

The Performance Techniques of the "Major Aria" in Chinese Tragic Opera

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Abstract

Chinese tragic opera refers to dramas with tragic endings where the protagonists meet their demise. The emphasis and prominence of the tragic theme rely on the arias of the main characters, especially the "Major Aria" sung by the protagonist before death, which plays a crucial role in expressing the tragedy and features unique performance techniques. The research selects seven "Major Arias" from six Chinese tragic operas created between 1980 to 2020 for performance research and analysis, applies theories of Chinese vocal performance and Chinese opera, and summarize the performance techniques of "Major Arias" Chinese tragic opera through methods such as observation, samples analysis, and interviews.

The research results found that performers need to master the basics of stage movement for the "Major Aria", including the use of hands, eyes, body, method, and steps. Performers must have a sense of spatial awareness and rhythm in their performance, which is significant for grasping the role and shaping the character's performance image. When performing the "Major Arias", performers need to integrate techniques of Chinese vocal music and Chinese opera singing, while also paying close attention to the expression of the Chinese language, particularly in the handling of rhymes and cadences.

Keywords: "Major Aria"; Chinese Tragic Opera; Performance Techniques

Introduction

Chinese tragic operas often feature protagonists with tragic fates that lead to their demise. The "Major Aria", as the final aria of the main character, encapsulates all their representative qualities and characteristics. It is the climax of emotional intensity in the opera, revealing the tragic trajectory of the characters through profound dramatic conflicts. This intensifies the tragic theme, deepening and elevating the overall tragic motif of the opera. The "Major Aria" holds a pivotal position, its significance evident, and possesses a strong artistic charm. It may be asserted that the "Major Aria" embodies, to a significant extent, the quintessence of Chinese tragic opera, characterized by its distinctive artistic features and exceptional execution techniques. Currently, research pertaining to the "Major Arias" of Chinese tragic operas primarily concentrates on a select few specific arias and works, notably omitting a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the "Major Arias" featured in operas that have emerged subsequent to the 1980s.

As one of the most important arias in the entire opera, the "Major Aria" reveals the final direction of the plot, foreshadows the tragic dramatic ending, and most representatively embodies the "tragic nature" of the work and its artistic charm. At present, there is relatively

little research on the "Major Arias" of Chinese tragic operas in a general, macroscopic perspective, and research concerning the genesis and execution of "Major Arias" primarily centers on works that originated prior to the year 1980, with fewer studies on those from the new era. Therefore, based on previous research, this research selects six Chinese tragic operas and seven "Major Arias" from these works created between 1980 and the end of 2020 as samples for study. The investigation into the performance methodologies of "Major Arias" within Chinese tragic operas holds considerable significance. Researchers aspire to contribute to the scholarly examination of "Major Aria" performance techniques and to modestly advance the flourishing of theoretical research in Chinese opera.

Research Objective

1. To analyse the performance image of the "Major Aria" in Chinese Tragic Opera.
2. To analyse The Movement Performance Technique of the "Major Aria".
3. To analyse The Vocals Performance Technique of the "Major Aria".

Literature Review

Mr. Jin Tielin, a representative figure in the field of Chinese vocal music, proposed in the 1980s and 1990s that Chinese vocal singing should possess characteristics of "scientificity, nationality, artistry, and contemporaneity." He pioneered a vocal music education system with a Chinese demeanor and national charm, establishing the "seven-character standard" for vocal performance, which includes "voice, emotion, diction, flavor, expression, cultivation, and image." This standard laid down objective criteria for the selection, training of national vocal talents, and the judging of national vocal music competitions, prompting many scholars in China to study this theory and its practice.

Famous artist Song (2012) discussed Jin Tielin's theories from the perspective of a student in her doctoral thesis, particularly Jin Tielin's discovery of mixed voice and the method of "support point" and "channel," which allows for the use of a combination of true and false voices to produce a bright, rich, and penetrating beautiful sound, while also conforming to the aesthetic habits of the Chinese people, thus gaining widespread popularity. Xiahou (2015) believes that through the literature research on the "singing analysis" of Chinese opera music, one can provoke thoughts on "singing analysis" and summarize one's own understanding and views on "singing analysis." Research on the enhancement of emotional interpretation in vocal performance art.

