

Analysis on the Changes in Playing Techniques of Erhu under the Impact of Westernization——Taking the Erhu Concerto the Praise Song for Chu

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Abstract. With the constant social development and cultural exchange, it's inevitable for Chinese traditional music to be affected by the western music. Among the traditional music of China, Erhu, as one of the representative traditional instruments, has also encountered a series of changes. The westernization of Erhu is not only an inevitable tendency but also a product of cultural exchange and integration. This paper aims at studying the westernization of Erhu in Chinese traditional music, probing into the impacts and changes of modern music on the traditional music, and interpreting the new vitality and charm of Erhu in the modern music through learning from the changes in Erhu's playing techniques and the Erhu concerto *The Praise Song for Chu*. The main part of this paper is divided into two sections. The first section reviews the development process of Erhu within the historical context, and presents the evolution of Erhu playing techniques. The second section analyzes the playing techniques of Erhu in *The Praise Song for Chu*, comparing with three classic Erhu compositions, thus demonstrating the changes and characteristics of westernization of the Erhu in the contemporary context.

Keywords: The Praise Song for Chu, Westernization, Modern Music, Playing Technique.

1. Introduction

Taking the Chinese traditional instrument- Erhu as the study example, this paper starts from the historical perspective to trace back to the representatives, masterpieces, work background and traditional playing techniques of Erhu. Secondly, the modern playing techniques in China is analyzed and compared to the traditional playing techniques from different angles. Under the impact of western music, the playing techniques of Erhu has met apparent changes. The traditional playing techniques of Erhu emphasize the application of bowstring techniques, while the playing techniques of Erhu in the modern music are more outstanding and various, added with more tricks like Vibrato, Glissando and Strumming. Such a change enables Erhu equipped with more expressive force and diversities in the modern music. The Erhu concerto *The Praise Song for Chu* has further motivated the diversification of Erhu's performance and creation, while another three traditional melodies of Erhu are compared with *The Praise Song for Chu* to further analyze the westernization phenomenon of Erhu. At last, by studying the changes of Erhu's playing techniques in the modern music, this paper analyzes the westernization phenomenon of Erhu in Chinese modern music, summarizes such phenomenon's impacts and significance on Chinese traditional music, and reveals the westernization tendency of Chinese modern music.

2. Westernization of Erhu in Chinese Modern Music

2.1. The Traditional Erhu Music

2.1.1 Definition of traditional melody

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Traditional melodies mean some representative melodies with historical inheritance significance among Chinese traditional music. Through a long term of evolution and development, these melodies turn into a significant component of Chinese music culture [1]. Erhu, beginning from Tang Dynasty, has borne a long history of more than 1000 years. Originating from a minority in the northern region of China in ancient time, it was originally called as “Ji Qin” and “Haegeum”. During the period from Song Dynasty to Qing Dynasty, with the development of Traditional Chinese Opera and Chinese Folk Art Forms, the folk instruments were equipped with their own accompaniment instruments as the emerging of “ancient theaters” and “Washe” (tile-roofed house). Later, due to the aria style needs of local opera, Huqin gradually became divided and changed its name as Erhu in Modern times [2].

