

# The creative characteristics of Liu Chi's film songs in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China

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**Abstract:** In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese film music entered a heyday, and Liu Chi was the most influential composer at that time. In his film songs, based on the development of the times, he boldly used ethnic and folk music as song materials, innovated the form of songs, and created many popular film songs for the people. This article starts from analyzing the three movie songs created by Liu Chi in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and summarizes his creative characteristics from the perspectives of nationality, originality, and contemporaneity. Provide research ideas for the development of film songs during this period.

**Keywords:** Liu Chi; During the founding period; Movie songs; Creative features.

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## 1. Chapter 1 Overview of Film Songs in the Early Years of the Founding of the People's Republic of China

The birth of the 1905 film "Dingjun Mountain" added a rich and colorful touch to the development of film history. Movies and films have also matured in the following decades of development, to the extent that they have now become the best choice for people's entertainment and leisure. Movies are also influencing us unconsciously. And movie songs are the most emotionally expressive way in film art. Movie songs can not only enhance the atmosphere and mobilize emotions, but also assist the film camera in driving the development of the story plot, achieving a dual effect. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, people's material level was not as prosperous as it is now, and computers and televisions were not popularized. Weekly movie screenings became one of the most important means for people to interact with music in that era. It was during this period that a large number of excellent movie theme songs and interludes quickly spread among the general public. The movie songs by composer Liu Chi are undoubtedly the most representative and widely sung.

## 2. Chapter 2 Analysis of Film Songs Created by Liu Chi in the Early Years of the Founding of the People's Republic of China

Liu Chi was born in Shaanxi. In 1939, he was admitted to the third term of the Music Department of Yan'an Lu Xun Academy of Arts and Literature with excellent grades, under the guidance of Xian Xinghai. Upon first learning about music, Liu Chi gained high recognition from Xian Xinghai and taught him that "when composing, ethnic music should be the main creative subject, but one must also learn from European symphonies, operas, classical music schools, and romantic music schools, be inclusive, and draw nourishment from literature and other arts..." It was under the guidance of his teacher's Chunchun that, Liu Chi constantly develops and innovates ethnic music.

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic

of China, Liu Chi co wrote three popular movie songs: "Let's Shake the Double Paddle", "My Motherland", and "Hero's Anthem".

### 2.1. A movie interlude that reflects children's innocence - "Let's paddle"

The song "Let's Row Our Paddles" is the theme song of the children's film "Flowers of the Motherland". This work was initially disseminated in the form of a choir, until the author adapted it into a solo song in 1959.

"Let's paddle" in 2/4 beats, # C feather mode. The melody uses weak and rising bars as a foundation to create a gentle atmosphere, reflecting the positive and optimistic attitude of the children. The whole song is led by children boating on the sea and paddling, shining on their happy mood with the beautiful sea scenery. Finally, the theme of the song is further expanded and sublimated with the rhetorical question "Who arranged a happy life for us?". The whole song depicts a beautiful picture of children's growth and development from a child's perspective and tone, with a lively melody.

Once released, "Let's Shake Our Paddles" quickly spread throughout the country and received high praise from the people. In 1980, it won the first prize in children's song creation.

### 2.2. A movie interlude promoting patriotic spirit - "My Motherland"

In 1956, to commemorate the third anniversary of the Korean War, Changchun Film Studio began planning to shoot the movie "Shangganling". However, until the filming of the film was completed, the theme song had not been finalized yet. Under various entanglements, director Shamon asked Qiao Yu to write the lyrics for the film, and the task of composing under Qiao Yu's recommendation was handed over to Liu Chi. He also expressed the hope that the theme song could become a classic, requiring every time people sang this song, they immediately thought of the heroes who fought bravely on the battlefield. So Liu Chi devoted himself to studying and locked himself in the room for more than ten days, spending a lot of effort. In order to be better accepted by the people, he conducted a survey and research on people's

favorite songs from 1949 to 1955, and selected ten songs that were repeatedly sung. Finally, the first two lines of the melody from "Lugou Q&A" rewritten from "Little Cowherd" were selected as the introduction for the new song. Soon, a melodious song "My Motherland" was born.

"My Motherland" is a single two part musical form, with 4/4 beats. The song includes a solo section and a choir section. The volunteer army, originally scheduled to hold out in the tunnel for 24 hours, ultimately held out for 24 days. When the instructor was seriously injured, the health worker tearfully sang "A big river with wide waves, the wind blowing on both sides of the rice flower fragrance..." which led to the solo part. This part of the melody is beautiful and lyrical, with a gentle and melodious melody. The three lyrics display three beautiful pictures, which bring out a strong sense of homesickness. Immediately after, all the soldiers sang together, "This is the beautiful motherland, the place where I grew up..." In stark contrast to the solo part, this part immediately displayed a strong and determined fighting spirit. The profound reflection reflects the patriotism and homesickness of the soldiers. This solo and choir singing form is a major innovation of Liu Chi's creation of this song. The difference between the two forms not only highlights the dramatic effect of the film, but also more accurately portrays the personality traits and resilient qualities of the movie characters, leaving a deep impression on the audience.