Research on Chinese opera performance techniques is currently mainly focused on doctoral dissertations. For instance, Sheng (2013) followed the historical development of Chinese opera, combined with the characteristics of its own development, and summarized Chinese opera performances in different periods. Li (2017) concluded that Chinese national opera singing is unique on the world opera stage from the perspectives of performance art summary, individual case analysis of performance art, and performance theory, but it requires continuous innovation. Zhao (2021) analyzes the expression of female roles in Chinese opera, emphasizing their simultaneous role in tradition and inheritance.

In addition, there are also in-depth explorations of the related performance forms of aria and individual aria performance studies. Examples include Yang and Jin(2010) conducted research on Chinese opera singing, " *The Artistic Form and Value Embodiment of Modern*

Chinese Opera Performance"(Ma,2018),which delves into the aesthetics and significance of modern Chinese opera presentations, and "*The Performance Art of the Female Role in Chinese Opera - Taking Wan Shan Hong, the performer of Jinzi in 'The Wild Land,' as an example*"(Chen et al.,2021) which specifically examines the artistic portrayal of female roles in Chinese opera, using Wan Shan Hong's interpretation of Jinzi in the play ' Wild' as a case study.

Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, one gains an in-depth understanding of the historical context, the current state of development, as well as the prevalent issues and challenges in the field of Chinese opera performance techniques. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese opera performance techniques have undergone continuous refinement, culminating in the formation of a distinct and unique performance style. With respect to research content, scholarly endeavors primarily concentrate on vocal techniques, the forms and values inherent in performance art, character development, and bodily movements. Within the realm of performance art's forms and values, scholars accentuate the national and contemporary traits of Chinese opera performances, deliberating on strategies to seamlessly integrate these characteristics into actual performance practices. However, the systematic examination of performance techniques remains an area that necessitates further strengthening. Steered by the principles of Chinese vocal performance theory, the investigation into the performance techniques employed in the "thematic arias" of Chinese tragic operas holds a pivotal position.

Research Methodology

1. Population and sample

The period after 1980 marked a new era of significant development and promotion for Chinese opera, with tragic operas being a classic representation. The operas and "Major Arias" selected for this study were published and distributed in authoritative publications, available for purchase or consultation in the mainstream market, and composed after 1980. These works are representative of Chinese tragic operas with "Major Arias" and serve as the overall research subject. In selecting the overall subject, this study took into account the following criteria:

(1) The selected Chinese tragic operas were created and performed by renowned composers, playwrights, and performing artists of Chinese nationality in China; (2) The selected Chinese tragic operas have had a significant impact in China, such as multiple revivals and reperformances, or have represented Chinese opera in its dissemination abroad; (3) The selected "Major Arias" have been performed at high-level concerts and competitions in China, possess a certain degree of promotional value, and are often used in Chinese vocal music education, opera performance teaching, and presentations.

After statistical analysis, researchers discovered that approximately 20 Chinese tragic operas were produced between the years 1980 and 2020. Notably, within this cohort, 13 operas featured "Major Arias" performed by the protagonists in their terminal moments, amounting to a total of 15 arias. This is the population of the research, details are shown in the table1 below:

Table 1 The main works of Chinese Tragic Opera and "Major Aria" (1980 - 2020)

