

# Development and Characteristics of Chinese Art Song in Song Dynasty

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## Abstract

The Song Dynasty in China is an important dynasty in Chinese history, divided into two periods: the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). The Song Dynasty was the peak period of economic development in ancient China. Kaifeng became one of the largest cities in the world at that time, with prosperous commerce and handicrafts, and was rich in grain, silk, porcelain, tea and other commodities. At the same time, the Song Dynasty was also a period of prosperity of Chinese culture and art, and it was one of the peaks of ancient Chinese culture. Many outstanding cultural figures appeared, such as Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Wang Anshi, etc. Remarkable achievements were made in Confucianism, literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, science, etc. At the same time, ancient Chinese poetry and art songs have also promoted the inheritance and dissemination of traditional culture in the contemporary era. The singing of ancient Chinese poetry and art songs usually pays attention to the expression of emotion and the processing of sound. Singers need to show a deep understanding and comprehension of ancient poems in music performance, convey the artistic conception and emotion of poems with voice, and let the audience feel the emotional world of ancient poets. Many ancient Chinese poems and art songs have become classics. This article presented the Chinese art song in Song Dynasty.

**Keywords:** Development; Characteristics; Chinese Art Song; Song Dynasty

## Introduction

As a major category of "song", "art song" is the product of European romanticism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. As a special vocal genre, they have unique characteristics that distinguish them from other categories of songs. Art songs in a broad sense refer to all songs with artistic value, and art songs in a narrow sense refer to "poems created by composers to distinguish them from folk songs. The layout is rigorous, the accompaniment part has a profound description and rendering effect, the words, rhythm and accompaniment are organically combined, and the staff is recorded, often with piano accompaniment. It is the main vocal genre of concert singing (Li, 2023). According to scholars, art songs are called "Lied" in Germany, "Melodic" in France, "Romance" in Russia, and "Art Song" in Britain and the United States.

Various music dictionaries, music theory books and documents in the world have similarities and differences in the definition of European art songs:

1. "New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians" defines art songs as: "Art songs are songs with serious artistic significance created by professional writers and different from folk songs.

2. The New Harvard Music Dictionary defines the art song as "An art song is a song written for chamber concerts, to distinguish it from folk and popular songs. It is music traditionally composed for poetry, and its lyrics have a strong Literary and artistic. Unlike most folk and popular songs, the accompaniment of art songs is formulated and created by composers, rather than rewritten by improvisations by performers.

3. "Encyclopedia of Chinese Music and Dance" defines art songs as "a lyrical solo song popular in Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries". Its characteristics are that the lyrics are mostly based on famous poems, focusing on expressing the inner world of the characters, the tunes are complex, the means of expression and composition are complicated, and the accompaniment plays an important role.

4. The definition of art song in "Oxford Concise Music Dictionary" is: "art song refers to a solo song with accompaniment".

5. "Foreign Music Dictionary" explains the art song as follows: "This word is now exclusively used in German songs, such as Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, etc. However, since Since the Middle Ages, it has also been used in a wider sense." Throughout the ages, it has been characterized by emotive emphasis on the lyrics and greater importance on the piano part. "

Roger Camien, director of the Department of Music Appreciation at New York University's Vince College, believes: "Art songs are one of the distinct genres of romantic music. Art songs are works written for monophonic vocal music and piano. In art songs, poetry and music are integrated, vocal music and piano are integrated... It is a solo song accompanied by piano, using poetry as words, and music to express the emotion and imagination of poetry (Rao, 2023)."

From the above description of the definition of art songs, we can see that art songs are song genres with specific meanings. Its lyrics are composed of poems, which are very literary. The music and accompaniment are specially formulated by composers who have received high artistic training and creative skills. The content of the songs focuses on expressing people's inner and spiritual world.

## **The Historical Development of Art Song**

The development history of art songs covers the history of humanistic spirit, vocal music and instrumental music. From the close combination of ancient Greek poetry and music and the spread of epic in the form of rap, the ancient Romans at that time believed that music was the entertainment of slave owners, so professional artists developed and emerged around the 5th century AD, and Europe entered the feudal society, namely the history of music is known as the "dark" medieval era of ecclesiastical rule. At this time, music was the means used by the church to strengthen people's religious beliefs. The part about women in the church in "New Testament Amen" and "1 Corinthians" mentioned, "Your women must keep silent in the church, and they are not allowed to speak; they must always obey the stipulations of the law." Therefore, the female voice was replaced by the male voice at that time. In order to ensure the singer's timbre, the boy was castrated before the voice change period. In the history of music, he is called "eunuch singer" or "eunuch singer". The emergence of eunuch singer has enriched the singing skills of singing art.

