Coincidentally, my mother was asked by a male stranger whether the programme was still obtainable. I kept asking my mother what he looked like. I wanted her to describe him completely to me! I really cared about this! I am extremely curious about who he is and what his motive is.

The graduate student participant P is like participant H, an assistant university professor. Some female musicians become vain due to men's adoration. Even though there might be a disparity or gap between their poster image and their true appearance or personality, men's admiration and imagination based on the posters still flatters some of the female musicians. After all, the image on the poster is obtained from the real person; the female musician deems the poster to represent her; even if it is not identical to the reality, at least it represents part of her. The admiration of her poster, therefore, reasonably extends to her. The female musician builds her poster thus not only from the phallogocentric angle, but also through the real male viewer's eyes.

#### VIII.5.ii.2 The Sexy Demonstration

Participant P mentioned an event that happened to her class during the concert season. It also shows her and her classmates' vanity derived from men's looking. "One morning, I heard the news from my classmates: Two concert posters had been stolen

from the bulletin board. They discussed this event enthusiastically. We knew that they must have been torn down by men who must think that those posters were especially beautiful. At that moment, an idea flashed into my head: Is it possible that my poster will also be stolen? I somehow looked forward to it every day (embarrassed expression).”

This kind of expectation may lead to the sexy, alluring style become more and more popular. Participant I, a professional accompanist working in a university and in schools, and the only participant without any poster-making experience, commented on this current trend of Taiwanese concert posters:

I saw a lot of university students’ posters on Facebook. They look like wedding photos. The image is absolutely dream-like and womanly. The focus of these posters is placed on the curve of the women’s body. The breasts and legs are boldly exposed. ... Why do they want to dress and pose at this level? Because they want to promote themselves! So they display their womanly parts too much! It is a marketing strategy. People will look at and pay more attention to this kind of poster! And some men will go to these concerts! These female musicians obviously want to demonstrate their strengths – the musician’s status and a sexy body! These two attractions can really catch the eye of men!

What participant I stated is true. A sexy poster can really promote the musician to the male viewer. In the interviews, for instance, two participants mentioned the same poster, on which a female student is entirely naked; she only used her instrument and a cloth to cover her private parts (see Figure VIII-2). Participant F, an orchestral musician, described how her colleagues discussed this poster:

PF: During a break in a rehearsal, a female graduate student showed her friend's poster on her mobile phone. Since this poster is unique, all of us joined in the discussion. Who is she? Which university does she study at? Who is her supervisor? Every one wanted to know the background of this woman.

LM: Did anyone want to know whether she played well or not?

PF: Oh (shocked and pause)! No! You remind me of it, but this issue did not feature at all in our conversation! ... In our discussion, a student expressed the wish to attend her concert.

LM: What was the gender of this student?

PF: (Pause) A man (lasting tone and laugh)! A man!

LM: Where is this male student's university located?

PF: The north.

LM: But the female student's university is in the south. Do they major in the same instrument?

PF: No.

LM: Did only this male student express an interest?

PF: But the other people were all women. He was the only man there. I did not know whether he really went to the concert eventually, but he really (word emphasized) showed a lot of interest in it ... He also did not care about her musicality.

After all, the male musician is also a man. Men are educated to view women through phallogocentric eyes, and therefore so do most women. The male musicians are probably more accustomed to these stereotypical images than general men, but an

exceptionally sexy image can still interest them. Participant O, a graduate student, also noted this poster. Although her community is different from that of participant F, their similar experiences reflected the general view of the sexy poster.

PO: Now a lot of concert posters are astonishing! One is wholly naked, sitting on a low stool and covering her private parts with a violin.

LM: I have also seen this one on Facebook.

PO: A lot of people have seen that poster. I saw it because my friend is at the same university as that female student. Actually, aside from this one, I have seen other posters almost entirely naked or largely-naked. I think that it is a kind of promotion.

LM: As a female student of a music department, in your opinion, why do some students want to take such photos?

PO: They want to be different from others! Making a splash! If you post your naked photo, then people in the musical business and the public will all be surprised. Then they will have the imagination on you.

LM: Can a sexy poster really attract a lot of people attend?

PO: Yes! According to what I heard, it does.

Although it is still uncommon to see a completely naked person on a poster, this poster is not astonishing whether it is for viewers or other musicians. The prevalence of the sexy concert poster has already made people accustomed to the alluring performance of female musicians. In sum, the sexy style is now a common representation of female musicians. Even though it stresses the exposed body and sensual pose, it is still categorized in the group of classy beauty. The current situation is that, as participant G pointed out, “as long as the poster photo is good-looking, then

people will think that this female musician is classy. The reason is that the public already has a fixed stereotype that the female musician is the representative of *qi-zhi*. Just because we are female musicians, people will always think about us in a positive way.”

### VIII.5.ii.3 Thoughts on Creating a Male-inviting Poster

From the previous examples, it can be seen that men are easily intrigued by visual attraction. They also show that female musicians realize how their image may function amongst viewers. The following discussion elucidates the female musicians’ considerations when building their image. Participant K commented:

Some people intentionally take sexy photos for concert posters. Don’t they? A lot of musicians do. Also, many of my classmates did! But it is just what they really want! They want to do this when they are young. They want to hear people say things like, “Wow! You’re so sexy!” They present a sexy appearance to get this praise. They’ll feel weird if they don’t get it ... You’ll choose a photo according to what image you want to display to others. Won’t you?

A female musician, as participant K noted, will pick a photo according to what image she wants to show to the viewers. She wants to be that sexy woman who attracts compliments. In most cases, what she shows others depends upon what reaction she wishes the viewer to have. What participant K’s classmates want is praise which eulogizes her sexiness and body. Hence, what they want is praise from men. Even when the praise is from women, these women still see them through male-gazed eyes. The next case is participant Q’s experience. She planned to invite as many men

as possible through her sexiness.

PQ: I hoped that a lot of people would attend my concert, so I wanted to give people an invitation card which really made them feel sincerely invited.

LM: So, what kind of photo can achieve this goal?

PQ: Photos which uncover women's bodies more than other photos. I think. I don't know (voice suddenly diminished).

LM: It is fine. It is just all about your experiences. You can say your own feeling and notion. Do you think that the more revealing the photo, the more people come?

PQ: Of course! It is absolutely a fact! I think that it certainly works on men! How to say it? They (men) undoubtedly have no harmful ideas. However, I think that men love sensual stimulation. Take my male friends for example. When I went to the university caring club and sent my and my classmates' invitation cards to them, these men looked at the photos and said "She is pretty!" They will go to the concert if they think that this woman is beautiful!

LM: Even if he does not know this woman?

PQ: Yes! The photos will be viewed amongst their friends. For instance, once, I emailed my poster to a friend, and his male roommate happened to see it. His roommate asked who I am and he wanted to go to the concert to see me. There are so many similar examples related to myself and others.

In participant Q's logic, issuing people a sincere invitation means exposing her body as much as possible. It is clear that the "people" whom she wanted to attract are

men. Attracting men to the concerts not only creates more chances for female musicians to meet the possible partner, it also satisfies their vanity. It implies that her beauty is manifest.

Occasionally, some men's immoderate gestures make the female musicians realize how men are extraordinarily obsessed with their image and status. Participant Q used Facebook to promote her each concert. She repeatedly received private messages from men due to her posters on Facebook. "They saw my photo and sent me the messages saying that I was classy. Some showed up at my concerts and said it to me face to face ... Some left praise publicly under the photo, such as classy beauty, and classy girl. Some of them I know a little, but some I've never met ... I didn't feel it would be problematic until a horrifying pursuit. I started to learn to be vigilant. ... I feel horrible about this [kind of adoration]! I will not respond to these male strangers' words. I think why they talk so much to me. Saying it to me is slightly impolite or crossing the line. They definitely fancy something in their mind when they view my poster!"

