

## CONSTRUCTING JIANG JIE'S OPERA GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHING VOCAL MUSIC FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS AT CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY OF ART COLLEGE, BEIJING PROVINCE, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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### Article History

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Jiang Jie's Opera is a modern Chinese opera based on the true story of 'Jiang Jie,' a female revolutionary who sacrificed her life for the ideals of communism in China. **Objective:** to study Jiang Jie opera to create an opera guidebook. Jiang Jie by using it to experiment and teach and find the results of the teaching experiment. **Methods:** Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. **Results:** found that Jiang Jie opera has an intense character, outstanding national style and beautiful singing parts. Jiang Jie opera guidebook there are a total of five chapters. The fourth-year students were taught Jiang Jie opera. using the guidebook, the trial took 14 weeks. **Results:** There was a noticeable improvement in students' vocal abilities following the activity, as evidenced by an increase in the average score from 3.13 to 4.10. This indicates significant development in both vocal technique and emotional expression through singing.

**Keywords:** Jiang Jie opera; Chinese People's Liberation Army of Art College; Beijing Province.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning traditional culture deepens understanding of cultural resources and values. In recent years, China has strongly promoted traditional culture, with President Xi Jinping (2014) advocating for cultural self-confidence. Chinese opera, a vital part of Chinese heritage, reflects rich cultural and educational values. To preserve and

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develop Chinese opera, the government has issued policies to integrate traditional opera into university curricula (Yu, 2022; Zhou, 2018). This demonstrates national efforts to enhance opera education at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, emphasizing personalized training for young talents (Yang, 2008).

Jiang Jie Opera, composed in 1964, emerged during the Cultural Revolution and represents a unique fusion of Beijing opera and Western musical elements (Jing, 2018). It is a significant example of modern revolutionary opera, combining singing, acting, dance, and instrumental music. As a branch of Chinese classical opera, it holds artistic and cultural significance (Chen, 2020; Liu & Liang, 2020). However, local operas in regions such as Liaoning face survival challenges due to the decline of traditional troupes, performer shortages, and limited performance opportunities (Zhou, 2018).

Despite growing interest in opera due to China's cultural exchanges and economic growth, the current classical vocal education system struggles to meet professional performance standards. Therefore, reform in vocal music education is necessary. This study focuses on the use of Jiang Jie Opera in the vocal training of senior students at the PLA Academy of Arts, exploring its educational value in higher institutions.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Jiang jie opera
2. To constructing the Jiang jie opera guidebook
3. To experimental teaching the Jianjie opera for Vocal Music Fourth-Year Students at Chinese People's Liberation Army of Art College, Beijing Province,
4. To find the results of teaching experiments

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Concepts and Theories in Vocal Music Instruction

Vocal Music Instruction in Higher Education Vocal music instruction at the higher education level aims to develop students' vocal capabilities and performance skills to a professional standard. It emphasizes vocal techniques, musical interpretation, and the ability to communicate emotions through music (Callaghan, 2014). University-level instruction typically involves one-on-one or small group lessons, allowing students to receive individualized feedback and close mentorship from experienced vocal coaches (Zemke, 2017).

Furthermore, vocal music curricula in universities often integrate music theory, music history, and performance skills to produce well-rounded artists (Miller, 2004). Essential Skills for Professional Singers Classical or operatic singers must master several key skills: Vocal Production: Control of the vocal mechanism is essential, especially when adapting vocal techniques to the phonetics of the Chinese language in opera performance (McCoy, 2019). Breath Control: Proper breathing technique is crucial for sustaining vocal phrases and maintaining sound quality. Effective breath management enables singers to project powerfully and expressively (Ware, 2008).

Emotional Expression: Conveying emotions through voice helps singers connect deeply with the audience. This involves an understanding of the text as well as expressive use of facial expressions, body movements, and vocal tone (Emmons & Thomas, 2008).

Training Methods Various training methods are used in university-level vocal instruction to support well-rounded development:

Masterclasses: These are public lessons where expert instructors provide live feedback to one student in front of peers. This format benefits both the performing student and the observers (Helding, 2020).

