

# Leslie's Love for Life with Its Musical and Lyrical Stylizations

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**Abstract.** This study chooses famous Hong Kong artist Leslie Cheung's song Love for Life for a detailed analysis of the musical and performance culture of that time. The song this study chooses has the style of Feng Yansi's Song Poems Ye Jinmen, with a strong literati atmosphere, beautiful and colorful, euphemistic and implicit. Love for Life not only has good lyrics, but the music also exquisitely embodies the artistic conception of the lyrics. Through Leslie's singing, he sings such classical poetic lyrics in a monologue poet's voice. The live version of his 1988 concert, complete with medieval prince costumes, is quite Romeo style, reminiscent of Lam Yihua's words 'If there is a Romeo in the world, I think he is similar to you'. Apart from the analysis of Leslie, this study also draws some attention to the other contributors such as Zhong Xiaoyang. It is argued that through the cooperation of these artists, the song successfully represented the golden age of Hong Kong and one of the peaks of Cantonese culture.

**Keywords:** Love for Life; Leslie Cheung; Hong Kong Popular Culture.

## 1. Introduction

Zhong Xiaoyang is the leader of the second generation of local writers in Hong Kong. In 1986, Zhong's first lyrics were published, and it was Love for Life, a song she co-wrote with entertainer power woman Aija Chang and composed by Taiwan's Jonathan Lee. At first, it was just the theme song of the movie of the same name starring Cheung, but because of the perfect combination of words, songs, and singing, it became a classic in pop music [1-3]. 'Love For Life' is a chick flick about a cliché attempt to steal your best friend's boyfriend. Zhong Xiaoyang's lyrics also take a female perspective, singing about the exclusive feeling when falling in love, and the infinite loss after separation. One hundred words in the space, to show her solid Chinese classical literature skills: small hands, hold into your sleeve, solve your sorrow, since ancient times more than hate, gold for a smile, right and wrong, kindness and resentment red Yan sentimental, almost no word without origin, can be found from the ancient Chinese model. In the nearly three decades since then, many versions of Zhong Xiaoyang's Love for Life have appeared. In 1986, "Love for Life" appeared on two albums of Rolling Stone Records: Pan Yue-yun's "Old Love for New Love" (Taiwan Top 100 No. 31), released in September, and Chang Ai-Ga's album, released in November, also featured the song. Pan Yueyun's version is thick and desolate, while Chang Aijia's version is light and melancholy, like a faint face in a black-and-white photo.

## 2. The literature identities and lyrics

The piece combines a variety of musical elements, using major accompaniment instruments such as guitar and piano, and a variety of styles such as opera arias, chorus, and rock with both classical chorus parts and powerful electric guitar solos. Is a classic representative work of genre-switching. Bohemian Rhapsody has promoted the development of traditional suits of pop music. Unlike most popular songs, it is not a common continue song, with a structure of "verse chorus verse chorus bridge". Instead, it puts the elements that usually appear in three or four different songs in just six minutes. The six minutes includes the introduction part (0:00-0:49), balled (0:49-2:35), opera (3:02-4:047), hard rock (4:07-4:54), and coda (4:54-5:55).

In 1980, while studying at Maryknoll Convent School of the Hong Kong Church, Zhong Xiaoyang accompanied his mother back to Shenyang during the summer vacation to 'visit relatives and collect writing materials'. It was summer, a dry and fiery moon. The sky is cloudless, the ground is rainless,

the rolling dust of the country is quiet, the extreme is the gray back gray belly cement housing cement wall.' But after all, 'the mirage finally had a physical object for me to recognize.' By then, she had begun writing. Shortly after returning from Shenyang, she began writing *Concubines Living Beyond the Great Wall* (Part I of *The Legend of Zhao Jinping*). In 1981, when *Concubines Lived Outside the Great Wall* was serialized in the newspaper, she finished the second part of the *Legend of Zhao Jinping*, *Stopping for a Moment*, which was serialized in the autumn of the same year. Then he went to the United States to read and write the third book in this series but left the pillow letter in tears. In 1982, three novels together, under the title of *Stop for a Moment*, were published by Taiwan Sansan Shufang. At 19, like her idol Zhang Ailing, she became famous at an early age.

