

The "Chinese School of Vocal Music" in the Perspective of Culture and Aesthetics

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Abstract

The aesthetic practice, aesthetic effect, and aesthetic experience of vocal art arise when both self-regulation and other-regulation have their cultural connotations and meanings, and are born out of socio-historical background and culture. "Culture, society, everything about people leaves them no choice but to also make them think as deeply as possible about the many complex realities of humanities and culture." Chinese vocal music and the Chinese vocal school, as a branch of the art discipline, has a cultural connotation that involves many personal, social, historical, etc. dimensions that require us to enter a deep and large field of exploration and research.

Keywords: aesthetics, Chinese vocal school.

Introduction

1 The "Chinese School of Vocal Music" from the perspective of cultural studies

At the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of "Western learning", Chinese vocal music has basically completed the transformation from traditional to modern. In fact, Chinese vocal music as a measure of the overall artistic level of a country and nation has been generally recognized by the entire society, and the status of Chinese vocal art in the aesthetic activities of the public has become more and more important, and the strategic position of Chinese vocal singing, vocal education and vocal performance in the pattern of cultural development in China has become more and more prominent. After the founding of New China, Chinese vocal art once again faced the transformation and challenge of Chinese society from agricultural society to industrial society; from industrial society to information society; from planned economy society to market economy society with multi-level, multi-structure and all-round. We can clearly see that the Chinese vocal art and the Chinese vocal school present an overall sign of society and the times. Therefore, analyzing the impact and

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integration of the Chinese vocal school in the past, present and future society and people's spiritual world into cultural reality can further promote the thriving of Chinese vocal art and contribute to future research on the development strategy of Chinese vocal art and culture.

1.1 Culture and Vocal Music Culture

The concept of culture was first coined by anthropologists at the end of the 19th century. The first to give a scientific definition of culture was the British cultural anthropologist E. Taylor. His definition of culture was that culture or civilization, in its broad ethnographic sense, is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and the abilities and habits acquired by anyone as a member of society. Taylor was looking at culture as a complex whole. In 1952, the American anthropologists A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, in their book *Culture: A Review of Concepts and Definitions*, counted 164 definitions of culture in the 80 years from 1871 to 1951. Today, more than half a century later, there is an even greater variety of interpretations of culture.

If we look at the art of Chinese vocal music in a cultural perspective, that is, music and Chinese language merged and processed and disseminated artistically, and eventually developed into a beautiful spiritual model that people inherited from each other, participated in together, enjoyed together and pursued. After thousands of years of evolution, singing, an activity in which the entire community of people participated, gradually fell to a handful of experts. The singers stood out for their superior singing skills and the infectious power of their art, forming a unified school or even a school of art that inspired the people and served as a companion in their times of joy or sorrow.

1.2 The Cultural Phenomenon of the "Chinese School of Vocal Music

As discussed in the previous chapters, the collision of Eastern and Western cultures and the arrival of Western vocal art at the beginning of the 20th century caused a subtle fusion of the relationship between "native" and "foreign" in Chinese folk vocal art, so much so that there was a "fierce debate on the relationship between native and foreign". In the early years of the founding of the PRC, there were heated debates on the relationship between the earth and the ocean, and on the combination of the earth and the ocean in the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, some experts called the new singing method "one voice for a thousand people" in the face of the combination of foreign and local, and now the situation of diversified development of Chinese vocal music has been formed. We should see objectively and realistically that the Chinese vocal school has gone through several generations of vocalists from the humble beginnings to the high

development, which contains several generations of musicians' hard sweat and even life's work.

