# Study on the Origin and Development of Dizi Diao, A Local Opera in Hebei, China

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#### **Abstract**

The DiziDiao of Hebei local opera in China is the title of the Luoluo Qiang after entering Guanzuo Village, Raoyang County, Hengshui in history. According to literature records, the Luoluo Qiang originated from three branches, forming different musical and artistic characteristics. However, which branch of the Luoluo Qiang originated from the DiziDiao was worth examining. In this paper, by consulting the relevant literature and the research on the Dizi Diao, the researcher found that the Dizi Diao had a more significant relationship with the Northern Xiansuo Qiang. There are many similarities between the mode singing style of the DiziDiao and the Cental-Southern Sixian Xi of the Northern Xiansuo Qiang in terms of lyrics structure, singing style, mode, and falling notes.

Key words: DiziDiao; Luoluo Qiang;Yiyang Qiang; Shuahai-er; Sixian

#### Introduction

The DiziDiao, also known as the Guanzuo Diao, is an ancient local opera popular in Guanzuo Village, Raoyang County, Hengshui City, Hebei Province, China. According to An Overview of Chinese Operas- Hebei Volume (1999), the Dizi Diao was the appellation after the Luoluo Qiang was introduced into Guanzuo village. In the Dictionary of Chinese Traditional Opera- Hebei Volume (1995), the Dizi Diao was named after the performance of the Dizi in its early formation. According to A Collection of Chinese Opera Music- Hebei Volume (1999), the Dizi Diao was taught by a private school teacher in Guanzuo Village during the Zhengde period of the Ming Dynasty (1506-1521) and has been sung to this day. The DiziDiao has a high-pitched and unique singing style suitable for children. Therefore, it is also known as the Tongzi Diao, with both male and female voices inside and humorous lyrics. Meanwhile, the lyrics of the Dizi Diao have many function words, and the play is unique and rich in local characteristics. It was once prevalent in the Raoyang area in Hengshui and is a local popular art.

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Due to its distribution in rural areas, the DiziDiao is mainly limited to the Raoyang in Hengshui and surrounding towns. It primarily exists in self-entertainment among villagers, reflecting the characteristics of family and village inheritance. Although the DiziDiaowas known for hundreds of years, it was rarely known to outsiders or only by its name. Therefore, cultural workers and theoretical researchers often ignored this opera, resulting in a lack of research literature. Regarding its origin, it could only be seen in the fragmented records of the above literature. The DiziDiao is the inheritance of the cultural and artistic value of the Luoluo Qiang, butthe origin of the Luoluo Qiang in the literature had different statements. Meanwhile, their different origins showed different characteristics in the artistic expression of music. As a particular form of artistic expression and inheritance of the Luoluo Qiang, the DiziDiao has a more significant relationship with the origin of the Luoluo Qiang, which is worth further exploration. Through literature review and analysis, this paper stated that a significant genetic relationship existed between the DiziDiao and the Northen Xiansuo Qiang, which originated from the Luoluo Qiang.

### I. This history of Luoluo Qiang

As a form of traditional culture with a long history, Luoluo Qiang has been passed down over time. Regarding the origin of the Luoluo Qiang, there are roughly three theories recorded in literature: Luoluo Qiang evolved from Yiyang Qiang; The Luoluo Qiangwas a Shuahai-er melody; The Luoluo Qiang originated from the northern opera singing style (Xian Suo Qiang).

## 1.1 The evolution of Luoluo Qiang

Yiyang Qiang was formed in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties, which were known as the four major Chinese opera singing styles, along with Kunshan Qiang, Yuyao Qiang, and Haiyan Qiang. In the early Ming Dynasty, Yiyang Qiang had already been passed down. According to Weitan (Zhu, 1526), Yiyang Qiang belonged to the genre of Southern Opera. Like Haiyan, Yuyao, Kunshan, and other opera singing styles, it was a product of the long-term spread and evolution of Southern Opera in various regions. Although early Southern Opera incorporated various folk music when it was popular among the people, it did not yet form various schools in artistic style. With the spread of different regions, the influence of folk art in various regions became increasingly profound. As a result, the changes in artistic styles gradually increased, and the differences gradually became apparent.