Even though participant Q had experienced men's excessive and even uncontrollable enchantment, she still continually portrayed herself as a sexy beauty on most of her subsequent invitation cards and posters. As she mentioned, she wanted to attract many men to attend her concerts. The men's compliments honour her appearance. Additionally, the uncomfortable pursuit even corroborated how influential the poster can be. In participant Q's view, she merely needs to be more alert to male strangers' overly laudatory gestures.

Participant K had similar experiences. She felt unsafe regarding the male strangers who attended concerts based on their preferred posters. She also felt negative when some men praised her poster. On her poster, she wears a sexy, low-cut, short dress, tenderly holds her violin, and lies on the floor.

PK: I felt weird that some unfamiliar men with an abnormal mentality left messages about my poster.

LM: You mean that they say something admiring?

PK: Yes! Kind of.

LM: They kept praising your beauty?

PK: It is reasonable that you want to put a beautiful photo on your poster. However, you will not expect to hear abnormal words, such as “I want to become that violin.”

In the interview, participant K showed an unusual reflection of the male-gazed image of female musicians. After contemplating, she stated that she regarded this unpleasant experience as a chance to critically think about the image constitution. Nevertheless, even though she was more perceptive than most of the other musicians, she still stayed in a patriarchal-control domain which aims to create male-looking pleasure. This was revealed by her decision about making her next poster.

PK: My boyfriend said to me. “Why do you musicians all create such feminine posters? Why don’t you just wear casual clothes, such as a T-shirt, and attentively play your violin? I can take shots for you!”

LM: So will you really consider having this kind of image on your next poster?

PK: Yes! Why not? It’s possible. My boyfriend has strongly urged me to try this style.

LM: So he must dislike your previous posters?

PK: (pause a while) No. I have a new boyfriend. When I created these sexy posters, I had another boyfriend. My ex-boyfriend loved the sexy images and



he thought that my previous posters were extremely fabulous and beautiful!

In fact, participant K's next poster presented this image. It seems that she deviated from the patriarchal-built standard for the female musician, and instead chooses solely to please the preference of the real man with whom she is now. The anti male-gazed poster looks like the fruit of independency and liberty, but it is essentially still a decision that relies on a man's wish. She is not really free of the male-gazed eyes. She only continually built perfect images according to boy friends' different criteria. Compared to pleasing the male strangers, her boyfriend is the man who is closely related to her, so his opinion is far more valued than that of other men.

### **VIII.5.iii The Image on Stage**

Considering the efforts made to present a "standard" beauty image on concert posters, what image do female musicians display on stage? Through the participants' experiences and observations of other female musicians, the interaction between the concert posters and their on-stage appearance will be clarified through answering the following questions: What aspects do female musicians take into account in making the on-stage appearance? What is the relationship between the poster imagery and the on-stage demonstration? How far does the music/performance affect their on-stage image? How can they maintain a "standard" image whilst performing and what conditions support this image? Participants H, N and P provided their ideas and observations, made over many years, regarding this issue.

To present the "standard" image and comfortably play music at the same time, preparing an on-stage image, in general, requires slightly more thought than preparing the one on the poster. One of the principal concerns is to diminish the negative influence on performance which an evening gown and adornment might have.

Participant N delineated the common considerations on how to avoid these problems on stage.

PN: I prefer to wear a strapless gown while performing, so there is no spaghetti strap around my neck where I put my violin on. Some people wear a necklace on stage, but for violinists, they can only wear exceptionally thin necklaces that will not affect their playing. The same with earrings. You can probably only wear an ear stud rather than pendant earrings. Otherwise, when you put the instrument to your neck, they might make a noise ... At least for me, I would not choose to wear a sexy, low-cut gown on stage. I will be continually distracted from my music by the fear that my top might falls off.

Participant H, an assistant university professor and instrumentalist who gives frequent concerts, also mentioned the importance of wearing things that will not affect the musical performance. “It is usual for most female musicians,” she said. “For example, vocalists should not wear tight dresses to ease their breathing; cellists may choose thin trousers instead of wool ones to improve the sound or resonance effect.”

Unlike the act of dressing up carefully for an on-stage performance, participant P commented that presenting a beautiful image on a concert poster is comparatively easy. “It is not like the on-stage image. Beauty is the only focus when taking photos for concert posters.” Participant P’s experience reveals the possible gap between the image construction of posters and the musicians’ appearance during performances:

All of my on-stage concert gowns were bought from second-hand boutiques. I did not rent them (from wedding photo studios, like many other

musicians). I usually chose black or white ones; comfort was my goal. They should be suitable for playing the piano. In fact, every concert posed many problems regarding what to wear, because my mother always gave me a lot of suggestions. She thought that I must wear beautifully high-heeled shoes, have a long fringe, and let my hair down (to make my face seem smaller). I told her that a fringe would get in my eyes, loose hair might stick to my lipstick, and too high-heeled shoes will make some pieces difficult to play. Her only consideration was that I needed to look attractive on stage, but our musical performance would be affected if we are not comfortable. ... Although the clothes would diminish the performance so much, I still took my mother's opinions into account. After all, she is one of the people who are "seeing" me in the audience. Her comments are valuable as a viewer. ... I hated those days when I was struggling to achieve a balance.

Although the on-stage image requires more consideration, it certainly does not mean that it is difficult to be glamorous. To wear a brilliant gown and not lose physical ease at the same time is achievable. As participants H and N stated, there are many pretty clothes available; female musicians can always undoubtedly pick up an attractive gown anyway.

LM: But you did not notice these (aspects) when you were taking the poster photos?

PN: Yes! For the concert posters, the only requirement is beauty, but comfort becomes important while we are performing. Of course, beauty is still necessary on stage. You should take these two concerns into

account simultaneously: You can wear a glamorous evening gown which you like and this dress is also suitable for playing your instrument.

According to the participants, female musicians do not stop pursuing a pretty image on stage; actually, they consider different aspects to achieve an image which is proper to present on stage. Other than providing physical comfort, a proper on-stage dress should also have a good visual effect.

As you know, some gowns fit tightly and cling to your body. If I wear one of those, my feet move during my violin performance, which is not very graceful and would be an apparently indecent sight on stage. So, for me, I choose princess-like gowns; that is, those with a wide, flat skirt. You cannot see my feet through those clothes. You know, some people may have special ways of moving their feet while playing. In these gowns, you can move your feet freely and no one can see them. ... Besides, my mother thought that tightly-fit gowns made me look very thin on stage. "It does not look attractive," she said.

According to some of the participants' observations, putting stress on image building or the comfort of their clothes is a negotiation for the female musicians. As participant N noted, "Of course, we have some classmates who still wear tightly-fitted gowns, which even have high slits to show their legs. They also wear extremely high-heeled shoes, so they probably suffer all of the discomforts we mentioned before. But it is the visual image they want to show on stage! It is a *negotiation* for everyone. It depends on how much physical comfort you want to sacrifice to achieve your preferred image." Participant N further added that, "If someone intends to attract more people to come to her concert, and puts a sexy image on her poster, then she might

particularly wear those inviting clothes!”

In addition to the example provided by participant N, participant P had a similar experience. As she stated, she cared about being comfortable in her clothes. For her graduation recital, nonetheless, she made a different decision: “I wore a princess-like grand skirt which was even uncomfortable to sit down in, because the grand skirt was stiff and I couldn’t really sit on the piano stool ... I also abandoned black and white. I chose the spotted gown which I wore on my concert poster. I just thought that it might be my last chance to perform on stage. Who knows whether I’ll have another one? So I wanted to try at least once to present the image I love most!” Participant P’s case is an instance where the individual’s preferences and the particular situation had to be negotiated.