Looking at the Chinese vocal art today from the perspective of history and world culture, especially from the perspective of development, the development of its aesthetic art has also gone through a historical stage. First of all, we should see that "today" Chinese vocal art has been successfully explored, inherited and borrowed by several generations of vocalists, finally finding the best entry point for the relationship between "earth" and "foreign", i.e., integrating the western vocal mixture of resonance into the traditional Chinese vocal art in a proper way, and finally forming a new kind of vocal art. In the end, a new national singing style was formed. Compared to the folk singing method of the 1950s and 1960s, this method is characterized by its ability to greatly broaden the expressive power of singing and adapt to the new era of multiple styles, genres, difficulties, and techniques of vocal works without losing the folk style. For example, today's Chinese vocal music has a wider range, a more penetrating and dramatic voice, and a fuller and rounder tone. Some vocalists, such as Wu Bixia, Dong Hua, Song Zuying, Lei Jia, etc., he or she can sing folk songs, operas and composition songs, as well as Western opera arias and art songs. From this point of view, he or she seems to have posed a challenge compared to his or her predecessors. Thus, in the 1980s, when this new approach to Chinese vocal singing, with its mix of styles, first emerged, it was immediately applauded for its refreshing appearance, and gradually became widely noted as an example. With the development of the times and the progress of folk vocal art, this new folk singing method, which emerged in the 1980s, has matured step by step and has been recognized and massively expanded, popularized and emulated by the society.

Secondly, the phenomenon of "one voice for a thousand people" has been formed in the road of development, especially the widespread dissemination of "Youth Song Contest", and the academic and vocal circles have called for Chinese vocal music to have national characteristics and not to have the same sound.

The author believes that "popularization and imitation" is the main reason for the formation of "a thousand people with one voice". However, a new form of artistic expression in its early appearance of some kind of similarity is not worth a fuss, because it is not a cultural aberration. "There are precedents in history, both in China and abroad: the American singing method, which originated in Italy, broke through national boundaries in its early days and became popular in Europe; in the early days of the formation of Beijing opera in China, Mr. Tan Xinpei created the Tan school of singing, which dominated the line of life for a while, so much so that it developed to the point that "no student does not learn Tan"; the Huafan line since Qiu Shengrong

created the Qiu school Since Qiu Shengrong founded the Qiu School, everyone has followed suit, and to this day there is "no net, no Qiu". If the word "thousand" in the phrase "a thousand people" is a broad term, then if it is compared to the word "no" in the phrase "no life" or "no purity," then the word "no" in the phrase "no" in the phrase "no life" or "no purity" is a broad term. I am afraid that the scope of the word "no" is much smaller than that of "no life" or "no purity." In fact, the various schools of art have all started from "a thousand people" and gradually developed into "a thousand people with many faces."

The Italian American singing method and the Peking Opera's "Wu Sheng Bu Xue Tan" were both a single flower for a certain period of time, but it was this flower that led to the prosperous scene of a hundred flowers and schools. The European singers who learned the American singing method, after mastering this method, combined it with the specific situation of their own country, and many vocal schools emerged in Germany, France, Russia and the United Kingdom, etc.; China's Peking Opera from "no student does not learn Tan" has evolved Ma (Lianliang), Yu (Shu Yan), Yan (Jupeng), Yang (Baosen) and Gao (Qingkui) and other very different styles. Qingkui) and other very different styles. A singing method is established is the integration of a variety of factors, the reason why the new national singing method can be developed from "one side" to "a thousand people", is also the result of a variety of factors have matured and in place one after another. One of them is that there are many recognized leaders of this singing method in the high male and female voices, the second is that this singing method has a wide mass base, the third is that there are a large number of excellent, dedicated songs suitable for this singing method, and the fourth is that we have mastered and popularized the teaching methods of this singing method, batch production of many singers and singing actors.

Therefore, the phenomenon of "one voice for a thousand" in Chinese vocal music marks a new historical stage in the development of Chinese vocal music, a milestone innovation, and a momentum stage for the diversification of vocal music.

The famous music critic Tian Qing expressed his views through the article "Folk Songs and Ethnic Singing - Speech at the Academic Seminar of the 2nd North-South Folk Song Competition in Zuoquan, Shanxi". He affirmed that the Academy's approach to Chinese vocal music and its aesthetic model is a wonder. Moreover, the formation of such a style and aesthetics of Chinese vocal music is not easy to come by. It is represented by the students trained by the mainstream of outstanding vocal educators led by Mr. Jin Tielin, and it is a new height of fusion of Chinese and Western vocal music combined together. It was even the aesthetic goal that singers collectively pursued in the 1950s. The establishment of such a Chinese vocal

school proved to be a success. However, even the most delicious delicacies cannot be tasted every day. After the development of artistic refinement, it tends to become monotonous, lacking in individuality and aesthetic fatigue. This is also the inevitable result of all art reaching its peak, and a sign that it is beginning to go downhill.

