

# A Brief Analysis of Music Art of the Chinese Shadow Puppetry in Tangshan City

Kun Xia <sup>a</sup>, Kaiyang Wang, Chaoqun Ren, Jianbin Wei, Xiaona Cui

Conservatory of Music, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, China

<sup>a</sup>xikaixiakun@163.com

**Abstract.** Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is a prominent and widely-influential genre of traditional Chinese drama that has gained immense popularity in the regions of eastern Hebei province and the three northeastern Chinese provinces. Its unique music artistry holds a significant and integral position in the art form, serving as a cornerstone of the performance. This paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of the historical development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry's music, including its vocal styles, lyrics, accompanying instruments, and the crucial inheritance of its musical artistry, in order to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the artistic heritage and development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry music.

**Keywords:** Tangshan Shadow Puppetry; Music; Art; Theoretical research.

## 1. Introduction

Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is the most representative type of northern shadow puppetry, characterized by the phonetics and rhyme of the Tangshan region. It is also known as "Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry," "Leting Shadow Puppetry," "Donkey Skin Shadow Puppetry," and "Lao Tai Shadow Puppetry." The music of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is a unique form of music, mainly reflected in its distinctive performance style, singing style, and accompanying music, which has extremely high cultural and artistic value.

Based on field research and on-site investigations, the researcher collects and sorts out the main singing sections, music scores and repertoire, musical instruments, and musical ensembles related to Tangshan Shadow Puppetry. On this basis, a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the music art of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is conducted, and a theoretical exploration of the development and inheritance of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is carried out.

## 2. The Historical Development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry

Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is one of the puppetry arts, which combines paper-cutting, local opera (or evolved from folk songs), and shadow play into an ancient art form. It is mainly distributed in the eastern Hebei Province and the three northeastern provinces of China. In 2006, it was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage of China. Based on the analysis of relevant literature and field investigations, the development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry can be divided into five historical stages as follows.

### 2.1 The Origin of Shadow Puppetry in the Jin Dynasty

The history of Chinese shadow puppetry is long, and many theoretical experts have different opinions on its formation time. Gao Cheng, a Song dynasty writer, once said, "During the reign of Emperor Renzong of the Song Dynasty, some people in the market would talk about the Three Kingdoms, and they would make shadow figures with additional decorations, which marked the beginning of the Three Kingdoms War shadow puppets." [1] Therefore, many scholars believe that shadow puppetry originated from the Song Dynasty.

After the formation of shadow puppetry in ancient China, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty became the earliest prosperous place for shadow puppetry in China, and it was also the starting point for the widespread dissemination of shadow puppetry in various regions of China. After the Jurchen

people invaded Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng) at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty, shadow puppetry artists scattered all over the country, gradually forming different regional styles. The northern style of shadow puppetry was formed by artists who were taken away by the Jurchen people during their invasion of the Central Plains. According to Xu Mengxin's "San Chao Bei Meng Hui Bian" in the Song Dynasty, "On the twenty-fifth day of the first month of the second year of Jingkang (1127), the Jurchen people came to demand forty-five imperial doctors, court musicians, eunuchs, and more than 150 artists, including actors, storytellers, shadow puppet players, novelists, singers, puppeteers, and flutists, to be taken to the military camp. The soldiers of Kaifeng fought over the documents and took people and property by force. Those who left the city to go to the military camp had to exhaust their family resources, take their elderly and children, and bid farewell to their relatives with tears before leaving..." The Jurchen people once abducted "three thousand craftsmen of various kinds" to Yanjing (present-day Beijing) and other places, and made "various craftsmen seek their own livelihoods." [2] This is enough to illustrate the relationship between the northern style of shadow puppetry and the source of Bianjing in the Song Dynasty, and also explains that the origin of northern shadow puppetry in China (mainly referring to the northeast and eastern Hebei) can be traced back to the Jin Dynasty.