No.	Name of "Major Aria"	Opera and Creators
1	"An unhappy life" (Zijun Aria)	"Regret for the past", Wang Quan and Han Wei lyricist, Shi Guangnan composition.
2	"You are me, I am you - Oh, my old friend" (Jin Zi and Qiu Hu duet)	"Wild", Wan Fang lyricist, Jin Xiang composition.
3	"Thousands of Miles of Spring" (TianYumei Aria)	"The Party's daughter", YanSu lyricist, WangZujie, ZhangZhuoya composition.
4	"We Shall All Live Forever", (Narengaowa Aria)	"Cangyuan", Huang Weire, Feng Baiming lyricist, Xu Zhanhai, liu hui composition.
5	"How I Wish." - "You are the eternal cloud in the sky." (Bai Yun and Tian Yuan duet)	"Sadness Dawn", Kong Yuan lyricist, Guan Xia composition.
6	"Smell the Flowers when you win" (Jin Huan Aria) "Mother is In the Cloud" (Yang Mu Aira)	"The ancient city of wild fire", Wang Xiaoling lyricist, Wang Zuji and Zhang Zhuoya composition.
7	"The most beautiful leaf in" (Bai Hua Aria)	"The Wave that never dies", Wang Xiaoling lyricist, Wang Zuji and Zhang Zhuoya composition.
8	"Ask sky" (Xiang linsao Aria)	"blessings", Wang Xiaoling lyricist, Wang Zuji and Zhang Zhuoya composition.
9	"I love you in the Afterlife"(Shui Hong lian Aria)	"Canal Ballad", Dong Ni lyricist, Yin Qing composition.
10	"Farewell moment is coming" (Dr. Hung Aria) "I hesitate to leave the reds "(Ping Yazhi Aria)	"Long March", Zou Zhijing Lyricist, Yin Qing composition.
11	"Sacrifice my death to awaken the people"	"Sandalwood Death", Mo Yan and Li Yuntao Lyricist, Li Yuntao composition.
12	"The Sun goes Down" (Sangji, Jin Ming and Qiu Wanli Trio)	"Beside the Jinsha River", Feng Boming and Feng Bilie Lyricist, Lei Lei composition.

Researcher selected 6 operas and their 7 "Major arias" as research samples. For the choice of performance versions, researchers primarily chose the premiere version as the main research sample and selected the concert version as an auxiliary sample. The performers of the premiere version included famous Chinese actors and singers; the concert version included, but was not limited to, famous Chinese actors, singers, teachers from art colleges, and participants in vocal competitions, among others.

2. Research tools

This research will comprehensively employ literature research, observational methods, and case studies as its primary research tools. The literature research component will meticulously focus on delving into the creative background, conception, aesthetic value, critical analysis, and detailed vocal analysis of the selected sample operas and arias. This will involve interpreting and analyzing an extensive collection of documented materials, with the aim of summarizing and analyzing the intricacies of performance techniques. Furthermore, the observation and case study methods will primarily consist of studying the audio and video recordings of the performers during their rendition of the arias. In conjunction with the corresponding musical scores, this examination will enable a profound understanding of the performers' unique characteristics, artistic prowess, and their approach to interpreting the

pieces. Ultimately, these methods will contribute to summarizing and generalizing the essential performance techniques employed.

3. Data collection

The data collection process for this study is outlined as follows:

- (1) Observation and collection of relevant information and data from literature, musical scores, and performance cases that are pertinent to this research;
- (2) Aggregation, classification, and refinement of the collected data;
- (3) Alignment of the data results with the research theme, and integration of the connections between the literature data and the musical score data;
- (4) Summarization of experiences and conclusions.

4. Data analysis

This research adopts a qualitative research approach, with its findings grounded in the collection and analysis of literature materials, observation and analysis of performance versions of “Major Arias,” and integration of information and data obtained from score examples and interview contents, ultimately yielding a comprehensive research outcome.