Regarding the conditions which might affect the female musician’s on-stage femininity, the specific repertoires and instruments are not a factor. The participants, who were asked the same questions, all expressed the identical opinion. “It is almost impossible to decide your repertoire because of your clothes.” Participant N firmly stated. “Your repertoire must contain techniques that challenge you, or the music that you like, or you want to achieve some goals by practicing these works! Unless you really wear a gown which can easily lead to accidental indecent exposure and your pieces need agitated movements. But there are too many pretty clothes (you can choose)! No need to decide which pieces to play to suit your gown.”

As the participants stated, furthermore, a female musician who wears a Western gown and plays Western classical music on stage already has a classy image. Hence, it is unnecessary for a beautiful image to influence the repertoire choices. No matter which repertoire or instrument she plays, even if the pieces require huge actions, there are all the components supporting the “classy” image which is closely connected to female musicians in Taiwan. The phenomenon is like what participant N mentioned,

“When she attentively plays music on stage, even though some poses are agitated, you do not think that they are ungraceful. People would think that it is natural (when playing music).” The image of female musicians wearing gowns on stage does not conflict with their classy image on the posters and the stereotype in the minds of Taiwanese people.

### **VIII.6 Making an Alternative *Standard* Image**

Other than the female students in every musical department and institute, the other major group of poster producers is young musicians who have returned from abroad and wish to promote their fame or develop their reputation in the music business. To upgrade their teaching position, most musicians also regularly hold concerts, except for professors. As previously mentioned, good-looking is an important consideration when posters are produced. However, what can be called good-looking and proper-looking for a woman is strictly defined according to the criteria set by the patriarchal norm. The criteria should be adjusted to suit a person’s multiple conditions, such as age, occupation, and status. Not just any classy or sexy poster will be seen as “normal.” Hence, there are some images which obey the “alternative” criteria set by the social norm. This part focuses on some poster styles which are secondary to the mainstream ones.

#### **VIII.6.1 Female Professors**

Since professors do not need to give concerts to upgrade their teaching position, it is comparatively rare to see concerts by Taiwanese professors. After their upgrading examinations, the professors are usually aged. Participant A, a renowned professor in her 50s, is one of a few professors who still hold occasional recitals. Most of her

poster images are black-and-white. She stated why she continually adopted this style:

These posters are simply composed of a black background and my white face. My poster is always just a head against a black background; at most, one or two colours are added sometimes. Many Western classical music CD covers are also similar to these. I definitely like the plain, simple design, because its focus is very clear; it will not dazzle the viewers' eyes. It fits in with the feeling of a concert of Western classical music. It looks classic.

Participant A intended to present a style which matches the noble status of Western classical music and her eminent position in the musical circle. These symbolisations cannot be embodied by a sexy or obedient woman image. What she wanted to emphasize is her musicality and professionalism, and the seriousness on her concerts. As she said, “[My posters are] more delicate than those of young female musicians and students. It shows that I am more serious [than them]; I hold concerts not for fun or frolic!” As Green analyses the relationship between sexy appearance and the seriousness of music, “[...] the more overt and affirmative her bodily display, the more she signifies a lack of commitment to the music's inherent meanings, the less likely she is to be regarded as a serious musician, and the less seriously her music itself will be taken. There is a conjunction of sexual display and loss of musical value.”<sup>16</sup>

This idea was also reflected by the other female professors. To diminish the pleasing meaning of their posters, professors put less visual attraction on their photo. In addition, participant C also pointed out two realistic reasons why Taiwanese professors do not need to invite people by their visual attraction. “First, she already

has status, so a lot of students will attend. Therefore, I do not think that she will value the poster very highly. Second, you know that most tickets are often bought by the musicians themselves in Taiwan and then they invite people to come. A female professor will have a lot of connections, so it is no problem for her to find an audience.” As participant P argued, “A poster has indeed not much function between a female professor and her audience. For the insiders of musical circle, a poster can be seen as the last thing that influences whether they attend or not.”

Hence, numerous professors even use the same photo for several concerts. “I complained to my professor that she always used the same photo on her posters (laugh),” Participant P recalled. Many of the female professors include only a small photo on the poster. Participant M mentioned her professor in this regard:

She used a portrait of Franz Liszt (A.D.1811-1886) to fill almost the entire poster, because she played Liszt’s music at that concert; her own photo was just a small head shot in the corner. I felt that many female professors do not place emphasis on their photo, because their appearance is not the focus of the concert. They also do not try to attract the audience by their photos.

As well as older professors, prestigious musicians also do not promote their concerts using sexy images, such as Pi-hsien Chen. The selling point of their recital is their musicality. To attract the audience by their appearance is not these musicians’ intention. After all, as numerous participants stated, the musician and the repertoire are the two deciding factors when they consider going to a concert. Participant P further mentioned that the world-renowned, Taiwan-born pianist Pi-hsien Chen’s

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<sup>16</sup> Green, *Music Gender, Education*, 6.



posters also continually used the same photo for many years: “Have you ever seen Pi-hsien Chen’s photo? It is not that kind of poster which places emphasis on appearance. My first thought on seeing this kind of poster is that maybe the performer *focuses* on music. (Pi-hsien Chen’s posters were displayed by the researcher.) She used this photo so often (points to it)! This photo has been employed on many posters for years, just different editions!”

Nonetheless, as participant D argued, “Is not it also a stereotype that female professors always present this kind of image? It is merely another kind of stereotype.” What participant D, an associate university professor, stated is true. The aged female professor follows the path which is indicated by the social norm. The public considered that the older female professor is powerful, serious, and authentic; so does the internationally renowned musician, such as Pi-hsien Chen. The serious facial expression or de-feminized appearance is not the non-stereotypical presentation, but the typical demonstration of another stereotype.

What participant O mentioned revealed the existence of this stereotype: “I really wanted to imitate the black-and-white professor style, but people will feel that it is sombre. Since we are young and the classmates’ posters are colourful, I am afraid that my poster will be neglected. Besides, I am only a student. People will feel that I am too arrogant if I use that professor style. It seems that I thought that I was very professional and powerful, like professors.”

The stereotypes of female professors and students are all the cultural regulations which act on the musicians’ bodies. In the cultural custom of Taiwan, the sexy or inviting performance is unsuitable for the female professor’s status and age. As many of the participants noted, it is considered weird to see an older woman as sexy. To view an old, exposed woman is difficult and unacceptable in the social climate in Taiwan. Her status is also an important consideration that stops her being exposed. As

participant H, an assistant university professor, argued, “It is impossible to lie on the piano or on the floor for me ... There is the minimum requirement for your status and occupational image. Therefore, I do not dare to present images like those that most female students present. Few professors choose that style either.”

A female musician would publicly perform the image which has been considered as “natural” and “normal.” Nonetheless, the powers and regulations pushing her to perform the stereotype simply uncover the fictional essence of the image. The continual and consistent performativity on the female musician’s body reinforces its naturalness. Their images, in Butler’s words, “have constituted the stable point of reference [...]”<sup>17</sup>

How to make a “proper” image is actually formulated by the various regulations. As Nina Lykke states, it is an intersectional condition. Intersectionality is to be understood as a concept or theory that explains how “intertwined power differentials and normative identity markers, and, more generally, how individual subjects negotiate the power-laden social relations and conditions in which they are embedded.”<sup>18</sup> According to intersectionality, the “[...] specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed socio-cultural categorizations such as gender, [class, and age/generation].”<sup>19</sup> The different categorizations are interwoven. The female musician can only to be considered to present a “proper” image when each variable is proper for her.