Yiyang Qiang came from Yiyang, Jiangxi. Its most prominent feature wasusing drums to beat knots with human voices as backing vocals. It originated from the folk singing method of Yangko, which was a singing form with one singing and others chorusing. It was the labor chant and

was later absorbed by song and dance. This lively singing style was already present in the song and dance drama Ta Yao Niang of the Sui and Tang dynasties. The biggest singing feature of ancient Yiyang Qiangwas singing without the accompaniment of musical instruments, with backstage singing. In detail, one person sang at the front desk, and everyone served asharmony singers backstage, with the voice of Yoyo Luoluo. According to the Records of Qingyuan Teacher Temple in Yihuang County(Tang, 1602), Yiyang was located west of the Yangtze River, and its section was composed of drums, while its melodywas loud. Zhou Yibai, an expert in the study of Chinese opera history, concluded that the loud melody referred to the fact that its ending paragraph or sentence with many choruses. In singing style, the vocal assistance of one singing and others chorusing in the Yiyang Qiangwas unique. The singing style of Yiyang Qiangwas suitable for fold stage performances and in line with the public appreciation interest. Therefore, it developed everywhere and showed its strong communication power.

In addition, Yiyang Qiang had the characteristics of no music score, following local customs, changing the melody of the song, and misusing the local language. Its artistic style was simple and passionate with local and wild charm, which was quite appreciated by rural people. Since its artistic characteristics were deeply loved by the public, it was widely circulated among the people. Traditional Chinese opera was originally a product of the people, and its popularity was determined when it came into the world. During its emergence and dissemination, Yiyang Qiang was widely spread throughout the country because it met the public appreciation interests.

As a result, Yiyang Qiang developed in various regions with an easy-toaccept attitude, and the local operas derived from it gradually flourished, making Yiyang Qiang become one source of many local operas. Among them, Luoluo Qiang belonged to the vocal opera that evolved and developed in the history of Yiyang Qiang. Meanwhile, Luoluo Qiang originated from Yiyang Qiang, with supportiveliterature. According to Zaiyuanzazhi (Liu, 1715), during the Kangxi period of the Qing, The old Yiyang Qiang was sung by one person without other choruses. Compared with Kunshan Qiang, it had more short recitations. The melody was best sung with a rolling mouth, and the ending of each paragraph still ended on its own, not like the sound of yo-lo-lo-lo-lo. The Yiyang and Haiyan Zhejiang Opera still retained an ancient style and nowhere else. After that, Yiyang Qiang changed to Siping, Beijing, and Wei operas, and even lower, to Bangzi, Luantan, Wuniang, Zona, and Luoluo. As the trend worsened, new ideas emerged, using Kunshan Qiang as the correct tune.

The record of Liu Tingji revealed that the Luoluo Qiang system evolved from the Yiyang Qiang and became more popular, which could be

increasingly inferior. In the dissemination, the Yiyang Qiang became increasingly inferior and novel, forming a more popular and folk style of Luoluo Qiang. Luoluo Qiang inherited the backstage singing form of Yiyang Qiang, characterized by the unity of one singing and others chorusing.

#### 1.2. Shuahai-er melody

In the Northern Opera of the Yuan Dynasty, and Shuahai-er was also known as Moheluo, Shuahair-er was included in the TaiHe ZhengYin Pu (Zhu, 1398). In this text, Shuahai-er was clearly labeled as Moheluo. Luoluo was the sound transformation of Moheluo, and Wawa and Luoluo were also known as the tone of Shuahai-er. As for Shuahai-er, there were roughly two categories of records:

First, various palace melodies were used in various Yuan Dramas and sets of song verses during the Song and Jin dynasties, such as Shuahaier. This type of Shuahai-erwas a melody in the original series of Banshe Melody, which was also used in the sets of Zhenggong, Zhonglu, and Shuangdiao. However, itwas not used as a separate minor. Its word structure consisted of long and short sentences, usually seven-seven-seven-seven, seven-seven-five, four-four, consisting of three sections and nine sentences, but slight changes might be in actual music examples. Example:

The sleeves are dripping with tears,

It's more sorrowful than Baijuyi.

Bolao goes to the east and the swallow flies to Yanxi,

Ask for the return date before embarking on the journey.

Clearly, there are thousands of miles in sight,

A glass of wine has been finished,

The heart is drunk before it is drunk.

Bleeding in the eyes,

The heart turns gray.

