

# The Characteristics and Forms of Contemporary Chinese Zheng Music Composition

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## Abstracts

The purposes of the research were to study the characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition.

The research methods were interview and observations, The research findings showed that Contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition has evolved significantly. This evolution includes the involvement of composers alongside performers, resulting in outstanding solo and chamber works. Themes have diversified, drawing from new eras, traditional opera, ethnic cultures, literature, and nature. Western compositional techniques have been integrated, broadening the guzheng's musical language. Performance techniques have diversified, incorporating rapid fingering, wheel finger, multi-finger shaking, overtone methods, and special effects. Moreover, performance forms have diversified, integrating with symphony orchestras and other instruments, while new forms like performance theater have emerged, enriching the guzheng's artistic expression.

**Keywords:** Guzheng; Zheng Music Composition; Diversification; Creative Characteristics; Expressive Forms

## Introduction

As one of the oldest and most distinctive plucked string instruments in China, the guzheng is an integral part of the development of traditional Chinese music. It was widely circulated as early as the Spring and Autumn Period (around the 2nd century BC), hence its name "ancient Zheng". Over the course of more than two thousand years of historical changes, the guzheng has combined with local operatic forms and folk music wherever it has spread, gradually forming many different genres of performance. Today, the influence of the guzheng extends almost throughout all of China and even has a profound impact in overseas regions. However, through thirty years of studying and playing the guzheng and more than ten years of teaching and research, scholars have found that contemporary guzheng art presents its own unique characteristics in composition and performance, incorporating both the inheritance of traditional skills and new technical innovations (Zhang, 2017).

By the Tang Dynasty, the development of Zheng music in this period had reached a period of prosperity. The diverse performance forms, players from all walks of life, and the wide influence at home and abroad all reflect the prosperity of Zheng music in the Tang Dynasty, forming a situation of "walking around to listen to Qin Zheng". In addition, the

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cultural exchanges between the Tang Dynasty and foreign countries were inclusive and diversified. The foreign exchanges of music, especially Zheng music, were more frequent, which also had an important impact on the spread of Zheng music overseas (Xu, 2011).

From the past until today guzheng shape reform is to adapt to the needs of modern music performance and the development of music creation, and aims to enrich the guzheng music expression and performance skills. The reform involves weakening the traditional strict equal-width sound patterns, increasing changes in range and timbre, and expanding playing techniques to make the guzheng more inclusive and expressive. This reform will help guzheng music maintain its vitality in the field of contemporary music and attract more young people to participate and learn (Fan, 2008).

Studying the characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition is important for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for the preservation and understanding of traditional skills while incorporating new technical innovations, thereby ensuring the continuation of a rich cultural heritage. Secondly, by examining the evolution of guzheng music, scholars gain insights into how this ancient instrument has adapted to modern music needs, enriching its expressiveness and appeal. Additionally, understanding the contemporary forms of guzheng music composition provides valuable insights into the ongoing influence and impact of this art form in China and abroad, shedding light on its significance within the broader context of world music. Moreover, such study can help attract more young people to participate and learn, ensuring the continued relevance and vibrancy of guzheng music in contemporary times.

## **Research Purpose**

To study the characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition.

## **Literature Review**

The guzheng, nurtured by China's long history and rich cultural heritage, represents a traditional musical instrument with strong regional and ethnic characteristics. Consequently, there is little academic literature available for reference by foreign scholars. Occasionally, a few museum catalogs might contain limited, ambiguously labeled images.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, research on guzheng music theory was nearly non-existent. From the establishment of New China until the 1980s, guzheng music research was in its infancy, resulting in relatively few achievements in guzheng music theory. The research scope was also relatively narrow, mainly involving the history of the guzheng, introductions to guzheng music pieces, and playing techniques. During this period, published papers included Cao Zheng Zai's *An Explanation of 'High Mountains and Flowing Water in Music Research*, Liaoning Daily, and other publications, as well as *A Discussion on the Adaptation of the Guzheng Piece 'Wild Geese in People's Music* (1959).

Since the 1980s, with the vigorous development of Chinese guzheng art, research achievements in guzheng music theory have greatly increased. Research content now covers various aspects including the history of the guzheng, guzheng music works, traditional genres, guzheng composition, and guzheng teaching. During this time, there emerged the journal *Qin Zheng* focusing on guzheng music theory research. According to incomplete statistics from researchers, more than 400 papers on guzheng music have been published in Chinese music journals since 1980, covering topics such as the history of the guzheng, studies on guzheng performance techniques, guzheng music composition, and guzheng teaching.