## 2.2 The Spread of Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry in the Ming Dynasty

Due to frequent wars and natural disasters in the north during the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, the development of shadow puppetry was hindered. However, after the Ming Dynasty's Emperor Chengzu established Yanjing as the capital, Hebei became an important region for economic development. To boost the economy as quickly as possible, many wealthy households from the prosperous south were brought to the north. The migration of southern people not only strengthened the economic power, but also brought some southern culture to the north, such as Nanxi (Southern Opera), which provided a good opportunity for the development of northern shadow puppetry. During the Ming Dynasty, rulers attached great importance to the function of promoting education and morality through drama. Many literati wrote plays about drama and legends. Until the mid-Ming Dynasty, the creation of legendary plays entered a period of great prosperity and development. At that time, in Luanzhou, located in the eastern suburbs of Beijing, some unsuccessful scholars wrote materials such as shadow scrolls for shadow puppetry. This had an important influence on the rapid development of Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry, which gradually became the representative of northern shadow puppetry in China.

Legend has it that during the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty, a scholar named Huang Suzhi, who had failed the imperial examinations many times, went to the northeast to teach and often played with the local shadow puppetry as a pastime. He promoted the Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry in the northeast region, which helped to spread the art form beyond its native area.

The most detailed record of the rise of Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry during the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty is found in the printed edition of "Luan County Annals" in the 26th year of the Republic of China (1937), which states: "During the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty (1573-1620), there was a scholar named Huang Suzhi in Anguzhuang, Luanzhou, who was dissatisfied with the shortcomings of the "Classical Shadow Puppetry," such as monotonous singing, simple musical instruments, rough carving, and dull colors. He was determined to reform it..." [3]

Gu Jiegang quoted Li Tuo Chen's discussion in his article "The Shadow Puppetry of Luanzhou": "According to Mr. Li Yun, during the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, there was an unsuccessful scholar in Luanzhou named Huang Suzhi (the exact department is unknown), who was a talented person in many fields. Not only was he good at literature, but he was also proficient in painting and carving. The only thing was that his luck was not good, and he repeatedly failed the imperial examinations, so he had no face to return to his hometown. He went to Shenyang outside the customs to study and only taught a few village children to make a living. In these leisurely years, he gradually made his artistic contribution - creating movies..." [4]

Shadow Puppetry had already existed in this region since the Jin and Yuan dynasties. Based on the above information, during the Ming Dynasty, "Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry" were spread and developed under the leadership of Huang Suzhi. He brought the shadow puppetry to the Northeast region and integrated them with the local culture, forming a new style and school of the region.

### **2.3 The Development of Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry in the Qing Dynasty**

Although Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry had been practiced for over a hundred years from its inception to the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty, its development had been relatively slow. At first, practitioners chanted the shadow scriptures while striking wooden fish, and incorporated elements from Yiqu opera. It was not until the late years of Emperor Yongzheng's reign that they were exposed to Kunqu opera, and in the late years of Emperor Qianlong's reign, the addition of the four-stringed instrument and more musical instruments made the melodies more pleasant. However, due to the limited variation in its tunes, the lack of diverse singing styles, and the monotonous rhythm, many plotlines were difficult to express, and the portrayal of various character traits was poor.

During the mid to late Qing Dynasty, the Qing government was preoccupied with domestic and foreign affairs and had no time to spare for shadow puppetry. However, the people in the eastern part of Hebei Province still used shadow puppetry to celebrate the harvest and pray for blessings. In addition to folk troupes, wealthy landlords also established troupes to entertain and impress their guests, and to show off their wealth. They paid high prices to hire famous actors and performers, and some even established classes to train their own children. According to records, there were more than forty shadow puppetry troupes in Loting County at that time, which can be described as a peak period.

Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry is known for its singing skills, and its most prominent feature is the "qiazhai" singing technique used by the performers. According to folk legends, this technique was created by a man named Guo Laotian (a native of Loting County) during the Xianfeng period. This singing technique can effectively control the vocal cords, making it effortless and pleasant to listen to. The tone of the singing is perfectly integrated with the shadow puppet's image, making it very popular. Even today, this singing technique is still being inherited.

### **2.4 The Heyday of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry in modern times**

The late Qing Dynasty to the 1930s was the heyday of shadow puppetry in the eastern part of Hebei Province. Many literati, common people, and folk artists carved boxes and formed troupes. There were both professional shadow puppetry troupes and small troupes formed freely in society. They performed for several nights, and the actors competed to showcase their skills. Watching and performing shadow puppetry became an important leisure activity in the local area.