Research Conceptual Framework

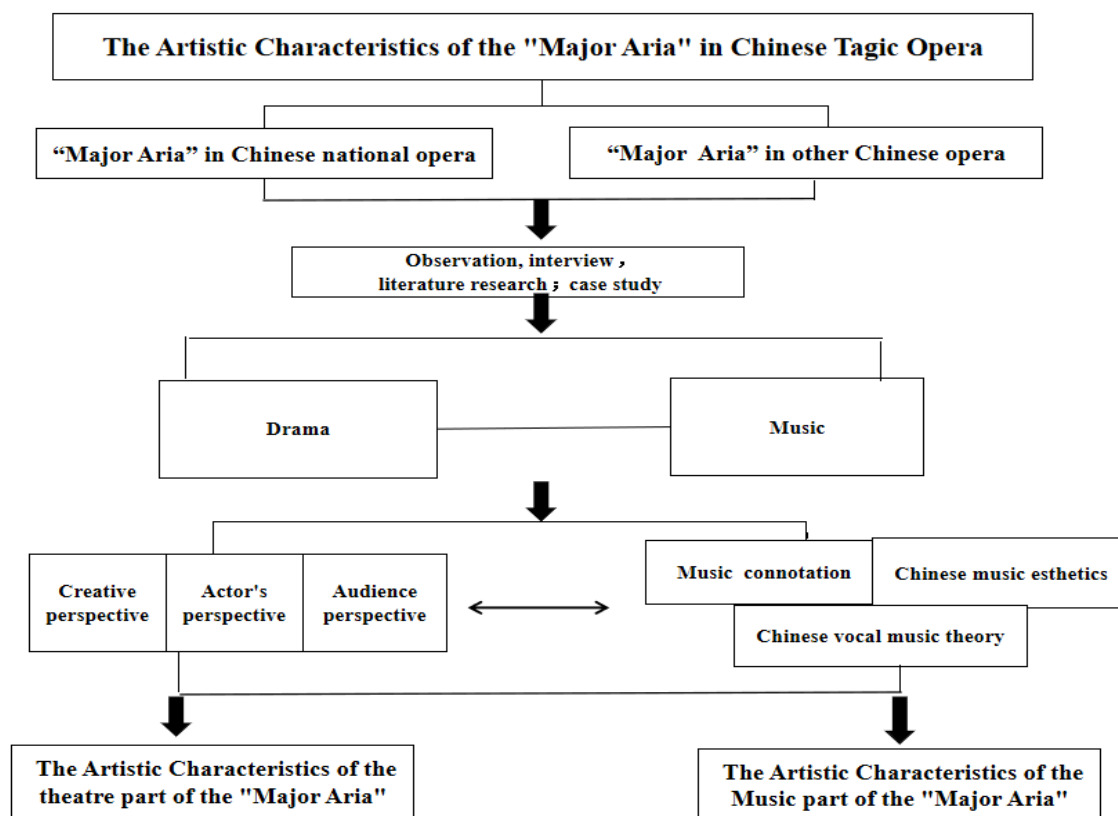


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework
(Source: Constructed by the researcher)

Research Findings

1. Analysis of the performance image of the "Major Aria"

In the research, a total of seven character performance images were involved, namely: Zijun, Qiu Hu, Tian Yumei, Narengaowa, Jin Huan, Yang's mother, and Shui Honglian. Due to the different background periods and theatrical contexts of the operas, there are various performance images. Through the analysis of the performance images in the seven arias, researchers found that the characteristics of the seven performance images can be summarized as follows:

Table 2 Analysis of Character Performance Image in "Major Arias"

"Major Aria"	Character figures	Performance image
"Smell the flowers when you win"	Jin Huan	A woman, around 25 years old, skillfully rebuked the enemy's atrocities at the meeting.
"Mother is in the cloud"	Yang Mu	An elderly rural woman, around 70 years old, was imprisoned by the enemy in a cell, where she met her son.
"Thousands of miles of spring"	Tian Yumei	A regular rural woman, about 30 years old, with a psychological age close to middle age, was captured by the enemy and was about to be executed at the execution ground.
"We shall all live forever"	Narengaowa	A Torgut Mongolian girl, about 19 years old, in the wild grasslands.
"An unhappy life"	Zijun	Intellectual youth, around 20 years old, pursue free love, despair, pain.
"You are me, I am you - Oh, my old friend"	Qiu Hu	Male, around 30 years old. Farmer, self-redemption, causing a sensation.
"I love you in the Afterlife"	Shui Honglian	The musician by the canal, a female around 18 or 19 years old, just and kind, loyal and resolute.

These seven performance figures embody individuality and commonality. The previous text analyzed each figure, and now let's analyze their commonalities:

Firstly, the seven performance figures are a microcosm of the common people in China. Whether it's the elderly rural woman Yang Mu, the ordinary rural woman Tian Yumei, or the Mongolian girl Naren GaoWa from the Torgut tribe, and the street performer Shui Honglian, they all represent the ordinary people of China without any grandiose identities. They are typical representatives of the common folk, thus reflecting the characteristics of ordinary and representative performance figures.

Secondly, before the "death" of the seven performance figures, there is a display of a "voluntary" trait. Through different stages of the performance, this willingness is expressed, ultimately presenting a shocking image to the audience. Therefore, shocking the audience and even provoking thought is also a characteristic of the performance figures.

