



REVIEW

Discussion on the Development Trend of Chinese National Vocal Music

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ABSTRACT

National vocal music carries the Chinese cultural spirit and Chinese national genes, and it has great influence among the broad masses of the people. The broad and profound Chinese spirit they display, with deep connotation and far-reaching significance is an important spiritual support for the survival and development of the contemporary nation. At present, the Chinese vocal music circle has effectively led the development trend of national vocal music by focusing on the inheritance and development of national vocal music, conducting academic research, singing exchanges, teaching innovation, media promotion, and field investigation, which has laid a good foundation for the creative development and innovative integration of national vocal music.

1. Introduction

Since the 20th century, the music circle has been conducting extensive discussions on the construction and development of “Chinese national vocal music.” Currently, national vocal music has broken the traditional limitations and gradually moved to the international arena. At the same time, it has also realized the transformation of national ideology. The future development trend is: through the efforts of the outstanding lyricists and singers of national vocal music, the national vocal music will continue to innovate, enrich and develop, and gradually become diversified and internationalized.

The first is the diversification and professionalization of the development of national vocal music. In the contemporary era of economic globalization and diversification of social systems, the industry should adhere to a compatible and inclusive attitude, and actively explore the development of national vocal diversity on the basis of persistence in specialization. The second is the nationalization of the national vocal music singing and the integration of the times. The singer should be good at learning the singing of other folk dramas, paying attention to absorbing various excellent singing techniques, especially to incorporate the modern pop music singing into the singing skills of

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national vocal music to innovate, to enrich the contemporary and aesthetic connotation of national vocal music.

2. Propose the Initiative to Build Chinese Vocal School

In response to historical accumulation, development of the times, social needs, and integration of China and the West, the theory on school management of “Inheriting Chinese culture, carrying forward the national charm, cultivating national instruments and playing the national music” has been established at China Conservatory of Music, with the Chinese culture as the foundation. Actively exploring the construction of Chinese music genre has achieved certain results.

2.1 The Proposal of the “Four Natures” Aesthetic Principles of Chinese Vocal Music

Professor Jin Tielin once proposed the “Building Chinese vocal music school, which is the unique vocal music of our country in the world of vocal music.” Finally, it is proposed that Chinese vocal music should have the scientific principles of “scientificity, national character, artistry, and contemporaneity”. The “four natures” aesthetic principles constitute a complete whole, and each aesthetic principle has its own independent and profound connotation. They put forward macro requirements for the development of vocal art from different angles. “Scientificity” mainly refers to the vocal music art to follow its internal laws in singing, learning and teaching; “national character” means that vocal music should be rooted in the traditional Chinese culture and conforms to the aesthetic requirements of the Chinese nation; “artistry” mainly refers to the characteristics of artistic beauty and reflects the aesthetic value; “contemporaneity” refers to firmly grasping the pulse of the times, injecting fresh blood into the art of vocal music, and making the development of vocal art advance with the times. Jin Tielin believes that the study of vocal art theory in contemporary China is still relatively weak, emphasizing that “with the in-depth study of other theories such as musicology and music aesthetics, our perspective on the study of national vocal music has also risen from the fully applied exploration techniques and practices to the theoretical nature and laws.”^[1]

2.2 Research on the Subjective Music Discourse System in China

The construction of “Chinese vocal school” was proposed and advocated by Professor Wang Liguang, Dean of the China Conservatory of Music, as the chief expert, he presided over the highest level of scientific research

in China—the 2019 National Social Science Fund Art Project “Research on Chinese Vocal School”. This project will comprehensively sort out the historical accumulation and contemporary development of Chinese music culture, build a Chinese subjective music discourse system, and provide direction and impetus for the innovation and development of Chinese music. The project hosted by Wang Liguang represents the highest level of Chinese art theory research and reflects the country’s policy orientation in the development of national vocal music.