Up to now, most monographs on the guzheng mainly focus on the origin and nomenclature of the guzheng, its cultural attributes, and the dialectical relationship between the guzheng and sister arts such as the Gu qin, Zhu, and se, primarily for popularization and educational purposes. Examples include *Entering the World of Guzheng* by Tian Shan, published by China Ocean University Press in 2018; *Historical Talks of Qin Zheng* by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation in 2006, which provides evidence of the return of the guzheng to Qin from different perspectives; *Discussions on History and Literature of the Guzheng* by Xie Xiaobin and Yao Pinwen, published by Shanghai Music Publishing House in 2015, which discusses the developmental history of the guzheng, focusing on textual records related to the guzheng from various dynasties; Jiao Wenbin's "Historical Talks of Qin Zheng (China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation, 2002), among others. In addition, there are many articles summarizing the historical development of the guzheng, including Jin Jianmin's *Ancient Zheng (Instruments, 1992)*, Tang Misao's *Overview of Zheng History*" (Chinese Music, 1990), Jiao Jinhai's *Discussions on Ancient and Modern Chinese Zheng—Discussion on Types of Zheng and String Making* (Chinese Music, 1998), Qiu Yue's *Pre-Qin Zheng Music Culture* (Master's thesis, Shaanxi Normal University, 2003), and Wang Ying Rui's *Chinese Guzheng Art in the 20th Century*, all of which provide important references for the theoretical framework of this research.

With the increasing interest in the study of traditional culture, academic papers focusing on guzheng performance techniques have increased. Based on data retrieved from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure, researchers have collected over 40 journal papers related to guzheng performance before 2020. Examples include Wang Zhongshan's *On the Use of Palm in Guzheng Performance* (Chinese Music, 1998), Yan Aihua's *A Brief Discussion on the Simulated Sound Effects and Performance Techniques of Guzheng*" (People's Music, 1996), Li Ke's *On the Tremolo of Guzheng* (Music Exploration, 2002), and Wang Yun's "Research on the Development and Innovation of Left-hand Playing Techniques in Guzheng in the Past Decade (Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music, 2004). These papers have made certain degree of systematic arrangements of the development of guzheng performance techniques from a longitudinal perspective. Particularly, in Wang Xiaohong's *The Evolution of Contemporary Guzheng Performance Techniques*, it explains the appearance of the technique of finger rolling introduced by Yin Qiyin in the adaptation of Yao Ethnic Dance in 1957 to the opening of a new chapter of double-handed playing initiated by Zhao Yuzhai Celebrating the Year of Abundance in 1955, the brush rolling, hook rolling, double finger plucking, left side rubbing, and later appeared double-handed tremolo, string tapping

techniques, etc. Yang Ping's paper, Viewing the Development of Guzheng Music from the Use of the Left-hand Playing Technique, further divides the evolution of playing techniques into five time periods based on Wang Xiaohong's work. Zhang Tong's paper, Viewing the Development of Guzheng Music from the Perspective of Modern Guzheng Composition, divides the development of modern guzheng music into three periods. Both of these papers provide a systematic overview of guzheng composition and performance techniques at different times, which has certain reference value for this research.

## Research Method

Research Methodology: qualitative research by interviews and observations.

