

Hunan Traditional Folk Song Teaching Curriculum Setting in China

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Abstract

As far as the present situation is concerned, most colleges and universities (referring to conservatories and comprehensive colleges and universities with vocal art majors) offer courses on Hunan folk songs only for students specialising in ethnic vocal music, while other vocal majors rarely have courses on Hunan folk songs. In the case of American vocal performance majors, for example, the problem of over-westernisation has not yet been alleviated, either in terms of theoretical elaboration or in terms of practical performance. This situation has also caused some of the American voice students to know that the "Slender Men on the Volga" will sing collectively when they are working collectively, but they do not know that the boatmen in Hunan have the custom of singing the "horn". As we all know, colleges and universities have the mission of "inheriting and promoting Chinese culture", but the problem of excessive westernisation of existing vocal music teaching is simply unable to make this goal a reality. In view of this problem, the viewpoint of this paper is: not only should the theory and practice of Hunan folk songs be offered to students majoring in ethnic singing, but also to students majoring in other vocal disciplines such as American singing, opera performance and popular singing.

Keywords: Hunan; Traditional Folk Song; Teaching; Curriculum; China

Introduction

Folk songs are produced by the working people in their daily practice of production and life, and are developed on the basis of the practicality that accompanies labour, so in the genres of folk songs, whether they are mountain songs, ditties or horns, they are all closely related to people's labour and life. Today, with the globalisation of economy and information, people's lives are becoming more and more affluent, and material life has reached a general satisfaction. On the basis of the satisfaction of material life, the pursuit of a rich spiritual world has gradually arisen, and thus a colourful life has appeared by people's side. In the former places with inconvenient traffic and undeveloped information exchange, people's music and cultural exchanges between various regions were few, and folk songs were very closely combined with the language, folklore, natural environment and other factors of the local environments in which they were located, so the regionality was very strongly expressed. And this unique characteristic makes it largely self-contained system in terms of humanistic customs, which is easy to form stabilisation and typology (Yang, 2022).

Based on the trend of globalisation, this kind of folk songs reflecting regional living conditions and aesthetic interests, its extensiveness and universality have been subjected to certain constraints, so this kind of unique characteristics of folk songs and the cultural connotations expressed behind them have gradually withdrawn from the scope of people's aesthetics and have become just a formal appreciation, resulting in aesthetic neglect, which is not able to resonate with the beauty of the people's hearts and thus not able to be sung. Many folk songs are created, processed and circulated naturally by the people in their production and life, and their lyrics and tunes are collectively adapted by the group. With the rapid development of science and technology and the improvement of the public's cultural level and appreciation ability, an individual can also create a folk song, but this kind of folk song is not a folk song with a universal significance, and embodies more of the individual's will, so the path of the generation of folk songs has been changed. The path of folk songs has changed. In the modern living environment, it is difficult for people to experience the primitive and simple character and cultural connotation of folk songs. For example, there is a kind of love theme in mountain songs, in which young men and women learn about and look for their partners through singing mountain songs, but it is difficult to see this kind of mate selection by singing mountain songs in the modern society at present (Fang, 2020).

In the original living environment, folk songs were spread in the venues of people's daily production and life, and the singers sang them with feelings and cheers, which were spontaneous by the singers individually or in groups without any interest, and the objects of the songs were often the people in the same circle of life with them, so the spreading of the traditional folk songs was a kind of interpersonal and natural way of spreading.

In contemporary life, with developed traffic and mass Internet, people's access to information is becoming more and more convenient and fast, and the cultural level is getting higher and higher, so it is more and more convenient to exchange and communicate music and culture among people in different regions, and the ways to understand music are also becoming more and more diversified. Mass media industry is now one of the main ways for people to understand music, in nowadays young people's music life pop music accounts for the main component, so the information in this regard will frequently appear in their vision, then the traditional folk songs in front of young people will be relatively less exposure, thus invariably increasing the public's familiarity with pop music, and so generating a big gap. Coupled with the decreasing number of young people who love traditional music and understand folk song repertoire and singers, the media's packaging of folk songs and singers is in a single form, ignoring the possibilities of the media to bring vitality to it, thus failing to satisfy people's aesthetics, the psychology of curiosity, and the sense of freshness, and affecting the development of traditional Chinese folk songs in the young people's population (Yu, 2013).

