

A Survey of the Development of Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs from 1920s to 1940s

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Abstract—The new vocal form of art songs was introduced into China. This period is an important period for the formation and development of Chinese art songs. Chinese composers combine Western advanced modern composition techniques with Chinese traditional ancient poetry culture to create ancient poetry and art songs. This kind of art song combines music and literature, has a very high ideological connotation and artistic level, and occupies a very important position in the history of music creation in China. The 1920s, 1930s and 1940s were the climax of the creation and development of ancient poetry art songs. From beginning with the "the Big river go east" composed by Qing Zhu during his study in Germany in 1920, to the founding of the new China, this period is a prosperous period in the creation of ancient poetry and art songs. The 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, a group of outstanding composers of ancient poetry art songs were born, and they created a large number of outstanding works. Even some of the works are included in the vocal music materials of professional music colleges, which have high academic value and artistic value, and occupy an extremely important position in the creation, singing and teaching of Chinese songs.

Keywords—Chinese ancient poetry art songs, The Development overview, 1920s, 1930s, 1940

The art song is a specific song art genre formed in Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was introduced to China in the early 20th century. The two cultures of the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement have promoted profound changes in Chinese music culture. A group of people of insight began to try to imitate Western-style music creation, and filled Chinese poetry into the melody of Western music. This is called the school music songs. With the continuous advancement of music thought and its composing techniques, the "school music songs" that rely on the way of filling lyrics according sound can no longer meet the needs of music creation. The music creation in this period was mainly based on vocal music works. A very important subject of composers in the selection of words was to compose music for ancient poetry and art songs, thus forming a very important song category, namely ancient poetry art songs. It combines Chinese classical poetry and literature with traditional Chinese music techniques and modern music creation techniques, and has a high artistic value. From beginning with the "the Big river go east" composed by Qing Zhu during his study in Germany in 1920, to the founding of the new China, a number of outstanding works have emerged during this period. Looking back at the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs in this period, according to the formation, development and maturity of ancient poetry and artistic songs, We divide it into three stages: the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1920s, the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1930s, and the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1940s.

I. THE CREATION OF ANCIENT POETRY ART SONGS IN THE 1920S

With the introduction of the concept of artistic songs into China in the early twentieth century, composers also began to try to create ancient poetry and art songs. The Qing Zhu is a typical representative of this period, and the only composer who made ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1920s. Qingzhu is deeply influenced by Chinese traditional culture. He is very familiar with the ancient poetry of ancient countries and has studied the rhythm of Chinese poetry, words and songs. During his stay in Germany, Qing Master had mastered Western language and Western composing techniques, and was deeply influenced by romantic and classical music. He believes that the first thing of writing songs is building of framework for songs, Then extract the melody of the lyrics from the harmony, not to write the melody to match the sound.[1] Although his music creation career is only a short six years, he has left valuable art songs, especially the wealth of ancient poetry art songs. In the past six years, Qing zhu only wrote artistic songs. He wrote a total of 32 songs. There are nearly 20 ancient poetry art songs. His songs have had a huge impact on Chinese modern music, both at the time and after, and played an important role in the development of ancient poetry and art songs.[2]

"The Big river go east" is the first ancient poetry and artistic song work of Qing Zhu. It was composed during his study in Germany in 1920. He chose Su Shi's work "Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao" as the lyrics, which is also the opening work of Chinese ancient poetry art songs. The works draw on the creation techniques of Western opera, and combine the recitative and recitation, so that they have the characteristics of Western techniques and the artistic conception of Chinese classical culture. In the 1920s, Qing zhu also created nine other works, namely, the ancient song "Sucking the Soil Song", "Yue Song" (The lyrics is selected from the novel "Feng Tu Ji"), "The world says that gods are good" (lyrics come from ancient poems), "Red sun is burning like fire" (the lyrics are collected from the novel "Water Margin"), "Yi Jiangnan" (the lyrics are selected from the works of the poet Bai Juyi of the Tang Dynasty), "Hometown Poetry" (The lyrics are selected from the works of the Tang Dynasty poet He Zhizhang), "Zhengfu Ci" (the lyrics are selected from the works of the Ming Dynasty poet Liu Ji), "The Spring of Wuling" (the lyrics are selected from the works of the Song Dynasty poet Xin Qiji), "I live in the Yangtze River" (the lyrics are selected from the works of the Song Dynasty poet Li Zhiyi) and other ancient poetry art songs. These ten works were all created in 1929, and they are all included in his published "Qing Ge Ji". One

of them is an ancient song, three lyrics from famous novels, and six lyrics from famous poets of all ages. These works are examples of the use of Western composing techniques to write artistic songs expressed in ancient Chinese poetry. Although the structure is short, it reflects the ability of the Qing Zhu to master Western composing techniques and profound cultural knowledge of ancient poetry. Each of his songs is written very succinctly, and most of his songs are in line with the structure of poetry. He uses a single-segment structure and refuses to use one more sound [3].