Chapter III of The Story of the Western Chamber

淋漓襟袖淹情泪,

比司马青衫更湿。

伯劳东去燕西飞,

未登程先问归期。

分明眼底人千里,

已过尊前酒一杯,

未饮心先醉。

眼中流血, 心内成灰。

# ——《**西**厢记》第三**折**

All the sentences in this Shuahai-er melody conformed to the general vocabulary of Shuahai-er.

The second Shuahai-er was in the slang songs of the Ming and Qing dynasties. This type of Shuahai-er was a folk song that had been passed down among the people for a long time. However, it was not adopted into the singing style of traditional Chinese opera. In the Ming Dynasty, it had no affiliation with the two major operas of Kunshan and Yiyang. Folk songs and melodies that did not belong to the singing style of traditional Chinese opera wereShidiao Xiaoling.

According to the record of Shidiao Xiaoling in An Unofficial History of the Wan Li Reign Period (Shen, 1619), "The Yuan Xiaolingwas carried out in Hebei and later became increasingly popular through immersion. From Xuande andZhentong to Chenghua and Hongzhi, the genera of [Suonanzhi], [Bianzhuangtai], and [Shanpoyang] were popular in the central plains. Since then, various songs such as [Shuanghai-er], [Zhuyunfei], and [Zuitaiping] have been popular. Until Jiajing and Longhua, [Naowugeng], [Jishengcao], [Luojiangyuan], [Kuhuangtian], [Qianheye], [Fenghonglian], [Tongchengge], and [Yinniusi] was popular from the Huai River Basin to South of the Yangtze River, it was far away from the poetry and music.

According to this record, the slang song Shuahai-er ( the folk song, Xiaoqu) was widely circulated in the Ming Dynasty after the middle period (Chenghua, Hongzhi) and before the Jiajing and Longqing periods. This type of Shuahai-er melody was widely absorbed and applied to various singing songs in the early Qing Dynasty during the diversion and fission of traditional Chinese opera singing styles. Pu Songling (1640-1715) used the Shuahai-er in his fourteen types of slang songs, with Junyecha specifically indicating the use of the fashionable Shuahai-er tone, while Supplementary Xingyun Qu sang the Shuahai-er tone in the first episode. Example:

If there is a cycle in the world,

Nowadays, people are different from before,

The new song is changed once a year.

The Yinniusier was only left behind,

Later on, Dazaogan emerged,

Lock the southern branch and half insert the Luo River Yuan.

The rise of 'Zhengde Whoring House,'

Shuahai-er is strange.

世事儿,若循还,

如今人, 不似前,

新曲一年一遭换。

银纽丝儿才丢下,

**后来**兴起打枣杆,

锁南枝半插罗江怨。

**又**兴起《正德嫖院》,

耍孩儿异样新鲜。

Pu Songling annotated the Shuahai-er with the Shixing in Junyecha and sang "Shuahai-er is strange" in Xingyun Qu. Due to this finding, the type of "Shuahai-er" written by Pu Songling could be classified as the category of Ming and Qing slang songs, whichwas not the same as the Shuahai-er in the various Gongdiaosof the Song and Jin dynasties and Yuan Opera. The main difference between the ancient Shuahai-er in Gongdiao and Yuan Opera and the popular Shuahai-er in Ming and Qing slang songs was that the former was not used as a single song alone, while the latter was a fashionable single song, which was a popular single song. The format of the former lyrics was generally three sections (four-three-two structure), nine sentences (word count: seven (4+3) seven (3+4) seven (4+3) seven (3+4) seven (3+4), seven (4+3) seven (4+3) five, four-four), and five or eight inverted sentences. The latter consisted of three sections (three-three-two structure), eight sentences (word count: six (3+3) six (3+3) seven (4+3), seven (4+3) seven (4+3) seven (4+3), seven (3+4) seven (3+4), and four or seven inverted sentences. Example:

A basket, a ladle,

There is a mule path,

Tears fall before you take a step.

Spending half a life growing this soil,

Once we departed in this lean year,

The future is hard to predict at this time.

Stay at home and wait for death,

Itis difficult to tolerate the official punishment.

一担筐, 一扇瓢,

上羊肠,路一条,

未曾举步泪先掉。

半世生长一块土,

**今**为荒年一旦抛,

这回生死实难料。

待要在家中守死.