Wang Liguang advocated the construction of the “Chinese vocal school” in a more inclusive manner to accommodate the world’s outstanding culture and learn from others. Because “Li Shutong borrowed foreign tunes, showing reluctant “Farewell” by Chinese literati; Xiao Youmei tried to reproduce the brilliance of “Collard Seduction Songs” with Western orchestral music; Li Jinhui used the form of Western musicals to popularize Chinese Mandarin; Liu Tianhua draws on the characteristics of the violin and conveys the “Wonderful Night” of China’s New Year’s Eve. Huang Zi created a new chapter in Chinese art songs with the title of Chinese ancient poetry; taking advantage of the Western Contata form, Xing Xinghai sang the “Chinese” works of the “Yellow River Cantata”^[2], which was endorsed by the Chinese against the enemy, which fully proves the necessity and importance of the blending of Chinese and Western cultures.

2.3 The Establishment of the Vocal Master’s Performance Benchmark of Chinese Vocal School

The Chinese national opera performance is an inevitable outcome of the development of national operas in the past 100 years and will inevitably become an important part of national vocal music. Huang Huali believes: “From the perspective of subject orientation, its training objectives and artistic requirements are very different from the general national vocal performance profession. Simply classifying it as a skill of the national vocal performance profession, and paying less attention to it... It has more profoundly affected the discipline construction and development of national vocal music.”^[3] At present, the industry is taking measures to make up for the embarrassing situation of the current national vocal singers and the lack of national opera performers, the singers who sing folk songs and the few opera performers.

On October 3, 2019, CCTV broadcasted the program “Glory of Chinese Opera”. The program carefully selected 11 classic operas selected by the audience, such as “The White-haired Girl”, “Liu Hulan”, “Peasant Takes a Wife”, “The Red Guards on Honghu Lake”, “Red Coral” “Sister Jiang”, “Gone Love”, “Daughter of the Party”, “The Canal

Rumor”, “Yimeng Mountain”, “The Long March”, from the small incision of music, it reflects the 70-year history of the new China. The program invited Yan Weiwen, Yang Hongji, Lei Jia, Zhang Ye, Wang Hongwei, Wu Bixia, Lv Wei, Mo Hualun, Wang Li, Wang Lida, Gao Yongmei and many other heavyweight guests to participate in the performance, sings the main theme, strengthens the positive energy, inspires the morale of the people, and invigorates the spirit of the Chinese people to revitalize the Chinese opera.

In particular, Guo Lanying, the winner of the National People’s Artists Honorary Medal, is the first person in modern China to move from old opera to new opera. During her 80-year artistic career, she sang a number of popular classics, representing the pursuit of national music culture for generations. She is known as the founder of the New Chinese National New Opera and folk songs. After bidding farewell to the stage, she devoted herself to the education, inheritance and development of the Chinese music industry. Throughout her life, she sang the motherland, the people, the roots, the age of singing, and singing “My Motherland” inspired several generations of Chinese.

On September 29, 2019, “Singing for the People——Chinese Vocal School Master Guo Lanying Art Achievement Concert” was held in the Great Hall of the People. Guo Lanying’s friends, students, and younger generations: Yun Enfeng, Yan Weiwen, Lei Jia, Zhang Ye, Li Danyang, Wang Hongwei, Liu Hegang, and other three generations of old, middle-aged and young singers, performed Guo Lanying’s “Nan niwan” and “The Scenery of Shanxi Is Highly Praised” “Bind the Red String with The North Wind Blowing outside,” “Sparkling Water and Blue Sky”, “Rivers and Mountains”, “Seeing the Red Army Marching North” and so on, can be called the classics of Chinese national songs. Guo Lanying sang the classic song “My Motherland” on the finale. In addition to singing classics, several old artists such as Guo Shuzhen, Li Guangqi, Hu Songhua, Deng Yuhua, and Li Guyi also paid a high tribute to Guo Lanying in the tribute. This concert not only showed the artistic achievements of Mr. Guo Lanying, but also set a benchmark for Chinese vocal school. Wang Li-guang, dean of the China Conservatory of Music, believes that Guo Lanying is a miracle of Chinese national music. The success of this miracle is because of its people. By learning from the people and singing songs to the people, Mr. Guo Lanying can gain the love of the people.

3. Dig up Intangible Cultural Heritage

In 2008, Lei Jia’s “Song of the 56 Nationalities of China” was produced by Ruiming Music and Tianhao Shengshi, and was presented as a gift to the guests. In 2018, Lei Jia

held three different styles of doctoral graduation music reports. Among them, the special concert of “The Long-Range Root-seeking Tour——Leijia National Folk Song Concert” has a strong national style. Lei Jia used her deep skill to sing 12 songs from different regions in a concert, showing her familiarity with different artistic styles and drawing a vivid music map for the audience, which praises the greatness of the motherland and the people’s beautiful life with national songs.

