



ARTICLE

Thoughts on the Complementation of Chinese and Western Musical Instruments and the Localization of Piano Music

Xiaolan Cui*

School of Music, Yancheng Teachers University, Yancheng, Jiangsu, 224051, China

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 17th September 2018

Revised: 8th October 2018

Accepted: 15th October 2018

Published Online: 31st October 2018

Keywords:

National musical instrument

Timbre

Charm

Piano music

ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 20th century, Western music gradually integrated into Chinese music education institutions and various music social activities. The timbre, range and comprehensive expression of Western musical instruments have played an important role in promoting the performance of Chinese national musical instruments. At the same time, Chinese traditional music culture has also had an important impact on the localization of Western music in China, especially for the piano music.

1. Introduction

The twentieth century is a century of rapid development of Chinese music culture and fruitful results. At the beginning of the century, under the influence of the new cultural trend, With the rise of new-style school education, some Western music with a long history, distinctive features and unique performance styles are gradually presented to the Chinese people through various musical activities, and have produced a

wide range of social influences. In the process of music exchange between the East and the West, the theory, equipment and performance forms of Western music have played a powerful role in promoting the development of Chinese music, making the traditional music rejuvenate and gaining the power of innovation and development, and achieved a qualitative leap. At the same time, the development of Chinese music culture has also had an important impact on the localization of Western music in China.

*Corresponding Author:

Xiaolan Cui,

School of Music, Yancheng Teachers University,

No. 50 Kaifang Avenue, Yancheng, Jiangsu, 224051, China;

E-mail: cuixiaolan888@163.com.

2. The Collision of Eastern and Western Music Culture

"Piano" is the most representative musical instrument in Western music culture, and it is also the most widely used musical instrument in the world of music performances. Especially in music education, it has an irreplaceable instrumental role. Piano music is a collection of Western music culture, which is an important part of the history of Western music. Since the introduction of piano music to China, the works played by the piano maintained the essential features of Western culture from content to form, which has a clear distance from the cultural concepts and aesthetic values of the Chinese people at that time. Therefore, for a long time, piano music is considered to be the "highbrow art and literature" that too high to be popular, which is difficult to integrate into the Chinese mass class. Obviously, if piano music is to be rooted in Chinese soil, it will inevitably absorb the elements of Chinese traditional music culture, and on this basis, create a new type of piano music culture with Chinese and Western music. This process of creation is also a process that promotes the transformation and innovation of the concept of local music culture in China.

At the beginning of the 20th century, China's national musical instruments have always been in a civilian state, artists' social status is low, and the performance of folk instruments is not elegant. At that time, Liu Tianhua, who taught at the Music Institute of Peking University, spoke highly of the national music, and introduced the national musical instruments such as Erhu and Pipa to the university classroom. "Erhu" is one of the most distinctive musical instruments in Chinese folk music. Its wide range of circulation and the popularity of performances make it the most representative musical instrument of traditional music culture in China. Liu Tianhua made bold reforms to the Erhu's shaping system, which enabled it to adapt to the needs of social development and modern music production, and applied the Western violin technique he had learned to Erhu performance. He used the Western composing technique to create Erhu solos such as "Walking towards a Bright Future", "Warbling on a Desolate Mountain" and "Nocturnal Peace", which laid the solo status of the concert for this folk instrument that was not elegant,^[1] and paved the way for the national musical instrument to enter the world music stage through improved development.

In the 1930s, composer Lu Huabai compiled piano accompaniment for Liu Tianhua's "Top Ten Erhu Famous Songs". Although in this work, the piano is subordinate to