On the other hand, Zhang Aijia also became famous early. Nine years older than Zhong Xiaoyang, she entered the television industry at the age of 16 and later acted in movies. At the age of 20, she decided to become a director. In 1985, at the request of Golden Grain, she began planning a comedy to be played by Aika Chang and Deanie IP. In the middle, Lam asked to join her. Aika Chang remembered a story that had been in her mind for a long time: 'It's about two good friends. Do women's relationships with women and friends change because of men?' After Jiahe passed the story outline she wrote, the film *Love for Life* was launched.

At that moment, Zhang Aijia saw Zhong Xiaoyang's poem, 'heart is very moved', the poem is called 'Red beauty': 'Red beauty can be a dress, broken hair for the line /... If beauty is only for a period of love/then let life is a period of love/life only love a person/I only have a kind of sorrow/delicate hand you firmly hold/hold it into your sleeve/That touching is yours is mine ', she asked Zhong Xiaoyang to modify the poem into lyrics, and then gave it to Zongsheng Li. As a result, Ms. Chang and Mr. Lee are sometimes included in the songwriters' bylines. Zhong Xiaoyang's *Golden Age* with her genius, and the writing standards maintained over the years, has been popular in the literary world for many years, revealing her endless aura smoothly and lightly. Writing novels, essays, poems, lyrics... There are almost no forms that she does not know, and every one of them has a masterpiece. At the age of 24, she slightly changed his poem into lyrics and used it in Ai-Ka Chang's movie *Love for Life*, which was later shortlisted for the Golden Horse Award for Best Film episode [4].

The words must be accompanied by the right melody. Jonathan Lee, the composer of 'Love for Life' was not so skillful at the time. The listener's auditory experience is that Zhong Xiaoyang's lyrics are sung into three interdependent but different emotions: 'If the beauty is only for one love' to 'solve your sorrow', the lyrics are repeated, the singer's mood is calm and gentle, infinite tenderness and kindness: 'Since ancient times, I have hated' to 'born just to know you after separation from you', It is a deep feeling in the face of the fate of separation after a sigh, 'forgot to tell you before, the most love is you, now think of it, the most love is you', is the calm and clear after a thousand sails. However, the song took a turn for the even much better in 1988. The last song on 1988's *Virgin Snow* album was a Cantonese version of "Love for Love" with lyrics by Cheng Kwok-kiang. With Zheng Guojiang's lyrics which had been adapted and Leslie Cheung's deep Cantonese voice, the song, this song also occupies a place in the Hong Kong singing circle and has an indelible status [5, 6].

Zheng Guojiang always gives people a sense of innocence, without a trace of wishful thinking. There is no in-depth description, no spoonish call, even no strange writing, everything is so approachable, really like a clear lake, clearly reflecting the innocence of young feelings. This text is easy to remind people of the beautiful daffodil youth, in the water, the clear lake reflected the beautiful shadow. If it can be described by ancient poetry, Zheng Guojiang's lyrics to Leslie Cheung's song *Love for Life* have the style of Feng Yansi's *Song Poems Ye Jinmen*, with a strong literati atmosphere, beautiful and colorful, euphemistic and implicit [7].

The lyric 'Like a lake Blowing Creasing' is inspired by 'the wind blowing creating a pool of water', which is also the climax of the whole song. In Feng Tingsi's *Song poem Ye Jin Men*, these two sentences are puns. They depict scenery on the surface but write feelings. Originally, the water waves are not stirring, but suddenly the wind blows and wrinkles the water of the pond, symbolizing the heroine's heart is turbulent and uncalm. In the song, Zheng quoted *Ye Jinmen*, aiming to portray the

image of a girl who once loved but could not. It is like the scene of spring and renewal in Ye Jin Men. However, the hero travels far away, and the heroine is alone. Therefore, Zheng Guojiang wrote, 'Hate is always immortal, a thousand pieces of gold smile is still natural and unrestrained, for right and wrong.' The use of song Ci classics to show the love and hatred of the hero and heroine makes the whole song more lively and infectious.