8th century AD. There is a kind of music in Germany that started to emerge and develop. "The earliest German lyrical songs arose during the separation of Old High German from other Germanic dialects and became an independent language, around the second half of the eighth century (Wu & Chen, 2003). This It is a kind of secular music sung in dialect with a monophonic style.

In the 11th and 13th centuries, with the formation of chivalry during the Crusades, it developed into knightly music. Cavalier music first appeared in France and spread to Germany after a long century. In France, knightly music is called "bard", while in Germany it is called "poetry lover (Du, 2023)". At this time, it is still monophonic, and the theme of the music has changed from folk songs to praising the motherland and love.

Around the 14th century, "poetry lovers were replaced by the famous singer's guilds of small merchants and artisans among the emerging citizens" Musical manifestations of the monophonic genre have existed and developed for more than six hundred years so far.

In the 15th century, people's aesthetics changed a lot. With the change of the times, various ideological movements gradually broke out in Europe in the 15th century. People began to oppose the absolute control of religion, which was called the Renaissance in history. The rapid development of productivity made the emerging bourgeoisie dissatisfied with the church's absolute control over the spiritual world. They proposed to liberate individuality and abandon superstitious theology. Only talents are the real masters of real life. With the spread of the spirit of the Renaissance, the emerging bourgeoisie advocated the use of ancient Greek monophonic melodies to express new ideas. People's requirements for music functions have changed, and monophonic music with monotonous texture and flat melody can no longer satisfy people's expression of spiritual liberation. At this time, religious music also changed, especially the Italian composer Palestrina (c. 1525-1594) also added a human touch to the creation of religious music, and polyphonic music replaced Gregorian chants. A genre of polyphonic song called "Reed" emerged.

Around the 16th century, the development of vocal singing art in European countries has matured, such as the "pastoral" in Italy. French "Chanson" and German "Art Song", especially German "Art Song", developed very rapidly in the 16th century, with various forms, and there were even works of "Art Song" with five to six voices.

During the Baroque period in the 17th century, the traditional polyphonic "art song" evolved into a new form of expression, which is the predecessor of the "art song" we are discussing today-continuous bass. If the 16th century was the world's 17th and 18th centuries, vocal music gradually caught up with instrumental music, and the history of music entered the Baroque and Classical periods.

At the beginning of the 19th century, under the background of the French bourgeois revolution and complex social turmoil, a new trend of thought, romanticism, emerged, and literature and art also entered the stage of romanticism, which merged with music art to produce art songs.

So we can say "From the monophonic dialect "Minnesan" in the 12th century to "Meistersang" in the 14th century, to the polyphonic dialect "Lied" in the 15th and 16th centuries, to the Baroque and Classical periods in the 17th and 17th centuries. In the 18th century, art songs presented a combination of monophonic melody and instrumental accompaniment. The notation used bass to pass through the music, and the accompanying instruments gradually developed from the original "lute" to the clavichord. In addition to the worship of gods, the continuous rise of the humanistic spirit has promoted the prosperity of classical poetry" (Gong, 2023).

### **Characteristics of the Chinese Art Songs**

After the genre of art songs was introduced to China, it was quickly accepted and loved by Chinese intellectuals.

First of all, the romantic temperament of art songs fits very well with the literati atmosphere of traditional Chinese intellectuals. Traditional literati have read poetry and books since they were young, and then they were influenced by Western culture, which broadened their horizons and inspired their thinking. Secondly, the personal emotional expression and description of art songs coincided with the spirit of the times when individual consciousness awakened after the May 4th New Culture Movement, which aroused the composer's creative enthusiasm and inspiration, and then opened the subsequent Chinese art songs. Development history, Chinese art songs refer to a kind of artistic solo songs that have emerged in the history of new music development in my country since the 20th century.