那官家枷打难招。

### —Adversity Melody (Qing, Pu Songling)

This is the standard word format for the slang song Shuahai-er, which was widely absorbed into various singing songs in the early Qing. The word format for Shuahai-er (Wawa) was roughly the same. Luoluo Qiangwas also known as the Shuahai-er melody, which was the tune in the folk songs of the Ming and Qing dynasties. It has become the main melody of the Luoluo Qiang.

### 1.3. Northern Xiansuo Qiang

According ToIntegration of Chinese Opera Music - Hebei Volume(1999), Sixian Qiang, also known as Xiansuo Qiang, Xianzi Qiang, Nuer Qiang, LuoluoQiang, etc., was popular in the central and southern regions of Hebei and the eastern part of Jinzhong and Yanbei regions of Shanxi Province. The Sixian Qiang belonged to the Xiansuo Liuzi Qiang system. However, the specific age of its origin and formation was unknown. Based on the common melody in the Sixian singing style, it belonged to the Xiaoling of Yuan mentioned in the Collected Notes on Ming Drama by Shen Defu in Ming.

The Xiaoling of Yuan was popular in Hebei and became increasingly popular due to immersion. After the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, Zhengzong, and Hongzong, the categories of Suonanzhi, Pangzhuangtai, and Shanpoyang were popular in the central plains. Since then, there have been songs such as Shuahai-er, Zhuyunfei, and Zuitaiping. In recent years, there have been two more songs, Dazaogan and Guazhi-er, with a slightly similar style. No matter region, gender, or age, everyone enjoyed this opera. Even it was published into frames and recited throughout the world.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the early Sixian evolved from the Yuan Xiaoling and the folk songs ofthe Ming and Qing Dynasties. Various small songs such as [Shanpoyang], [Suonanzhi], [Bianzhuangtai], [Hangzhi-er], [Zhuyunfei], and [Shuahai-er] formed a large-scale opera genre during the Qianlong period.

In the early stage, the singing style of Sixian Qiang was mainly composed of long and short sentence structures in the Qupai style, which gradually evolved into a mixed form of melodic models and modes belonging to two major parts: Guandiao and Yuediao.

In Drama Discourse (Li, 1782). "The Nuer Qiang was also known as Xiansuo Qiang. Its common name was Henan Opera, like Yiyang Qiang, without harmony at the end. With stringed instruments, the sound was relaxing and long." According to this literature, Xiansuo Qiang (Sixian) "replacedvocal harmony with stringed instruments. The Luoluo Qiang originated from the Northern Xiansuo melody. In the meantime, its instrument did not support the melody, only accompanied the ending and orchestral music interlude. The characteristic of the Luoluo Qiangwas consistent with the Xiansuo Qiang. The early form of the Qupai Lianqu style in the Xiansuo Qiangwas also reflected in the Luoluo Qiang singing style.

2. Textual research on the origin of DiziDiao and Northern Xiansuo Qiang

The researcher analyzed the musical and artistic characteristics of the origin of Luoluo Qiang, such as Yiyang Qiang, Shuahai-er Qupai, and Northern XiansuoQiang. Based on the investigation and research of Dizi Diao, the researcher believed that the genetic relationship between Dizi Diao and the Northern XiansuoQiangwas relatively significant.

Sixian (Xiansuo Qiang) was integrated based on Xiaoling and popular songs from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. During the inheritance and development, four Sixian zones with different styleswere formed because of cultural differences, including languages, aesthetic preferences of the audience, and folk music. Wherein Central-Southern Sixian Xiwas a mature one among various SixianXi. Meanwhile, it was the birthplace of the Sixian Xi. Through comparative analysis, Dizi Diao and the Central-Southern Sixian Xi had a more direct relationship.

The Central-Southern Sixian Xiwas popular in the central and southern regions of Hebei, centered around Zhengding and Shijiazhuang. As the birthplace of the Sixian Xi, the musical culture has been prosperous in this region since ancient times. According to the pitch, its singing style could be divided into two categories, Guandiao and Yuediao. The Sixian Xi adopts a singing style that focuses on mode changes withmelodic models. In the long-term development of Central-Southern Sixian Xi, both Guandiao and Yuediao established their modes and melodic singing style. Due to the many common features between the Dizi Diao, the following part will provide a summary introduction to the Yuediao singing of the Central-Southern Sixian Xi based on mode singing and the Yuediao singing of the Central-Southern Sixian Xi.