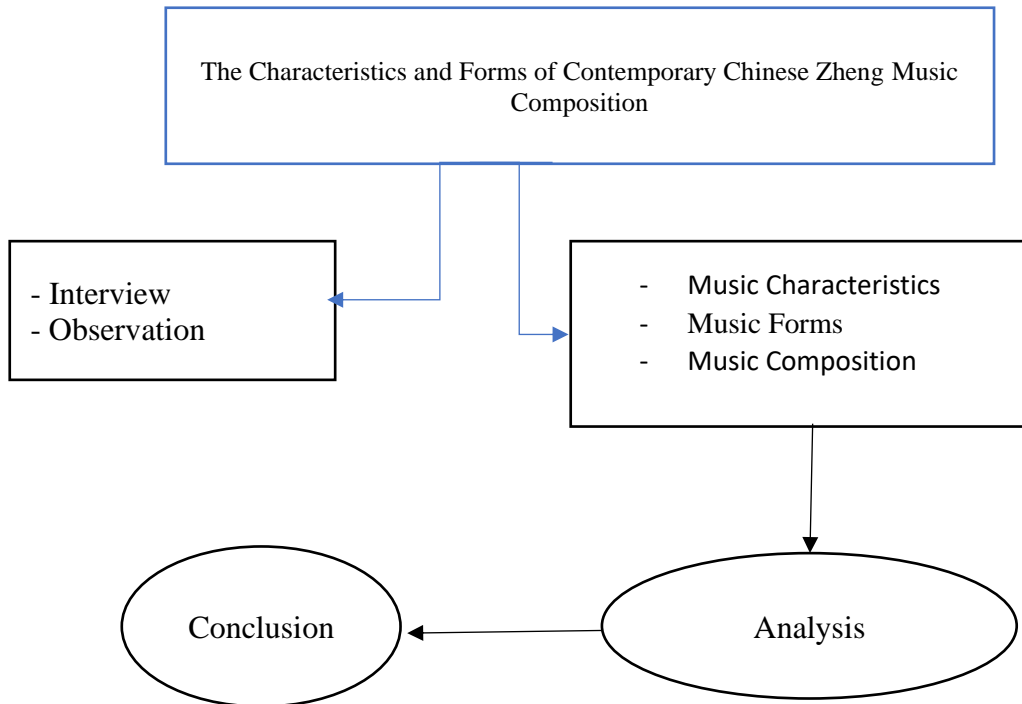
Source of Data: In order to ensure the orderly progress of this research, the researcher initially collected approximately 58 guzheng musical works created between 2000 and 2020. From these 58 pieces, the researcher selected 20 works as research samples. These samples represent different creative themes, distinct creative features, and unique expressive forms, encompassing innovative playing techniques. Additionally, these works are required repertoire in various major professional music schools in China and are selected entries for major instrumental music competitions (such as the Golden Bell Award, Huabiao Award, CCTV National Instrumental Music Competition), possessing a certain level of representativeness and dissemination.

Research Tools: interviews form and observations form.

Data Collecting: This research utilizes qualitative research methods including interviews and observations. To gather data in a more flexible and comprehensive manner, semi-structured interviews were conducted targeting performers, composers, guzheng researchers, among others. The purpose is to help the researcher gain deeper insights into the creative concepts of guzheng music, to sense their enthusiasm for creation during the interview exchanges, understand their musical preferences and pursuits, and enable the researcher to explore the connotations and values of music. Interviewing performers allows the researcher to understand their views and evaluations of different styles of works.

Analysis of Data: The data from the interview and observations will be analyzed by using content analysis.

## Research Conceptual framework



## Research Results

**The characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition.**

### 1. Diversification of Creative Entities

Traditional Chinese Zheng music composition was primarily carried out by folk guzheng artists. However, in contemporary times, the composition community for Chinese guzheng music has quietly undergone a transformation, mainly consisting of two groups: composers and performers. The inclusion of composers has brought about a qualitative leap in guzheng composition, resulting in a large number of outstanding solo and chamber music works for the guzheng. Composers not only enhance the performers' technical skills but also provide a broader creative direction for guzheng players. They apply Western composition techniques to structurally transform folk musical materials, incorporating both national stylistic features and diverse Western expressive forms. By injecting new musical vocabulary and ideas into guzheng music composition, they have merged Eastern and Western composition methods and creative concepts on the basis of inheriting traditional musical culture, thus creating masterpieces that meet contemporary aesthetic demands. Representative figures include composers such as He Zhanhao, Zhou Yuguo, Wang Jianmin, guzheng performers Wang Zhongshan, Liu Le, Song Xinxin, and others.

Furthermore, with China's increasing openness and deepening cultural exchange, an increasing number of Western composers have started paying attention to the guzheng. For example, American composers Victor Cheng and Mike Gordon-Shapiro, German composer Robert Zollitsch, Danish composer Simon Steen-Andersen, among others, have been devoted to producing new art music in China for many years, creating guzheng works of different genres, such as the guzheng solo Black Horse, ensemble Flowing River, concertos Opening, Zhongshan Suit, as well as ensemble works of guzheng and various traditional Chinese music pieces such as Exquisite and Moon in the Pine Forest.