Since the modern industrialisation, foreign culture, music, art and economy have been imported into China, and people have experienced great changes from their behaviour to their way of thinking, such as learning from foreign countries in the past to developing according to their own characteristics, and in terms of music, there are new folk songs with the characteristics of the contemporary era, combining traditional music elements with modern fashion elements, which shows the style and appearance of the modern society. It is a good display of the style of modern society. It can be seen that with the increasingly superior social development in China, the living environment and cultural environment of the people have changed, and the basic environment of folk songs has changed with the development of the times.

Reasons for the Difficulty of Developing Traditional Chinese Folk Songs in the Present Time

Internal reasons: Language is one of the core elements of Chinese folk songs. The tunes of regional folk songs are based on the tones of the local dialect, and the lyrics are written according to local production and living habits, so language plays a very important role in folk songs. However, with the development of the times and the mobility of the population, a large number of young people have left their own places of living and flocked to the cities or big cities to study, work, live and settle down, and in the case of long-time use of Putonghua to communicate, their own regional language habits, language tone, dialect words and other linguistic functions will be slowly diluted and weakened, so that when they sing their own regional folk songs, their cadence will be inaccurate and their lyrics will not be understood properly, which will affect the folk songs. This affects the emotional expression of the folk songs. The decline in the number of inheritors is very unfavourable to the development of folk songs. There is a serious imbalance in the proportion of young people and old people in rural areas, so that it is very difficult to find an inheritor from one's own ethnic group or region. Some young people who are well qualified are not willing to inherit, and those who are willing to inherit are not able to meet the standard of inheritance because their abilities are not satisfactory in all aspects. Coupled with the fact that young people don't pay much attention to folk songs, there are many people who seek for new and different things, so the soil for the survival of folk songs is getting thinner and thinner, resulting in the loss of inheritors. Due to the convenience of information exchange in modern life, there are many different perspectives in cultural understanding and it has become more and more complicated. The older generation of folk song inheritors have a deep sense of identity with the national sentiment and their own culture, and they are able to guard the original flavour of the folk songs and preserve the most primitive style of the folk songs in the face of the influences of foreign cultures (Zhu, 2016).

External reasons. Folk songs are very precious cultural heritage, containing rich cultural spirit, conveying people's wishes, wills, thoughts and feelings, so folk songs have a lot of interesting and exquisite images in culture, thought and art. However, in the contemporary modern culture is gradually affecting the excellent traditional culture, and tightening the scope of development of traditional folk songs, so we will elaborate the reasons for the development difficulties from the following points:

Firstly, the media is a product of the rapid development of science and technology nowadays, because people know more and more diversified ways of information, new things constantly stimulate people's thinking, people are more and more demanding for high-quality enjoyment of music, and the emergence of a variety of music equipment, music software improves the efficient dissemination of music and music and people's lives are more and more closely linked to the music and the combination of music and modern science and technology, the infectious and expressive power of the music is more and more obvious, and the music and modern technology are more and more important. After the combination of music and modern technology, its infectious power and expressive power are more charming. In such an environment, people's learning ability is also gradually rising, such as the use of folk song material and other musical elements or cultural elements combined with each other, drawing on each other, so in the folk song, this form of music to show the people's strong will, requirements and aspirations of the music appeared in a variety of forms of expression such as new folk songs, city ballads, campus ballads.

Secondly, with the rapid development of China's economic environment and science and technology, machines have replaced the traditional handmade farming methods, and industrialisation has penetrated into people's lives, with fewer and fewer jobs requiring manual labour, and more and more skilled jobs, which greatly saves the consumption of resources. As a result, people seldom need to sing trumpets to raise their spirits and relieve their fatigue at work, and so the number of such naturally occurring mountain songs and trumpets that are sung while labouring will decrease, and the number of labouring people who sing these kinds of folk songs will also decrease accordingly (Li, 2012).