the accompaniment, the individual performance characteristics of the piano instrument itself have not been fully exerted. However, the first cooperation between the two instruments played a very good leading role in simulating the characteristic tones of Chinese folk music and expressing the unique style of national music. At that time, people with different ideas believed that the piano sound used the twelve-average law, which is different from the temperament used by the Erhu. In particular, there is a certain error between the partial sounds "fa, si" and the average rhythm in the national seven-level musical scale. These two instruments should not match. However, the interpretation of the work not only achieved the recognition of the audience, but also proved that the piano can fully absorb the Chinese national music culture and express the characteristics of traditional music.^[2] In the early 1960s, composer Liu Wenjin wrote two Erhu solo pieces, "North Henan Ballad" and "Sanmen Gorge Rhapsody", which boldly use the piano for Erhu accompaniment, giving full play to the acoustic performance characteristics of the piano's wide range and rich sound effects, and the Erhu's playing technique, timbre and piano performance are skillfully combined and played to the extreme. The prelude of "Sanmen Gorge Rhapsody", the piano with its grand volume, solid chords, and the sound of running up and down, expresses the magnificent scene of the Yellow River's water, and the passionate and full of accompaniment sound patterns, which leads to the melody of the Erhu, the melody of the Erhu. In the "North Henan Ballad", the piano fully uses the Legato playing technique to play the main melody of the Erhu playing with the keyboard instrument, showing a strong bowstring instrument charm. These two most representative instruments in the East and West music not only fully display their respective performance characteristics, but also complement each other, and complement each other, making these two works a classic of the fusion of Chinese and Western musical instruments.^[3] Between the 1950s and 1970s, the "Youth Piano Concerto" appeared in concert with a solo national band concerto; the Pipa concerto "The Heroic Little Sisters on the Grassland" was used to solo the Western orchestra concerto; These forms of performance of Chinese and Western musical instruments not only broaden the artistic expression of national musical instruments, but also enhance the performance of national musical instruments to an unprecedented level of performance. Since the reform and opening up, the playing style of Chinese national musical instruments has entered the world with a brand-new attitude, which has been loved by more and more countries and people, and has opened up a broad road for the promotion of Chinese traditional culture and art.

3. The Excavation of the Individuality Characteristics of National Musical Instruments and the Sublimation of Performance Techniques

China is a country with many ethnic groups. The geographical differences, different languages and folk customs have nourished rich folk music, and many folk instruments of different types and characteristics have been produced. After the years of washing, some musical instruments have been passed down to the present with their unique musical expressions. Some of these instruments have been passed down for thousands of years, such as "Chimes, Guqin, Se and Zheng", etc., which are original authentic Chinese traditional musical instruments. Although some instruments have been passed down for a long time, their ancestors were not authentic Chinese instruments, for example, "Erhu, Pipa, Suona, and Pipe" and other musical instruments flowed from overseas to the Central Plains area of China. They can be said to be "imported" instruments. Only in the course of their circulation for more than a thousand years, folk musicians of all ages have continuously improved and perfected them in their use. Now they have been completely Sinicized and become Chinese national musical instruments. According to the historian's textual research, "Erhu" is a folk instrument from the edge of the Eurasian region in the northwestern border. Because the northwestern tribe was called "Huren" at the time, the "Erhu" was also called "Huqin", also known as "Xiqin". After being introduced to the Central China area, it experienced the evolution of the generation of musicians in the process of circulation. Huqin had been "Sinicized" and gradually became Chinese instruments, and thus emerging a large Huqin family, including Gaohu, Banhu, Zhuihu, Jinghu, etc. Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, with the development of drama and music, Erhu is the most important accompaniment instrument in local drama. It is also the most widely spread and used folk instrument in the Han area. It can be seen that in the process of social development, traditional culture is not as old as the antiques; it is changing along with the long rivers of the years. Today, with the wide exchange of cultures in different regions, different nationalities and different countries, China's traditional national musical instrument performing arts, like the national musical instruments of other countries in the world, continues to innovate with the trend of the times and has achieved good development opportunities.^[4]

Chinese national musical instruments can be roughly divided into four categories: bow string instruments, plucked instruments, wind instruments, and percussion instruments. Each type can also be divided into different