## **2. Diversification of Creative Themes**

In contrast to the subtle and elegant, profound and solemn musical expressions of traditional guzheng music, contemporary Chinese guzheng works present a more diverse range of themes. Looking at the current creation of Chinese guzheng music, there are several categories of compositions:

### **2.1 Works that sing praises of the new era and the new life of the people**

Over the past twenty years, Chinese guzheng compositions have closely followed the pulse of the times, reflecting the spirit of the times, and have produced a batch of excellent works that express national spirit and reform. For instance, composer Fang Dingding created the large-scale situation concert Great National Strategy with the core idea of spirit, which illustrates the history of the ancient and modern Silk Road of the Chinese nation and sings the magnificent undertaking of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; the symphonic suite Dream Bridge is a work dedicated to Chinese bridge builders, with the second movement Dedication to History using the guzheng as a solo instrument, conveying a sense of remoteness and profundity. Through the construction history of several bridges, it demonstrates the unyielding spirit of the Chinese nation.

### **2.2 Works based on Chinese traditional opera themes**

The inheritance and development of Chinese guzheng music are inseparable from folk music, especially folk opera. The guzheng existed early on as an accompanying instrument in folk music arts, and many traditional guzheng pieces originated from or were adapted from opera music tunes. For instance, the guzheng piece Lin Chong's Night Escape was adapted early on from the Kunqu Opera Baojianji, and the piece "General's Order" was created based on the ancient score "Thirteen Sets of Strings". The adaptation of traditional repertoire and the transplantation of existing instrumental works are also major sources of creative elements in contemporary guzheng music. For example, Wang Zhongshan adapted the Jinghu tune Deep Night to create the guzheng piece Deep Night.

In these themed works, composers skillfully dissolve concepts and elements such as grand free rhythm and tight slow singing from Chinese opera into the musical details. This organic integration of traditional opera and guzheng, two representatives of China's outstanding traditional culture, promotes the diversified development of traditional music and guzheng music.

### **2.3 Works based on ethnic minority themes**

China has 56 ethnic groups, each with its own unique musical symbols. In order to inherit and protect these precious cultural heritages, creators ingeniously incorporate these ethnic musical elements into their compositions, resulting in a batch of works with rich ethnic styles. For example, there is the Western Theme Fantasia, which draws on materials from Xinjiang Uyghur music; Clouds and Mountains, full of the rich ethnic minority customs

of southwestern China; and Nuo I, which was created based on elements of the Yunnan Lahu and Hunan Yao ethnic minority folk songs. By combining Western composition techniques with music elements from various Chinese and even world ethnic regions, creators have not only expanded the musical language of the guzheng but have also paved a brand-new path for innovative guzheng composition in contemporary times.

#### 2.4 Works based on characters from Chinese classical literature

In contemporary guzheng music, when using historical figures as themes, grand musical structures are often employed, usually in the form of concertos, presenting traditional historical themes in a modernized performance format. For instance, renowned composer Professor Wang Jianmin used the ancient Chinese figure Diaochan, one of the Four Beauties of ancient China, as the theme for his modern work *Butterfly Lovers*, named after the ci poem *Butterflies Love Flowers*, as well as concertos such as *Lu You* and *Tang Wan*, interpreting the tumultuous lives of emperors in Chinese history in pieces like "Prince of Lanling and Xiang Yu, the Hegemon-King of Western Chu.

#### 2.5 Works based on Chinese traditional culture

China possesses a profound and extensive traditional culture. Through vivid musical compositions, creators showcase China's five-thousand-year-old traditional culture to the world, expressing cultural confidence of the Chinese people, including aspects such as calligraphy, painting, martial arts, intangible cultural heritage, and more. Composer Fang Dingqing incorporates the ancient Chinese character art of soaking, dyeing, blending, splashing, and dabbing into his composition *Moke*, displaying the exquisite beauty of ancient Chinese character writing art. There are also works with strong backgrounds like *Biography of the Present Life*.

#### 2.6 Works based on natural scenery

Depictions of natural scenes are commonly found in guzheng works. Stories about mountain streams and rivers were already circulating during the Warring States period. In the 1930s, the piece *Fisherman's Song at the Dusk* became widely renowned, becoming a globally recognized traditional Chinese guzheng masterpiece. Contemporary pieces often depict natural landscapes, such as *Waves of the Sea*, capturing the imagery and representation of the sea; *Flowing Clouds and Running Water*, symbolizing the nimbleness and freedom in pursuit of a certain state of life; and *Autumn Whirl*, portraying the beautiful and captivating autumn world.

