

# Study on the Historical Development of Folk Songs in Shanbei

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**Abstract:** Northern Shanbei folk songs are famous traditional music in China. This study focuses on the origin and historical development of northern Shanbei folk songs, as well as its characteristics and ways of expression. The origin and development of northern Shanbei folk songs have not only incorporated ancient farming culture and theatre traditions, but also combined them with modern music to form a unique musical style and mode of expression. This has made northern Shanbei folk songs retain their ancient characteristics in their inheritance, while also advancing with the times and adapting to the needs of modern society. As an important part of Chinese folk songs, northern Shanbei folk songs are of great significance to the study of Chinese music culture and social history.

**Keywords:** Northern Shanbei folk songs; Historical development; Characteristics.

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## 1. Introduction

As an important part of Chinese traditional music, northern Shaanbei folk songs have a long history and rich cultural connotations. With its unique musical style and profound national characteristics, northern Shaanbei folk songs are very popular among people. The study of the historical development, characteristics and expression of northern Shanbei folk songs will help us to know more about Chinese traditional folk music.

## 2. History of Folk Songs in Northern Shanbei

As one of the important branches of Chinese folk songs, northern Shanbei folk song has a long history and unique musical style. It originates from the ancient land of Shanbei, carrying rich cultural connotations and social history. The origin of folk songs in northern Shanbei can be traced back to ancient times, and after a long period of evolution and inheritance, it has gradually formed a unique form of music. The origin of folk songs in northern Shanbei can be traced back to the ancient prehistoric period. At that time, the residents of northern Shanbei made their living by farming, and they expressed their awe and gratitude to nature through singing. These primitive folk songs were mainly passed on orally, with no fixed tunes or lyrics, but they contained strong regional characteristics and emotional expressions. With the development of society and cultural prosperity, northern Shaanbei folk songs gradually formed their own unique style. During the Tang and Song dynasties, the music of northern Shanbei began to combine with opera forms such as Peking Opera and Chinese Opera, forming a unique form of northern Shanbei opera. In this form of opera, northern Shanbei folk songs became an important means of expression, conveying emotions and stories through singing. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, northern Shanbei folk songs began to have more fixed tunes and lyrics. During this period, the themes of northern Shanbei folk songs were gradually enriched to include various aspects of life, love, war, and social phenomena. These folk songs were loved by people for their heartfelt and simple expressions.

In recent times, northern Shanbei folk songs have undergone some changes in the process of modernisation. With the development of music technology and the diversification of means of communication, northern Shanbei folk songs have begun to incorporate modern elements, such as electronic music and pop music. This makes the northern Shanbei folk songs more adaptable to the needs of modern society and more popular among more people.

## 3. Characteristics and Traditional Expression of Northern Shaanbei Folk Songs

As an important part of Chinese folk music, northern Shaanbei folk songs have unique musical characteristics and ways of expression. The origin of northern Shanbei folk songs can be traced back to the farming culture and labour life in the ancient northern Shanbei region, and it is a true portrayal of the life and emotion of the people in northern Shanbei.

Firstly, the musical characteristics of northern Shanbei folk songs are reflected in their melodies, rhythms and tones. The melodies of northern Shanbei folk songs are simple and infectious, often expressing emotions in natural and smooth tunes. They have a strong sense of rhythm, with both bright and cheerful tunes, as well as melodious and soft tunes. The tone of the songs is mainly in the middle and low tones, giving people a calm and deep feeling. In addition, the musical accompaniment of northern Shanbei folk songs mostly adopts folk instruments such as erhu, pipa, suona, etc., which enhances the folk atmosphere of the music.

Secondly, the traditional ways of expression of northern Shanbei folk songs mainly include oral singing and dance performance. Northern Shaanbei folk songs are mainly sung orally, and the songs are passed down from generation to generation. This traditional way of oral transmission and singing makes the folk songs of northern Shanbei widely spread and circulated among the people. At the same time, northern Shaanbei folk songs are often accompanied by dance performances, in which the dance movements echo the melodies of the songs, enhancing the artistic infectivity and ornamental qualities of the music.

In addition, the lyrics of northern Shanbei folk songs are

rich and varied, covering all aspects of life, love, and labour. The lyrics are usually based on the northern Shaanbei dialect, which is simple and natural and gives people a sense of intimacy. The content of the lyrics is mostly based on real life, expressing people's love of life and feelings, and reflecting the emotions and spiritual world of the people of northern Shaanbei.