Both national music and folk music met a rapid development after 1949. The Erhu music of the folk artisans, such as *The Moon over A Fountain* of Hua Yanjun, *Homesick Trip* of Lu Xiutang, *Recitation in Sickness* of Liu Tianhua, had been made into albums, triggering the booming of Erhu playing art [3]. It's not hard to figure out that most of the Erhu masterpieces in this period showed the feelings towards the real life and shared the simple creation themes; after 1950, due to the great recovery and development of national development, people lived a peaceful life and the Erhu creation enjoyed a growing development tendency. A batch of Erhu composers emerged, *Horse Racing* by Huang Haihuai, *Ballad of North Henan Province* by Liu Wenjin, *Capriccio of Qin Opera Theme* by Zhao Zhenxiao and Lu Riron demonstrated the composers' desire and passion for the life then. In the early 1970s, as the Great Cultural Revolution ended, some Erhu composers created some distinguishing melodies, such as *New Grassland Herdsmen* by Liu Changfu, *Water of Hongqi Canal Gurgling along Mount Taihang* by Min Huifen, *Sending Public Grains with Happiness* by Gu Wuxiang and Meng Jinjin. When the Great Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976, the Erhu works were very limited back then, however, there were some classical works, such as Chen Yaoxing's *Battle Steeds Galloping Ahead*, Zhu Changyao and Ma Xilin's *Spring in the South Yangtze* [4]. It's shown that these traditional Erhu melodies were created by the composers inspired by their environment, the masterpieces in this period shared distinguishing themes and special features, focusing on realistic interpreting and local styles. By analyzing on the Erhu melodies from history, we could figure out that both melody name and theme of Erhu met changes. From my point of view, Erhu melodies changed from traditional Erhu music to modern Erhu music after the ending of Great Cultural Revolution in 1976.

2.1.2 Changes in the playing technique

As the progress of the times and the introduction of foreign cultures, the traditional music of Erhu has met changes in which the elements of western music have been added into the traditional techniques. The representative masterpieces of all times are chosen to visually show the changes in the playing technique.

In the masterpiece of *The Moon over A Fountain*, some phrases and partial tones are very high. During the performance, especially for the tone in the below, the denser the finger space is, the more necessary it is for the wrists to be fixed. The natural drooping of arms would generate a force to motivate the wrist and then drive the moving of fingers and wrists. Such a playing technique can avoid the intonation problem caused by the wrist tension. During the performance, different playing techniques are needed to distinguish the rhythms of the whole melody. To achieve such an effect, processing is needed for playing to express the emotion and ideological implication of the whole masterpiece [5].

In *Ballad of North Henan Province*, this verse is started with an introduction and played in the key of C, performing the memories of the people in North Henan in the singing way. The second part is entered with a gradually-accelerating interlude, expressing vivid emotions in the D melody and revealing the coming-true new life that the people in North Henan desired so much. The third verse is the glitzy part, with more freedom in emotion expression and back to the C key. The former three phrases are of the free-operation singing style, from slow to quick and from weak to strong. Therefore, the bowstring playing should be relaxed, forceful in the middle to create full and firm tone. The last

period is the representation section of the masterpiece, quicker and clearer than the first period, demonstrating the new image of North Henan [6].

In *New Grassland Herdsmen*, more attention need be paid to the technique of kneading strings. In the meantime, grace notes are added into the melody. The introduction of grace notes makes the musical melody more exquisite. The staccato created by the ricochet of Erhu can create a view that the horses on the grassland of Inner Mongolia are running rapidly and vividly [7].

The playing technique of *Spring in the South Yangtze* has been affected by the playing habit of traditional stringed and woodwind instruments. The application of quick bowstring is distinguishing, and the stresses are different from those of other melodies, changing the stress performing with bowstring pulling and smartly integrating with the bowstring playing technique of South Yangtze River folk music. This is why the music is diversified. When analyzing the music with South Yangtze River style, we could see that such bowstring using method could enable the musical artwork more infectious [8]. In the meantime, glissando is an important technique and artistic creating way for the music with South Yangtze River style. The appropriate glissando is extremely significant in the artistic creation, emphasizing the charm of South Yangtze River. Portamento is a very representative feature of *Spring in the South Yangtze*, including Same-finger Glissando, Pad Glissando, Back Glissando [9].