Thirdly, due to changes in the use of land, more and more high-rise buildings have been erected, and people are gradually moving closer to these walls of reinforced concrete and steel, with less contact with nature, and more of them revolving around modern life, so it is difficult for individuals or groups of people to create universal folk songs that resonate with labour and nature.

The development of a traditional Chinese folk song programme in the context of higher education

Due to the limitation of class time and teaching task, it is extremely unrealistic to let non-ethnic vocal majors learn Hunan folk songs systematically as ethnic vocal majors do. This can be solved by increasing the number of elective courses. That is to say, after the compulsory courses for non-ethnic vocal music majors are set up, a gap is taken from them to set up elective courses such as "Hunan Ethnic Vocal Music Appreciation Course" or "Ethnic Vocal Music Performance" for the students.

In addition to the independent courses, the teachers should also actively penetrate the elements of Hunan folk songs in all kinds of professional teaching. Hunan has given birth to many vocal artists, and their reinterpretation of traditional Hunan folk songs, either through American or popular singing methods, provides a rich source of teaching examples for teachers. Here, I would like to share with the readers the teaching experience of the author and his colleagues.

For American soprano students, in vocal performance practice activities, teachers will let students listen to some works of Hunan sopranos first. For example, let the students listen to the famous young Hunan soprano singing and performing artist Li Sisi singing "Liu Yang River" and "Dragon Boat Tunes", etc. After that, let the students try to sing by themselves, and the teacher will point out their shortcomings and let them make improvements, and let them write down their own experiences and insights when they practise in the class (including: personal problems, evaluation of the original singers, and personal feelings, etc.), and then, when the class is over again, the teacher will answer the questions and solve the puzzles, and let the students sing with their own voice and make the students sing with their own voice, and let them sing with their own voice. The teacher will answer his questions and let the student create the repertoire based on his own feelings and understanding (Zhou, 2016).

For students of popular singing, in response to the "prejudice" of students of this speciality towards ethnic songs (who consider them vulgar), teachers will encourage students to actively try "new singing of old songs" to stimulate their interest in the art of ethnic vocal music in the practice of vocal performance. This way of letting students participate in the creative process also helps to solve the drawbacks of the lack of articulation between skills and ideas in the process of vocal performance.

Therefore, the dissemination of Hunan folk songs in vocal music teaching also requires great attention from the management of the faculty. Increasing the number of courses for non-ethnic vocal majors in Hunan folk song appreciation and singing and carrying out practical activities in Hunan folk song courses is not something that can be achieved simply by teachers' willingness to teach and students' willingness to learn. Because every teaching activity will inevitably use various teaching resources such as teaching funds, teaching environment and teaching management. Therefore, it is necessary to vigorously promote folk music and start the teaching programme of Hunan folk songs, so that more people will pay attention to traditional folk songs. In the process of preserving traditional culture, it should be borne in mind that only development can enable culture to be passed on better.

Hunan traditional folk song teaching curriculum setting

The study of Hunan folk songs has produced many results, with the publication of many specialised books and theses on many topics. There are two main types of books on Hunan folk songs collected, compiled, edited and published: Hunan Folk Songs Collected by the Hunan Provincial Department of Culture, and Hunan Ballads Collected by the Hunan Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles. The Hunan Folk Songs Collection (four volumes in total), originally titled Chinese Folk Songs Collection - Hunan Volume, was published by the Culture and Art Publishing House in 1994. Later, after revision, it was renamed Hunan Folk Songs and included in the large-scale series Hunan Literature Library, published in June 2008 by Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House as the 212th and 215th books in the series B. The book contains a variety of songs on various subjects. The book contains 1,432 Hunan folk songs on a variety of subjects, divided into five sections: Han, Tujia, Miao, Dong, and Yao. The Han folk songs are divided into eight categories according to genre: trumpets, field songs, mountain songs, fishing songs, lamp tunes, ditties, custom songs, and children's songs, with additional life tones. Each category is preceded by a brief introduction outlining the content of such folk songs, their singing style, lyrics, genre, and characteristics of the tunes. There are many types of music in Hunan, including folk songs, custom music, song and dance music, rap

music, theatre music, folk instrumental music, music of sound and religion, and ceremonial music (Li, 2014).

