

The Fusion of Pop Songs and Chinese Elements: Zhou Shen's Traditional Elements Involved Performance in the Song Guangliang/Bright

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Abstract. Since the beginning of the 21st century, as China's national strength continues to grow, the Chinese people's national consciousness has increased. In order to make more young people pay attention to history and love traditional music, many musicians have incorporated Chinese-style elements into popular music with high popularity, which are reflected in the lyrics, singing voice, and orchestration of the songs throughout all parts of the songs. This study takes the song "Bright" composed by Qian Lei and sung by Zhou Shen as an example to analyze some "Chinese style" music. It is argued that the social function and entertainment functions of pop music will be increasingly enhanced, and the development also tends to diversify, and in the future, China's "Chinese-style" pop music will certainly have a bigger and better development.

Keywords: Popular Song; Chinese Style; Zhou Shen.

1. Introduction

As the process of globalization intensifies, the arts and cultures of various countries collide with each other and diversified forms of music emerge. Pop music, which is highly popular and has a wide audience, serves as a vehicle for spreading culture. Music has been a vehicle for the spread of culture.

In the early days, influenced by the music of the West, where pop music originated, China had already simulated and fused Western music artists and music styles with some traditional Chinese music. The development of Chinese pop music began with the song "Mao Mao Yu" composed by Lai Kam Fai and sung by his daughter Lai Ming Fai. Although the song still retains much of the old Chinese opera style, its gentle and melodious singing became the first locally composed pop music in China and broke the monopoly of Western music in Shanghai. Under the influence of the "universal era" in which China advocates national characteristics and ethnicity benchmarks, more and more musicians and even ordinary listeners are emphasizing their own cultural output and influence, and a steady stream of "Chinese-style" music works is coming out, which These works emphasize the use of traditional Chinese musical elements throughout the works and the use of Chinese opera elements. [1]. These works are different from the early Orientalist-style absorption and acceptance of Oriental music [2-4]. Under the Orientalist imagination of Orientalism in the early Western perspective, the difference in meaning between Europe and America, and Asia is fixed, and the real East is isolated from the Western imagination under the Western thinking barrier, and the perception of the East is in a sense self-imagined and constructed by the Western social media under the framework of Orientalism, so film, television, and music have a strong westernized color [5, 6]. In the recent Disney movie Mulan, the oriental faces and oriental music elements in Mulan attracted many Chinese audiences to go to the theater, but the scenes presented in the movie were misaligned with historical facts, and the oriental story and elements were still implicitly orientalist, which aroused the dissatisfaction of many Chinese audiences.

The soundtrack and interludes, the lyrics of these interludes, and soundtracks are based on the traditional story background of Hua Mulan, and the music is interspersed with fragments of traditional Chinese musical instruments such as bamboo flute and erhu [7]. These fragments are used in the film by Western music producers to take advantage of the strong analog quality of the timbre of the erhu, and the instruments and people are like a form of question and answer in the film, and the tuning of the soundtrack also adopts the traditional Chinese tuning [8]. The difference between these scores

and the Chinese-inspired works composed by some Chinese music producers is that they still retain the performance forms and singing methods of Western musicals, while some Chinese-inspired works in China today make extensive use of traditional Chinese singing styles and instruments, with piano and strings as part of the focus of the songs, and a good blend of the two.

This study takes the song "Bright" composed by Qian Lei and sung by Zhou Shen as an example to analyze some "Chinese style" music nowadays. Qian Lei is a very excellent composer, his works include "Big Fish", "Silence", "Lone Brave", "Three Lives, Three Worlds, Ten Miles of Peach Blossoms", and "As You Wish". Among them, "Big Rain" and "Three Lives, Three Worlds, Ten Miles of Peach Blossoms" are modern "Chinese-style" works composed by him, which have the characteristics of ethereal and grand. In his "Chinese-style" works, he likes to put traditional Chinese musical instruments in the interlude of the songs and use strings with them to render the main melody of the songs, enrich the colors of the songs and enrich the acoustics of the songs.

2. The Development of Chinese Popular Music

The origin of "popular music" in the United States, originated from black folk music, religious songs, labor songs, dance music, etc., and has a century of history. In early Europe, black slaves were emancipated because of the Civil War, but because of the lack of land and income sources, black people formed groups to enter the taverns or cafes to sing to make ends meet, and these songs were generally to tell their miserable experience, express their desire for a better life, and some were to describe the fidelity of love and some daily life.

The development of Chinese pop music began with the song "Mao Mao Yu" composed by Lai Jinhui and sung by his daughter Lai Minghui, and it has been more than 90 years since then. During these 90 years, China has undergone many changes in social systems and social ideologies, and pop music has changed from expressing family sentiments to more about their own emotions and lives [9].