### 3. Diversification of compositional techniques

Since the reform and opening up, with the influx of Western culture, creators of guzheng music have gained a deeper understanding of Western music. Many creators have been influenced by Western musical culture and are accustomed to using Western compositional techniques, resulting in works that exhibit a fusion of Chinese and Western styles. In terms of musical structure, traditional guzheng compositions often follow a linear development structure of Scattered—slow—moderate—fast—scattered, while contemporary guzheng music incorporates commonly used structures from Western music. For instance, guzheng performer and composer Wei Jun's pieces *Journey through the Desert* and *The Traveler* adopt a typical ternary form structure. Although this is a typical Western formal structure, it also inherently aligns with Chinese traditional formal structures, demonstrating the author's profound understanding and mastery of both Chinese and Western music.

At the same time, composers are constantly exploring new scales that are different from traditional keys, in order to achieve new breakthroughs in language and technique. For example, in contemporary works, the Zheng opera Xiao Wu which uses traditional Chinese opera music as the material, is an example:



Figure1: The new scale of Zheng opera

Source: Wang Yat-sen, 2006

Breaking the traditional arrangement of four groups of identical pentatonic scale cycles, the juxtaposition of four different house tone systems is arranged for the four tone groups: B flat house tone for large character group, F house tone for small character group, G house tone for small character group, and D house tone for small character group 2. The special string setting of the spiritual design provides an inexhaustible source of power for the free conversion of the tonality of the work, and a variety of tonality blends with each other to add tonal color to the work.

For example, Ye Xiaogang's Forest Spring uses atonal tonality to set the strings, combining A-flat major, B-flat major, and D-flat major to form a special chord setting method created only for the melody of the piece.

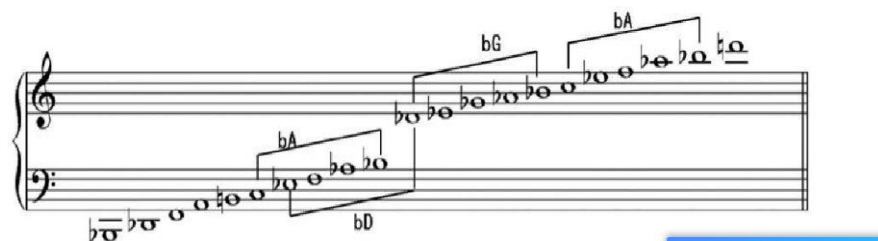


Figure2: Ye Xiaogang's Forest Spring chord

Source: Huan Ning ,2024

#### 4. Diversification of performance techniques

With the continuous enrichment and innovation of guzheng works, new requirements have been put forward for guzheng performance, and the traditional performance technique of right division and left press has been difficult to meet the performance needs of



modern works, so a series of new performance techniques such as rapid finger sequence, two-handed finger shaking, wheel fingers, and special sound effects techniques have emerged.

#### 4.1 Quick fingering technique

the rapid fingering technique is created by Mr. Zhao Manqin, a famous performer and educator in China, who borrowed the performance techniques of piano, violin, pipa and other musical instruments. The fast-fingering technique system founded by Mr. Zhao Manqin completely solves the defect that the guzheng cannot play fast melody with one hand, especially the fast melody of the seven-tone scale, which not only lays a solid foundation for the guzheng to get rid of the status of color instruments in the orchestra and enter the ranks of regular musical instruments, but also lays a solid foundation for the scientific fingering and standardization of performance methods of the guzheng. His representative works include *The Sun is Red on Jing gang Mountain*, *Fighting the Tiger on the Mountain* and so on.

#### 4.2 Wheel finger technique

the wheel finger technique is developed by Mr. Wang Zhongshan, a guzheng player and educator in China, on the basis of borrowing the wheel finger technique in pipa performance. On the basis of the pipa wheel finger, Mr. Wang Yat-sen integrates the arpeggio technique of the guzheng and uses four fingers (name finger, middle finger, index finger and big finger) to pluck the strings in a finger sequence in order, that is, the wheel fingers. The musical expressiveness of the wheel finger is very similar to that of the finger shake, suitable for playing the melodic tone of the long line, but there is a great difference in timbre between the two, the wheel finger technique is characterized by a relatively loose sound, flexible and changeable, in 1996 Mr. Wang Yat-sen used the wheel finger technique for the first time in his adaptation of the work *Yi Dance Music*, and then used this technique extensively in his work *Yunling Music and Painting*. The wheel finger technology has brought a new breakthrough to the performance of the guzheng, so that the guzheng has a new timbre expression.