In order to promote and enrich the playing techniques of Erhu, Liu Tianhua intentionally absorbed the advantages of the western music and innovated the playing techniques of Erhu, such as Tuning, String-kneading and Position Shift. Back in the 19th century, Liu Tianhua took the lead in revealing the rule for Erhu- tone and string fixing. By cooperating with the large-scale national orchestra, he broke the tradition of playing Erhu at the fixed tone, extending the pitch interval from the narrow ninth to the three octaves in the way of position shift and enabling the fingers of the left hand to fulfill their potentials. The playing techniques of western instruments like violin also were applied to that of Erhu, enriching the musical expression of Erhu. The same-tone and different-finger way of the Erhu melody *Chirping Birds in the Mountain*, the repeated big leap within two octaves in the upper registers, the repeated internal string and external string of *Marching on the Bright Road*, the slight and quick rhythms of dots, the integration and application of Bowstring Pause and Vibrato, all of the aforesaid promoted the playing techniques of Erhu to a new height. Based on inheriting the traditional techniques, Hua Yanjun extended the original holding position playing to the flexible application of internal string and external string at high positions [10]. No matter the instrument revolution or the playing techniques of Erhu had gained outstanding progress under the motivation of a variety of performer talents like Wang Guotong, Chen Yaoxing and Min Huifen after 1949. Among the artworks of Chen Yaoxing, the innovation and new techniques like continuous bowstring pauses, big bowstring strike, outside string plucking, left-hand and right-hand string plucking had promoted the playing techniques of Erhu to a new height. In the masterpieces of *Baoyu's Weeping before Coffin* and *Li Ling Tombstone*, Min Huifen used the glissando to imitate the singing tune of Yue Opera and Peking Opera. At present, the range of Erhu reaches to three to four octaves, the bowing includes Long Bow, Short Bow, Tremolo, Spiccato, Strike Bow, and the finger techniques include String Kneading, Trill, Plucking, Overtones, Circular Finger Movement, Big and Small Leaps [11].

2.2. Modern Erhu Music

Back to 1980s, exactly in 1980, Zhang Xiaofeng and Zhu Xiaogu jointly created an Erhu melody *Separation of the Newly Wed*, creating the new era for the large-scale Erhu masterpieces. From then on, a lot of large-scale masterpieces sprung up, such as Guan Ming's Erhu ballade- *Ballade of Lan Huahua*, Liu Wenjin's *Caprice in the Great Wall*, Wang Jianmin's *First Erhu Rhapsody*. In the meantime, several modernism Erhu masterpieces showed up, Tan Dun's *Twin Que Towers* was played with Erhu and Dulcimer and created at the theme of *Beautiful Night*- the Erhu melody of Liu Tianhua, as well as the excellent masterpieces like *The Four Dreams* of He Xuntian.

Since early 1990s, the Erhu concerto, especially the large-scale concerto, has been on the wane, while the small and medium-sized Erhu masterpieces focusing on chamber music have begun to grow

increasingly, for example, *Elegy-Autumn Mount Poem* of Tan Dun, *Charm of Autumn* of Yang Qing, *Caprice for A* of Hu Dengtiao [4].

The modern Erhu masterpieces have begun to integrate with the western style, starting up the westernization of Erhu. To make Erhu distinguishing and refreshing, a breakthrough in the traditional playing techniques should be achieved to break free from the limitations and gain new techniques and methods. As more and more diversities happened in the music forms and contents, some modern composers found that the original playing techniques and ways of Erhu couldn't meet the professional requirement of the current performance. To fulfill such need, they studied on the corresponding techniques and methods. From the beginning of the 21st century, the premise for the excellent and professional Erhu music artworks was lots of foundational practice. When solving parts of the technically challenging problems, the players would undertake according to such etudes, deepening the acknowledge on the playing techniques of Erhu. As the era goes, the contents and forms of music continuously innovate, driving the innovation of the music technology to some extent. The development and innovation of music technology would in turn influence the development of Erhu music and motivate the evolution of Erhu music and its playing techniques [12].

If the traditional Erhu is of a slow, calm and medium-speed lyrical melody, the modern Erhu is equipped with the techniques of Fast Bow, which is featured with high-speed bow hauling and tempering force with mercy, and it can be as wonderful as violin. In *Twin Que Towers* of Tan Dun, the tone and words that are not habitual to the "traditional ears" expresses the music concept of "rebellious" [13]. *Four Dreams* of He Xuntian, with the techniques of long trill, big leap and glissando and the scattered melody sections, demonstrates the diversified and unique tone of Erhu. Although these haven't become the main stream, the melody of Erhu has broken through the traditional limitation and shown the brave exploration in the playing techniques and the spirit of innovation, bearing a positive and profound significance [14].