Early Chinese pop music developed for the same reasons as the Beatles in England. One of the reasons why the Beatles were able to conquer millions of young people was because of the "hippie revolution" youth movement of the time [10]. At the same time, under the influence of the industrialization of Western society, the accelerated pace of life, study, and work, the repressed social state led to the repressed psychological state of many young people, who were eager for individuality and freedom, and the pop music of the time captured such a characteristic and was able to spread and develop rapidly. It was because of the influence of the changes in social form and social system that early Chinese pop music usually had a very distinctive sense of the times, and the content of the songs must have shown a positive meaning, which was loved and supported by the general public, thus accelerating the development of Chinese pop music.

In terms of singing technique, the singing method of early Chinese pop music was different from the traditional Chinese singing method, which focused on biting and rhyming, and in which vocal singing was the main part of the song, while the instrumental music only served as an accompaniment to the vocal singing, following the direction of the vocal. In early Chinese pop music, for example, "Sweet Honey", to express the meaning of the song and to better match the atmosphere created by the song, the singers no longer follow the traditional Chinese singing method to bite the words, but drag the notes or add decorative sounds such as glissandos when singing the end of the words, such singing techniques sometimes cannot distinguish the content of the lyrics, but better create the atmosphere of the song. This technique is sometimes indistinguishable from the lyrics, but it creates a better atmosphere and intention for the song. The vocals also become part of the background of the song, blending in with the instrumental accompaniment rather than being the most important part, and the song becomes more abstract in its expression.

After the year 2000, with the rapid development of Chinese pop music, excellent musicians such as Jay Chou and Eason Chan emerged. Because of the influence of western music education, their works belonged entirely to the category of pop music. This group of musicians they pay more

attention to the imagery and atmosphere of their songs, they combine a variety of elements, they no longer pursue clear singing lyrics, and they express their understanding of pop music through various innovative singing forms.

Nowadays, under the blossoming market of pop music, the development of the new generation of pop music has harkened back to traditional Chinese music, some in terms of singing techniques and some in terms of the orchestration of the accompaniment. With the development of electronic technology, the latest electronic synthesizers have been able to produce almost identical sounds by "sampling" and creating imaginary sounds that have never existed in human hearing. To broaden the market of pop music, some Chinese music producers have combined the needs of the market by sampling traditional Chinese folk instruments, combining them with futuristic electronic music, and interspersing traditional Chinese singing techniques into the songs, thus creating a new generation of "Chinese-style" electronic pop music. The combination of pop music and electronic technology has facilitated the development of pop music in both breadth and depth and has made current pop music more contemporary.

3. Reasons for the Fusion of Contemporary Chinese Pop Songs with Chinese Elements

The famous Chinese literary scholar Mr. Lu Xun once said, "The more national, the more universal". From ancient times to the present, both the dance music of various nationalities and American jazz have been able to gain the love of people around the world for their ethnicity. The combination of Chinese pop music and ethnic elements is also an inevitable trend, and with the intensification of the globalization process, cultural and artistic exchanges collide, and diversified forms of music appear, Chinese music and art also enter the peak of development in the continuous exchanges and collisions. Pop music, because of its wide audience, has seen an increase in demand in the music market and an urgent need for breakthroughs to discover new markets, so the "Chinese style" element has entered the Chinese pop music scene. Music producer Huang Xiaoliang has given his unique insights on "Chinese style", he believes that "Chinese style" elements in pop works are mainly reflected in the "three ancient and three new", the so-called "three ancient and three new" refers to "ancient diction, ancient culture, ancient melody", "new singing style, new arrangement, a new concept". Music with Chinese elements differs from other pop music works in that the lyrics use ancient rhetoric, the melodies are mostly in traditional Chinese tunes, the instrumental music uses traditional Chinese folk instruments, and the background stories of the songs have Chinese historical and cultural connotations. For example, the song "Light" performed by Zhou Shen is the theme song of the sixth episode of the large-scale Chinese historical documentary "The Forbidden City", and some of its lyrics come from the poem "Ding Feng Bo" by Su Shi, a poet of the Northern Song Dynasty. The opera part, which is a Chinese element, mostly uses the traditional Chinese pentatonic tune as the main melody and is accompanied by traditional Chinese folk instruments such as guqin, folk drums, and cymbals, which are brighter and more Chinese folk characteristics compared to other melodies in this song, reflecting the ups and downs of Ming Dynasty history and finally seeing some light of hope at the end, fitting the name of the song.