### 3.1. Musical characteristics of Northern Shaanbei folk songs

Shaanbei folk songs are an important part of local folk music in northern Shaanbei, with unique musical characteristics. Its musical characteristics are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

Firstly, the tone of northern Shaanbei folk songs is diverse. Northern Shaanbei folk songs have rich and varied tones, flexible melodic jumps and a wide range of tones. It includes high-pitched and impassioned tones, as well as soft and gentle tones, which can express a wealth of emotions and moods.

Secondly, the rhythm of northern Shaanbei folk songs is unique. Northern Shaanbei folk songs have a strong sense of rhythm, often dominated by fast rhythms, sometimes accompanied by bright percussion rhythms. This unique rhythm gives people a feeling of vigour and passion.

Again, the sound of northern Shaanbei folk songs is unique. Northern Shaanbei folk songs often use traditional musical instruments, such as erhu, pipa, yangqin, etc. The unique tone of these instruments can increase the unique flavour of northern Shaanbei folk songs. At the same time, northern Shaanbei folk songs often use the throat singing method, making the tone more unique.

In addition, the lyrics of northern Shaanbei folk songs are rich and varied. The lyrics of northern Shaanbei folk songs are related to the local customs, historical legends and life in northern Shaanbei province. The lyrics are close to life and can make people resonate with them.

Finally, northern Shaanbei folk songs are performed in various forms. The performance forms of northern Shaanbei folk songs include solo, chorus and accompaniment. This variety of performance forms can better show the musical characteristics and charm of northern Shaanbei folk songs.

Northern Shaanbei folk songs have attracted a large number of listeners with their unique musical characteristics. It not only reflects the cultural characteristics of northern Shaanbei region, but also is an important way of spiritual support and emotional expression of the people of northern Shaanbei. Through in-depth study of the musical characteristics of northern Shaanbei folk songs, it can better inherit and develop northern Shaanbei folk songs, and enrich the artistic connotation of northern Shaanbei local music.

### 3.2. Traditional expression of northern Shaanbei folk songs

As an important part of traditional Chinese music, Shaanbei folk songs have a unique way of expression. The traditional expression of northern Shaanbei folk songs mainly includes oral transmission, folk singing and local opera performance.

Firstly, oral transmission is one of the most traditional and primitive ways of expression of northern Shaanbei folk songs. In this way, the lyrics, tunes and singing techniques of northern Shaanbei folk songs are passed down from generation

to generation through oral transmission. In rural areas, people often sing folk songs orally in the fields or at family gatherings, which makes it possible to preserve and pass on the northern Shaanbei folk songs.

Secondly, folk singing is another important way of expression of northern Shaanbei folk songs. Folk singing usually takes place on specific occasions, such as weddings, funerals, and holiday celebrations. On these occasions, people sing northern Shaanbei folk songs collectively to express their feelings and blessings for life. Folk singing is not only a form of musical performance, but also an important way of social communication and cultural inheritance.

In addition, local opera performances are also an important way of expressing northern Shaanbei folk songs. There are rich and diverse local operas in northern Shaanbei, such as Jin Opera, Yu Opera, and Bangzi Opera, etc., and elements of northern Shaanbei folk songs are often incorporated into these operatic works. In opera performances, actors interpret the emotions and stories in northern Shaanbei folk songs through singing and acting, allowing the songs to be displayed on a wider range of stages.

Traditional expressions of northern Shaanbei folk songs include oral transmission, folk singing, and local theatre performances. These modes of expression not only reflect the unique charm of northern Shaanbei folk songs, but are also an important way for the inheritance and development of northern Shaanbei folk songs. However, with the change of society and the rise of new media, the traditional ways of expression are facing challenges and changes. Therefore, how to integrate the new media with the traditional expression of northern Shaanbei folk songs has become a topic worth studying and exploring.

## 4. Conclusion

During the origin and development of northern Shaanbei folk songs, they have not only integrated the ancient farming culture and theatre traditions, but also combined with modern music to form a unique musical style and expression. This has made northern Shaanbei folk songs retain their ancient characteristics in their inheritance, while also advancing with the times and adapting to the needs of modern society. As an important part of Chinese folk songs, northern Shaanbei folk songs are of great significance to the study of Chinese music culture and social history. With their unique musical characteristics and expressions, northern Shaanbei folk songs have become an important part of the folk music of the northern Shaanbei region and of China as a whole. Through oral singing and dance performances, northern Shaanbei folk songs convey people's emotions and life experiences to the world. It is not only a treasure of northern Shaanbei culture, but also an important part of traditional Chinese culture.

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