functions according to its different pronunciation modes, different timbres, different textures and types. For example, there are flutes, Sheng, Xiao, pipes, Suona, etc. in the wind instruments; Pipa, Yueqin, Zheng, Guqin, Sanxian, Liuqin, etc. in the plucked instruments. After thousands of years of history, these instruments have been loved and passed down to the present day, mainly because they have irreplaceable individuality characteristics and cultural connotations in their respective timbre characteristics and musical expression. For example, "Qin" is also known as "Guqin", from the production process to the form and method of playing, it has a strong Chinese traditional literati color. Its tone is thick, empty, quiet, and has the meaning of drifting thoughts. In the past thousand years, it has accumulated a large number of works with a wide range of content, from human emotions to natural landscapes, all of which can enter the performance circumstances of Guqin. The sound of "Xiao" is elegant and simple, with a sense of leisure and freedom; "Zheng" has a wide range of sounds, and the bass sound is dense and thick, while the high-pitched sound is bright and pleasing, and the lyricism is very strong. The flexible and varied playing techniques can express the softness of the flowing water and the spectacular scene of the storm; "Bamboo flute" is one of the most widely used and most popular national blow instruments in China. The sound of the "Pang-ti" in the bamboo flute family is bright and clear, full of youthful vitality, with a large volume change and a rich expressiveness. It can not only play soft and melodious tunes, but also fast and powerful melodies with jumping colors; "Quidi" sounds round and soft, such as the singing of human voices, used in the Kunqu opera accompaniment, and the lyricism is very strong; "Erhu" sound is full and soft, sweet and beautiful, with very delicate expressiveness; The sound of "Banhu" is high, bright and penetrating, and is suitable for cheerful, festive and witty; The "Gaohu" commonly used in Cantonese music has a slender, clear and elegant tone and a strong Southern charm. It can be seen that "tone" is an important performance feature of Chinese national instrumental music.

After entering the 1950s, China's social, political, economic, and cultural education has ushered in a period of great change and great development. With the development of China's music education and the development of performing arts, the manufacture and performance of national musical instruments have made a huge leap. Many national musical instruments have been further improved and sublimated from the original accompaniment function of drama, song and dance, and rap art. The compilation of Western big bands and rich sound colors have brought new development opportunities to the development of

national musical instruments, and the performance art of national musical instruments has developed rapidly. The change of the playing function will inevitably promote the reform of the instrument type and performance, and the improvement and perfection of the instrument function will further promote the innovation of the playing technique. Composers and national instrumentalists have constantly updated and higher requirements for the adaptation of musical instrument models, timbre changes and performance techniques in order to adapt to the needs of the new works. Chinese traditional folk instruments use "Copinism" from the manufacture and performance techniques of Western musical instruments to absorb their essence. According to the aesthetic concept of the national tradition, on the basis of preserving the original phonology of the national musical instrument, the material, the shaping system, and the tuning system of the musical instrument are transformed. With the participation of many experts and scholars, this work has achieved fruitful results since the end of the 1950s and has made great contributions to the performance of traditional Chinese musical instruments and the modernization of traditional music. For example, the bamboo flute absorbs the advantages of the western flute and develops into an adjustable bamboo flute. The fine pitch can be controlled by fine-tuning the length of the flute, thereby reducing the subtle effects on pitch due to changes in ambient temperature and air humidity, and also makes it suitable for transposition. The range is developed to two octaves and can participate in various band ensembles. In order to make up for the shortcomings of the traditional national bands' bass instruments, according to the advantages of the Western double bass, which is thick in volume and full in sound, the "Gehu" has been developed. "Sheng" is the only harmonic blow instrument in China. In order to enhance its expressiveness, the material of the reed is modified, and the carbon steel is used instead of the copper, which increases the volume of the cymbal, making it more pure and more harmonized. Pipa has gradually evolved from the original four items and ten levels to six items and twenty-five levels. According to the pitch of the twelve equals, the semi-tone grade is arranged. It is convenient to transfer when used, which is conducive to the performance of modern music works with rich tonal changes.

Since ancient times, the silky overspun wire and the gut strings used in Chinese bow-stringed instruments and plucked instruments have also been changed into metal steel strings and nylon-stringed strings one by one, making the pronunciation of the instruments more solid and bright. Absorbing the strengths of Western musical instruments and using modern techniques to improve the

traditional national musical instruments, there is a qualitative leap in the range, tone, and volume and performance techniques of the performance. It is comparable in performance to Western instruments, which not only makes it possible to play traditional folk music more perfectly, but also to play modern music and some famous Western music. Such as the Erhu solo "Flight of the Bumble Bee", "Zigeunerweisen", the flute solo "Lark" and so on. A variety of national musical instruments can not only be solo, but also enter a variety of bands, including large symphony orchestras.