Introduction to the categories of Hunan traditional folk songs

Tens of thousands of Hunan folk songs have survived from thousands of years of Hunan culture. According to the subject matter of the songs, there are three main types of Hunan folk songs: labour songs, mountain songs and ditties.

Labour songs

Labour songs are songs created and sung by working people in the course of their labour. It is closely related to labour and is sung during labour. In the beginning, the labour call was the command sound of labour, which played the role of organising labour and unifying movements. Later on, in order to reduce the boredom caused by the single movement of labour, people added melodies and appropriate rhythms to the orders, which helped to relieve sleepiness and boredom. During the labour, everyone follows the command of the song to exert their energy and strength in one direction. When the song is sung, it is divided into a leader and a chorus, "one leader and all the people in harmony". The rhythm of the labour bugle is generally more regular and powerful, not as free as that of the mountain song, and not as gentle as that of the minor key music. The labour call is more practical in its musical function. In order to apply to the continuity of labour, labour songs usually have repeated passages. Sometimes, due to changes in the labour environment, different pieces of the labour songs are sung in succession, forming the form of a suite.

Mountain songs

Mountain songs are songs that people sing when they are working. It is a way for people to relax and enjoy themselves after labouring in the fields and mountains. Most of the songs are sung in solo or duet. Among the solo works, the solo songs sung by male voices are mostly those sung while chopping wood, cutting grass and going out to work. Women's solo songs are mostly sung when they are picking tea, fruits and clothes. The songs sung in duets are mostly "Pan Songs" and "Teasing Songs" between children and "Love Songs" and "Festival Songs" among adults. The main songs are "love songs" and "festival songs" among children and adults. Classification of Hunan Mountain Songs: Hunan Mountain songs can be classified into four types according to their vocal cadences: high-cavity mountain songs, flat-cavity mountain songs, humming-cavity mountain songs and children's mountain songs. Compared with the mountain songs of other regions, Hunan Mountain songs do not have the boldness of the northern mountain songs or the vastness of the western mountain songs, but they have the unique spiritual beauty of Hunan people. Hunan songs are not only bold and atmospheric, but also soft and gentle. These are closely related to the geographical environment of Hunan. Hunan is hilly and the mountains are not very high, so you don't need to shout to let the other side hear your voice in normal life. Therefore, compared with the mountain songs of other regions of China, Hunan Mountain songs have a little more subtle beauty (Tang, 2020).

Ditties

Ditties are also known as tunes, ditties and so on. With the labour horn and mountain song is different from more by the narrative-based, and the song is mainly lyrical, the structure is more regular, are generally created by people. Its melody is euphemistic and fluent, and the rhythm is more proportional. The melody is simple, easy to learn and easy to sing, with a strong mood of life. Hunan ditties are roughly divided into silk-string ditties and life ditties. Silk-string ditties refer to ditties sung with silk-stringed instruments, which are mostly made by literati and scholars of all times, with subtle lyrics and soft tunes. For example, "Appreciating the Four Seasons", "The Yin Tattletale", "Come to Spring" and so on. These songs are mainly popular in teahouses and restaurants in the city, and are mostly sung by singers and singers. They are accompanied by stringed instruments such as erhu and pipa. Silk-string ditties are mainly sung by artists, so the repertoire has a wider range of circulation, and the lyrics are more stable, rarely improvised, and these ditties are very delicate, sweet and gentle, suitable for narrating and singing stories. Silk-string ditties can be divided into "time-key ditties", "lanterns" and "ground flower drums". Life ditties reflect the daily life of ordinary working people and depict all kinds of life. For example, "Chestnut Blossom", "Sending a Son in October", "Little Son-in-Law", etc. They are mostly sung in the form of apprentice songs. They are sung in a free manner without accompaniment. The dirges of life describe the shortcomings of parents and the affairs of the common people's families, and although the repertoire covers a relatively small geographical area, the regional colours are very distinctive.