Thirdly, the seven performance figures are predominantly female, all exhibiting the characteristic of "combining strength with softness." Whether they are actively facing death or passively, they all show a fearless, unyielding, and composed courage in the face of death. At the same time, six of the seven figures are female, possessing feminine attributes such as being

a woman or a mother, with beautiful character traits. The other figure, a male, also has delicate and tender qualities related to love.

2. The Movement Performance Technique of the "Major Aria"

2.1 Solid and flexible foundational skills in acting

In the basic skills of traditional Chinese opera performance, "hand, eye, body, technique, and step" are the core elements that actors must master and apply in their performances. They are both individual techniques and an organic whole that enriches the performance through interaction. In the singing of "Major Arias," performers use these techniques.

The variations in hand gestures, such as pointing, wiping, fixing, and swinging, as well as specific finger movements like the "Orchid Finger" and "Cloud Hand," have specific aesthetic and expressive functions. Eye contact is an important means of expressing emotions in performance, and the use of eye movements such as looking, gazing, peering, glaring, flirting, glancing, and turning can vividly display the inner world of characters. When performing, actors need to communicate with each other, giving and taking the scene, and they also need to communicate with the audience through eye contact to enhance the performance. The changes in methods and steps, the flexible use of fixed performance props, and the process methods and foundations have their specific ways of performance and technical requirements, which actors need to master.

This can be seen in the table below, which shows the researchers' record of observations on the study sample.

Table 3 Observation Table for Performance Action in "Major Arias"

"Major Aria"	Performer	Hand	Footsteps	Spatial change	Turn around	Prop usage
<i>"An unhappy life"</i>	Yin XiuMei	-	-	-	-	-
	Wang Yifeng	12	3	Sit-Stand-Sit-Stand	2	Scarf
<i>"You are me, I am you - Oh, my old friend"</i>	Zhang Qinghai	13	5	Walk-Stand-Kneel	6	无
<i>"Thousands of miles of spring"</i>	Peng Liyuan	20	7	Stand-Sit-Stand	6	无
<i>"We shall all live forever"</i>	Yao Hong	12	7	Kneel-Crawl-Stand-Kneel-Crawl-Stand-Sit-Lie down	3	无
<i>"Smell the flowers when you win"</i>	Sun Liying	23	6	Stand-Semi-recline-Stand	6	Hairpin
<i>"Mother is in the cloud"</i>	Huang Huali	35	4	Sit-Stand	4	无
<i>"I love you in the Afterlife"</i>	Lei Jia	54	8	Semi-Crouch position	4	Tilted Stake

2.2 Performance space sense of combining the virtual and the real

Through the clever use of the interplay between the tangible and the intangible, actors can transcend the limitations of reality within the confined stage space and create a wealth of emotions and imagery. This acting technique not only showcases the actor's professional level but is also a vital component of the "Major Aria" performance technique. Performers interact with the stage space through movements and expressions, creating virtual scenes and imagery. The "tangible" aspect involves the performer's actual movements, positioning, and interactions on stage, while the "intangible" part is about making the audience "see" objects or scenes that do not exist on stage through these actions. For example, an actor might convey walking across vast fields by waving and taking steps, even though there may only be a simple set on stage. The performer must have a sense of spatial awareness; it is this technique that guides the audience into this virtual space, fully engaging their imagination, allowing them to "see" those non-existent scenes.

For example, in the "Major Aria" *"You are me, I am you - oh, old friend,"* the performers Sun Jian, who plays Qiu Hu, and Wan Shan Hong, who plays Jin Zi, first engage in a duet. Through exaggerated movements such as leaning forward, embracing, falling, dragging, and running, they vividly depict the two characters' falls while running across the vast plains and the trembling of their bodies during moments of emotional loss of control. Their performance draws the audience into the artistic space, creating an artistic resonance. At the beginning of the aria, as Qiu Hu urges Jin Zi to have his child for revenge and keeps pushing her to hurry, Sun Jian starts with standing singing and then switches to singing on his knees. Meanwhile, Wan Shan Hong's movements change dramatically, with moments of emotional breakdown and cries of despair, almost reaching a "handstand" posture. In the struggle over whether to leave or stay, Sun Jian pushes Wan Shan Hong to the ground, and the audience hears a loud "thud" of her fall. This "real" performance allows the audience to feel the "pain of the body, but even more so, the pain of the heart" - the "imaginary" sensation. The entangled theme of love and revenge between Qiu and Jin gives the audience a powerful visual and auditory impact, prompting reflection on human nature.