#### 4.3 Multi-finger shaking

Multi-finger shaking is a new performance technique created by Wang Zhongshan, a contemporary guzheng player and educator, on the basis of inheriting the creative achievements of his predecessors and boldly exploring based on his many years of creative experience. Multi-finger shaking is developed on the basis of two-finger shaking, Mr. Wang Yat-sen used this technique in his adaptation of the work *Yi Dance Music*, multi-finger shaking refers to the finger shaking with more than two fingers at the same time, usually the big finger, index finger, middle finger, ring finger combination can be used on different strings at the same time to use the finger shaking technique.

#### 4.4 Overtone technique

In traditional Zheng music, overtones are rare, but they play an important role in contemporary Zheng music, and techniques such as rapid continuous overtones and one-handed overtones are also born. Rapid succession overtones mean that the player gently places his left hand on the string on the right side of the saddle, finds the overtone point with his right hand, and then scrapes it quickly with both hands.

#### 4.5 Special sound effects,

Special sound effects techniques initially only played the finishing touch in the music, decorative role, but later gradually affirmed, and the integration of traditional performance techniques of the guzheng, not only set off the atmosphere of the music, but also

expand the sound and musical expression of the guzheng. In the 21st century, the use of special audio is at its peak to date. Special sound also became more abundant in this period, and the creators began to borrow the performance techniques of other musical instruments, in addition to percussion beating, percussion and other techniques, but also borrowed the techniques of bowed string instruments, etc., and these techniques were transformed and used, so that more and more sound and the timbre of the guzheng itself fused, resulting in a lot of graceful and novel, gorgeous and colorful modern Zheng music works.

For example, Tao Yimo uses the alternation of fourth-note accents and sixteenth-note and eighth-note beats on the strings in the modern zhengqu *Hunting of the Wind*, which more vividly depicts the scene of hunters and prey competing with each other in the cold wind.

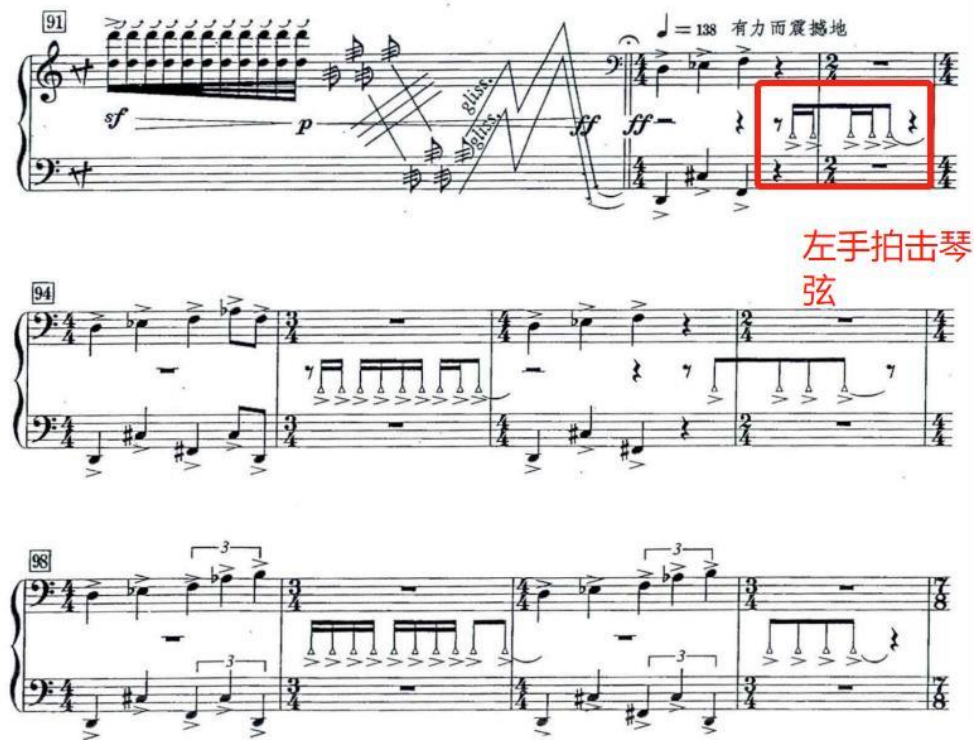


Figure3: Special sound effects techniques of *Hunting by the Wind*.