Musical Characteristics of Various Types of Hunan Folk Songs

The ups and downs of musical melodies are closely related to production and life. In Hunan folk songs, no matter whether they are labour calls used to help with work, mountain songs used to help with difficulties, or ditties used to sing about the change of seasons and trivial matters of life, their melodies are inseparable from the environment (geography, living environment, working environment, etc.) of the time.

Musical features of the Labour Horn

Boatmen's Horn: In the boatmen's horn, due to the different geographical environment of each water, sometimes the travelling beach is with the current, and sometimes the travelling beach is against the current. Due to the influence of weather, sometimes it is windy and sunny while sometimes it is thunderstorm. Therefore, the melodic characteristics of the shipwright's horn will change according to the changes of these external conditions. Therefore, in Hunan's five major waterways - Xiang, Zi, Yuan, Li, and Dongting Lake - the boatmen's horns of each river basin are somewhat different in terms of musical style and singing style.

Xiangjiang River Boatmen's Horn: In the Xiangjiang River Boatmen's Horn, the melody changes accordingly because of the changes in the water conditions in the upstream and downstream parts of the river. In the upstream part, because of the uneven width and depth of the riverbed, sometimes even in the dry season, many sandy beaches are exposed on the riverbed, and the boatmen often encounter dangerous beaches when they are travelling on the river, and in this kind of travelling, they appear the horn of going up to the beach, the horn of pulling fibres, etc. The melody is sung freely by the leader. In the melody, the leader sings freely and drags the voice for a long time, which is to give the chorus time to adjust and build up strength. In the middle and lower reaches of the river, as the terrain gradually flattens out, the river gradually becomes calmer than the previous rapids, so the melody mostly takes the

form of a long lead and a long chorus, which expresses a kind of exciting and stretching emotion.

Zishui Boatmen's Horn: The hills along the Zishui River are undulating, and the area through which the Zishui River flows has many dangerous beaches. The long years of travelling have created the brave and resolute character of the boatmen. It is this kind of bold character that makes the melody of Zishui boatmen's bugle lead the part with short high pitch and explosive long tone, and the chorus part keeps repeating a simple and fixed melody. The melody of Zishui Boatmen's Horn mostly uses "6 1 3" three-tone and "6 1 3 5" four-tone scales.

Horn: Most of the labour of ram-raping is in the form of a single repetition, so the melody of the horn is also based on a repetitive and concise structure. Hunan's "hit the ram ram horn" is represented by Changde's "hit the ram ram horn". Influenced by the local dialect, Changde's rattlesnake is in tune with pure fourths at both ends and a combination of major second and minor third fourths between the tones. In the melody, the high note often appears at the beginning of the sentence, and then transitions to the middle and low notes.

Musical Characteristics of Mountain Songs

Hunan mountain songs are melodic with big ups and downs, free and soothing rhythms, and many ornamental sounds such as glissandos, leaning sounds and fluttering accents in the tunes. Most of the songs are sung by people during their labour and leisure time, so they are more entertaining. In terms of melody, it is not as powerful as the labour horn, nor is it as soft and sentimental as the ditty, which expresses more the wildness of the people in the mountains.

Musical Characteristics of the Minor

The Hunan minor key is mostly sung by soloists, but also by male and female duets. It has a beautiful melody, but sometimes there are big jumps in the melody. This is inextricably linked to the subtle and spiritual character of Hunan people, which makes Hunan ditties full of rich local characteristics.

Conclusion

The theoretical basis for teaching folk songs in Hunan covers a number of aspects, including the history and cultural background of folk songs, the characteristics of Hunan dialect and intonation, the singing techniques and methods of folk songs, teaching strategies and curriculum design, the significance of the protection and inheritance of folk songs, the analysis of the aesthetics of folk music, cross-cultural communication and integration, as well as the teaching practice and evaluation of the effect. In the teaching process, teachers need to consider these factors comprehensively and develop a scientific teaching programme to help students learn and master Hunan folk songs better.

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