Mr. Tian Qing's remarks were prescient. In fact, the "one voice for a thousand" is only a process stage. With the development of vocal art, nowadays, Chinese vocal music has entered a diversified form. For example, in the current Chinese vocal music teaching, the concept of singing style has gradually weakened, and the choice of singing style depends more on the work itself and the connotation expressed by the language. There are many types of vocal works in opera style, ancient music style, pop music style, different works with different languages, convenient expressions, and at the same time to be sung with different timbres, thus forming a truly beautiful singing, which will also produce the cultural phenomenon of a hundred flowers blossoming in Chinese vocal schools.

2 The "Chinese School of Vocal Music" in Aesthetic Perspective

2.1 The aesthetic essence of vocal art - the beauty of singing language

When music is seen as art, not as a commodity or a political slogan, and not for commercial transactions, then it acquires an artistic character and a certain aesthetic value in the first place. Vocal culture, like all cultures created by human beings, is a comprehensive art form that uses language to express music, which is a unique form of "dialogue". Although the aesthetic process of vocal culture is a special "dialogue" form of creation, but because of its own artistic characteristics and linguistics, performance science, psychology and sociology and other disciplines inextricably linked, and inevitably lay the foundation for the construction of vocal culture and theoretical generalization.

In the performance activity of vocal art, language is the basis of this unique artistic creative activity, and the only means of dialogue and communication with the audience and listeners, and of artistic communication and aesthetic service to society. Language is a collective pattern, a co-temporal, socially inertial, self-contained system, rational, universal, established, hidden, and solid, while speech belongs to individual behavior, ephemeral, individually selective, rich, and free, open, and derivative. Such a clearly discernible structural relationship exhibited by linguistic activity fundamentally affects the way people view language, culture (including art), and society. It can also be said that the linguized mental world is the most important cultural world of man."

Obviously, it is the "language of singing" or the "language of singing" that gives real meaning and value to the vocal art and culture, it is the

"language of singing" that brings the aesthetics of art into a state of fluidity and infinite openness, and it is the "language of singing" that gives vocal artworks (songs, operas, etc.) their richness, their poetic and cultural qualities, and their own charm and beauty to life.

The singer's natural, pure and beautiful tone and timbre through the "language of singing" is both a flow of music and a rich creation of language, containing aesthetic pleasure and artistic charm. The singer's "singing language" gives a clear and vivid "life" to the melodic flow, whether it is the beauty of the world's immortals or the great and small events of the world.

As mentioned earlier, music has the power to unite emotions and thoughts without words, and has the function to bring back the "life" of everything in the world without words. Then music, as a song sung by the human voice with complex and rich emotions and a pleasant and loud voice - language, shortens the distance between people and communication, so that people and people can not help but come together without caution.

Vocal art - the music of language or call it - the language of singing, in human cultural aesthetics, a word is a mental imagery, a cluster of imagery, a song is a vibrant full of divine rhythm and artistic tension. A song is a vibrant and full of artistic tension and "artistic magnetic field" and "cultural magnetic field". From the expression of vocal art, the basic vein of human life feeling can indeed be leaped out, that is, this feeling is based on survival desire, aesthetic emotion, and of course, also contains three aspects of reverential intention, aesthetic emotion with spiritual emotion as the background, survival desire based on the natural pursuit of human artistic instinct, reverential intention with the pursuit of faith as the main body, the three aspects are glued together with each other.

2.2 The Aesthetic Implications of the "Chinese School of Vocal Music" - Rhythmic Beauty

Chinese vocal art, as one of the icons of Chinese music culture, has not only greatly enriched and satisfied people's spiritual and cultural life with its comprehensive aesthetic style and profound cultural implications that blend tradition and modernity, but has also influenced and guided the change of people's artistic and aesthetic interests over the years.