The fact is, as participant H pointed out, “Age, maturity, status, occupations are all matters for female musicians. The social impression is also a consideration. For

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<sup>17</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 175.

<sup>18</sup> Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (London: Routledge, 2010), 51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

instance, you cannot wear the clothes of women in their 30s and lie on the piano when you are actually in your 50s.” Hence, for the middle-aged female musicians, “Their poster image is warm, but solemnity is not absent. Their image is not so serious as to lose their attainability; it also doesn’t entail lying on the floor,” participant D analysed, as a middle-aged associate university professor.

Despite the limited space for expressing their personal preferences, numerous issues have to be taken into account. As Figures VIII-3 and VIII-4 show, the middle-aged female professors placed themselves in the transition between the aged and young female musicians. Compared to the young musicians, they are also beautiful and elegant, but not overly sexy or exposed. Compared to the aged professors, many of them also look at the viewer directly but with a sweet, friendly smile. In sum, the overwhelming majority of female musicians are well disciplined to follow the stereotype which belongs to their current position.

Participant D is an example who compliantly conforms to the stereotype of different stages according to her age and status. In her late 20s/early 30s, her posters continually displayed a shy and submissive beauty, with a bent head and low sight line. It makes her an obediently gazed object. The bashful smile and the soft light shine on her naked arm, showing an inviting image and highlighting her womanly character. The following quote shows that she comprehended the connotations of these body poses, although the consciousness of it was comparatively hard to admit when discussing her own poster: “Sometimes, people will feel that the facial façade indicates a too intense or serious meaning. Bending the head or body is the language delivering the meaning of feminine docility. It does not give the viewer an excessively strong and direct feeling.”

Consequently, participant D was aware of what reaction and thoughts the viewer might gain from her poster images. It can explain why her most recent poster was

dissimilar. Due to her increased age and promotion to associate professor, her most recent poster showed the “common” image for professors, looking at the viewer directly from nearly face on and wearing a half-sleeved top. As participants B, C, and H indicated, age and position are two influences on how female musicians design their posters.

### **VIII.6.2 Pastoral Style Posters**

In the previous chapters, the relative modern women’s images were compared. In the section on advertising images, the pastoral, cute style of the concert posters was discussed because of their resemblance to some advertisements. Although the pastoral style poster only occupies a minor place amongst the posters, it is the most common style after the classy and sexy ones, especially for students. Participant M is one of the musicians who makes posters in this pastoral style, which means a style in which the musicians wear more casual clothes against an outdoor background which usually composed of grassland, blue sky or sea, old wall or building.

Participant M stated that she usually has short hair and no make-up, and wears jeans and a T-shirt in everyday life. Consequently, she preferred the images of the pastoral style. As she said, “I think that these imageries are more like my usual appearance; it is only slightly more beautiful than my daily look. For viewers who know me, it is ‘like’ me.” Even though participant M and other participants claimed that people who employ this style care less about the stereotype, some stereotypical elements can still be seen in these images.

Take participant M as an instance. As other musicians who use the pastoral style, participant M also lowers her head. It seems that she is looking at the floor. She explained why she still adopted this typical pose which is widely used in the classy style posters. “I like this pose because it looks classy. The background is already so

vivid.” From her statement, it appears that she still wanted some elements which can prove her musician status. For most of the female musicians, following the stereotype guarantees a safe space for identifying their musician status.

In addition, participant M also admitted that her poster is very like the current advertisement when her posters and some advertisements were shown during the interview. “They are similar,” she said. “They belong to the same style. It (the poster) is like an advertisement if I had a commercial product (laugh) (pointed at Figure V-10, V-11)!” The similarity with advertisements also reveals that the pastoral-style poster submits to the patriarchal and capitalistic beauty norm. Besides, since many musicians who use the pastoral style still often adopt feminine poses or props, the only difference left is the site and clothes. Even though the musicians who choose the pastoral style want to be somewhat free of the stereotype, they still cannot abandon it completely. It can be seen that they solely employ another expression to portray a musician beauty.

### **VIII.7 The Influence of the Image on Life**

By means of posters and other media, the typical image has become imperceptibly ingrained in the minds of Taiwanese people, including female musicians. The stereotype has profoundly influenced and formed female musicians’ career and lifestyle in various dimensions. They thus present the typical image on posters and perform it in their daily life or on special occasions because of the numerous advantages this brings, such as the attraction of the (male) audience and marriage partner, the legitimacy of the musician status, and the self-satisfaction of being a commonly-accredited beauty musician.

The majority of the participants in the present study are not excluded from this.

Take participant I as an example. Her long, straight hair, elegant clothes, and beautiful make-up often lead to her being described as a classy, beautiful musician. Her behavioural performance also highlights her classy status: she often sweetly smiles and speaks in a low, soft voice. When she complained how the female musician's appearance has been fetishized, her surface naturally became the interview topic. The following statement was her response to this question:

You ask why I perfectly conform to the stereotype of the female musician? My answer is, whether I look in people's eyes, I did not deliberately present this image ... I never thought about this issue before! I never thought of it (pause)! I have always had long hair. As for my tender character, my personality is quiet and calm! It is probably not related to the stereotype. It happens to be like this ... These are two separate things. One is the stereotype which you know of the female musician. One is that you should find out which appearance suits you. This style suits me. There is no need for me to be un-pretty.

Participant I eliminated any possible influence of the stereotype on her external presentation, although her appearance is as the same as what she described as the typical image of female musicians. A few of the participants thought that their conformation to the "standard" image is a coincidence. How they look is a natural presentation of their inside. Nevertheless, from participant I's later talk, it is clear that she chose to "perform" this exterior for securing her job opportunities; so do some other participants. The continual and consistent acts make them accustomed to the performing image. The stereotypical image is similar to what Butler said on gender: "What we take to be an internal essence [...] is manufactured through a sustained set

of acts, posited through the [...] stylization of the body. In this way, it showed that what we take to be an ‘internal’ feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produced through certain bodily acts, at an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures.”<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, participant G confessed that sometimes the image is an intentional performance. She was aware that her appearance conforms to the stereotype. Furthermore, in her observation, why she has this specific look is constituted by the social view: “In most people’s eyes, I am already classy. In my opinion, I might formulate my image based on other people’s judgments.” Whether the musicians realize the relationship between themselves and the stereotype, the specific image represented by the overwhelming majority of female musicians in Taiwan is no coincidence.

### **VIII.8 The Forces of the Stereotype**

Through the experiences of the participants, it can be found that the identical image is the result of the negotiation between the female musicians and the strengths of the outside world. The following analysis will focus on the cultural regulations which exert their power on bodies. As previously mentioned, participant F’s musician status had been often doubted principally because of her short hair and loud laugh. These elements do not belong to a “classy/normal” female musician.

PF: In the summer vacation before I went to university, I worked part-time in a non-musical business. My colleagues told me that I was not like a musical student. I myself knew clearly that I was not like a female musician.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., xv, xvi.

LM: What kind of appearance do you think is like a female musician?

PF: It must be long hair (tone extended and stressed), long hair (tone extended again). She should look classy (*qi-zhi*).

LM: But you have had long hair for many years.

PF: It is now! It is now! Because people always said that a female musician is classy and has long hair, I certainly changed my hair length for this reason! Besides, I have taught students during my university period, so I must have the “image” since then. From that image, people will think that I was capable of teaching well, because people always consider that music teachers look like that. You know.