Source: Huan Ning ,2024

At the end of section A, measures 34-41 are combined by the bottom, the outside, and the upper part of the string, and during the beat, the player moves the position to the right side of the zither while clapping, which has two purposes, one is to prepare for the octave solo composed of 42 bar double bass and double bass, and the other is to enrich the contrast of the timbre of the beating technique, and in measures 37-38, the color tone of the right hand is also added to promote the musical mood towards the B section.

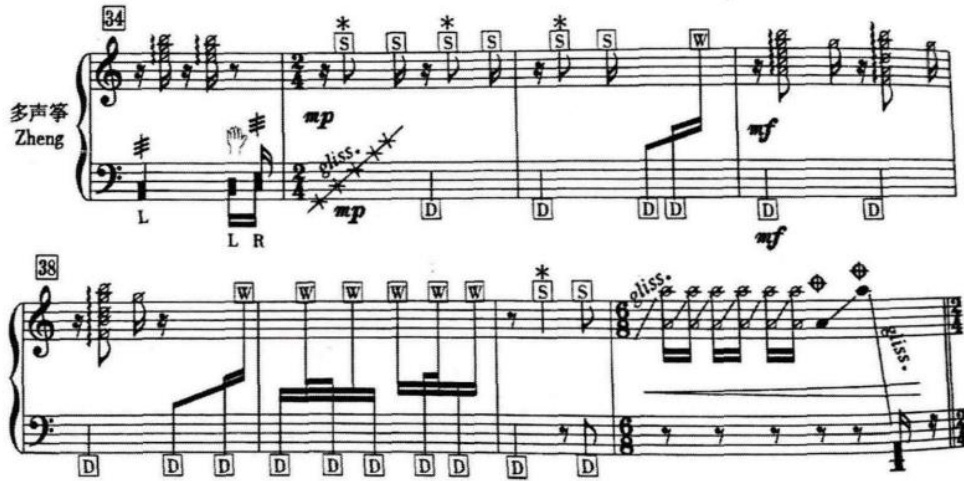


Figure4: Special sound effects techniques of Hunting by the Wind.

Source: Huan Ning ,2024

In measures 177-185 of the E section, the upper part of the string is slapped with the right hand and the lower register is played with the left hand. In the tempo of the Adagio, the left hand breaks down the chords and irregular accent changes in the upper row, and there are strong and weak dynamics to express the retrospective of the lost childhood and the attachment to the hometown. The combination of the right hand beating and the chores adds a sense of rhythm to the music, and the pure octave music progression of the left hand echoes the front and back of the previous section, and also forms a clear contrast with the sound effect of the right hand, making the musical language lively and vivid, and enriching the expressiveness of the music.



Figure5: Special sound effects techniques of Bronze Inspiration.

Source: Huan Ning ,2024

In addition, there are alternating hands to beat the strings, and unlike the traditional beating strings, in order to simulate the percussion of the original copper drum music, Copper Drum needs to lift the entire palm from a high place, quickly fall, and touch the middle of the string with all the palm to obtain a short, focused, powerful sound experience.

At the beginning of the piece, measures 1-7 are prelude by a string of primitive buckle and bass RE, and the combination of buckle shake and the outside of the zither body and the upper part of the zither body alternately beat. Presenting the dynamic and straightforward original appearance of the Red River to the audience, two bass instruments are added in a powerful plucked way to complement the enrichment, and the accompanying vocal cello also alternately uses the beating plate to match the plucked strings, using the richness of the timbre to reflect the local geography.

In addition, from the beginning of measure 24 to the end of measure 28, the structure of the phrase is supplemented by the technique of two-handed clapping, alternating three combinations in just 5 measures: the left hand beats the bottom, the right hand beats the outside, the left hand beats the bottom, the right hand beats the strings, and the left and right hands beat the strings from the bottom to the top. Beat the body in different positions to get a

variety of sound experiences with 5. The non-musical form of the changing combination outlines the regional characteristics of the Red River, the strange scenery of the mountains, and the dangerous caves of the gorge with the artistic language of music.