2.3 Performance rhythm that combines both soft and hard.

The role creation that combines both strength and softness requires the actor to demonstrate not only the hard, strong and resolute aspects of the character but also the soft, gentle and delicate ones. The complexity of the character's personality necessitates precise performance rhythm from the actor to convey. In the tender moments, the actor's performance should be fluid and relaxed to express the character's gentleness and affection; whereas in the resolute parts, the performance needs to be tight and forceful to display the character's tenacity and indomitability. The actor's movements and expressions are also important means to show the sense of performance rhythm. In the hard parts, the actor's movements should be powerful and decisive, with expressions that are firm and resolute; in the soft parts, the actor's movements should be gentle and subtle, with expressions that are soft and affectionate. Through precise control of movements and expressions, the actor can better convey the emotional changes of the character.



Peng Liyuan performance of 'Hard'

Peng Liyuan performance of 'Soft'

Figure 2 Peng Liyuan performed '*A Thousand Miles of Spring Wind*'
(Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/r1XLLCaz4xNKZyu7Q3Mj2Q>)

3. The Vocals Performance Technique of the "Major Aria"

3.1 Vocal music fusion technique

In the theory and practice of Chinese vocal music, two terms are often mentioned—national style singing and bel canto. Among them, bel canto is the same as the European BELCANTO, mainly using the nasopharyngeal cavity for its resonance adjustment. Typically, the larynx is placed lower, the throat area is larger, the sound channel is positioned at the upper and lower parts of the pharyngeal wall, and the vocal tract is widened and lengthened as much as possible to achieve maximum resonance of the fundamental frequency. Traditional national style singing generally relies on chest voice, and when singing folk songs, the voice sounds sweet, the articulation is clear, the pitch is often high, and mostly the thoracic breathing method is used, taking in deep breaths but in small amounts, resulting in a longer breathing passage. Mr. Jin Tielin, a representative figure in the field of Chinese national vocal music, proposed in the 1980s and 1990s that Chinese vocal singing should possess characteristics of "scientificity, nationality, artistry, and contemporaneity," providing a new academic orientation and direction for the development of Chinese national vocal music education. In terms of the performance of "Major arias," researcher can further analyze the performance techniques of "Major arias" through observation and analysis of performance versions.

Table 4 Observation Table for the Application of Vocal Techniques in "Major Aria"

Major Aria	Type	Performer (Version)	Basic singing for performer	Voice section	Vocals Performance Technique
<i>"An unhappy life"</i>	Serious opera	Yin Xiumei	Bel canto	Soprano	The voice is light and agile, highly malleable, with a nationalistic flavor in the ending notes, drawing on folk singing techniques.
		Wang Yifeng	Bel canto	Soprano	The voice is rich and mellow, incorporating many ornamental sounds, drawing on techniques from folk singing.
		Gong Shuang	Folk singing	Soprano	The voice is clean and employs bel canto techniques, making it more piercing.
<i>"You are me, I am you - Oh, my old friend"</i>	Serious opera	Sun Jian	Bel canto	Baritone	The voice is clear and has great plasticity.
		Hu Ying	Bel canto	Baritone	The voice is clear and has great plasticity.
<i>"Thousands of miles of spring"</i>	National opera	Peng Liyuan	Folk singing	Soprano	Sweet, agile, high-pitched, powerful, with strong control, using bel canto technique.
		Lei Jia	Folk singing	Soprano	It employs bel canto techniques.
<i>"We shall all live forever"</i>	Serious opera	Yao Hong	Bel canto	Soprano	Dramatic soprano with a rich timbre, strong support, and powerful projection.
		Chen Yingzhu	Folk singing	Soprano	The voice is broad, employing many bel canto techniques, with a rich and full timbre.
<i>"Smell the flowers when you win"</i>	National opera	Sun Liying	Folk singing	Soprano	The voice is high-pitched, firm, and has a distinctive turn sound, employing bel canto technique.
		Si Yan	Folk singing	Soprano	The voice is high-pitched and bright, employing bel canto technique.
<i>"Mother is in the cloud"</i>	National opera	Huang Huali	Folk singing	Soprano	Flexible in sound, wide in timbre, high and powerful, with strong control, employing bel canto techniques.
		Huang Huihui	Bel canto	Soprano	The voice is rich and resonant, with a strong sense of vocal decoration and a strong ethnic character, employing ethnic singing techniques.
<i>"I love you in the Afterlife"</i>	National opera	Lei Jia	Folk singing	Soprano	The voice is sweet, high-pitched, and has strong control, employing bel canto techniques.
		Liao Shiyu	Folk singing	Soprano	Strong voice control, employing bel canto techniques.

