

# Developmental Characteristics and Influencing Factors of Guzheng Performance Techniques

Surong Zhang

Graduate University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 11000, Mongolia

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**Abstract:** The guzheng, as one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, has developed and evolved its playing techniques throughout the thousands of years of Chinese history. This paper starts from the origin of guzheng, and then analyses the development characteristics and influencing factors of guzheng playing techniques. In general, the development and evolution of guzheng playing technique is an important part of Chinese music culture, we should continue to pay attention to and promote its development, so that the guzheng playing technique will bloom more brilliantly in the new era.

**Keywords:** Guzheng; Playing Technique; Development Characteristics; Influencing Factors.

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## 1. Introduction

Guzheng, as one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, has a long history and rich playing techniques. In the long history, guzheng playing techniques have been evolving and developing, and have made great contributions to Chinese music culture. However, the development characteristics of guzheng playing techniques and their influencing factors have not been systematically studied. For this reason, this paper aims to discuss the development of guzheng playing techniques, analyse its regional and epochal characteristics, as well as the influence of social and cultural background and music aesthetic concepts on the development of techniques.

## 2. Regional Characteristics of Technique Development

In the process of the development of Chinese guzheng, regional characteristics are an important factor that cannot be ignored. Due to the vast area of China, there are big differences in cultural traditions, folk customs and language habits, which affect the formation and development of guzheng playing techniques to a certain extent.

First of all, in the southern region, guzheng playing technique pays more attention to the delicacy and softness of the tone. For example, the Guangdong zheng school has a very unique style of playing, often using more gentle touch and more delicate tone, making the music more rhythmic. In the Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas, guzheng performance pays more attention to the beautiful melody and rich harmony, with obvious characteristics of the Jiangnan water town. The guzheng playing techniques in the northern regions are more rugged, such as the Shandong zheng school and the Shaanxi zheng school, which often pursue strong emotional expression and an impassioned atmosphere when playing. In terms of playing techniques, the northern zheng school uses more ornamental sounds such as glissando and vibrato to make the music more infectious. In addition, there are also differences in the inheritance and development of guzheng playing techniques in different regions. Due to the humid climate in the southern region, the production materials and craftsmanship of guzheng have certain special characteristics, which makes the southern zheng music more distinctive. In

the north, due to the dry climate, the production materials and techniques of guzheng are different from those in the south, which makes the zheng music in the north have a unique style. At the same time, the regional characteristics of zheng music in terms of playing techniques are also influenced by local cultural traditions. For example, the Shandong zheng school is influenced by Confucianism and pays more attention to the moral education of music; while the Sichuan zheng school is influenced by Ba Shu culture and pays more attention to the fun and entertainment of music.

## 3. Characteristics of Technique Evolution of the Times

The evolution of guzheng playing techniques is deeply influenced by the background of the times. In different historical periods, the guzheng's performance techniques show obvious characteristics of the times.

In the pre-Qin period, guzheng began to form and develop gradually, and the guzheng playing technique in this period was relatively simple, mainly based on the pentatonic scale, and the form of playing was relatively single, which was mainly manifested in the two techniques of strumming and vibrato.

Entering into the Qin and Han Dynasties, the guzheng got prosperous development, and its playing techniques were enriched. During this period, the guzheng began to have more decorative notes and glissandos, and its playing techniques became more diversified. In the period of Wei, Jin, and North-South Dynasties, the guzheng began to spread to different parts of the world, forming different local schools and innovations in playing techniques. During this period, more fingerings and pizzicatos began to appear in guzheng playing techniques, making the guzheng's musical expression richer. The Sui and Tang dynasties were the peak of the development of guzheng playing techniques, during which the guzheng playing techniques had become very mature and the forms of playing were more diversified. More skips and trills began to appear in guzheng playing techniques during this period, making the musical style of guzheng more diversified [8]. During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the popularity of the guzheng was further increased, and musicians from all over the world created a variety of new performance techniques according to their own regional characteristics and cultural

backgrounds. During this period, more scraping and percussion techniques began to appear in guzheng performance techniques, making the musical style of guzheng more diversified. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, guzheng performance techniques entered a new stage of development, during this period, guzheng performance techniques paid more attention to the control of tone and volume, which made guzheng's musical expression richer. In modern times, guzheng playing techniques have been further inherited and developed, and many musicians have devoted themselves to the innovation and development of guzheng playing techniques, which makes guzheng's music style more diversified.

#### **4. Influence of Social and Cultural Background on the Development of Techniques**

As one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, the evolution of guzheng playing techniques is deeply influenced by the social and cultural background. In different historical periods, the change of social and cultural environment provides the soil for the innovation and development of guzheng playing techniques.

In the pre-Qin period, the guzheng was mainly used for rituals and court music, and its playing technique was relatively simple, with soft melodies and melodious tones. With the arrival of the Qin and Han Dynasties, the zheng gradually flourished and its playing techniques were significantly developed. During this period, the zheng began to be used in folk entertainment and court music, and the playing techniques became richer, such as the maturation of the basic techniques of plucking with the right hand and pressing the strings with the left hand. During the Wei, Jin, and North-South Dynasties, the zheng began to spread throughout the country, and local schools gradually emerged. The cultural exchanges and integration of different regions brought new vitality to the development of guzheng playing techniques. The zheng performance techniques became more diversified during this period, and many repertoires and performance styles with local characteristics appeared. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, guzheng performance techniques entered a mature stage. During this period, the change of music aesthetic concepts had an important influence on the innovation and development of guzheng playing techniques. The zheng playing technique became more delicate and gorgeous, and many popular famous songs appeared, such as 'Guangling San' and 'Will Enter the Wine'. During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, guzheng playing techniques continued to develop, especially in the Southern Song Dynasty, when the culture of Jiangnan flourished, and guzheng music gradually formed a genre represented by Jiangnan silk and bamboo. During this period, guzheng playing techniques paid more attention to the expression of emotion and the depiction of musical images. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, guzheng performance techniques entered a period of transition. With the stability of the society and the prosperity of music culture, guzheng playing techniques were further improved and enriched. The guzheng music of this period is represented by Fujian Nanyin and Guangdong music, and the playing techniques are more characteristic. In modern times, guzheng playing techniques have been carried forward on the basis of inherited tradition. With the advancement of recording technology and sound