The stereotype which participant F confronted is related to Document 5 of Chapter 3. In that newspaper report, Ellie Lai noted that she only speaks in a low volume and would not destroy her facial expression because of emotions. As many participants consider that newspaper is one medium which seriously influence how people think of the image of female musicians, it can be found that the image portrays on newspapers is identical with the image in most people’s view. In addition, participant F proposed a realistic problem in the career of the female musician. Since most Taiwanese people think that only a specific image is like a female musician, presenting a non-standard one will be easily distrusted. For many female musicians, having a standard image thus becomes a necessity on many occasions. Participant F mentioned an example of this: “First, the influence of long hair on my job is that when people see me for the first time, I am undoubtedly a music teacher. I tally with the image of the female musician in their mind. Second, when we play music on stage, long hair image is much classier. It is more like a musician for the viewers.”

Like most other music students, participant M has been teaching at several



private music studios. She had experiences similar to those of participant F: “I had short hair in the past, but the bosses of the studios asked me to grow it longer and wear more lady-like clothes. Otherwise, in their words, I cannot obtain the parents’ trust.” Participant M had no choice but adjust to the reality: She still has short hair, but has to wear it longer than before. Participants F, J, and N also expressed that they had been asked by the owners of the music studios to have long hair or to dress well to present an appearance of female musicians. This phenomenon indicates what image the female musician should present and how to earn people’s trust. Even though they were facing their career, what was required of them was linked to their surface.

In the aspects of marriage and career, both demonstrate a similar situation. This also explains why Rebecca Sun, the mistress of legislator Wu, can easily win those powerful men’s confidence in her musician status, and the accompanying adoration based solely on her appearance. The multiple powers push and demand female musicians to show a “standard” image. In this sense, how Butler analyses gender provides a faithful instruction on the image. “[It] is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of [...] coherence.” The image “proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be.”<sup>21</sup> Hence, the image is always a “doing,” a performativity, an educated and cultural product, never an expression of inherited nature.

Except for teaching jobs, performing music in business occasions is another popular way of making a living in musical circles. Many musicians join an ensemble to perform at weddings or corporate events. Participant N has plenty of experiences of this. She described how her image has affected her career development:

After all, the hirer merely wants to enhance the wedding ceremony. The

requirement for you is to provide a high-class air! All you need to do is be beautiful. The music you play will be fine if it isn't too terrible. Actually, the hirers and guests are incapable of appreciating classical music. You do not need to be very professional, but you need to "look" like professional.

Since the function of the female musician is to be looked at, participant N emphasized the importance of clothes. "[Performing at the banquets or ceremonies,] you should wear dresses or gowns. You shouldn't wear trousers. ... " She further noted that appearance and clothes are a prerequisite when hirers choose musicians or the musicians search for partners. "It is like a natural elimination. If you do not have the right image, you won't be hired again. Other female musicians will not seek you out for cooperation either," participant N concluded. "Hence, as a strategy of survival within compulsory systems," as Butler argues, the stereotypical image "[...] is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. [...] indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their [image] right."<sup>22</sup>

Participant I, as a music teacher, popular accompanist in university and schools, and freelance musician, had also played on these occasions. She made the identical observation:

LM: If a female musician does not conform to the stereotype, would she face more difficulties in the music business?

PI: If she conforms to the image, then absolutely she has an advantage. For example, now a lot of wedding banquets or opening ceremonies need an ensemble. People will not hire ugly women to perform. These women at

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 190.

least must have a nice face and body, so people can see the classy beauties playing in the string quartet.

LM: Right.

PI: I despise this phenomenon. It's like fetishizing women ... However, what can you change? Men definitely love to see this! I do not like this feeling, but I still do this kind of job because of the money.

LM: Could you describe your unpleasant experiences?

PI: The unhappiest part is when people merely deem you as background. No one is listening to the music! ... People just want several beautiful, well-dressed and well-made up women sitting there, like an adornment. ...

LM: How do they ensure that the musicians they hire are beautiful?

PI: The hirers will select them. To hire a classy musician is a common view or an unwritten rule.

What the female musician is expected to bring to these occasions is her appearance, not her music. It is obvious that musical professionalism has been deeply connected to the visual image. The image, borrowed from Butler's words, is formulated by "the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, [...] and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them [...]."<sup>23</sup> Whether when teaching students, holding concerts, or performing activities, image in Taiwan is a vital element in the career of the female musician. To develop a successful career, one needs not only the professional ability but also a classy image, even for some professors.

Participant C, a graduate from a renowned UK academy, is a lecturer who teaches at university and several music classes. Even though she has continually given

concerts at the National Recital Hall, she is still questioned in her daily life because of her visual image. “There have been a lot of these experiences, especially when having meals. They usually politely asked, ‘You are classy. But do not you musicians wear skirts and have long hair?’ I asked why female musicians must have long hair? I even replied that we pianists do not need to have it. Only flautists should have long hair. ... I said it because people have the impression that the flautist Ellie Lai’s image is classy.”

Participant C adopted Ellie Lai as an excuse to divert the focus from herself. She felt embarrassed and uncomfortable when she had to answer questions which had no relation to music but were tightly bound to visuality. She cannot work out why a professional female musician has to “perform” a specific appearance and behaviour, although, in people’s minds, the image is not performed but naturally expressed due to the inner traits of female musicians. Compared to most other female musicians who happily perform the image and obtain the “deserved” advantage, participant C was depressed about the situation in Taiwanese society. “Consequently, all I can tell you is that I had a terrible time when I first returned to Taiwan. At that time, I thirstily wished to return to the United Kingdom. I yearned for those simple days in the United Kingdom where I could be myself. Now, I have gradually become accustomed to the phenomenon (laugh).” Participant C’s thoughts are rarely heard in Taiwan. Her unusual thoughts are also reflected in her unusual posters. She has repetitively created them in a plain, black-and-white style for almost twenty years. Nonetheless, most Taiwanese female musicians, even some of them who also have long-term foreign experience, still perform the standard image.

Some musicians are not comprehensively conscious of the forces and the function of the male-gazed mechanism but follow the image norm; some feel these

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 190.

forces but still choose to perform it. No matter at what level they are aware of it, as participant H, an assistant university professor, argued, “In the current situation, only if you present the [standard] image will people respect your music.”

As insiders in the music business, female musicians will learn how to obtain the advantages of the environment in which they exist. They will also realise what they will probably lose if they do not perform the standard image. Participant I’s analysis faithfully illustrates the situation:

PI: The stereotypical image is classy (*qi-zhi*), tender, submissive, and with long hair, so you must follow the image. If you want to get a job easily, you have to perform the image. Performing the image becomes the requirement of musical professionalism. ...

LM: Since you mentioned the fetishization of women, do not you think that this is also a kind of fetishization? How you “look” has no relation to your musical ability.

PI: There is nothing we can do about this reality! Nowadays, people value their first impression. Besides, you should devote yourself to your field. Therefore, I do not think that it is fetishization. Presenting the image is a professional performance now ... I consider that it fetishizes women. It is troublesome! However, if I want to get better and brilliant work, I have to perform that “image.”

LM: You feel impotent about this situation.

PI: It all depends on what you demand of yourself. You can still insist on having short hair and wearing neutral-gender clothes. You can still do this and still live! However, if you have high expectations for yourself, you will know that it is obligatory to perform that image. Because you realize

that the image will bring you benefits, such as more income. After all, it is not prostitution. It is just (raises voice then pauses) your choice! Especially once you have enjoyed the sweetness of the benefits, you will feel that insisting on some belief is unnecessary. You will weigh the gains and losses of your situation.