3. The Praise Song for Chu

3.1. The Status of The Praise Song for Chu in Chinese Modern Music

The Praise Song for Chu is based on the story of "*Farewell to My Concubine*", telling the love story between Xiang Yu- King of Chu and his concubine Yu Meiren and demonstrating Yu Meiren's true love to Xiang Yu- the defeated king. It describes the "hero" image of Xiang Yu, who was brave to fight in the battlefield and sad for the desolation of land after the wars. The fierce fighting scene, the danger of being besieged on all sides, and the loyal love are matched perfectly.

This artwork was created by the young composer Li Bochan in 2014 Second Beijing Huqin Art Festival, its first performance was the concerto version of double Huqins and national orchestra. It was played by the famous Erhu performers Zhao Hanyang and Zhao Yuanchun and assisted to perform by National Orchestra of the Central Conservatory of Music. When the composer Li Bochan attended the First National Instrumental Music Collection Competition held by Chinese Musicians Association In 2015, he changed it into a version of Erhu solo and piano concerto [15].

The Praise Song for Chu has borne its unique style and expression way in the modern music:

1) The innovative playing techniques: the Erhu playing techniques in *The Praise Song for Chu* focus on trills, glissando and plucking. Such a diversified playing way is a change tendency in the Erhu playing techniques of modern music.

2) The integrated musical elements: *The Praise Song for Chu* has integrated the musical elements of Chinese ancient Chu culture and the style of modern music. Such integrated musical elements equip the masterpiece with unique charm and expressive force.

3) The change and impacts on the traditional music: *The Praise Song for Chu* embraces changes and innovation on the basis of traditional music. Such changes and impacts are carried out in the composition method, the performance form and the music expression, enabling the traditional music to be inherited and developed in the modern music [16].

3.2. The Westernization Phenomenon Demonstrated by The Praise Song for Chu

3.2.1 Analysis on musical form

The Erhu concerto- *The Praise Song for Chu* is a work in the sonata style, in which the glitzy part of Erhu is between the recapitulation and the accessory part. Erhu as the melody part and piano as the harmonic accompaniment supplements each other. In the melody party, the composer takes into account the unique tone and playing techniques of Erhu. The piano part mainly performs the harmonic dynamics and color, and it's seldom used for pure accompaniment [17].

The introduction is the 1-20 syllables, the piano part that is full of historical sense and bring us into the historical scene. The presentation part from 21-34 syllables is at the theme of "hero", followed by 35-41 syllables as the connection part with a long piano accompaniment changing from the heavy music prospect to the music color with the theme of "love". The presentation part from 42 to 67 syllables is the second theme with the most singing, showing the touching love story between King of Chu and Concubine Yu. The part from 57 to 67 syllables is the Zenith, with accompaniment and concerto to play the melody line and resonate with the audience, in stark contrast with the ending of 75-85 syllables. The part from 86 to 164 syllables, the touching piano accompaniment seems to bring the fierce battlefield to the audience. The last presentation party is 165-263 syllables, in which the composer presents again the themes of "hero" and "love" [18]. In my opinion, when playing this melody, every syllable should be understood completely by mastering the contents and feelings. When we have understood the theme and contents of the melody, we could be immersed in the melody to experience the emotion that the composer wants to express and the feelings of the figures in the melody. The tone, rhythm and speed of the melody determine its musical feelings, so when the performer plays the melody, close attention shall be paid to the intensity and feelings of the melody, only by this way could the composer's division and musical connotation be thoroughly understood.