Repertoire-Based Learning: Learning through actual musical works allows students to practice technique, interpretation, and performance. This is particularly relevant in courses involving traditional Chinese opera such as Jiang Jie (Zhou, 2018). Individual Coaching: Personalized instruction helps address each student's unique strengths and weaknesses, building confidence and fostering steady progress in their musical journey (Stark, 2003).

## 2. Historical Background of Jiang Jie's Opera

Jiang Jie Opera is one of the revolutionary Chinese operas that emerged in the mid-20th century. It was composed in 1964, shortly before the Cultural Revolution, and was widely performed during the political movement from 1966 to 1976. The opera aligned closely with the ideological goals of the proletarian class and was promoted as a model of revolutionary art (Jing, 2018; Zhang, 2020).

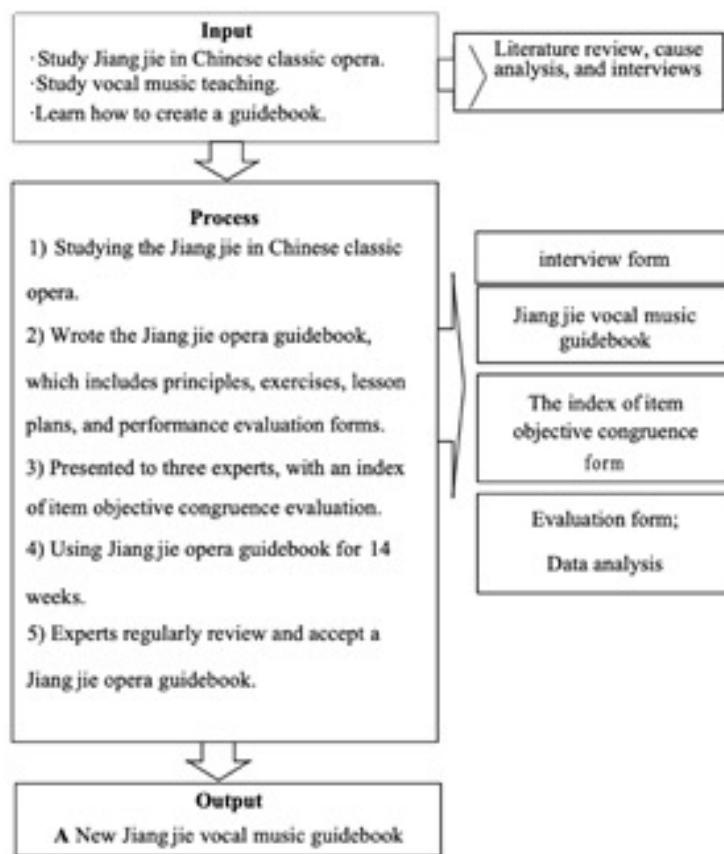
The storyline of Jiang Jie is based on the real-life figure Jiang Jie, whose actual name was Zhao Yiman, a female revolutionary who sacrificed her life for communist ideals during the Anti-Japanese War. Her story was chosen for theatrical adaptation because it reflected strong political values and the spirit of self-sacrifice, which were central to the ideology of that era (Chen, 2020). In its early performances, Jiang Jie Opera received strong support from the Chinese government in terms of production, distribution, and staging. This was largely due to the fact that both the content and artistic form of the opera were in line with the political agenda of the time.

## 3. Distinctive Features of Jiang Jie's Opera: A Fusion of Peking Opera and Western Music

Jiang Jie Opera is a prominent example of the fusion between traditional Chinese performing arts and Western theatrical concepts. It particularly reflects the influence of Peking Opera and Western classical music, incorporating elements such as the use of a Western-style orchestra alongside traditional Chinese instruments, leitmotif-based composition, and a spoken-and-sung opera format (Liu & Liang, 2020). In terms of performance, actors employ key features of Chinese opera such as stylized movements, elaborate costumes and facial makeup, and projected vocalization (belting). These are blended with Western classical vocal techniques, creating a hybrid performance style that gives Jiang Jie its unique artistic identity. Furthermore, the musical structure of the opera allows performers to fully demonstrate their vocal range and expressiveness, utilizing modern vocal techniques while still retaining the foundational traditions of Chinese opera (Stenberg, 2019).