Qi Rushan said, "Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry in Hebei Province had already developed, and it was performed in several villages before and after the Lantern Festival during the Qing Dynasty. It was performed at every temple fair, and it is still popular today." [5] Zhou Yibai, an expert in shadow puppetry, said in his book "The Long Compilation of Chinese Drama History" that "the most famous place for performing shadow puppetry is the area around Luan County in Luanzhou, Hebei Province." It was formerly known as "Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry" because it was named after Luanzhou Prefecture. Later, the academic community mostly used this name for discussion. [6] In the second year of the Republic of China (1913), when Luanzhou Prefecture was abolished, shadow puppetry in Loting County was very prosperous. The active center of shadow puppetry on both sides of the Luan River was also in Loting. The term "Loting Shadow Puppetry" gradually became popular.

In modern times, some shadow puppetry experts, artists, and revolutionaries have improved shadow puppetry and promoted the development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry:

In 1913, Loting County Magistrate Sun Huanlun hired literatus Zhang Tingyin to improve shadow puppetry, "deleting the old and creating the new according to the tune book, in order to transform the vulgar and change the style, and to assist in the lack of social education." [7] Zhang Tingyin reformed the repertoire and innovated the singing style of shadow puppetry, which played a significant role in the development of local shadow puppetry.

In the summer of 1919, Mr. Li Dazhao inspired the patriotism of the villagers through shadow puppetry. He wrote the shadow puppetry script "An Jung-geun Stabs Inejiro Asanuma" and collaborated with shadow puppetry artists to organize rehearsals. The first public performance was held in the Leting County town, which pioneered the modernization of shadow puppetry performance themes and provided vivid patriotic education to the masses.

During the first decade of the Republic of China, with the prosperity of shadow puppetry, shadow puppetry artists gradually became more organized and stylized. They put a lot of effort into singing, and many famous artists (such as Leting natives Han Zeng, Qi Huai, etc.; Luannan natives Zhang Shengwu, Tang Zibo, etc.; Changli natives Zhou Wenyu, Gao Rongjie, etc.) set the tone, reformed, and promoted the development of local shadow puppetry.

During this period, shadow puppetry in Fengrun, Yutian, and Zunhua counties also emerged. In 1922, the Yutian Zhang Hui Shadow Puppetry Troupe created a new situation with its excellent actors and outstanding performance skills. Some shadow puppetry troupes near Tangshan also entered Tangshan, and shadow puppetry was gradually accepted by the people of Tangshan, and its influence became greater and greater. In the following years, shadow puppet performers gradually flocked to the city center of Tangshan. Due to the influence of regional dialects and folk culture, different effects were formed during performances, gradually forming the "Eastern School" represented by Changli, Luanxian, and Leting, and the "Western School" represented by Fengnan, Yutian, and Zunhua. [8]

## 2.5 The Inheritance of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry in contemporary era

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, shadow puppetry received high attention from the Communist Party and the government. Revolutionary leaders of the older generation such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Dong Biwu, Chen Yi, and He Long have all watched shadow puppet shows and given great encouragement.

The performances of Tangshan shadow puppetry have always been renowned for their local dialects and singing skills. However, despite being the essence of the art, these traditional shadow puppet shows did not receive much response when facing audiences from different dialects across the country. Therefore, in the second half of 1956, reforms were initiated to improve the performance art of shadow puppetry. The local cultural department in charge of Tangshan organized several shadow puppetry troupes, including Qiyongheng, Liufutian, Liyazhang, Jushang, and Kangjixiang, to visit and learn from other theater groups in different regions in terms of puppet manipulation, singing styles, accompaniment music, script creation, and artistic carving. Afterward, various shadow puppetry troupes in Tangshan underwent reforms in terms of performers, screens, singing, accompaniment, and other aspects.[9] These reforms brought about a new look for shadow puppetry, not only improving the performance effect and attracting more audiences but also reaching a certain climax in the development of shadow puppetry.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the national cultural department held several national puppetry and shadow puppetry observation and performance events, promoting the integration of traditional and new shadow puppetry and facilitating exchanges among young actors. In the performances of Tangshan shadow puppetry troupes, renowned shadow puppetry actor and "Mei Lanfang" of the shadow puppetry world, Gao Rongjie, and the founder of shadow puppetry and huangqiang singing, Li Xiu, received unanimous praise from attendees for their exquisite singing skills. The young "Arrow King" Qiyongheng's superb performance in manipulating long and short weapons also received praise from many peers.