Yuediao singing is a complete set of mode singing formed by various mode changes based on the Sandao Qiang and Luoluo Qiang. The Sandao Qiang is known as the Three-segment Opera because it is a folk art singing style named after its music having three segments, and the

sequence of each segment can be reversed and interchanged in practical use. The more melodious Head Mode, Third Mode, and CatchingMode are developed from this style. Luoluo Qiang was a customary term used by people in Hebei and Shanxi to refer to Sixian Xi and its commonQupai,Shuahai-er. It was also the source of the singing style of Yuediao Erban. Based onShuahai-er, the singing style of Yuediao Erban gradually developed by changing the word structure and mode. Although it maintained the same singing style as the original Shuahai-er, it had no strict regulations on word and sentence structures as the original Shuahai-er. Furthermore, it had stronger adaptability and flexibility in music expression, with broader space for emotional expression. Now,it has become the most commonmodeof modern CentralSixian.

#### 2.1. Lyrics

The lyrics of Yuediao Singing are antithesis with seven characters in four-three structures, or ten characters in three-three-four structures, with occasional use of five-character sentences. The high sentence rhymes with or without oblique tones, while the low sentence rhymes with flat tones. The preceding and following sentences correspond to each other and are coordinated in rhythm. The instability of oblique tones and the stability of flat tones precisely meet the need for stability in vocal music, where the falling tone of the high sentence is not fixed, and the low sentence falls on the main tone.

#### 2.2. Modes

Since the lyrics of Yuediao Singing are based on antithesis with seven characters or ten characters, without strict restrictions on the number of sentences or paragraphs, a mode-style singing with high and low sentences as the basic singing units has gradually emerged.

#### 2.2.1. [Yuediao Erban] (2/4 beat notation)

Yuediao Erban is a type of Shuahai-er that changes its word structure and mode. The lexical form is a seven-character antithesis with a highlow sentence, with each sentence divided into two sub-clauses (4+3) based on the style of the lyrics. Anorchestral music interlude of about 2 bars is placed after each sub-clause to indicate separation, and each paragraph is distinguished by a long orchestral music interlude. From the mode, the Yuediao Erban has no differences between male and female melodies but mainly focuses on the Gongdiaomode. The Yuediao Erban of Hualian Opera adopts the Zhidiao mode in several plays. From the perspective of falls, there are only two situations. First, both the high and low sentences fall into the Gong Yin, reflecting a stable melody. The second is that the core sound of the melody in the previous sentence falls into the Shang-Yin, while the core sound in the next sentence falls into the Gong-Yin. This two-dimensional relationship between the falls in the high and low sentences shows the

dynamic and static relationship of the mode, giving theaudience a sense of regression after a sudden change.

#### 2.2.2. [Yuediao Sanban]

[Yuediao Sanban] was developed based on the Sandao Qiang, and it was also an essential and frequently-used style in the Central-Southern Sixian. The lyrics of Yuediao Sanban have a significant feature.Based on the basic four-three structure of seven-character sentences, opera players often add or subtract characters or add functional characters and interlude in accordance with language habits or emotional needs, making the singing more vivid. Since [Yuediao Sanban] singing style has a ban without yans (only one beat), it is goodfor narration, including slow Sanban with a 2/4 beat and fast Sanban with a 1/2 beat, and Gongdiao style. The difference between its singing structure and [Yuediao Erban] is that although an orchestral music interludeseparates the high and low sentences, the high and low sentences are not usually divided into sentences. Under normal conditions, it ends in the second half of the singing section and turns into a scattered singing style. In the singing style, a falling Jue-Yin or a falling Yu-Yinis in the low sentence, with the falling Jue-Yin being the most common, while the low sentence follows the core sound of the falling Gong-Yin.

The above are the singing characteristics of the main modes of the Central-Southern Sixian Xi Yuediao, among which there are many similarities with the mode singing style of the Dizi Diao in lyrics structure, singing style, mode, and falling notes.