In fact, it is different from Western vocal art in such aspects as artistic expression, first of all, it is not "true" as the artistic purpose, but "rhyme" as the core of the writing style. Rhyme is the life of Chinese vocal art, without "rhyme" there is no art to speak of. As Lu Shiyong said in Ming Dynasty, "Rhyme is life, no rhyme is death; rhyme is elegance, no rhyme is vulgarity; rhyme is loud, no rhyme is sinking;

rhyme is far, no rhyme is bureau."So, where does "rhyme" come from? "The search is in the point of coloring, the mood is in the turn, the mood is in the Yuyi, the style is in the nick, the tone is in the throughput, the system is in the parade, this is the rhyme is born from." The "rhyme" mentioned here is precisely rooted in the rhythmical state of life of man and the universe. (Liu Chenghua, 2002)

As a unique aesthetic character of Chinese vocal art, rhythm has a distinct aesthetic spirit of national characteristics. Nowadays it has become an important part of the aesthetic theory of Chinese vocal art. Turning the historical scroll of the development of Chinese vocal art, the soul of which is the formation of rhythm, also has a historical and incomprehensible artistic kinship with traditional Chinese opera.

The glorious Chinese traditional culture (poetry, folk songs, etc.) and the colorful national language have nurtured Chinese opera and shaped the unique aesthetic character of rhythm, but also provided a close reference for another artistic performance form, the Chinese vocal art. It is in the 20th century that Chinese vocal art began to write its own splendid history, with the formation of the "Chinese vocal school" through the exchange, mutual integration and complementation of various singing styles. Therefore, the generation of Chinese vocal art flavor and Chinese traditional opera have a lineage of history. The aesthetic character of Chinese vocal art is of certain practical significance and theoretical guidance for the comprehensive understanding and grasp of the cultural meaning of Chinese vocal music and the strengthening of national consciousness, especially for the new historical period, how to deal with and grasp the national vocal performance art under the influence of various cultural trends and the tide of commodity economy in the issues of era and tradition, inheritance and innovation.

Rhyme is originally a unique aesthetic concept proposed by Chinese literary theory and a special aesthetic category in ancient China, with unique national style and characteristics. As an aesthetic concept and aesthetic category, rhyme refers not only to the realm of beauty of literary works. And mainly refers to an aesthetic feeling and connection between the aesthetic subject and object, that is, profound, subtle and meaningful, which can cause a kind of appreciation and aesthetic enjoyment of emotional resonance for a long time. As a unique aesthetic characteristic, rhyme was initially widely applied not only in various art fields such as poetry, but also, and more importantly, in the creation of Chinese operas (plays). From the Southern opera of the Song Dynasty to the miscellaneous plays of the Yuan Dynasty, especially the legends of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it became a fashion for literati to participate directly in the creation of operas (plays). Their compositions were not only concerned with rhetoric and meter, but also with mood and rhyme.

The literati composed and the artists edited and performed. The opera artists of successive generations created scripts for the literati in a second and third degree, abandoning certain traces of the axe caused by the literati's deliberate pursuit of literary rhetoric and metre, and pursuing intimate and natural singing and performance, communication with the audience, and far-reaching rhythm.

From ancient times to the present, the creation and singing of traditional Chinese opera have not forgotten the pursuit of rhythm because of the changes of the times and the relocation of the stage. On the contrary, the pursuit of rhythm has been preserved from generation to generation as an excellent tradition in the creation and singing of Chinese opera art, and has directly or indirectly influenced the national vocal art (song and opera singing art) today as an aesthetic ideal. At the same time, Chinese audiences have always judged the singing level of folk vocalists by the presence or absence of rhythm.