Its characteristics are as follows: First, tapping the excellent traditional culture of China is the theme of the era of cultural self-confidence. Organizing and excavating non-material inheritance is the work of all walks of life, and the vocal world is no exception. Lei Jia’s instructor, Professor Peng Liyuan, asked her to step on the land of the motherland. Learning from the people is an objective reflection of the theme of the times in the vocal world. Second, the choice of songs reflects the extent to which intangible cultural heritage is organized. The main programs are: “Wash the Vegetables”, “Eryuan Love Song”, “Lullaby”, “Throwing Copper”, “Beauty”, “Embroidery Pouch”, “Baoleng Tune”, “Three Miles Pave”, “The Song of Summer Cicadas”, “Avar Guli”, “Watch the Yangko”, “Noonjiyaa”, “Zizhu Tune”, “Spiritual Love Song”, “Red Peach Blossom and White Apricot Flower”. These 15 songs, carefully selected by Lei Jia and carefully arranged by the composer, are also representative works of the “New National Wind” music concept. Lei Jia hopes that under the premise of loyalty to Chinese art tradition, Lei Jia will draw on the musical elements of various countries, integrate new spirits, realize new expressions, and finally realize new life. Third, the front row of the band is the color of Western classical music, decorated with Chinese classical music, showing the ancient and modern Chinese and Western art views.

4. Chinese Art Songs Go Global

The art song originated in Europe and is a genre that closely integrates other art forms such as music and poetry. It has a profound cultural heritage and is good at creating a wonderful artistic conception. The Chinese art songs are unique. In the development of a hundred years, it has gone through a splendid century of development, fully integrating Western musical elements and Chinese culture and art, and expressing the traditional aesthetics and artistic connotations of Chinese tradition with rich musical techniques. Liao Changyong believes: “How to make Chinese excellent traditional culture go international, how to make more Chinese elements go to the world stage, the importance and support of the state is very important, and contemporary music people are duty-bound.”^[4]

On January 3, 2019, Liao Changyong successfully held a precedent in the form of novel, ingenious and all-round display of Chinese classical art in Geneva, Switzerland——“Chinese Classical Poetry and Paintings——Liao Changyong Chinese Art Songs Solo Concert”. He sang the art songs such as “Eastward Flows the Yangtze River”, “Distant Love”, “Bright Moon How Many Time Have”, “Recalling the Maid of Qin Dynasty • The Month of Hengshan “. At the same time, together with Wang Jiafang and Ding Yifang, two famous painting and calligraphy artists created 16 calligraphy works, 16 painting works and two porcelain works according to the artistic conception of 16 art songs. A delicate dialogue between painting and poetry and poetry and music, presented a lively Chinese cultural audio-visual feast for the international audience. For the second year in a row, Liao Changyong held two solo concerts in the “100 Years of Chinese Art Songs” in Shanghai, showing Chinese art songs and contemporary Chinese art songs from the 20s and 30s of the last century.

5. The Convergence of Singing Methods

The famous singers often do not stick to some kind of singing, but on the basis of stabilizing certain singing methods, they are eclectic, integrated and cross-border innovation. In his long-term practice of vocal music, Peng Liyuan “touched the nationalities, Western songs, opera arias, Peking Opera, Shandong, singing, etc. across the country, and was able to absorb nutrition in his extensive artistic vision, so that his artistic literacy reached a very high level”.^[5] Liao Changyong believes that the reference to the development of the national vocal music is not standardized. Because Italian Bel Canto, which means beautiful singing, does not contain the concept of singing itself. The Chinese translate it into singing, which is considered to narrow the scope of Bel Canto. Therefore, Chinese vocal music must have a grand perspective, break the blind pursuit of singing, and strive to pursue beautiful singing.