The 1920s is the beginning of the imitation and exploration of the creation of ancient Chinese poetry and art songs. Although there is a certain level of professionalism, it is not widely spread. On the one hand, the number of works is scarce. Throughout the 1920s, only the Qing Zhu independently wrote the ancient poetry art songs, and other composers rarely tried, resulting in only ten works; On the other hand, the lack of aesthetic taste. In the 1920s, people were still deeply influenced by the music of the school. They were still accustomed to accepting songs that were familiar and easy to sing, and did not cultivate an ideological and artistic aesthetic. Moreover, singing techniques have not kept pace with music creation. There are very few singers who can sing professional art songs in the 1920s, which also affects the spread of ancient poetry art songs.

II. THE CREATION OF ANCIENT POETRY AND ARTISTIC SONGS IN THE 1930S

The 1930s was a prosperous period in the development of ancient Chinese poetry and art songs. A large number of composers returning from overseas began to try to create ancient poetry and art songs. Compared with the 1920s, the creation of this period has made great progress in both the quantity and quality of works, and the creation of works has begun to go maturity from imitation, exploration. More importantly, the works of this period reflect the high unity of nationality and artistry. The composers who created ancient poetry and art songs in this period include Huang Zi, Liu Xuean, Jiang Dingxian, Chen Tianhe, Yan Xinghai, and Tan Xiaolin.

Huang Zi is the representative figure of the ancient poetry art songs in the 1930s. His works are widely spread, high quality and numerous, representing the highest level of this period. Huang Zi loved the Tang poetry and Song poetry since childhood. "In childhood, always sit on the mother's arms, listen to the mother singing folk songs, recite the Tang poems" [4]. He is very concerned about expressing the artistic conception of ancient poetry art songs using musical works. In his creation, he attaches great importance to the rhythm, tone and rhythm of poetry works. Huang zi's ancient poetry and art songs, which were created in the 1930s, were mainly concentrated between 1930 and 1935, and were specially designed for junior high schools. Such as "Flower Flower" (created in 1930, the lyrics are selected from the poem of the same name by the poet Bai Juyi of the Tang Dynasty), "To Jiangling" (created in 1933, Li Bai's poetry), "Dian Jiangchun" (created in 1934, the Song Dynasty poet Wang Zhuo's works), "Bu Suzi" (created in 1935, the works of the Song Dynasty poet Su Shi), "Nanxiangzi" (created in 1935, the same noun works of the Song Dynasty poet Xin Qiji), Huang Zi's works are distinctive, with clear lines, vivid images, careful ideas, smooth music, elegant accompaniment and rigorous layout. The emotional expression of music is logical and tense, and it is also very hierarchical. He boldly carried out nationalization attempts in music. His creations are never astute, the sound range is moderate, and they try not to let the singer feel the burden. [5]

Huang Zi's student Chen Tianhe also created ancient poetry and art songs in the 1930s. Chen Tianhe uploaded the nationalization characteristics of Mr. Huang Zi in music creation, integrated Western techniques into national music creation and made Western techniques for national music creation. His cultivation in literature is extremely profound. When he creates, he must first learn the charm and connotation of asphalt poetry, then find the inspiration of music creation in the rhythm of poetry, and then use notes to express the artistic conception and emotion of poetry. His ancient poetry and art works are simple in style and refined in artistic features. Representative works include: "Maple Bridge Night Park" (created in 1936, the lyrics are selected from the poetry of the late Tang Dynasty poet Zhang Ji), "Where is the Spring" (created in 1931, the lyrics are selected from the works of the Song Dynasty poet Huang Tingjian), "Jiangchengzi" (created in 1931, the lyrics use the works of the Song Dynasty poet Qin Guan), "Cai Sang Qu" (created in 1933, the lyrics use ancient poems) and so on. These works were published in the major music publications of the "Music Magazine", "Music Art" and "Music Education" in the 1930s. These works are also included in his collection of songs, "Reminiscences" and "Creation Collection".

In addition, composers and their representative works of ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1930s include: Qing Zhu's work "I live in the Yangtze River" (1930, Song Dynasty poet Li Zhiyi), face like flowers (1930, Song Dynasty poet Du An), "Hong Manzhi" (1930, Nan Tang poet Feng Yanji); Ying Shangneng's work "Wu Yi" (1938, "Book of Songs · Qin Feng") and "My Words" (Yuan Dynasty Scholars Guan Daosheng), Zhang Xiaohu's work "Sheng Shengman" (1933, Song Dynasty poet Li Qingzhao), Zhou Shu'an's work "Spinning Song" (1932, Ming Dynasty poet Qi Bi's work), Li Weining's work "Crane song" (Song Dynasty poet Su Shi lyrics), Jiang Wenye's four works: "Spring Morning" and "Prelude To Water Melody" (1938, Song Dynasty poet Su Shi lyrics), "A Tranquil Night" and "Broken Spring" (1939, Song Dynasty poet Wang Anshi lyrics).