Among all national musical instruments, Erhu is the solo instrument with the most innovative and innovative achievements and a high reputation. From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, Erhu is inspired by the manufacturing process of the Western musical instrument violin, the use of materials and the playing techniques. After many experiments and practices, the Erhu's "Qianjin" changed from the traditional wire string entanglement to the semi-mechanical "Qianjin" of adjustable pitch, and the length of the Erhu has a scientifically unified standard, which increased the position of the Erhu and the range was broadened. The Erhu with enlarged sound field can freely play semitones and various transpositions, and the traditional silky overspun wire is changed to metal strings like violins, which has improved the sound quality of the Erhu. The Erhu's bow is also changed from a ponytail bow to a violin-like adjustment bow, which can freely adjust the bow's tightness, and the length of the bow is significantly increased, which has promoted the development of right-handed bow technology. On the basis of the original traditional bow and split bow, the technique of violin bow, trembling bow, bow jumping and plucking is also applied to the Erhu.

4. Exploration on the Localization of Chinese Piano Music Vocabulary

The piano must take root in Chinese soil. To gain the recognition of the Chinese audience, the piano must learn to speak "Chinese". For decades, Chinese composers have tried to integrate the acoustic characteristics of traditional Chinese folk instruments, the style of Chinese music, and the aesthetic image of Chinese traditional culture into their piano works in terms of the choice of musical vocabulary and the use of vocal techniques, which makes the piano go down the towering music altar and enter the music life of the general public. The composer uses a variety of techniques to transplant the unique rhyme of the national musical instrument into the piano music, so that the musical style has a piano music different from the western

tradition, which has become the universal pursuit of the composer's music creation in China. These special color sound characteristics and playing techniques not only enrich the piano playing technology and sound effects, but also fully reflect the Chinese national characteristics of the works in the music vocabulary style.

Guqin is one of the oldest traditional musical instruments in China. In the long history, it is unique in its music and performance. The sound of the low-pitched area is low and thick, simple and ancient, and the sound is long. The high-pitched sound is clear and round, and it is very penetrating. The Guqin music works contain rich literary connotations in content and proposition, reflecting the aesthetic thinking of traditional music in China. In Chinese piano music works, similar to the chords and overtones in the Guqin music, the piano music vocabulary with Chinese characteristics has been created. Wang Lisan's work "Calligraphy and Music Verve" uses a downward split octave, which mimics the playing skills of the Guqin. It not only makes the music produce the acoustic charm of the Guqin, but also expresses the acoustic characteristics of Chinese traditional music. Wang Jianzhong's "Three Variations on Plum Blossom" and Li Yinghai's "Flute and Drum at Sunset" and other piano songs can make people feel that the Guqin performance is desolation and the artistic concept is profound.

The Erhu is a bowed string instrument, and the piano is a stringed instrument. It is obviously very difficult to play the acoustic effect of the Erhu playing on the piano. Because the material structure of the two instruments is very different, the pronunciation principle of the Erhu is far from the piano. To simulate the acoustic effect of the Erhu music on the piano, you should work harder on the performance of the music. The composer Chu Wanghua conveyed the artistic conception and charm of the music through the analysis of the phrases, the understanding of the Erhu performance method and the special skills, and adapted the famous Erhu song "The Moon over a Fountain" into a piano solo. He gave full play to the stereo sound effects of piano and sound woven fabrics, and used powerful and beautiful contrasts of sounds. He used the techniques of accented triads, plus two-degree intervals and second-degree and third-degree decorative sounds to imitate the charm of Erhu in the Erhu, so as to strengthen the ethnic style and dignified, rich emotional color of the music.

The dulcimer is a stringed instrument, which is similar to the piano pronunciation principle. The dulcimer is pronounced using two hammers. You can strike the strings at the same time or alternately, and you can use the hammer

to pluck the strings to make a special tone. The hands are alternately struck, and the use is flexible and the sound is crisp and bright, which is great for playing a large melody, playing a variation or jumping melody. In the piano song "Embroider a Golden Plaque", the composer imitates the dulcimer's octave Sanda, floral decoration and other characteristic acoustic colors to imitate the vivid and full of charm. It is a kind of wind instrument. It is widely spread in China. It is used in folk weddings or funerals and is usually accompanied by Pipa; Suona's tone is grand and bright, with a strong sense of penetration, and a strong contrast between strength and weakness. The composer Wang Jianzhong adapted the singer "Hundreds of Birds Worshipping the Phoenix" into a piano solo. The music has a strong northern style. On the piano, he simulated the performance techniques of single vomiting, double vomiting, three vomiting, and portamento. The effect of the flower tongue sound vividly mimics the chirping sound in the shade. The parallel five-degree harmony of the left hand mimics the effect of the cymbal, soft and beautiful, so that the parts have a contrasting effect and a very harmonious and harmonious, fully demonstrating the original artistic style.^[5]