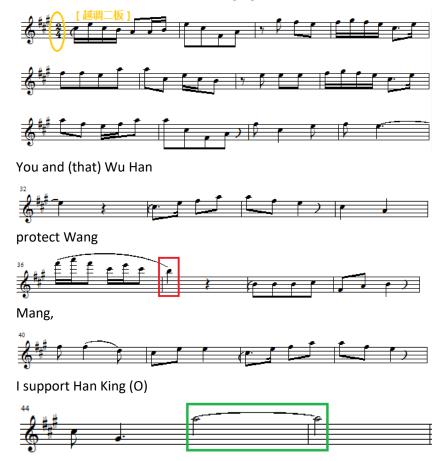
In lyrics structure, the mode style singing lyrics of the Dizi Diao are seven-character antithesis withhigh-low sentences of four-three structure. The high sentence at the foot of the rhyme often rhymes with anoblique-tone character, while the low sentence often rhymes with aneven-tone character. The lyrics of the Dizi Diao have many functional and interlinear characters, similar to the Yuediao lyrics. In Yuediao, players often added or subtracted characters or increased functional and interlinear characters in accordance with language habits based on the seven-character high and low sentence with a four-three structure.

In the mode singing style, the lyrics of the DiziDiao are also based on the seven-character antithesis, without strict restrictions on the number of sentences or paragraphs, forming a mode singing style where the high-low sentences are the basic singing units.

Through a comparative analysis of the singing styles of the Central-Southern Sixian Xi and the DiziDiao, the singing style of the Sixian Xi [Yuediao Erban] is characterized by a 2/4 beat notation, and both male and female melodies are mainly in the Gongdiao. From the perspective of falling notes, the high sentence falls into the Shang-Yin through the

core part of the melody, while the lower sentence falls into the Gong-Yin through the core part of the melody. Meanwhile, [Yuediao Sanban] contains slow Sanban and Gongdiao with a 2/4 beat notation. Its singing structure also has orchestral music interludesto separate the high and low sentences, with the high sentence falling Jue-Yin or Yu-Yin, and the lower sentence falling Gong-Yin through the core part of the melody. The similarity of these features can be found in the singing melody of the Dizi Diao (music scores 1, 2, and 3).

Score 1 Sixian Xi [Yuediao Erban] Singing



stay in Nanyang.

Source: Referring to the Integration of Chinese Opera Music - Hebei VolumeSixian: "Cen Peng, Don't Be Hurried" (selected from the play "Jiyang Pass"), the author compiled and scored.

## Score 2 DiziDiao Singing



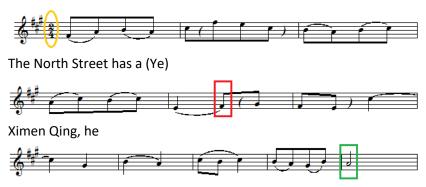
Bring (Ye) your hand together (A, Shi)



On the way (A Ai).

Source: Referring to the DiziDiao of Chinese Opera Music Integration - Hebei Volume: "Our Husband and Wife Leaving the Mountains" (selected from the play "Ten Difficulties"), the researcher compiled and scored.

Score 3 DiziDiao [Liushui Ban] Singing



is (O) a (A) great tycoon.

Source: Referring to the Liushui Ban in the Dizi Diao,"Ximen Qing on North Street" (selected from the play "Jin Ping Mei") in the Integration of Chinese Traditional Chinese Opera Music - Hebei Volume, the researcher compiled and recorded the score.

Due to the singing style of the Central-Southern Opera, the high sentence of the singing style often falls into the Jue-Yin, while the low sentence falls into the Gong-Yin through the core sound of the melody. Therefore, the researcher will not list any musical examples for explanation here.

## **Conclusions:**

Based on the analysis and previous research of the above literature, the researcher inferred that the local opera of Raoyang County in Hengshui, the DiziDiao had a relatively direct relationship with the Northern Xiansuo Qiang. However, there are many similarities between the mode singing style of the DiziDiao and the Cental-Southern Sixian Xi of the Northern Xiansuo Qiang in terms of lyrics structure, singing style, mode, and falling notes. From the location perspective, the Central-Southern Sixian Xi was mainly spread in the central and southern regions of Hebei Province, centered around Shijiazhuang. At the same time, the spreading place of the DiziDiao, Hengshui, is in the southeast of Hebei Province. The western part of Hengshui borders Shijiazhuang City, and the integration of music and

culture between Hengshui and Shijiazhuang is due to the geographical situation. Furthermore, the derivative influence and blending of the Yiyang Qiang, the Luoluo Qiang, and the Northern Xiansuo Qiang in the historical inheritance and development were also expected to be further clarified in future research.

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