With the passage of time, as director Shamon had hoped, the song gained the love of the audience and gradually moved away from movies, becoming a memorable vocal work. After a long period of baptism, the movie song "My Motherland" has become the voice of the times and is still being sung endlessly to this day.

### **2.3. A movie insert showcasing the spirit of heroic struggle - "Hymn of Heroes"**

"Hymn of Heroes" is the theme song of the movie "Heroic Sons and Daughters", which belongs to the same theme as "Shangganling". After watching the film, Liu Chi was deeply moved by the fearless spirit of "Wang Cheng" and immediately decided to use "hymns" to reflect the image of national heroes. At the same time, the Mongolian folk song "Bater Tao Tao Hu" caught the eye, and in Mongolian, "Bater" means "hero". Immediately, Liu Chi absorbed and borrowed this local folk song as the music theme of "Hero's Anthem".

The Hymn of Heroes is a typical lyrical work. 4/4 beats, single two-part form. The form is roughly the same as the song "My Motherland". The first part is a female solo, showcasing the greatness of an unknown hero from a narrative perspective; The second part is a three part choir, in the form of Q&A, using the passionate and straightforward expression of the choir to pay tribute to the hero.

## **3. Chapter Three Research on the Characteristics of Liu Chi's Film Song Creation in the Early Years of the Founding of the People's Republic of China**

### **3.1. Ethnicity**

During the founding of the People's Republic of China, Liu Chi's film and song creation was constantly exploring the path of inheriting and developing excellent traditional Chinese culture. He often goes to the folk to collect folk customs and

records ethnic materials through practical activities that he sees and hears with his own eyes. He once said, "National folk music is an inexhaustible source of power." In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, "My Motherland" was inspired by the folk tune "Lugou Q&A", and "Hero's Anthem" was presented based on the Mongolian folk song "Bater Tao Tao Hu" as the theme of the music. In addition to absorbing the essence of these folk songs or folk music, Liu Chi also boldly uses modern composition techniques to truly make the past serve the present and inherit and innovate. This not only maintains the original ethnic flavor of the national tone, but also gives them new life.

At the same time, Liu Chi was also skilled at using the "transitional" structure of ethnic music to compose songs during this period. The songs "Let's Row Our Paddles" and "My Motherland" all reflect this. Taking "Let's Row the Double Paddles" as an example, the song is divided into three major sections, each of which is divided into four phrases. The first verse uses the weak rising bar as the starting point, showing us a group of children playing on the lake surface. The second sentence "Cheng" and the first phrase are both weak and similar in structure, and continue the scene from the previous sentence to further describe a beautiful picture. The third sentence "Zhuan" uses a rhythmic pattern of long notes and large dots, reflecting the joyful mood of children and highlighting the passion and vigor of the times. The ending sound of the fourth phrase "he" falls on "sol", and the semi ending state creates an unfinished scene for the audience, giving them ample room for imagination.

In addition, boldly using the national pentatonic mode is also one of Liu Chi's creative characteristics. For example, the song "My Motherland" uses the "palace mode", while "Let's Shake the Double Paddles" uses the "feather mode". The pentatonic mode, as a national mode, is the most commonly heard and easily accepted form of song by the people.

### **3.2. Originality**

In the creation of movie songs, how to promote the development of the story plot and deepen the character images in the film is an important factor that Liu Chi considers. In his two works "My Motherland" and "Hero's Anthem" created during this period, Liu Chi boldly used the form of lead singer+choir. The lead singer first introduced the audience into the entire story in a tone of confession, and then through the baptism of choir, as the harmony continued to thicken, the music gradually reached its climax, and the characters in the play became more three-dimensional. Once this novel form emerged, it quickly gained widespread recognition, and even today it still plays a crucial role in the creation of modern songs.

### **3.3. Contemporaneity**

The emergence and development of any cultural work are closely related to the current era they are in. The creation of movie songs reflects the most authentic feedback of humanistic sentiment during a certain period of time. Therefore, timeliness is one of the most important characteristics of film song creation. The songs of every era reflect the social and spiritual outlook of the people at that time. During his creative career, Liu Chi always placed himself in the era he was in, and from the perspective of the times, created songs that the people loved and enjoyed. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, "Singing of the motherland and paying tribute to heroes"

became an eternal and unchanging topic of that era.

During the period of the founding of the People's Republic of China, it was also a crucial time for the victory of the Korean War. To complement this historical background, composer Liu Chi created songs such as "My Motherland" and "Heroic Hymn". They are all based on the theme of anti US aid to North Korea movies, and their patriotism and heroism highlight the theme of that era. Enable people to still receive the education of patriotism, love for the party, and love for the people, while watching movies and listening to songs. The movie songs created by Liu Chi not only showcase the spirit of the times promoted in that era, but also further promote the cultural development in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Becoming a promoter and propagandist of the spiritual culture of people in that era.

#### 4. Summary

Liu Chi's life has composed songs of loyalty to his motherland, love for his nation, and longing for a better life, influencing generation after generation. This may be why he became the most influential composer of that era, a role model worthy of our admiration.

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