With the progress and development of society, it is inevitable that "Chinese-style" elements will be combined with pop music, in line with the development trend of today's times. Chinese traditional music has a profound accumulation, which is formed by taking the essence of thousands of years of Chinese music history and is the crystallization of the wisdom of Chinese music creators, reflecting the unique style of Chinese music. The music with "Chinese style" elements is based on the traditional Chinese culture, combined with the current popular elements of the creative style and formed. As the pace of life accelerates, traditional skills such as Chinese opera and Chinese folk instruments are long and difficult to learn, and young people's in-depth understanding of traditional culture gradually decreases, making these skills gradually lag behind some current trends and no longer attract the attention of young people. The integration of Chinese-style elements into the creation of pop music

not only attracts a large number of young people but also promotes the development of, for example, opera and Chinese folk instruments to a certain extent. It not only meets the needs of the current music market that wants innovation and diversified integration but also inherits the excellent Chinese traditional culture.

4. Characteristics of Pop Songs with Chinese Elements

One of the differences between some pop songs with "Chinese-style" elements and other pop songs is the use of ancient Chinese poems or literary texts as part of the lyrics. Some of these poems are bold, some are euphemistic, some think about people's hardships, and some express their own feelings, but what is rarer is that the lyrics concentrate a lot of history and humanities, full of connotation, and the words have an endless meaning, which not only makes people think deeply but also gives people a kind of hazy beauty so that people have infinite reverie about its meaning. For example, Zhou Shen sings the song "Light" as the theme song of the sixth episode of the large-scale Chinese historical documentary "The Forbidden City", and some of its lyrics come from the poem "Ding Feng Bo" by Su Shi, a poet of the Northern Song Dynasty. The poem, "Don't listen to the sound of beating leaves through the forest" means that when walking on the road, don't bother about the sound of raindrops hitting the bamboo leaves, if you enjoy it as beautiful music, it will make you enjoy the journey. This verse as lyrics in the song reflects the Forbidden City as a spectator witnessing the development and changes of China's Ming Dynasty history, and also reflects the unity and diversity of history from the side, which is profound and full of philosophical meaning. Some other pop songs with "Chinese-style" elements use some Chinese words with classical meaning as part of the lyrics. "the picture of a lady", "embroidery needle", "splashed ink landscape painting", "Jiangnan town" and other words with Chinese characteristics. The combination of words adds a Chinese historical color to the song and reflects the cultural heritage of the production process of celadon.

Traditional Chinese music has a long history, and there is no single form of music, for example, folk songs and Chinese operas are different types of singing, and the difference in singing methods and cadences is also a distinctive feature of music works with "Chinese-style" elements.

The instrumental accompaniment is an important part of the overall tone of a piece of music and plays an important role in driving the music forward and enhancing the quality and impact of the piece. The use of a large number of traditional Chinese instruments in the arrangement is also a distinctive feature of music works with "Chinese style" elements. Chinese folk music usually uses traditional Chinese instruments such as erhu, guzheng, pipa, xiao, etc., which are added to the intro, interlude, or outro of the music. The acoustic quality of Erhu, which is also known as the Chinese violin or erhu fiddle, is a perfect example to illustrate Chinese style with a classical or traditional taste in music. In terms of singing, the process of singing will use a lot of Chinese singing voices, such as upper glissando, lower glissando, crying voice, etc. Some Western music producers are also using traditional Chinese folk instruments as orchestrations to describe the East, and they use erhu in Eastern films and TV productions. For example, the recent Disney movie "Mulan", with its clear oriental faces and oriental music elements, attracted many Chinese audiences to the theater. For the soundtrack and interludes containing a lot of Chinese elements, the music is interspersed with fragments of traditional Chinese musical instruments such as bamboo flute and erhu. These fragments are used by Western music producers in the film to take advantage of the strong tonal simulating qualities of erhu, bamboo flute, and other instrumental music, and to combine musical instruments and people as a form of question and answer in the film.

As we all know, early pop music originated in the West, and the composers were influenced by Western pop music and had their own opinions about Western pop music, while the composers also understood the deep cultural background of China, so the music works created were not confined to tradition but were based on tradition, fused and innovated, with the characteristics of collision and fusion between Western pop music and traditional Chinese culture. For example, in the song "Light", the piano and drums are used extensively and combined with traditional Chinese folk instruments

such as folk drums, cave drums, and cymbals, so that listeners can feel the charm of traditional music in pop music and pop music at the same time.

5. Conclusion

For today's Chinese pop music, the social function, and entertainment function of pop music will be increasingly enhanced, and the development also tends to diversify, and in the future, China's "Chinese-style" pop music will certainly have a bigger and better development. It is hoped that Chinese music producers in the future adhere to the principle of using the past for the present, absorb the essence of various regions and genres of music, learn more from the scientific vocal methods of traditional singing, combine them organically into Chinese pop singing, sing the style of their own country and region, base on the development of the nation, and spread the excellent "Chinese style" pop music works to the world. The new fusion style is also the revival of the old ones.

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