When Leslie sings here, he sings the emotional progress represented by the ups and downs of water waves. In the words of a passerby, the Cantonese words are higher, and Leslie can also catch the most artistic conception of the water blowing creasing [8]. The mood is perfectly constructed through slow, rising, rising waves of chanting that eventually become silent. This indicates the importance of lyrics, but how many singers understand them so well? I believe that many people can sing the emotion of this song, but it is difficult to sing the artistic conception of blowing up the lake, which requires not only literary literacy but also aesthetic literacy, not singing skills, just these two things are both Mr. Zhang. This shows the importance of lyrics and songs to singers, so song collection is also learning ah, and Leslie has a kind of classical poetry.

### 3. Leslie Cheung's vocal and performances

Leslie is a very delicate artist. Everything he shows you is not 'made', but 'polished', at least in his own opinion is perfect. As to whether you think it is good or not, he dealt with the market in the 1980s, and by the late 1990s, he has stopped thinking about such issues. Love for Life not only has good lyrics, but the music also exquisitely embodies the artistic conception of the lyrics. Through Leslie's singing, yes, I would like to call it singing, he sings such classical poetic lyrics in a monologue poet's voice. The live version of his 1988 concert, complete with medieval prince costumes, is quite Romeo style, reminiscent of Lam Yihua's words 'If there is a Romeo in the world, I think he is similar to you'.

Coupled with Cantonese, to create a kind of love and hate continuous, worldly affairs fairy fantasy artistic conception: 'hate is always left immortal, a thousand pieces of a gold smile, natural and unnatural, right and wrong many grievances, like the lake blowing wrinkle.' This kind of 'wisp of love in infiltration' of tenderness, in the cover design of the snow and ice thick and boundless, disconsolate mood, both clear and deep. The close-up of Cheung's wistful gaze, wearing an animal hair-felt hat, overlapped with the imagery of him stumbling through a snowy wilderness, revealing feelings of longing and nostalgia, confusion and heartache [8]. All kinds of thoughts make the song act increased such as snow falling free and easily and overflowing around. Finally, the string whispers stopped abruptly, and Leslie Cheung's last sentence, 'I don't think you are like me,' drew the audience to the front, to question, to grieve, to shed tears, to love [8]. When cultural wholeness is often used to understand modern or recent Chinese culture, it seems that the vast difference in cultural styles between Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking areas is often an overlooked detail [9]. The same distinction should be further illustrated in the area of study of this paper. Leslie has an undoubtedly remarkable ability to learn as an accomplished actress. It has been reported that when she was paired with director Chen Kaige in the film Farewell My Concubine, Zhang was very ambitious in believing that her Mandarin level was adequate for a full film performance [10]. Music fans and fans of the singer often use the ability to switch between Mandarin and Cantonese fluently as a criterion for superior musical expression. There is no shortage of modern musicians who sing both Mandarin and Cantonese versions of the same melodic piece. And often the comparison of words, vocals, and artistry between the two different versions can become an enduring topic of conversation among music fans. For half a century, the singers who were able to master both Mandarin and Cantonese, such as the Jacky Cheung generation and the subsequent Eason Chan generation, basically had a more consistent mid-voice expression, and the breadth of their range was also very impressive. When one looks at Leslie as a mature singer, one generally values his skillfulness in Cantonese singing and word processing [11]. This polished and perfected virtuosity is inseparable from his aesthetics, which have a high degree of integrity.