III. THE CREATION OF ANCIENT POETRY AND ART SONGS IN THE 1940S

The special historical background of the War of Resistance Against Japan in the 1940s made the creation of ancient poetry and art songs have a new mission. Some of the works of this period are very vivid, and have obvious masculinity, or express anti-Japanese feelings. Or express a national disaster, or express the belief that the war of resistance will win. Among them, the outstanding representative is Lin Shenghui's "Man Jiang Hong", his work borrows Yue Fei's heroic spirit to express his feelings of resistance to the war; The representative works also include Zhao Yuanren's "God of Heaven". The work draws on the real struggle, expressing the longing for the light and the hatred of the reactionary forces; Another representative work is Liu Xuan's "Red Bean Words", which is widely circulated. The works express the longing for the good life of the composers through the bursting of inner feelings such as love and thoughts. Tan Xiaolin is a representative of the ancient poetry art songs in the 1940s.

He not only studied under Mr. Huang Zi, but also studied in the United States, so he is very skilled in the use of modern Western composing techniques; he is very passionate about Chinese traditional culture and has a deep love. The folk music skills are quite deep in the study of traditional music culture; Tan Xiaolin's music works are introverted and exquisite, and his works have a thoughtful concept, a rigorous structure and a serious creative attitude. As Mr. Shen Zhibai said: "Tan's writing, in order to do the best, Dreary management, painstaking efforts, even if you write a small song, sometimes it takes three or four months of light, so its output is not much, but its works are all music treasures" [6]. Tan Xiaolin combines traditional music with Western composition techniques to create a new style of music, so its works and styles play a very important role in the modernity of Chinese music. 1944 was a very important year for the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs. Four works were created, and the works of Tang and Song poets were selected as the lyrics: "Out from you" ([Tang] Zhang Jiuling), "Spring Breeze Spring Rain" ([Song] Zhu Xizhen), "Peng Langji" ([Song] Zhu Xizhen), "Positive song Song" ([Song] Wen Tianxiang). "Pang Langji" is a Chinese-style work because of the special music creation technique. The work depicts the author's feelings in his heart and mind when he is studying in the United States. His works are highly ideological and artistic.

Liu Xuean was another important representative of the creation of ancient poetry and artistic songs in the 1940s. He tried to combine the traditional Chinese music writing techniques with Western composing techniques to create an ancient poetry and art song with rich national characteristics. His works have smooth and simple melody, easy-to-reach music language and artistic style with rich national characteristics. His representative work is "Red Bean Words". This work is widely circulated which created in 1943 and written by Cao Xueqin, a Qing Dynasty writer. Another work, "Listening to Flute in Lo City Spring Night", was written in 1946, The lyrics are selected from the poems of the poet Li Bai of the Tang Dynasty.

The great musician Xian Xinghai also created a large number of ancient poetry and art songs. Most of these works were created on the way to the Soviet Union in 1944 and after the Soviet Union. The works are not closely related to the real life of the people at that time, so the works are not widely spread, but His ancient poetry and artistic songs have a very important position in both contemporary quantity and quality, and they occupy a considerable proportion in his personal vocal works. His representative works are: "Recalling Qin E" (1940, Li Bai's poetry in the Tang Dynasty), "Bamboo branch words" (1944, the lyrics of the poet Liu Yuxi of the Tang Dynasty, "Farewell Love" (1944, Song Dynasty poet Lu Benzong lyrics), "Wind and Rain" (1944, the lyrics are selected from "The Book of Songs · Zheng Feng"); "Tweet in Nigh" (in 1944, the poet Li Wei of the Southern Tang Dynasty).

The composers such as He Luting, Ma Sicong, and Jiang Wenye tried to create ancient poetry and art songs during this period. They benefited from their rich creations in instrumental music and other musical genres. Their creative concept and other aspects are more mature than in the 1930s. They combine their deep traditional cultural heritage with advanced techniques to create a highly artistic ancient poetry and art song work. Their representative works include: Jiang Wenye's work "Record things in the village on the river" (The lyrics are selected from the Song Dynasty poet Si Kongshu), "Spring Scenery" (the works of the Song come from Song Dynasty poet Ouyang Xiu), He Luting used the two poems of the poet Li Bai of the Tang Dynasty to make the works of the lyrics, "Pu SA Man" and "Night Thinking"; Ma Sicong performed the creation of ancient poetry and art songs in 1943. The lyrics are selected from Li Bai's poems "Guan Shanyue", "Jiang Jinjiu", "Chang Xxiangsi" and "Xing Lunan" (1) (2), etc. He also created four other works in 1943, which were selected from the two works of the Tang Dynasty poet Li Shangyin, "The Remnant Sun", "The Difficulty Meet" and the two poems of the Tang Dynasty poet Wang Wei, "Dusk in the autumn of the mountain" and "Quiet".

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