Participant I sometimes made inconsistent statements. She argued that she merely chose an image which suits her, but this quote shows that she actually forced herself to perform an advantageous image. She occasionally revealed her disapproval of the current situation, whereby female musicians have little choice but to perform the widely-recognized image, but she simultaneously insisted that performing the stereotype is evidence of professionalism. She knew that many female musicians pretend to be ideal to please the social climate and to earn possible advantages in their marriage or career. At some level, she realized that she is also one of those female musicians who obey the rules. To solve the dilemma, she transferred obedience into a professional act, declaring that performing the stereotypical image is a requirement for being a professional female musician. From participant I and others' experiences and ideas, it can be seen that image is a construction which “‘compels’ our belief in its necessity and naturalness.”<sup>24</sup>

When she defended the performance as not being the same as selling one's body, she certainly sensed that an element of trade is indeed involved in the performance. They are just different trades. Prostitution means selling one's body, body contact, and the direct satisfaction of carnal desire. Performing the image means stirring up men's desire, the image of the ideal object, and pleasing the male-looking pleasure. In other words, to “perform” as a female musician is also to sell a body. For the female

musician, her body is not her own. The body is sold to the social regulation and cultural practices. The body needs to wear smart clothes, look beautiful, and make classy movements. The performer sells the freedom of how to use her body. Although there is no body which can be entirely free from cultural inscriptions, the body of female musicians in Taiwan seems have more regulations and be subject to more forces than other bodies.

Considering their possibly prosperous marriage and career development, many female musicians submit themselves to the stereotypical image, as shown by the phenomenon of the highly identical performativity amongst the group of female musicians. It can also be found in the life of many participants, such as participants M and F, who decided to grow their hair.

Participant G is a musician who admitted that she had fully enjoyed the favours which her “standard” appearance brought:

In most people’s eyes, I am already classy (*qi-zhi*). I learnt what image is beautiful for me in people’s judgments over the years. ... It is very helpful to perform the image which people think the female musician should have! It bears fruit when I search for funding for concerts! A lot of people might think that beautiful women have an advantage. They say, “You gain something because you employ your appearance!” “Do not fetishize women!” “Do not make use of your exterior!” For me, however, I think that the surface is really an extremely important (word emphasized), an extremely important vantage point! Because it is the reality! Whether you are gorgeous or not really matters!

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 190.

What participant G said about her appearance is credible. She looks like a “standard” beautiful musician. She meant that she formed her classy look through others’ repeated comments. She has interiorized this praise and performed them as if she is “naturally” a classy musician. In Taiwanese society, a female musician decides to be such a musician not only for her career development, but also for her marriage. Participant G is an example of this, as shown by the fact that her husband, a very high-level executive in the world of finance, asked her to keep the look of a female musician, as the previous section noted. The situation is as participant D concluded: “For Taiwanese female musicians, the stereotype is a bonus point!”

### **VIII.9 Conclusion**

The image of the female musician is a performance. Why is it not a female musician’s natural image? Take the participants for example. Many of them were clearly aware of how their image functions in their life and career. Other than a few participants who had been asked to change their appearance, most have been disciplined to be obedient followers of the stereotype, no matter how much understanding of the mechanism they have. They see and experience how the image can affect the life scenarios of both themselves and other female musicians.

Some participants can point out how their performances have been formulated because of their experiences in the past. Some have realized the importance of their image but have not thoroughly pondered upon the relative experiences and thus had difficulty in locating their meanings clearly. Numerous participants were conscious of this phenomenon at some level but refused to confess to this; some of them were still in a dilemma about their own independence and the pursuit of benefits. On the other hand, a few participants also attributed their performance to their own interior nature,



but their belief had been somewhat awakened by the interview. In sum, at whatever stage they are at, almost all of the female musicians understood the influential position of their image in their life and career. They have developed different tactics to deal with it.

This image inherits the ideology of women in Chinese culture and the meaning of Western classical music in the Taiwanese historical context. It also embraces the beauty criteria of modern society and the patriarchal looking mechanism. What elements can be preserved in the image depend upon the contemporary situation. The female musician's body is a carrier on which the cultural inscription is illustrated. The image, consequently, is “ [...] **a corporeal style**, an ‘act,’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ‘**performative**’ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning.”<sup>25</sup>

The credibility of performativity relies on its continual repetition and publicity. As Butler states, the body is “a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field [...]”<sup>26</sup> where an ideological hierarchy exists. The status of the female musician needs the consistent and constant performance of most members of the group to maintain the existence of the identity; “[...] the ‘doer’ is variably constructed in and through the deed.”<sup>27</sup> As Butler argues, image and gender are “the ritual social dramas.”<sup>28</sup> Both of them are social-cultural constitutions. According to Butler's theory, the action of the constitution requires “a performance that is **repeated**. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation.”<sup>29</sup> The female musician

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

must publicly and repeatedly perform the “standard” image to found her identity and prove her status.

The “natural” image or a “real” female musician<sup>30</sup> is composed of “any number of prevalent and compelling social fictions, and that this is a sedimentation that over time has produced a set of corporeal styles [...]”<sup>31</sup> The “stylized repetition of acts”<sup>32</sup> institutes the effect of the stereotypical image. It constitutes a recognizable and valid female musician. As a ritual social drama, the image is similar to what Butler analyses on gender: “The effect [...] is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding [...] self.”<sup>33</sup>

According to Butler, if the transformation of gender is desired, it is necessary to realize that gender is a compulsion and a cultural fiction. This appears difficult since the idea that gender is considered a natural trait for a normal person is deeply rooted. For female musicians, nevertheless, the image has more possibilities of being uncovered in its fictional essence due to the posters. The female musician designs her own image and ensures that it conforms to the “standard” by meticulous examination. Every detail of her image is carefully investigated by herself to compare it with the “normal” one.

For an individual, it is hard to realize that gender is essentially a cultural product. However, for a female musician, other than herself, the poster creates another self. The looking relationship constitutes a space between the real self and the self on the poster. The female musician not only performs her “natural” image in daily life, but also looks at her performativity on posters. The space sets her apart from herself to

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<sup>30</sup> The terms “sex” and “woman” in Butler’s description are replaced with “image” and “female musician” here to illustrate the similar concept.

<sup>31</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 191.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

see how she, the person on the poster, “acts” the “natural” female musician. It offers the possibility of identifying the performing quality of her image and status.

This can be partly seen in the interviews. When participant Q commented on her poster, she always said “she,” i.e. the one on the poster, instead of “I.” Apparently, participant Q deemed the “self” on the poster to be another woman, not her. In her examination, this “other” woman should perform the “right” image to evidence that there is no doubt of her musician status. Other than participant Q, many other participants also discussed their images as describing another person. When they produced the posters, they considered many elements of the image which symbolize or denote the meanings related to the status of female musicians. Compared to the perfect and standard female musician on the posters, the participants easily notice the gap between the real them and the ideal images. In the interviews, some of them even admitted that they were not like the “perfect” them on posters and in people’s imagination. Due to the strict examination of their posters, it creates the possibility for female musicians to recognise that the image of female musicians “[...] ought to be understood as generative political structures rather than naturalized foundations.”<sup>34</sup>

The resolution of revealing the performing essence of gender which Butler proposes is its imitability. As she claims, gender is from “[...] cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary.”<sup>35</sup> There is no original identity; all of it is constituted. As gender, the image of the female musician is also a ritual social drama. It relies on repetitive performativity to keep its coherence of the group and thus builds a false impression that this image is its original quality. The female musician is a contingent product which is “falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction [...]”<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, through Rebecca Sun’s case, the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

image discloses its imitative structure. It “deprives hegemonic culture”<sup>37</sup> and the “naturalized or essentialist [...] identities”<sup>38</sup> of female musicians in Taiwanese society.