5.1 Promote the Cross-Border Integration of Opera and Folk Songs

Li Guyi, Song Zuying, Lei Jia, Wu Bixia, Wang Lida, Zhang Ye, etc. all studied the drumming dramas at the earliest, and later transferred to vocal music. They all achieved remarkable results and were successful cases of cross-border development. They were called “flower drum phenomenon” by the industry. Li Guyi’s “Love in the Countryside” is the symbolic result of the combination of national singing and popular singing. The new folk song and academic singer Peng Liyuan “Who doesn’t say

that his hometown is good” is the symbolic result of the combination of traditional folk singing and Bel Canto; Li Guyi’s “Qianmen Qingsi Big Bowl Tea” is the iconic achievement of Chinese opera songs.

5.2 Absorb the Rational Elements of Chinese Opera Songs

The opera song, as the name implies, has songs in the play and songs in the song. It is a unique art form in China, a vivid expression of the traditional opera expression, and an innovative development of the national culture with the times.

From September to October 2017, the CCTV Opera Channel broadcasted eight episodes of “Chinese Opera Songs”. The quality of this program is very high, leading the trend of vocal music, drama, culture, singing national customs, singing the national conditions, and excavating excellent traditional cultural music materials. Li Guyi’s definition of a pair of opera songs is: “Drama and singing are in the field of performance. They are two different types and branches. They carefully grafted the opera and singing cultivation to form a vocal work with special ethnic characteristics.”^[6] Therefore, she believes that it will be beneficial to learn the songs and integrate the elements of the opera into their own singing.

Li Guyi’s original “Qianmen Affection and Big Bowl Tea” and “Bosom Friend” are extremely classic cases. Xu Di, a singer of “Qianmen Affection and Big Bowl Tea”, began to learn Beijing opera at the age of 17, and the elements of opera have been integrated into the marrow of his artistic career. When she sang, she said, “The door (children’s voice, closed accent)”, “Tea (rolling tongue) is handled very authentic, very old Beijing, and reflects the elements of Beijing Qinsu in “a few dreams.” “Bosom Friend” is a classic opera song combining Kunqu and modern music elements. The singer Chen Sisi believes that the singer should not only express the characteristics of Kunqu Opera’s elegant, delicate and euphemistic, but also reflect the profound meaning of strength, tenacity, persistence and expectation contained in the song.

5.3 Explore the Artistic Vision of Chinese Folk Songs

In the 21st century, “the development of songs has shown a diversified trend. The original ecological songs shine.”^[7] From the perspective of artgenesis, “China’s rich and colorful folk music comes from rich and colorful national languages and dialects.”^[8] The “Folk Songs China” column is the only Chinese folk song art program created by the CCTV music channel in China. It provides a good op-

portunity and a broad platform for the display of Chinese folk songs. This column series develops the artistic vision of Chinese folk songs, introduces the original folk song art of Chinese nationality and folk, and promotes the development of Chinese original folk songs. The songs broadcast on June 3, 2019 include: “Play the Tambourine and Sing Songs”, “Hulunbeier Prairie”, “Pleasant Sunrise”, “The People Paddle the Big Ship”, “The Yellow River Chanty”, “I Offer Oil for the Motherland” “Fishing Girl at the Beach”, “The Song of Karamay”, “Sing Loudly”, “The Shipman’s Song”, “The Flower Basket”, “Loessial Fields”, “The Song of Peony”, “Nanniwan”, “The Song of Five Craftsmen”, “Red Sun Shines over Frontier” “The Holy Sound Of Love”, “Yao Nationality Dance Music”, “On the Field of Hope”, “Walking on the Well-off Road” and so on.

6. Conclusion

In summary “Music is a sound thought.”^[9] National vocal music transcends the boundaries of the country and the nation because of its ideological and artistic nature. It is both historical and contemporary, both national and world. Only the vocal music that is rooted in the land that is born in the land and grows in the land can be grounded, emboldened, and angry, and gains a foothold in the fierce competition of world culture. The development and growth of national vocal music must persist in not forgetting the original, absorbing the outside, facing the future, transforming in inheritance, and surpassing in exploration. Create more excellent vocal works that reflect the essence of Chinese culture, reflect the aesthetic pursuit of Chinese people, spread the values of Chinese people, and conform to the trend of contemporary world progress, which

makes the national vocal music stand in the world with its distinctive Chinese characteristics, unique and strong Chinese style.

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