#### 4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure1:  
*Conceptual Framework*



#### 5. METHODOLOGY

##### 1. Population, sample, and key informant

Population: 121 Vocal Music Fourth-Year Students at Chinese People's Liberation Army of Art College, Beijing Province, sample: 21 students by purposive sampling

##### 2. Variables

Independent Variable:

Jiang Jie's Opera Guidebook

Refers to the instructional material or teaching framework developed by the researcher, based on the content, musical pieces, vocal techniques, and historical context of Jiang Jie's Opera, designed for use in teaching fourth-year vocal music students.

#### Dependent Variable:

Vocal performance achievement of fourth-year students Measured through pre-test and post-test scores or performance assessments focusing on vocal technique, sound production, and emotional expression. Control Variables: Control variables are maintained consistently within the sample group to ensure the reliability of the research results. These include: Academic level of the students: Only fourth-year students are included. Institution: The People's Liberation Army Academy of Arts in China. Duration of guidebook implementation: The instructional period during which the guidebook is used. Instructor or basic teaching methods used alongside the guidebook.

#### 3. Research Scope

The scope of place at Chinese People's Liberation Army of Art College, Beijing Province

The Scope of time 2022-2023

The Scope of contents

The content of Jiang Jie opera teaching, Professional Training in Vocal performance, Character Creation for Vocal Performance, Quality Preparation for Vocal Performance, Comprehensive Training for Opera Vocal, Classic Vocal Section of the Opera "Jiang jie "

#### 4. Research tools: interview form, observations form, Evaluation form.

#### 5. data collection

Study information from books, documents, printed media. Related research and from the interview Learning from experts.

Analysis of data and statistics used Content Analysis The data were obtained descriptively. IOC form (Index of item objective congruence) Use evaluation by rating scale.

## 6. RESULTS

Jiang Jie opera has an intense character, outstanding national style and beautiful singing parts.

Figure1:

*A scene from Jiang Jie*



Source: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202107/27/WS60ffaa5ca310efa1bd664b6b.html>

The opera is adapted from the Chinese revolutionary novel Hong Yan (Red Crag), written by Luo Guangbin and Yang Yilan, which portrays a group of underground Communists in southeastern China and their heroic fight against the enemy on the eve of 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China. Centering on the story of one of the female martyrs, Jiang Zhuyun, also known as Jiang Jie, the opera premiered in Beijing in 1964, was a huge success and toured nationwide. While this year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, Jiang Jie will be restaged for the fifth time by the China National Opera & Dance Drama Theater.

The opera "Jiang Jie" consists of the first act "Overture to the Red Plum Blossoms", the second act "Bashan Shuhui must be liberated", the third act "Relatively Speechless", the fourth act "Interception of Arms", and the fifth act "Sister Jiang is Arrested", the sixth act "Spring silkworms will not run out until they die", the seventh act "Embroidering the Red Flag", a total of forty-four pieces of music

**Act 1 "Overture to the Red Plum Blossoms": Consisting of 7 songs**

1. Chuanjiang Haozi
2. Put away the clouds and fog to see the sun
3. Bashan Shu River must be liberated
4. Praise for red plums
5. Peonies and colorful doors welcome you back home
6. The mountains are covered with weeds that cannot be cut down.
7. Chuanjiang Haozi

**Act 2 "Bashan Shuhui must be liberated",**

8. The red flag is flying in the green pine forest
9. Lao Peng lit a fire
10. The revolution will be as strong as steel to the end

**Act 3 "Relatively Speechless"**

11. War drums shake the sky and thunder rolls
12. Men don't shed tears lightly
13. There will be successors to the revolution
14. Kill the enemy and take revenge today
15. Relatively speechless and hard to speak
16. Walk forward in the footsteps of the martyrs
17. War drums shake the sky and thunder rolls

**Act 4 "Interception of Arms"**

18. Jian Jianshan
19. We are poor but ambitious
20. Daqu wine is fragrant when opened.
21. There are many capable people in the Communist Party

22. The scorching sun shines on your head
23. This mountain is not as high as that mountain
24. Those who suffer must turn their heads
25. That's weird
26. Got it wrong