What performance can “compel a radical thinking of the [...] presuppositions of [...] identity? What performance where will compel a reconsideration of the place and stability [...]? And what kind of [...] performance will enact and reveal the performativity of [...] itself in a way that destabilizes the naturalized categories of identity [...]?”<sup>39</sup> Considering that imitative structure might also be very effective to evidence the fictional unity of musician, then, Rebecca Sun is definitely a case of this. What Sun did is to pretend to be a female musician. Why she can smoothly pretend to be a female musician is because people deemed the stereotype to be a natural presence, so the possibility of imitation does not arise. Hence, the intentional performativity became the evidence proving that she was a genuine female musician.

When the possibility of denaturalizing and denormalizing the “culturally essentialized” status is mentioned, as Lykke argues, “It is possible to expose the dissonance in many ways.”<sup>40</sup> Participant C is another example which destabilized the stereotyping fiction. As a real female musician, she has been questioned by people sometimes about her appearance. She did not perform the intelligible image, but she actually is a female musician. Her authority can be proved by her academic background, teaching experience, performance career, and musical ability. She had studied at music classes and a music department in Taiwan, and a musical college abroad. She is teaching performance in universities and music classes. She has given concerts at the National Recital Hall and other venues. She is frequently engaged in

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>40</sup> Lykke, *Feminist Studies*, 60.

musical activities, both solo and ensemble.

Undoubtedly, she “is” a female musician. Hence, people ask the question of whether she is like or unlike a female musician, the fictional essence of the “status” of female musicians is revealed. The seemingly stable identity fails to keep its unity. It can be seen that there is no “original” or “true” image of female musicians. The so-called originality is a stereotyping fiction. What Taiwanese female musicians imitate is a myth, and now this fictional product has become an identity through the massive and continual imitations of it. The identification of female musicians “is constituted by a fantasy of a fantasy.”<sup>41</sup> Hence, “‘the normal,’ ‘the original’ is revealed to be a copy, and an inevitably failed one.”<sup>42</sup>

As Butler concludes, “The abiding [...] self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional **discontinuity**, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this ‘ground’”<sup>43</sup> Sun and participant C are both the “discontinuity.” The possible revolution relies on the discontinuity. Participant C has presented some traits which do not belong to the stereotypical image. She had short hair, a serious expression and an authoritative pose on her black-and-white posters; she had short hair and wore trousers often in daily life. The powers symbolizing specific cultural meanings had been redeployed on participant C’s body. The elements which were in tension with the stereotyping performativity caused confusion among participant C’s viewers. Nevertheless, if the adaption of diverse units becomes normality or a general condition, the image of the female musician and the group which is sustained by this image will be unstable. The image is “not expressive but performative.”<sup>44</sup> When the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 192.

stereotypical image no longer exists, “there would no true or false, real or distorted acts of”<sup>45</sup> female musicians any more.

### **VIII.10 The Interview Afterword**

The status of being a female musician is often a distinction in Taiwan. Nonetheless, the stereotype means that the intelligible performativity become necessary if she wants to grasp the profits. The everyday happenings remind her of whether she is like or unlike a “real” female musician. According to the interviews, how the participants employ the stereotype can be considered a conscious use, but different levels are allowed. Generally, the participants knew what the “normal” image of their group is. They built and altered the image, no matter whether on posters or in life, according to their teaching position, marital status, and age.

Even though they cannot indicate all of the specific meanings or connotations of each element on the poster, they were aware of what feeling and impression the image will deliver to the viewer. They knew what image they want to build and what thoughts the viewers will probably have. Most of them devote their energies to performing the “right” image to the viewer in public. Although the data cannot cover the thoughts of all Taiwanese female musicians, they demonstrate some representative ideas and experiences of the musicians.

Regarding the interview ethics, the music circle is a small community in Taiwan. Most musicians have known or heard of each other since they are educated in music classes from a very young age. In the present study, therefore, not only the thoughts of the participants were analysed, but also some of their friends’ experiences were included. The participants provided as much data as they can since they seemed to

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

enjoy speaking about the topic. Nevertheless, two of them regretted that they had revealed too much of others' private matters. They asked me not to mention these events in the thesis. As participant E noted, "The people in the story are famous in the music business now, so it would be better not to write it." The data which the participants did not want to be demonstrated are usually those that unreservedly display how their musician friends attracted men by their status or image, but it is certainly the interviewer's responsibility to respect their decisions. Even though the data cannot appear in the thesis, they help the interviewer to understand the research issue even better.

In most cases, the data appear to have highly similar content. This shows what the female musicians care about and what events happen to them that are usually similar when talking about image-related topics. These things are the forces which push many female musicians, the producers of their posters, to follow the stereotypical image. It explains why Taiwanese concert posters are only displayed in a very limited style.

There is a cycle to the female musician's current image. As participant H described, the image of the female musician in Taiwan is "constituted from every aspect. It is like the apotheosis." The media, newspaper, television, posters, the real female musicians and the public, what Taiwanese people hear, read, and see about the female musician is invariably the image of a classy beauty. Even though many current images are sexy ones, they are still grouped under the classy image. As participant G indicated, as long as the image of the female musician is beautiful, people will consider it classy (*qi-zhi*). The female musician is one of the media giving the stereotype to her viewers, in person and on the posters. As an active producer in making the image, the female musician is simultaneously the passive carrier absorbing the information of Taiwanese society which inculcates her how to be a "normal" and

“standard” one. Eventually, the viewer also becomes one of the media influencing how the female musician performs herself.

The stereotypical image of the female musician in Taiwan seems a particular product. The participants who had studied abroad were asked if there is a similar condition in the United Kingdom or the United States, which are the western countries where most of the participants had lived for years. Only one of the six participants could not give an answer because of her limited contact with westerners. The others noted that there is no custom of such a definite image of female musicians in their experience. Participant C commented: “I lived in the United Kingdom for eight years. I had no experience that they consider that female musicians should have any particular image or should wear clothes of a specific type! Not even once! I don’t think that they have any special expectation of female musicians’ image. Also, they do not have posters which are like ours!”

In the interviews, since this issue is so closely connected to their life, many participants showed a high degree of interest in the present study. Almost all of them were excited about the themes and thus pleased to share their private ideas and experiences. Although most of them expressed that they had not pondered on this issue before the interview, they started to sense the gendered issue in their status which had been accustomed for them in the past. For example, participant G was surprised at the question why her career options were only a musician or a dancer which were the two career choices given to her by her mother when she was a young child. According to her, this was the first time she realized how her life has been decided differently with her brothers due to her gender.

Participant C was an exceptional case in Taiwan who continually presents monochrome and nearly de-feminine poster images. “No one has spoken to me about this since I returned to Taiwan,” participant C said. Despite her insightful thoughts on



image constitution, she stated that she did not touch any gendered issue or feminist theory. A very lengthy letter was received after the interview in which she reflected on all the possible events and the vulnerable parts in her life which made her decide to be an independent person, not a “female” musician: “The interview helped me to re-understand myself in a more detailed, self-conscious, and deeper way. It was like a heaven-sent event to help me to be confident.” The discussions and analyses of the present study may provide an important opportunity for Taiwanese people who are already used to this circumstance, especially the female musicians, to re-think the phenomenon and so further motivate their energy to change.