### **5. Diversification of performance forms**

Contemporary guzheng performance forms are constantly innovating while inheriting the tradition, and the performance forms of guzheng are even more diverse, which can not only cooperate with symphony orchestras, but also integrate with different instruments. For example, the guzheng and piano concerto works Yunshang Sue and Fengqiao Night Park, etc., the guzheng and cello works Dark Fragrance, Butterfly and Blue, the guzheng and percussion works Dawu and Autumn Leaves, etc., the guzheng and chamber music works Dream Shadow of the Green Lantern and The Waves of the Sea, the guzheng and symphony concerto works Dance of Ice and Fire, The Great Silk Road, and the works of Guzheng and Konghou Cordyceps Sinensis, In addition, with the continuous reform of musical instruments, a new form of instrumental performance called performance theater has emerged on the stage in recent years. Performance Theater is a new type of guzheng performance form jointly created by the performer and educator Professor Li Meng and her team, so that the instrumental music performance from a simple music form to music + drama + real scene + stage art and other ways, the theater version in addition to a large number of voices, complex and free tonality and sound for the performers to increase the difficulty, but also for professional guzheng players to put forward the high difficulty of stage performance.

## **Discussion**

Research objectives was to study the characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition, Researcher found that The Contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition has evolved significantly. the result consistent with (Xu,2011) This evolution includes the involvement of composers alongside performers, resulting in outstanding solo and chamber works. Themes have diversified, drawing from new eras, traditional opera, ethnic cultures, literature, and nature. Western compositional techniques have been integrated, broadening the guzheng's musical language. the result consistent with (Ma,2008) Performance techniques have diversified, incorporating rapid fingering, wheel finger, multi-finger shaking, overtone methods, and special effects. Moreover, performance forms have diversified, integrating with symphony orchestras and other instruments, while new forms like performance theater have emerged, enriching the guzheng's artistic expression the result consistent with (Fan,2008).

## Conclusions

The characteristics and expressive forms of contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition have evolved significantly. Firstly, there has been a transformation in the creative entities involved in guzheng music composition, with the inclusion of composers alongside performers. This change has driven a qualitative leap, resulting in a wealth of outstanding solo and chamber music works for the guzheng. Composers have effectively merged Eastern and Western composition methods, incorporating national stylistic features with diverse Western expressive forms, to meet contemporary aesthetic demands. In contemporary Chinese Zheng music composition, there has been a diversification of compositional techniques influenced by Western musical culture. Creators have integrated Western compositional techniques into their works, resulting in a fusion of Chinese and Western styles. This includes the adoption of commonly used structures from Western music such as the ternary form, which inherently aligns with Chinese traditional formal structures, showcasing a profound understanding of both musical traditions.

The diversification of performance techniques in contemporary guzheng music has led to the emergence of new methods such as rapid fingering, wheel finger technique, multi-finger shaking, overtone technique, and special sound effects. Innovations by prominent figures in the field, such as Zhao Manqin and Wang Zhongshan, have incorporated techniques from other musical instruments to expand the expressive capabilities of the guzheng, ensuring its relevance in modern compositions. These advancements have not only enhanced the technical range of the instrument but also broadened its tonal and expressive possibilities, leading to a rich and diverse repertoire of modern guzheng music.

The performance forms of contemporary guzheng music have diversified, allowing for collaboration with symphony orchestras and integration with various instruments. This diversification is evident in the emergence of collaborative works such as guzheng and piano concertos, guzheng and cello compositions, as well as guzheng and percussion pieces. Additionally, new forms like performance theater, pioneered by Professor Li Meng and her team, have expanded guzheng performance into a multidimensional art form that includes music, drama, real scenes, and stage art. These innovations have elevated guzheng performances and introduced higher levels of complexity and artistic expression to the instrument's repertoire.

## Suggestions

### 1. General Recommendations

The emergence of new forms of performance fully reflects the creator's open and innovative ideas, and makes the guzheng performance show unprecedented new effects, so as to effectively arouse the emotional resonance of contemporary people, improve artistic expression, and vividly present the classical beauty and modernity of the guzheng performance in front of the audience, which has made great contributions to the popularization and prosperity of contemporary Chinese guzheng art.

### 2. Recommendation for future research

A Recommendation for Future Research about Chinese Zheng music composition" might involve identifying areas that merit further study and exploration within the realm of contemporary Chinese Zheng music. This could include investigating the evolution of compositional techniques, delving into the fusion of Eastern and Western musical styles,

exploring the impact of diversified performance techniques, examining the integration of the guzheng with other instruments, and assessing the cultural and artistic implications of contemporary guzheng compositions.

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