So, what is the connotation of "rhyme" in concrete terms? The scholar Lan Fan (1992) in his Comparative Essay on Chinese and Western Drama has this insightful summary, he believes that "rhythm" is the expression of language, the expression of voice and the expression of feelings - the profound meaning and deep feelings created by the art of singing. The realm of meaningful and profound feelings created by the art of singing. The famous poet Bai Juyi of the Tang Dynasty had this comment on poetry: the highest beauty of poetry is in the root of emotion, miaow words, Chinese sound and real meaning, which is actually used as a basic requirement and guideline for the beauty of rhythm in Chinese opera singing art. This is also the most basic artistic requirement and the most basic aesthetic criterion of the rhythmic beauty of Chinese vocal art.

Chinese (including some similar ethnic languages) is a monosyllabic word, one word with one sound and one meaning, and one word sound contains a vowel, a rhyme or a compound rhyme. In order to distinguish the meaning of monosyllabic words with the same sound and rhyme, each word itself has different tones of high and low, and intonation. This characteristic of tone and rhyme makes the language itself very rich in musicality and beauty. After the art of Chinese opera arose, it was necessary to fundamentally regulate this more complex language so that the art of singing could express the thoughts and feelings of the characters and maximize the beauty (musicality) of the Chinese language through clear and beautiful language. Since the independence of phonetics as a specialized language discipline in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, writers in the Sui, Tang, Jin, Yuan, and Han Dynasties have studied the art of language. This undoubtedly reflects the influence of the characteristics of Chinese language on the

generation of rhythm in opera and national vocal art from another perspective.

The art of opera singing is developed on the basis of folk song singing. It has long been exercised again mainly in open-air square performances. In order to adapt to the audience's appreciation, it is required to send the voice farther and bite the words more clearly, so it is necessary to divide the words into head, belly and tail to deal with, and pay more attention to the sound, rhyme and tone of the words as well as the five tones, four calls and so on. These not only bring their own requirements and characteristics to the art of opera singing, but also bring the historical need and possibility for the formation of rhyme.

The Yangge movement in Yan'an in the 1940s and the subsequent opera climax represented mainly by the new opera "White Maiden", not only flourished the folk music and Chinese opera creation at that time, nourished and cultivated a large number of folk vocal artists, but more importantly, laid a strong foundation for the creation of modern Chinese vocal art (songs and opera singing art) and the development of contemporary Chinese vocal art. The prosperity of music creation often brings the prosperity of performing art creation. The songs of Wang Kun, Li Bo, Meng Yu, Guo Lanying and a number of other national vocalists flew from Yan'an to various liberated areas as if with wings. Their singing art was based on traditional Chinese opera and folk songs, and they created a unique singing method in the history of Chinese vocal music, the "integrated singing method of opera and folk songs", which has had a great and far-reaching impact on contemporary folk vocal art. Generations of singers have emerged like a mushroom. They are either rooted in traditional Chinese opera to learn folk songs, or rooted in folk music to learn from traditional Chinese opera. Ren Guizhen (who studied with Guo Lanying), Peng Peiying (who studied with Yu Opera master Chang Xiangyu), Peng Liyuan (who studied with Guo Lanying), Li Guyi (formerly a flower drum opera performer), Li Yuanhua, Liu Bin, Sun Liying (formerly a Beijing Opera performer), and so on. It is because of their artistic creation and succession of inheritance and progression that the "marriage" between contemporary folk vocal music and folk songs has become a fine tradition. Therefore, contemporary folk vocal art and opera have the same historical origin in terms of words, sounds and emotions, and have a common artistic pursuit and common aesthetic ideal, reflecting a common aesthetic character.

Chinese folk opera and song writing, like other artistic disciplines, has been flourishing step by step with the changes and development of the times, especially the "White Maiden" created in 1945 based on the rhythm of opera and folk songs, which not only brought a historical breakthrough to the opera itself and had a great and profound impact

on Chinese opera, but also made the "three clappers and one fall" model of opera creation take shape after the founding of the PRC. "The First Opera Symposium" in 1957 made people realize the constraints that opera had brought to Chinese opera. However, the impact of the opera "The White Maiden" in China has far exceeded people's imagination. It has not only influenced the opera itself, but also other areas of musical creation, and still releases a great deal of energy into today's musical creation. In fact, both the operaticization of opera composition and the nationalization and modernization of song composition have undoubtedly brought good creative opportunities for the singers to introduce the "rhythm" of opera singing into folk vocal music, which is a very important reference and basis.