3.2.2 Theme Analysis

In a word, the melody has repeatedly expressed two themes. The first one is the theme of hero. Xiang Yu, the king of Chu, was defeated by Liu Bang, however, Xiang was still a great hero who dared to fight with fate. The composer tries the best to describe this point. As for the melody, two phrases are used to describe Xiang Yu in the 17th syllable. 21-34 Syllable is the first phrase, with a calm and sweet-sounding rhythm, expressing that Xiang Yu was thinking along Wujiang River. The second phrase bears an obvious melodic fluctuation with leaps of the seventh and octave, shaping up the hero image of Xiang Yu who was struggling in heart and decided to fight to death. As for the rhythm, the theme is mainly based on tercets, crotchets and half notes, creating an extremely good effect in expressing the inner changes of the figure. In the meantime, the composer uses prolonged sounds to increase the rhythm tension and create the continuous tone effect, meaning the fearless marching forward of Xiang Yu and his soldiers. In the strength, the gradually increasing strength starts from the medium strength, with more and more tangled emotions and stronger and stronger hero sense.

The second theme is love. *Farewell to My Concubine* is the ever-lasting muse for all artistic creations in the history of China. It's so touching to see the breakup and death of the hero and heroine. Therefore, the love theme is an important component for the melody. As for the melody, during the 42-67 syllables, the composer applies the traditional music creation way of China and achieved the effect of progressive development in details, every two syllables are a part, representing Presentation, Solidification, Controlling and Zenith. In the Zenith part, the melody is easy to sing along, demonstrating the charming and colorful image of Concubine Yu and adding warm colors to the whole melody. As for rhythm, the rhythm changes in the love theme are frequent, and the rhythm forms like large syncopation and liaison are continuously used, especially the application of tercet, expressing the love of Concubine Yu to Xiangyu. As for the strength, the composer uses special ways to create the strength changes. The whole speed design depends on the emotion changes. The tercet in the 54th syllable gradually reaches the small zenith, demonstrating their loyalty to love. It's

concluded after analysis that these two themes are set very carefully to bring different scenes to the audience [19].

With *The Praise Song for Chu* as an example, such new works integrating the classical topics with the modern playing techniques meet the aesthetic pursuits of modern people. The inspiration of the era gathers the psychology and ideology of the people together, creating a denser and deeper sense of beauty. No matter how the tone and the beat are, Chinese traditional composing way is the subject and the western composing method is the ancillary, they work together to bring up the musical charm of “combination of Chinese and Western elements”. It takes the lead in the new direction of modern composing technology and drives the continuous breakthroughs and innovation of the modern playing technique.

3.2.3 Application of Erhu’s playing techniques

The analysis on the three love melodies like *The Praise Song for Chu*, *Ballade for Lan Huahua* and *The Butterfly Lovers* are carried out to study on the application of playing techniques of Erhu.

Ballade for Lan Huahua was composed by the composer Guan Ming in 1981 according to the folk song in the north of Shaanxi-*Lan Huahua*, with eight paragraphs of lyrics. This folk song *Lan Huahua* experienced several times of recomposing, and *Ballade for Lan Huahua* of Guan Ming created in 1981 was of the greatest influence.

To present different customs, the performer would adjust the tone to express with rich tones during the performance [20]. When playing the introduction, not only the simple and straight character of Lan Huahua as a resident in North Shaanxi need to be expressed, but also the careful and soft charm of the girl in love shall be revealed correctly. Therefore, during the performing of this part, close attention shall be paid to the calm and lingering tone changes. In the glitzy part and the part of “Being Lifted into Zhou Mansion”, to present the sadness of Lan Huahua for her love loss due to the feudal power oppression, the composer has repeatedly used the pressing rubbing, demonstrating the expressive force and the sad and hatred emotions by pressing toward the palm with the left hand or wrist to change the acoustic wave created by the tension of string. In the meantime, to reflect the style of North Shaanxi, the composer uses the glissando to imitate the swing tone of the folk song. To enrich the vivid musical artistic conception, circumflex glissando is applied for times in the music. At the same time, in order to express the emotions of the figures better, the ricochet technique has been adopted to make the musical melody more relaxing and lighter, demonstrating the lively and pure character of Lan Huahua, solidifying the foundation for the music development, forming up an obvious comparison with the emotions in the later part of the melody [21].