Over the past hundred years, composers have created many excellent Chinese art songs. These works not only spread Chinese classical poetry, but also inherit the bonding culture of words and music in traditional Chinese art of expression, and also fully express the personal emotions and realistic feelings of the family.

Compared with western art songs, the connotation of Chinese art songs has its own characteristics:

1) The choice of lyrics. There are both classical poems and recent works of later generations. Art songs based on classical poems, such as "I Live at the Head of the Yangtze River" (lyrics by Li Zhiyi, main song by Qing), "Flowers Are Not Flowers" (lyrics by Bai Juyi, melody by Huang Zi), "Poems by Hongdou" (lyrics by Cao Xueqin, melody by Liu Xuean), etc. Art songs composed according to modern people's lyrics, such as "Question" (Yi Weizhai lyrics, Xiao Youmei music), "Teach me how not to miss him" (Liu Bannong lyrics, Zhao Yuanren music), "Gold Rose Three Wishes" (Long Qi lyrics, Huang Ziqu), etc. (Lu, 2023).

2) In terms of the relationship between lyrics and music, Chinese art songs not only have the rotation followed by the lyrics, for example, Yi Weizhai pays attention to the traditional parallel tune (Yu, 2009); relatively free. Zhao Yuanren's creations are either smooth or flat, not sticking to one pattern.

3) Piano accompaniment. The main feature of Chinese art songs is the national style of harmony. The "Chinese School Harmony" first proposed by Zhao Yuanren carried out a functional transformation of Western harmony, such as the use of additional and omitted chords in the chord structure (Zhao, 2023); Taboo parallel fifth and eighth and so on. This transformation makes Western harmony more suitable for Chinese pentatonic melody.

4) Singing skills. Chinese art songs are influenced by western art songs. Over the past century, with the continuous expansion and enrichment of creations and the continuous frequency and expansion of exchanges, the singing and expression of Chinese art songs has gradually shown a diversified trend from the initial emphasis on single bel canto.

5) In terms of performance venues. At the beginning of the 20th century, Western music was introduced to China, and China's urban concert culture gradually emerged. Compared with the Western salon form, Chinese and foreign art songs are mainly presented in the form of concerts, which are familiar and loved by people. With the continuous improvement of the living standards of the mass society, family gatherings, club gatherings, festival celebrations, etc, there is no shortage of singing assistance from Chinese art songs. In addition to the classic form of piano accompaniment, there are also band accompaniment, chorus adaptation, and live sound amplification. In addition, some new chamber music performances have appeared, such as Fan Jingma's "Song of Songs". etc.

## **Chinese Art Song in Song Dynasty**

### **The Historical Development of the Chinese Art Song in Song Dynasty**

Ancient poetry originated in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. The Book of Songs is the beginning of ancient Chinese poetry and the earliest collection of poems. It was originally called "Poems" or "Three Hundred Poems". Since ancient times, poetry and music have been integrated, and all three hundred poems can be sung, and all have tunes. They are profound in conception, concise in writing, rich in connotation, and long in rhythm, shining unique brilliance in the long history, such as Chuci, Qinge, Ming and Qing ditties and other forms. But it is a pity that the form of poetry and music has not been passed down, and now only the form of pure text remains, lacking the records of tunes and scores (Chen, 2023).

Chinese Art Songs (Song Dynasty) is an art song created by modern composers with the classic "Song Ci" as the lyrics, combined with piano accompaniment and modern tunes. It uses modern and traditional Western writing techniques and combines traditional Chinese music techniques to present Chinese classic classical poetry. The charm makes it an indispensable part of Chinese art songs. All in all, Chinese art songs (Song Ci) are not only a kind of inheritance of ancient Chinese poetry, but also a kind of development.

### **Characteristics of the Chinese Art Song in Song Dynasty**

Chinese art song (song dynasty) includes not only traditional ancient songs, but also various songs created by modern and contemporary composers based on ancient poems, as well as ancient poems and art songs. There are various ways and forms of singing, including singing, folk singing, bel canto, and popular singing. Some Chinese art song (song dynasty) can have the quality of Chinese ancient poetry art songs under certain conditions. We might as well include these songs in the category of art songs. Dai Penghai believes that "the first art song in my country should be the baritone solo "Great River Going East" composed by Qingzhu when he was studying in Germany in 1920 with Su Dongpo's lyrics "Niannujiao·Chibi Nostalgia" It can be seen that in 1920, China's first the appearance of an art song also opened the history of Chinese ancient poetry art songs. So far in 2020, it has been 100 years.