equipment, guzheng music has gradually come to the world stage. At the same time, guzheng playing techniques are constantly innovated, and there are many repertoires and playing styles with modern atmosphere.

#### **5. Change of Music Aesthetic Concept and Development of Technique**

The change of music aesthetic concept plays an important role in the development of guzheng playing technique. From the pre-Qin period to the present, the aesthetic concept of music has experienced the change from simple and simple to rich and colourful, and this change has also been fully reflected in the evolution of guzheng playing techniques.

In the pre-Qin period, the performance technique of guzheng was relatively simple and simple, focusing on the naturalness of tone and the expressiveness of music. The aesthetic concept of music in this period emphasised the harmony and unity between music and nature, and pursued the beauty and emotional expression of music. With the change of time, the concept of music aesthetics gradually changed. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, the zheng's playing techniques were further developed, and more techniques and expressive methods appeared. The aesthetic concept of music in this period paid more attention to the sense of rhythm and ornamentation of music, and the playing techniques were more delicate and rich. During the Wei, Jin, and North-South Dynasties, the aesthetic concepts of music began to diversify, and the zheng's performance techniques were also constantly innovated. The aesthetic concepts of music in this period emphasised the complexity and technicality of music, and the playing techniques became more diversified, with more decorative and varied sounds. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the aesthetic concepts of music were further diversified, and the zheng's playing techniques were also further developed. The aesthetic concepts of music in this period emphasised the gorgeousness and showiness of music, and the performance techniques became more exquisite and magnificent. In the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the aesthetic concept of music began to develop towards introversion and subtlety, and the zheng's performance techniques also paid more attention to the expression of emotion and inner flavour. The aesthetic concept of music in this period emphasised the gentleness and elegance of music, and the playing techniques were more delicate and softer [12]. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the aesthetic concept of music began to develop towards freshness and naturalness, and the zheng's playing techniques also paid more attention to the naturalness and innocence of music. The music aesthetic concepts of this period emphasised the freshness and simplicity of music, and the playing techniques were more simple and natural. In modern times, the aesthetic concept of music has undergone great changes, and the guzheng playing techniques are also constantly innovated. The aesthetic concept of music in this period emphasises the modernity and innovation of music, and the playing techniques are more diversified and novel.

#### **6. The Main Factor of Performance Technique Innovation**

The main factors of performance technique innovation mainly include performers, composers, educators and scholars. First of all, as practitioners of guzheng performance techniques, performers play a crucial role in the innovation

and improvement of techniques. In the process of playing, performers will reform and optimise the traditional techniques according to their own playing styles and aesthetic concepts in order to achieve better performance effects. They constantly enrich and expand the expressive power of guzheng performance by exploring and experimenting with timbre, volume and rhythm [13]. Secondly, composers also play an important role in promoting the development of guzheng performance techniques. They constantly try to integrate new musical elements and techniques into guzheng works according to the needs of music creation, thus promoting the innovation and development of guzheng performance techniques. By creating challenging works, composers inspire performers to explore and innovate in their techniques, so that guzheng performance techniques can be continuously advanced. In addition, educators and scholars play the role of bridge and link in the inheritance and innovation of guzheng performance techniques. They spread the guzheng playing techniques to more people and cultivate a group of excellent guzheng performers through writing teaching materials, conducting teaching research and academic exchanges and other activities. At the same time, they conduct in-depth discussions and analyses of guzheng playing techniques in the course of their research, providing theoretical support for the innovation of the techniques.

## 7. Conclusion

The regional feature of guzheng playing techniques is an important part of Chinese guzheng art. This characteristic not only reflects the rich and diverse cultural traditions of different parts of China, but also provides a rich source for the inheritance and development of guzheng playing techniques. In the future development, we should pay more attention to this characteristic, strengthen the exchange and research of guzheng playing techniques in different places, and jointly promote the prosperity of Chinese guzheng art. The evolution of guzheng playing techniques is a process of continuous absorption, integration and innovation, which is influenced by various factors such as social and cultural backgrounds, musical aesthetic concepts and musicians' personal talents in each period. The social and cultural background has an important influence on the evolution of guzheng playing techniques. In different historical periods, the changes in

social and cultural environment have provided a constant impetus for the innovation and development of guzheng playing techniques. From the pre-Qin period to modern times, guzheng performance techniques have developed continuously through inheritance and innovation, becoming an important part of traditional Chinese music culture. The change of music aesthetic concepts is closely related to the evolution of guzheng performance techniques. The music aesthetic concepts in different periods have had an important influence on the innovation and development of guzheng performance techniques, which has promoted the continuous progress and development of guzheng performance techniques. The main factors of performance technique innovation include performers, composers, educators and scholars. They have jointly promoted the development and evolution of guzheng performance technique through their practice, creation, teaching and research. In the future development, these main factors will continue to play a key role in contributing to the innovation and inheritance of guzheng performance techniques.

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