The Butterfly Lovers derived from an well-known folklore back in ancient China. Integrating the western and Chinese music styles, this soft, touching and beautiful music makes use of Yueju Opera to carefully depict their love story, including meeting and acknowledging, swearing in Caoqiao, seeing-off for 18 miles, marriage refusing, meeting in tower, crying before tomb, jumping into the tomb and turning into butterfly. A beautiful, romantic and pitiful scene is created to express the romantic and loyal love story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai [22].

In the melody *The Butterfly Lovers*, the prelude part of the introduction demonstrates the bright and vivid spring scene. In the presentation party, the playing of Erhu describes the love theme, we seem to witness this pair of lovers are appreciating the beautiful views and expressing their love to each other. This melody is recomposed from Yueju Opera, in which the singing is calm and graceful, presenting the charm of South Yangtze River. In this melody, the tone control is exquisite and smart. In the parts of Seeing-off for 18 miles and Meeting in Tower, roll rubbing is used to polish the music, the waving wrists drive the hand joints and change the string length. Such technique usually is used in the lyric and singing melody, making the music softer, smoother and more expressive. The description of this masterpiece is extremely detailed, the emotion expression is very careful and detailed, and the application of glissando is various. Therefore, when playing this melody, the performer needs to pay attention to the using of different glissando. In the meantime, the techniques of springing bow and ricochet are adopted to drive the emotion to develop and enrich the musical conception level [21].

At the theme of “Hero” and “Love”, *The Praise Song for Chu* focuses on the male image and places extra emphasis on the female image, different in the emotional descriptions. Therefore, rich playing techniques are applied to show the emotions. In the part of “Hero Theme”, to express the heroism of the hero, we could apply the integrated techniques of Roll Rubbing and Pressing Rubbing. In the part of “Love Theme”, to describe the lasting romantic love, we frequently use Roll Rubbing to express the soft, delicate and colorful love.

In this melody, bowing is one of the significant techniques in Erhu playing, playing a very important role in the emotion expression of the music through the reasonable application of the composer. First of all, many times of long bowing are applied to express in “Hero Theme” and “Love Theme”. The “Hero Theme” mainly describes the hero image of Xiang Yu, the sound head and force need to be expressed in the slow performance of long bowing.

The Praise Song for Chu is a modern masterpiece, and many modern composing methods are used. The polyrhythm and rich rhythm changes bring up acoustic stimulus to the audience. In the part of “Hero Theme”, the composer uses more quarter notes, half notes and triplets to express Xiang Yu’s sublime heroism of affronting death. The phrases are very tense, brave and open, full of the spirit of fearlessness. In the part of “Love Theme”, syncopation and liaison are adopted for times and the melody continues constantly, expressing the deep love between Xiang Yu and Concubine Yu as well as more and more musical emotions. In the meantime, the composer changes the traditional strength law of 4/4 beats, transforming “strong-weak- secondary strong-weak” into “strong- weak- weak”. The changes in the stress position strengthens the expressive force of the artwork, making the traditional 4/4 beats more rhythmmed with uncertainty and presenting the fierce war scene [21].

3.3. Feedback on The Praise Song for Chu

First of all, the performance of *The Praise Song for Chu* has gained unanimous praise from the audiences and music critics. In their opinions, the perfect integration of traditional and modern performing ways and styles has generated a strong culture impact and aesthetic experience. The audiences all think the emotions of *Farewell to My Concubine* have been expressed by Erhu and they were deeply touched by the touching scene. According to the music critics, the creation of this Erhu concerto-*The Praise Song for Chu* has reached a high level of technique and artistic expression, and demonstrated the excellence of Chinese traditional music.