Chinese art song (song dynasty) refers to a kind of artistic solo songs that have emerged in the history of new music development in my country since the 20th century. It is a combination of literature and music, and the lyrics are selected from classic poems handed down from the classics. It is a combination of Chinese and Western music creation, a modern vocal music with scientific bel canto and national style, and it belongs to China's new music culture.

Looking at the development history of the past 100 years, Chinese art song (Song dynasty) have the following characteristics in terms of creation, subject matter and singing:

1) Various technologies. There are three main types of art songs created based on ancient poetry in terms of harmony techniques: first, they are created using the functional harmony system of major and minor scales. Second, the pursuit of the national style in harmony, and the national transformation of western harmony, such as Huang Zi's "Bu Suanzi Dinghui Temple Dwelling Works in Huangzhou" (Su Shi's poems), the melody is the five positive tones, and the harmony the acoustic background includes twelve-tone pitch material, the typical usage of functional chords in the whole piece, etc. Huang Zidu has carried out theoretical exploration and creative practice in the national style of harmony. By omitting or substituting sounds, he strives to match the functional harmony with the pentatonic melody; thirdly, he explores modern composition techniques, such as Jiang Wenye "Jiangcun Jishi" (Sikong Shu Ci), etc., are written in non-functional harmony texture (Jing, 2017). The continuous sound of this song is repeated and the minor second sound pattern is added, which concisely and vividly simulates the sound of wind.

During Xi Xinghai's visit to the Soviet Union, he composed the art song "Ten Ancient Poems", which was intended to explore China's "new harmony". Tan Xiaolin's "From the King" combines Chinese mode thinking with Hindemith's modern harmony techniques. Over the past hundred years, composers have explored the combination of modern composition techniques and ancient Chinese poetry, and created a large number of ancient poetry and art songs, which have attracted more and more attention and attracted many singers' research and interpretation.

2) Rich subject matter. Chinese art song (Song dynasty) has a long history spanning thousands of years, with rich themes, lyrical shapes and different moods. Chinese art song (Song dynasty) endow the ancient poetry with the characteristics of the times and express the feelings of family and country and personal sentiment. Ancient poetry and art songs such as Huang Zi's "Fu Climbing the Tower", Li Yinghai's "Fengqiao Night Mooring", Ao Changqun's "Jiangchengzi" have become indispensable aesthetic resources in our modern life.

3) Sophisticated singing. Chinese art song (Song dynasty) are the combination of literature and music. To sing Chinese art song (Song dynasty) well, one must not only master the scientific singing method, but also reflect the national style; not only must have good skills and musical quality, but also have the corresponding historical and cultural knowledge. Jiang Jiaqiang said when he sang "Fengqiao Night Mooring": "I sang "Fengqiao Night Mooring" and learned that the lyricist Zhang Jiluokao was full of melancholy. Looking up the information, I understood the meaning of 'midnight bell'. Tang There is a custom of ringing the bell in the middle of the night, which deepened my understanding of the sadness of the lyrics. When I sang the word "cry", I adopted the embellishment characteristics of poems in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. This kind of pitch embellishment with large ups and downs, I heard it on the ground in Jiangsu and Zhejiang." Mr. Jiang experienced a cultural baptism and forged

a classic singing. It can be seen that the singer must integrate himself into the ancient poetry and internalize it into a kind of temperament in order to sing the charm of history, the fashion of the times, and the beauty of art. Generations of singers have provided us with many classic singing models.

## Conclusion

As we all know, art songs are a musical genre in which poetry and music are combined to complete artistic expression. Its name was established by the works of romantic music master Schubert, and it has become an independent type of song. Art songs are highly expressive and appreciative, combined with beautiful vocals and melodies, and are a unique form of artistic expression of romantic music in the 19th century. Chinese Art Songs (Song Dynasty) is an art form that combines Chinese classical poetry "Song Ci" and Western art songs. The perfect blend of songs.

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