Nowadays, through the joint efforts of several generations of singers and vocal educators, the art of Chinese vocal music has been continuously developed and innovated in the practice and exploration of "foreign for Chinese" and "combining Chinese and Western", which has led to the emergence of multiple singing styles (opera, folk songs, American voice) mutually. The Chinese vocalists have been using the Chinese as the Chinese and the Chinese as the Chinese. Over the years, Chinese vocalists and educators have not stopped pursuing and creating rhythm. The beauty of rhythm has become the common aesthetic ideal of Chinese folk singers and vocal educators, and has been constantly innovated and improved as a national characteristic and excellent tradition of the Chinese vocal school.

2.3 The beauty of word rhyme, sound rhyme and emotion rhyme

The characteristics of rhythmic beauty of Chinese vocal art are based on the aesthetic ideas of Chinese opera, operatic rap and folk songs, where language is expressed as word rhythmic beauty, voice as vocal beauty and emotional expression as emotional rhythmic beauty.

The beauty of character rhyme is a prerequisite for the art of Chinese vocal music. From Wang Kun and Guo Lanying in the 1940s and 1950s to Jiang Jiamang, Guo Song, Wu Yanze in the 1960s and later to Peng Liyuan, Dong Wenhua, Song Zuying, Wang Lida, Lei Jia and other famous singers, all attached importance to the expression of "words". They emphasized and drew on the clarity and rhythm of operatic singing as a collective aesthetic intention of the singers. The accuracy and clarity of the bite is a basic technical requirement for Chinese vocal music, and is one of the basic skills that singers must learn. The connotation of word rhyme beauty is in accordance with certain language laws, language requirements, for the word's first belly tail, four calls, clear and turbid, etc. are clearly explained. As the use of singing skills, it is the accuracy and clarity of the spit, the words are explained clearly, the paragraph word true sentence clear. In Chinese vocal art, the clarity of the words is a technical difficulty, especially when words, rhymes and tones are required in a comprehensive

manner, and the contradictions between words and sounds, rhymes, tones and vocalizations need to be solved scientifically, so that the words and sounds, rhymes and tones in singing are transformed into a relationship of mutual influence and mutual promotion of the unity of opposites.

Vocal beauty is another kind of aesthetic character pursued after achieving clear biting and spitting, and its aesthetic rule is that the word is heavy and the sound is light, and the word flows with the word. The specific requirements are to emphasize the strength of the word head sound in the singing, to keep the breathing stable, and to drive the organic combination of voice and breathing. The requirement of the word flow is that the singer, driven by the word tone, complete the melody tone height, length, intonation, i.e., language musicalization, so as to subconsciously promote both the musical elements of words and melodic rhythmic performance, and more importantly, the word with sound, to get aesthetic enjoyment. The flow of words and sounds requires that the melodic lines of music circulate organically back and forth, with flowing, dynamic aesthetic characteristics. The rhythmic beauty of Chinese vocal music is very importantly dependent on the beauty of the line, the beauty of the tone timbre, the beauty of the expression and so on

The beauty of emotion is also the core structure of the aesthetic character of Chinese vocal art. The appreciation of an excellent vocal composition is based on the depth of emotion and the beauty of the aftertaste. The rhythm here is not just a simple emotion, but a condensed expression of emotion experienced by the singer after a deep understanding of the musical work or of the characters in the play. This also requires the singer to have a high level of literary and musical expertise, to appreciate the creative characteristics of Chinese music, to be well versed in the appropriate expression of the combination of language and music, and finally to achieve a proper grasp of emotion and to achieve the dialectical unity of the two with as scientific and beautiful bite and vocalization as possible.

The creation of rhythmic beauty in Chinese vocal art is indispensable in these three aspects, and they are the relationship between the individual and the main body, the partial and the overall unity of opposites. Only by integrating the beauty of character rhyme, vocal rhyme and emotional rhyme with each other, and by uniting the three, can we complete a pleasing, deep, evocative and moving singing.

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