The "Zheng" is one of the oldest national musical instruments. In the ancient tombs of the Warring States found in Hubei, a "classic" with a history of more than 2,000 years has been excavated. Its shape is basically similar to that of a modern zither. The sound of the kite is bright and varied, and there are many different playing techniques such as squatting, dragging, wiping, picking, hooking, and ticking, and so on. There are different sound colors such as pressing sound, portamento, hum and vibrato in the sound quality. The sound color produced by using a variety of performance techniques in piano works is very effective. The most common method is to use the method of playing the voice on the piano to imitate the sound effect produced by the "whisking" and "wiping" in the kite performance. In the third movement of the piano concerto "Yellow River", the long cymbal composed of the densely spaced five-tone scale simulates the playing effect of the zither, which creates a pastoral life on the banks of the Yellow River that is feminine, euphemistic, bright, pleasant, poetic and rich. The piano music "Liuyang River"(by Chu Wanghua) uses the "whisking" technique to play a fast-moving five-tone short-sounding voice, depicting the sparkling flow of water in the sun, recreating the melodious and gorgeous tone of the Guzheng. "Celebrating Our New Life" is the work of the composer Chu Wanghua at the Conservatory of Music. In order to describe the performance of the portamento playing on the piano keyboard instrument, he creatively used

the simultaneous second-order interval collision. It mimics the special local charm of Banhu's folk tones, vivid and lifelike, which makes the music flow with a northern language style full of festive colors.^[6]

The pursuit of special timbres in Chinese piano works mostly belongs to the imitation of the style and charm of national musical instruments. The composer uses different touch-key methods to simulate the special acoustic color of the national musical instrument on the piano by using the strength of the melody, the contrast of the rhythm, the use of the decorative sound, and the arrangement of the sound fabric, which makes Chinese piano music works with different acoustic effects and styles than Western piano works, which not only enriches the piano playing techniques. Moreover, it has brought the creation and performance of Chinese piano music to a new height—— both with strong Chinese national characteristics and acceptable to all countries in the world.

5. Conclusion

"Chinese piano music"—— this music culture originated from the West, experienced the blood and sweat of several generations of composers, created a new variety of music that is full of the Chinese people's aesthetic taste and infiltrated the Chinese culture. In today's world cultural exchanges, the piano has its unprecedented musical charm and unique musical charm. It has become the most popu-

lar Western musical instrument with the most popular and popular among the Chinese people.

References

- [1] Xinghua Xiao. Let Erhu Approach the Top Grade, Teach Foreigners to Know about Chinese music—— The National Music Reformer Liu Tianhua. The First Volume of Chinese Modern Musician Biography[M]. Liaoning: Spring Breeze Literature and Art Publishing House, 1994. (in Chinese)
- [2] Huabai Lu. Meet Flourishing Age in an Old Age, Pleasant with Writing Sparkles —— Composer Lu Huabai Autobiography. The Second Volume of Chinese Modern Musician Biography[M]. Liaoning: Spring Breeze Literature and Art Publishing House, 1994. (in Chinese)
- [3] Anonymous. "Continuously Surpassing" Liu Wenjin—— Summary of the Special Study of Liu Wenjin's Works in the Chinese Bowstring Art Festival[J]. Journal of China Conservatory of Music, 2013(03). (in Chinese)
- [4] Jing Jiang. The Infiltration of Chinese Traditional Music into the Creation of Professional Instrumental Music[J]. Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music, 1991(01). (in Chinese)
- [5] Zhiyu Chao. Analysis and Teaching Experience of Wang Jianzhong's Piano Works[J]. Piano Art Research, 2004. (in Chinese)
- [6] Anguo Wang. Research on Modern Harmony and Chinese Works[M]. Chongqing: Southwest Normal University Press, 2004. (in Chinese)