**Act 5 “Jiang Jie is Arrested”**

27. The storm is about to come and the wind fills the building
28. A big road passes over the hill
29. Call Sister Jiang a good comrade
30. He is a poisonous snake
31. The situation in front of us is so dangerous
32. Dark clouds cannot darken the sky and the moon

**Act 6 “Spring Silkworms Will Not Lose Their Threads Until They Die”**

33. Fire melts and reveals true gold
34. Red plums welcome spring with smiles
35. Taking a step back leads to a brighter future
36. You are like the statue of Qin Hui beside the West Lake
37. How many bright moons and breezes are there in this world?
38. Spring silkworms keep spinning till they die.
39. I dedicate my youth to communism

**Act 7 “Embroidering the Red Flag”**

40. The wind is blowing, and the night is long
41. My child, quickly take over the red flag and conquer the world.
42. Embroidered red flag
43. People from all five continents laugh together
44. Praise for red plums

**Jiang Jie opera guidebook.**

The content of Jiang Jie opera teaching

Chapter 1 Professional Training in Vocal performance

Chapter 2 Character Creation for Vocal Performance

Chapter 3 Quality Preparation for Vocal Performance

Chapter 4 Comprehensive Training for Opera Vocal

Chapter 5 Classic Vocal Section of the Opera “Jiang jie “

The results from the teaching experiment are summarized and compared as follows.

Compare the formative test and Summative test score

Table1:

Compare the formative test and Summative test score

Students	Formative mean	Summative mean	comparing	Result
1	3.0	4.4	+1.4	Improved
2	3.1	4.0	+0.9	Improved
3	3.3	4.2	+0.9	Improved
4	3.0	4.1	+1.1	Improved
5	3.4	4.2	+0.8	Improved
6	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
7	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
8	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
9	3.1	4.1	+1.0	Improved
10	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
11	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
12	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
13	3.1	4.1	+1.0	Improved
14	2.4	3.6	+1.2	Improved
15	3.1	4.2	+1.1	Improved
16	3.2	4.0	+0.8	Improved
17	2.7	3.9	+1.2	Improved
18	3.3	4.1	+0.8	Improved
19	3.4	4.5	+1.1	Improved
20	3.5	4.8	+1.3	Improved
21	3.5	4.5	+1.0	Improved
Total	65.7	87.9	22.2	
Average Mean	3.13	4.1	0.97	

From the table, students who received a low mean score between 0.8-0.9 when comparing the results of the formative Test and the summative test. They are students number 5, 16, 18, 2, and 3. The student with the highest score, meaning 1.4, is the No. 1 student. Summary of results summative test is higher than formative test 0.97.

## 7. DISCUSSION

Jiang Jie is a significant work in the tradition of Chinese revolutionary opera and serves as a cultural touchstone reflecting China's historical heritage. Unlike European operas, which often emphasize Western harmony, orchestration, and dramaturgy, Chinese operas such as Jiang Jie (also Huangmei and Sichuan Opera versions) present unique features in pronunciation, vocal production, and performance conventions that are deeply rooted in Chinese linguistic and cultural traditions (The Chinese Bel Canto Theory..., 2024; Derivations and Developments..., 2024).

In urban areas, the erosion of traditional cultural identity—due to modernization, migration, and globalization—has resulted in reduced audience engagement with cultural activities including opera (Literature Review on Chinese Opera Education, 2024). As a response, Jiang Jie has been revived and restaged in prominent venues (e.g., the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing) for major commemorative events, drawing both older and younger audiences. For instance, Opera fit for a heroine reported that performances of Jiang Jie in Beijing attract widespread attention due to its patriotic narrative and historic importance.

### Importance of Theory in Opera Education

Opera in China, particularly Jiang Jie, follows a structured pedagogical tradition that places great emphasis on foundational theory: pronunciation, vocal technique, diction, and emotional expression. Research indicates that students exposed to strong theoretical foundations tend to achieve more sustainable growth in their vocal performance (Features of the formation of vocal and stage skills among students..., 2024; Research on Opera Practice and Teaching..., 2024).

For example, a recent study on teaching reform in college opera courses based on scaffolding theory observed that students' learning outcomes improved significantly (by 0.37–1.10 points) when theoretical frameworks were integrated into performance practice rather than relying purely on mimicry or rote rehearsals. Similarly, a study of pedagogical competence in vocalists demonstrated improvements not only in intonation accuracy but also in expressive depth when combining traditional techniques with modern teaching tools (Approaches to improving the pedagogical competence..., 2025).