Secondly, the performance of *The Praise Song for Chu* has raised a lot of attention in China. My first view of it was in the cartoon of Bilibili, in which there are performance videos by all kinds of performers who have different performance genres. However, no matter how it’s played, the audiences could always follow the performer, and be immersed into the melody and experience the love between King of Chu and Concubine Yu. Its view counts can reach dozens of thousands, with about 230 comments and 123 bullet comments (incomplete statistics) that appreciate the melody very much. It’s shown that this melody has exactly described the feelings of the audiences. There are some comments on *The Praise Song for Chu* as follows: in the part of wandering, it’s as beautiful and touching as “the inseparable birds flying in the sky and the twinned trunks linked under the ground” for you seem to hear the calls and signs of *Concubine Yu*. In the part of depressive despair, “it’s as bitter as “the water bursting out of the silver bottle and the clanging spear pricked from the cavalry”, and you couldn’t help blurring with tears. The mixture of pity and love and the integration of sadness and mercy have formed up the “extreme beauty” based on one piano and one Erhu.

At last, the success and feedback of *The Praise Song for Chu*, to some extent, has promoted the propaganda and popularization of Erhu around the world, which not only promotes the international spreading of Chinese traditional music but also presents the unique musical style and cultural connotation to the audiences all over the world.

By and large, the Erhu concerto- *The Praise Song for Chu* has gained worldwide acclaims. It has not only demonstrated the westernization tendency of Erhu in the modern music but also stimulated people’s interest and protection awareness towards the traditional music. Through innovation and integration, Erhu has been rejuvenated in the modern music to significantly make contribution to the

inheritance and development of Chinese traditional music. Meanwhile, the success of excellent modern music is built upon the pavement of traditional music, therefore, we shall not abandon the traditional music and its musical techniques completely just to integrate with the modern. Challenges may exist for the traditional Erhu music, but we need to learn, respect and promote mutually to march ahead in the long-termed road of harmonious integration of Chinese culture and western culture.

4. Conclusion

By studying on the westernization phenomenon of Erhu in Chinese modern music, it can be concluded as follows: Erhu is not only the inheritance of cultural history but also that of spirit, therefore, such a cultural gene of China shall be inherited and kept. The breakthroughs should be made in the Erhu art, absorbing the quintessence and getting rid of the dregs. It's not to completely change the traditional playing techniques of Erhu into the western playing techniques but to absorb the advantages of traditional culture and adapt with the integration of the music culture in the era. The absorbance of western musical elements and the breakthroughs in the unique playing techniques would enable the avenue of artistic development to be wider and wider. To achieve such a great goal and promote the significance of performer to the art tradition of Erhu performance, the generalization of traditional Erhu performance art shall be strengthened, as well as the propagandization of traditional Erhu musical works. The constant self-quality promotion, the basic playing technique mastering, and the practiced playing techniques would be needed in the new era. Only when the quintessence of these traditional Erhu playing art is mastered could the inheritance of performance art tradition be realized and the high-quality Erhu musical works be created.

To sum up, the paper has revealed the westernization phenomenon of Erhu in Chinese modern music and probed into the changes in the playing techniques and the learning from the traditional culture. Such research would of a critical theoretical and practice significance for the development and protection of Chinese traditional music.

The westernization of Erhu in Chinese modern music is an inevitable tendency. With the social development and cultural exchange in China, the mutual impacts and integration between traditional music and western music will be more and more frequent, therefore, Erhu met a series of changes as one of Chinese traditional instruments. Under the effect of western music, the playing techniques of Erhu have embraced obvious changes. The traditional playing way of Erhu emphasizes on the application of bowstring techniques. However, in the modern music, the playing techniques of Erhu becomes more diversified, added with more trills, glissando and strumming and enabling Erhu to have stronger expressive force and more diversities in the modern music. *The Praise Song for Chu*, as the masterpiece of Chinese modern instrumental music, provides a unique example for the westernization of Erhu with its musical style and expression way. The research on the integration of westernization and Erhu will further motivate the diversities of the performance and creation of Erhu and promote the status and influence of Erhu in the modern music.

The aforesaid contents are my study on the westernization of Erhu. In case of any inadequacy, it's because the researches on such a topic are limited. I sincerely hope that more scholars would probe into this topic to make the development and prospect of Chinese traditional music be better and better.

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