## IX. Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates how image has greatly formulated and affected the milieu of Taiwanese female musicians' life and career. It answers a series of questions which arose in the public domain when the stereotypical image was utilized by Rebecca Sun, the mistress of legislator Yu-sheng Wu, who pretended to be a pianist and thus became admired by many powerful men. It is clear, from this case and the interview data, that Taiwanese people have a particular attitude towards and impression of female musicians. Whether a female is a musician or not makes a considerable difference with regard to how the Taiwanese see and treat her. Taiwanese men, in particular, have often shown an excessive enchantment with female musicians.

Nevertheless, the critical factor in whether a female can be recognised as a musician is based on her visual image. The present study thus scrutinizes the principal elements of the image and traces the contexts of these components to sketch their cultural apparatus. As Butler argues, “[...] the body is figured as a surface and the scene of a cultural inscription.”<sup>1</sup> The thesis further uncovers the mechanism of how the image is gazed at and how female musicians construct and think of their image, including on posters and in their daily performance. The reasons and driving forces which make most Taiwanese female musicians employ similar images are also explored to establish an understanding of the image-making/viewing institution.

The elevated position of Western classical music in Taiwan is a major reason why female musicians have such a high-class status and glorified image. The origins, the developmental route and the current condition of Western classical music in the Taiwanese socio-historical context are thus examined in the Introduction chapter to

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 176.

clarify why this art form is often attached to the symbolization of progress and civilization. Nonetheless, although the ability to appreciate and play Western classical music is commonly considered a high-class engagement, it is not a promising career for all.

As explored in the Chapter 6, Taiwanese parents actively plan and push their daughters to become musicians mainly because of their possible prosperous marriage. To enhance their advantages in the marriage market has become the principal reason why most Taiwanese female musicians are currently engaged in this profession. Since a musical career is unstable in reality, the benefits of pursuing one are linked to marrying a wealthy husband. It also explains why men are usually discouraged from being musicians, since men are considered to be the main bread winner and the one on whom women depend. Music in Taiwan, therefore, is not only a “feminized” industry, but also a “gendered” one. Even though some female musicians, such as participants H and J in this study, were fond of and devoted to music, marrying a rich husband still became a critical consideration while they faced the difficult employment situation associated with the music business.

Nonetheless, to obtain men’s special adoration and then possess a marital advantage is highly related to visibility. How a female musician is recognised in Taiwan is largely based on whether she “looks” like a musician. For this reason, the thesis not only investigates which sources formulate the stereotypical image of female musicians, but also analyses which elements compose the image. In Taiwan, most of the sources illustrate a similar image – a classy, beautiful, tender, and well-dressed woman. The poster is the most influential of these sources because of its prevalent circulation, its focus upon directly displaying the appearance of female musicians, and that its status as the medium which is produced by the musicians themselves. Most poster images involve the elements which conform to the current image of female

musicians in Taiwanese society. The study traces the origins and references of the components of the stereotypical poster image: some of the elements are historical sediment in the Chinese culture; some of them are the characteristics of a beauty in modern terms. The image combines the traits of a beauty and of a female musician.

Through uncovering which meanings and connotations are included in the image, how female musicians are regarded in Taiwanese society can be understood. Hence, as uncovered in Chapter 3, which explores the female image in Chinese history, the items, the poses, and expressions which adorn or highlight female beauty in ancient bell paintings are preserved on the posters, and the looking relationship between the image and its expected (male) viewer is also similar. In ancient China, women learnt instruments mainly to amuse men; it was intended to enhance their attractiveness. The bell painting painted and sponsored by men is also for men's viewing pleasure and appreciation. In these paintings, a woman with an instrument is a product that aims to please their male sponsor. The interview data, nonetheless, show that the posters of today still creates a beauty in a male-gazed mechanism. To fulfill the patriarchal beauty criteria and to attract real men's attention are the core ideas, when female musicians create their own posters.

The thesis also examines three popular modern fields for female images – advertising, magazines, and the wedding photo. Like the commodity in advertising which exerts its function of becoming a sign, the female musician on the poster is also a sign to index such a beauty who possesses a high-class quality and the symbolization followed by Western civilization. The analyses of magazine covers show that the compositional similarities regarding female images between concert posters and women's magazines are far fewer than those between posters and men's magazines. The target viewers in the design of the poster are men, not women. This viewing mechanism is further explored in the scrutinization of the wedding photo. As Chapter

5 validates, for concert posters, without the groom on photos, the actual man is the assumed viewer, receiving the invitation.

The poster seems a self-declaration to display a female musician's legitimacy; for many female students and young musicians, it is also bait to inspire men's desire to meet them since the poster becomes the material for men's fancy and image of female musicians. The interview data show that many male viewers believe that the real musician is like what they see on the poster, which is actually an intentional design requiring much attention and effort.

The poster is a still portrait, telling the viewer what a living female musician is like. The image on the poster thus extends to the behavioural performance and appearance of female musicians. The public easily think that the image is a natural expression, since every medium around them releases similar images of female musicians. According to the participants' experiences, the "natural" image is so legitimate that any performance deviating from the norm will invite suspicion and distrust from the viewer. The social regulation and cultural power are like the driving forces pushing female musicians to perform the particular image. For many female musicians, the repetitive and continual performance makes them think that the performing image equals their natural expression. Take the participants as an example: many of them consider that there are special qualities in them which probably make them different from ordinary women.

Nonetheless, even though they consider that the classy trait is shared amongst female musicians, the demands from their bosses and hirers and the inquiry from any viewer when they do not show the stereotypical image certainly reveal the gap between the ideal image and their own. The endeavours which the female musician devotes to fit in with the image demonstrate that the accustomed image is not a "natural" one. The poster, in this aspect, creates an opportunity for female musicians

to realise the fictional nature of the “natural” image. To examine whether their design on posters conforms to the stereotype is a process of “creating” the “natural” self. The process evidences that the image is an artificial and intentional product.

Additionally, Rebecca Sun’s case substantiates the imitability and unsteadiness of the “natural” image. In her case, how her musician status can be trusted solely relies on her visual performance. Participant C’s musicality and position, instead, sometimes do not sufficiently legitimize her status, also because of visuality. This is the “discontinuity” which Butler places hope upon. Sun’s pretence evidences the performing nature of the intelligible surface and deconstructs the community of female musicians as a stable group. The status of female musicians and their images, in Butler’s words, are “[...] constructs, socially instituted and socially regulated fantasies or ‘fetishes,’ not natural categories, but political ones [...].”<sup>2</sup>

The stereotypical image is highly influential among female musicians and is prevalent in Taiwan but has not previously been systematically reviewed, until this thesis. The way of denaturalizing a stereotype in the present study can be a reference for other accustomed images. The present study fulfills Griffiths’ wishes regarding female musicians’ image which are mentioned in the chapter of literature review: first, Griffiths noted the necessity to research how female musicians choose their appearance, influenced by social expectation and individual differences. The thesis finds that the female musician highly values the social expectations in Taiwan. Most female musicians demonstrate the socially-expected “normal” image which is a synthesized result based on their age and position. In Griffiths’ view, how female images are presented on promotional materials should also be explored. This appeal is answered in this study. The poster, as the most important promotional material in Taiwan, promotes not only the concert, but also the female musician. Hence, as well

as analyzing the poster image, how the poster has been distributed, produced, designed, and viewed are all scrutinized in detail.

In addition to making up for a deficiency in the research field regarding how the visual factor influences the female musician, the potentiality of the study is to activate the dynamics of a revolutionary possibility. It intends to make the female musician aware of how the mechanism functions on their body and how the compromises are processed. From the case of participant C and some other participants, it can be found that female musicians can sense the existence of the compulsive power and driving forces through touching on and discussing the related issues. To sense how the image works is an initiation into the long journey of change.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 172.

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