## 8. ORIGINALITY AND BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

### Originality

This research presents an original contribution to the field of vocal music education by constructing a specialized guidebook based on Jiang Jie's Opera - a significant revolutionary opera that integrates both traditional Chinese Peking Opera techniques and Western musical elements. While previous studies have analyzed Jiang Jie in the context of political, cultural, or performance history, few—if any—have developed a pedagogical framework using this opera as a core instructional tool for higher education in vocal performance. This research innovatively applies Jiang Jie as a curriculum-aligned medium for teaching advanced vocal students, emphasizing both cultural heritage and technical proficiency.

Moreover, this study pioneers the adaptation of Jiang Jie's opera into a structured guidebook tailored specifically to the vocal training of fourth-year students at the Chinese People's Liberation Army of Art College. The approach merges vocal performance theory, historical context, character analysis, and technical vocal exercises rooted in the opera's content, offering an integrative model not previously implemented in formal vocal education.

### **Body of Knowledge**

This study contributes new knowledge in the following areas:

#### **1. Curriculum Design in Vocal Music Education:**

The creation of a context-specific teaching guidebook based on Jiang Jie's opera serves as a model for integrating Chinese revolutionary opera into the curriculum for voice majors. It offers educators a structured resource to enhance vocal technique, emotional expression, and cultural interpretation.

#### **2. Application of Revolutionary Opera in Modern Pedagogy:**

This research expands the pedagogical use of Chinese revolutionary opera beyond performance, positioning it as a tool for skill-based and values-based education. It demonstrates how operatic content can support technical voice training while fostering ideological and cultural awareness.

#### **3. Development of Performance-Based Assessment Criteria:**

The study provides a formative and summative assessment framework specific to opera performance, including rubrics that assess vocal quality, projection, stylistic accuracy, and emotional communication. These tools can be adapted to other Chinese operatic works within educational settings.

#### **4. Preservation and Revitalization of Chinese Opera Traditions:**

By incorporating Jiang Jie's opera into formal education, the guidebook contributes to the ongoing efforts to preserve, transmit, and modernize traditional Chinese operatic forms. It demonstrates how academic institutions can play a role in cultural preservation through structured vocal training.

In summary, this research advances knowledge in the interdisciplinary field of vocal pedagogy, Chinese cultural studies, and opera performance, offering a replicable model for other institutions seeking to bridge classical tradition with contemporary music education.

## **9. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Implication of the Study**

1.The Jiang Jie's Opera Guidebook is an effective teaching material for developing the vocal skills of fourth-year vocal music students at the Chinese People's Liberation Army Art College.

2.The integration of theoretical knowledge, practical training, and the historical context of Jiang Jie's Opera helps students improve their vocal techniques, emotional expression, and appreciation of Chinese opera art.

3.Incorporating specific cultural content into higher education curricula promotes both artistic skills and cultural preservation.

4. This guidebook serves as a model that can be adapted by other institutions aiming to promote traditional performing arts within a contemporary educational framework.

5. Instructors and curriculum developers should consider adopting similar teaching materials to enhance student engagement and improve performance quality.

## 2. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the scope and findings of this study, several avenues for future research are recommended:

1. Expansion of Sample Size and Diversity: Future studies could involve a larger and more diverse sample of students from multiple institutions to increase the generalizability of the results.

2. Longitudinal Studies: Investigations examining the long-term effects of using the Jiang Jie's Opera Guidebook on students' vocal development and cultural knowledge would provide deeper insights into its educational impact.

3. Comparative Studies: Research comparing the effectiveness of the Jiang Jie's Opera Guidebook with other traditional opera instructional materials or different teaching methodologies could identify best practices in vocal music education.

4. Integration of Technology: Future research could explore the use of digital tools and multimedia resources to supplement the guidebook and enhance interactive learning experiences.

5. Cross-disciplinary Approaches: Studies that investigate the integration of traditional opera training with other art forms, such as dance or drama, may offer holistic strategies for performing arts education.

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