Leslie's performance reached an insurmountable height at the 1997 Concert and the 2000 Lagow Concert. Jonathan Lee's songs incorporated classical elements of Western drama, and Cheung elevated the mood of the lyrics with his inner monologue, which he later performed in the Midnight Song. Since the 1980s, Leslie's interpretation of songs has often exceeded the original artistic conception of the lyrics, which is also the reason why his songs are difficult to imitate. Many of his songs have been deeply branded with Leslie. After listening to many of Cheung's songs, people feel more and more that they should look at him from the perspective of culture. Zhang is a person with classical beauty and classical poetry, but in many cases, he and his works also reflect the influence of Western culture, and the best way to describe it is a combination of Chinese and Western elements. You can never read him from just one side because of the complex side Leslie presents.

Many singers have high notes but low notes. Leslie Cheung's vocal range is very wide, and each of them has a good tone quality, which is rare among male singers. On top of that, since Zhang spent his teenage years in the UK, his singing style is western, which means he is better suited to singing English songs. Western words are composed of channel syllables, so the singing glissando requirements are very high, Zhang made; Chinese songs, on the other hand, have monosyllabic characters, which led to Jacky Cheung's style of singing. Other male singers, such as Luo Wen and Tan, are only the best in Chinese singing. In this, I believe Leslie Cheung is unique. That's why he has a huge fan base.'

But when the time came, his voice was gone. Only dantian gas, oral changes to control, change the sound, perfect. Deep skills, not ordinary people can achieve. Luo Yusheng was not able to master such martial arts until his later years and Mei Lanfang after middle age. The elder brother, middle-aged has been incomparable, and, his difficulty is also at the voice, later, singing the passion of the desert, I, such a song, and cherish the voice as the life of the predecessors can not do. Deep down he was in so much pain. My brother's high notes are said to reach 14 degrees, and it was Li Xiaotian who helped him form the style of the 1980s when he first started his career, considering that his high vocal range would give people a sense of immaturity. So bass and middle are his specialties.

Leslie Cheung's singing is chest resonance, vibrato is very general speech. The last word of every sentence of Leslie Cheung's song is very pleasant to listen to and very deep. Leslie's song is well handled in the end, which is very suitable for the deep and rich voice of his brother. The end note is very far back. In the field of music, Leslie Cheung tries a wide range of music types. And he set the bar for a lot of people in terms of the technical aspects of the song interpretation. Whether it is his shape or his performance of this breakthrough and boldness, and more importantly, his dancing is refreshing, and can give others a very different visual feeling. Just listening to Leslie's music, I think his songs are very big, and the chords are very beautiful, nice, and advanced, should be someone who has learned music theory. Later, when I got to know him, I realized that he was not a professional. What's more, I was amazed by his creation and felt that he was a genius at it.

Leslie said in an interview that he always made up a story for the song before singing. When he sang, the picture in the story came to mind, which made him more devoted to the song. In his words, he put a lot of emotion into every song. I think that's why he interprets the songs so well. No matter how good the singing skill, no matter how perfect the vocal line, also can not match such a focused voice. There has been a saying, quote 'Leslie Cheung, the outermost layer is soft, gentle, and warm, smiling like a spring breeze, but when you get to know him deeply, you will find that the inner layer is hard, strong, and principled, stubborn and undefeated, nice but not bad. But in the deeper to taste, but found in this layer of hard, the most inner is still soft, even more, soft than the outside layer, this heart, is soft water kindness, and broad tolerance'. Before he sings, he makes up a story for the song, and when he sings, the picture of the story comes to mind, which makes him sing more deeply. In his words, he puts a lot of emotion into every song. I think that's why he interprets the songs so well. No matter how good the singing skill, no matter how perfect the vocal line, also cannot match such a focused voice. The beautiful melody and poetic lyrics make this song reach an unsurpassable height. Although Chang's later Mandarin version of 'Love for Life' also uses poetic changes, which is very sweet, it can never surpass Cheung's deep voice and Cheng's lively fairy-tale lyrics.

## 4. Conclusions

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