Table 4 is a summary by researcher of the vocal application in the "Major arias" of 7 samples based on observation and singing analysis. Combining the analysis and observation, the following can be concluded:

Most performers are adept at singing the soprano range, requiring the ability to produce high-pitched notes, with a wide vocal range, precise control over their voice, and at the same time, their voice must be powerful and have a strong presence. The performers do not sing using a single vocal technique; instead, they base their singing on their own specialized vocal skills, incorporating or drawing inspiration from other techniques, ultimately creating a blended technique known as "folk singing & bel canto," and they engage in second creation according to the needs of the role and emotion. This is a major characteristic of the technique of "Major aria" vocals performance, while also following the aesthetic of current Chinese vocal singing methods.

3.2 Technique of vocal melodies in Chinese traditional opera

Table 5 is a summary of observations on the application of technique of vocal melodies in Chinese traditional opera to the "Major arias" of 7 samples.

Table 5 Observation Table for the Application of Vocal melodies Techniques in Chinese traditional opera in "Major Aria"

Major Aria	Performer (Version)	Song sheng	Tuo qiang	Penkou	Kuqi ang	"Jin La Man Chang" "tight music against leisurely vocals"
<i>"An unhappy life"</i>	Yin Xiumei	✓	✓	×	✓	×
	Wang Yifeng	✓	✓	×	✓	×
	Gong Shuang	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
<i>"You are me, I am you - Oh, my old friend"</i>	Sun Jian	×	×	✓	✓	×
	Hu Ying	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
<i>"Thousands of miles of spring"</i>	Peng Liyuan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lei Jia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>"We shall all live forever"</i>	Yao Hong	×	×	×	✓	×
	Chen Yingzhu	✓	✓	×	✓	×
<i>"Smell the flowers when you win"</i>	Sun Liying	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Si Yan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>"Mother is in the cloud"</i>	Huang Huali	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Huang Huihui	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>"I love you in the Afterlife"</i>	Lei Jia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Liao Shiyu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

In the table above, the techniques of vocal melodies in Chinese traditional opera involving Songsheng, Tuoqiang, Penkou, Kuqiang, Jinlamanchang were examined. Among the seven samples, the use of Kuqiang was the highest, reaching 100%; Songsheng and Tuoqiang came in second with 80%; Penkou was third, and Jinlamanchang was the lowest. Upon examining the scores, it was observed that Kuqiang is used in both bel canto and folk singing styles, but Kuqiang only appears in the "Major aria" of the first category of folk operas.

Songsheng refers to the addition of other phrases (or melodies) at the end of a piece of music to serve as a conclusion. *Tuoqiang* means the prolonged notes after words during singing. *Penkou* requires that the pronunciation of words be emphasized with lip sounds during singing, and after the sound is produced, the pronunciation should still be rapid, clear, and melodiously loud. *Jinlamanchang* refers to a vocal style where the accompaniment is played tightly and quickly, while the singing part is relatively slow and free.

Kuqiang means a sobbing tone in singing refers to a voice filled with sadness, sorrow, or melancholy emotions. It is achieved through specific vocal techniques and emotional expression, making the song more impactful and expressive. The tone often carries a tearful, soft, and delicate quality, allowing listeners to feel the emotional depth and authenticity of the character. Through observation and research, it is believed that the use of sobbing techniques in "Major aria" is very necessary and important. Not only must performers master certain expressive skills and emotional delivery, but it also reflects the tragic fate of the character, foreshadows the plot development, and enhances the audience's empathy with the character.

Discussion

1. Research Objectives

This study aims at the performance techniques of the "Major aria" in Chinese tragic opera. Through research, it was found that analyzing the characters in operas is beneficial for grasping the commonalities of the roles in aria performances, which is conducive to the study of performance techniques. The research utilized Chinese vocal music theory, opera theory, and other resources to summarize performance techniques from the aspects of physical performance and vocal performance.

2. Research Results

The Movement Performance Technique: The "Major aria" requires actors to have solid and flexible foundational skills in acting, especially in the richness of hand movements. At the same time, actors need to have a sense of performance space combining the virtual and the real; as well as a rhythm in their performance that balances hard with soft.

The Vocals Performance Technique :The "Major aria" is a fusion of “flok singing & bel canto” techniques, and is a second creation based on the character and emotional needs. In the vocal performance, "Major aria" will use the kuqiang, tuoqiang, and others techniques of Chinese traditional opera to express the sadness.

3. Reflection

Analyzing the portrayal of characters on the verge of death in opera can further delve into the performance techniques. This study has further explored the performance techniques of the "Major Aria" in Chinese tragic opera, mainly from the aspects of physical performance and vocal performance. It also compares the elements of Chinese vocal performance and Chinese traditional opera performance, expanding the depth of exploration. This study can provide strong reference for the performance of these arias.

4. Consistent/inconsistent

Consistent:

The findings of this study confirm the issue raised by Li Zi (2017) that the second creation determines the improvement of the essence of performance. She discussed the importance of the foundation of performance and the establishment of singing, as well as the emotional capture of action vocabulary. This article also believes that when performing the

Major Aria," character actors can enrich their performance through techniques of physical and vocal performance, thereby engaging in second creation. The analysis of the character roles in this article corroborates Zhao (2021) 's expression of the strength within softness in the portrayal of female roles in Chinese opera and the beauty of the stage art conveyed.

Inconsistent:

This article, building on previous studies by scholars such as Li Zi (2017) and Yang Shuguang & Jin Yongzhe (2010) on the singing techniques of Chinese opera, which have drawn on Western vocal methods and traditional Chinese operatic singing, proposes a perspective that goes beyond mere borrowing to a point of integration and application. This is also based on the artistic characteristics of "Major Aria" being distinct from those of ordinary Chinese opera vocal segments, possessing their own uniqueness.

Recommendations

1. Theoretical Recommendation

In the existing data, there are not many studies using "Major Aria" as a research perspective, and no scholars have been found to have conducted a more systematic study on "Major Aria" after 1980, and this paper fills a certain gap. It is conducive to the creation of opera art, performance research to provide reference basis. Beneficial to the promotion, appreciation and popularisation of the elegant art of opera. It is conducive to the summing up and upgrading of the teaching experience of opera singing.

2. Policy Recommendations

The relevant government departments should increase support for the performance of "Major Arias" in Chinese tragic operas. This could be done by establishing special funds and providing subsidies for creation, encouraging the creation and performance of outstanding operatic works and "Major Arias". At the same time, support for artistic troupes and creative talents should be strengthened to enhance their enthusiasm for creation and innovative capabilities. The performance of "Major Arias" in Chinese tragic operas should be incorporated into regular vocal music teaching, and public artistic literacy and appreciation abilities should be improved through school education, social training, master classes, and other methods.

3. Practical Recommendations

Organize various art exhibitions, performances, and lectures to popularize knowledge of Chinese tragic opera, expanding its social influence. Strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the international art community, introducing excellent foreign tragic opera works and creative experiences, while promoting Chinese arias onto the world stage. Through international arts festivals, competitions, and other events, showcase the artistic charm of Chinese tragic opera and "Major Aria", enhancing its international recognition and influence.

The next step is to further explore the performance techniques of the "Major Aria" from the aspects of action performance, vocal music performance, and other dimensions, in order to enrich the research on the performance techniques of the "Major Aria," thus providing insights for the performance of the "Main Aria" in Chinese tragic operas.

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