On July 28, 1976, the Tangshan earthquake caused the death of nine performers and injuries to 90% of the shadow puppetry troupe (which had more than 40 members). All props were destroyed as well. However, the people of Tangshan were not afraid of difficulties and fatigue. They re-carved the puppets, purchased new props, and rehearsed new programs, continuously bringing more wonderful shadow puppetry performances to the audience.

From July to August 19, 1982, Qiyongheng, a member of the Tangshan Shadow Puppet Troupe, was invited by UNESCO to give lectures in France on the relevant content of shadow puppetry,

promoting Chinese culture and receiving praise from colleagues from various countries. This event facilitated cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries and enhanced friendship between China and foreign countries. From December 28, 1984, to February 5, 1985, the Tangshan Shadow Puppet Troupe visited the United States and performed shadow puppetry shows such as "The Crane and the Turtle" and "The Witch's Hairdressing Skills."

At that time, Tangshan shadow puppetry caused a sensation in Disneyland and shook American and international tourists. The legendary story of Tangshan shadow puppetry entering the world was born. Tangshan shadow puppetry has enhanced the connection between the world and China, promoted exchanges between countries, and facilitated world peace. The performing artists continuously explore and experiment, making Tangshan shadow puppetry keep up with the times, reform and innovate, and promote the inheritance and development of Tangshan shadow puppetry.

In this new era of China with Chinese characteristics, accompanied by the progress of network technology, digital new media continuously leads social trends. Tangshan shadow puppetry also expresses its voice to the world through this way, integrates with various cultures, promotes the development and inheritance of Chinese culture, and stands tall in the world's east.

### **3. The Musical Artistic Characteristics of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry**

The local dialect singing style of Tangshan is the essential characteristic of Tangshan shadow puppetry. Outsiders refer to the Tangshan dialect as "Tai'er Hua" or "Lao Tai'er", which has a gentle and melodious tone and rich rhythm and rhyme. Tangshan shadow puppetry has high requirements for performers, who have professional and abundant musical literacy. They perfectly integrate the Tangshan dialect with local folk songs and ballads, making the shadow puppetry performers more vivid and lifelike in both appearance and sound. Tangshan shadow puppetry has a soft and melodious tone, collecting both male and female singing styles. In the Qing Dynasty, artist Guo Laotian created a unique singing method called "qiaza" that distinguishes Tangshan shadow puppetry from other shadow puppetry styles. The emotional and distinctive singing style and unique melody make it full of local color, and the resulting melody is unique, crisp, and pleasant to the ear. This is also a unique feature of Tangshan shadow puppetry that sets it apart from other shadow puppetry styles, perfectly matching the character images and body movements of the shadow puppetry performers. The accompaniment instruments for Tangshan shadow puppetry include percussion instruments such as gongs, drums, and cymbals. As the singing style gradually became richer, the main accompanying instrument became the four-stringed instrument (tongtong sihu). Other plucked and wind instruments such as the sanxian, pipa, flute, sheng, and suona are also used. These instruments play a crucial role in shaping different characters during performances.

#### **3.1 The Main Roles of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry**

Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is mainly divided into five major roles: "Sheng" (young male lead), "Xiao" or "Dan" (young female lead), "Da" or "Jing" (painted-face male), "Ran" (old male), and "Huasheng" or "Chou" (clown).

The "Sheng" role mainly portrays young male characters, with a bright and mellow tone. It is further divided into "Wensheng" (civilian male) and "Wusheng" (of male of martial art). Wensheng focuses on vocal skills, with a smooth and lyrical singing style, while Wusheng is characterized by powerful and vigorous singing with clean and sharp notes.

The "Xiao" or "Dan" role mainly portrays middle-aged and young women, with a bright and graceful tone. It is further divided into "Qinghua" (positive female), "Guimen" (unmarried female), "Daoma" (female of martial art), and "Huaxiao" (female of comic effect) roles. The Qinghua role has an elegant and noble singing style, with a dignified and steady demeanor. Guimen's singing style is cute and lovely, with delicate and lyrical expressions. Daoma is also called Wuxiao, with a strong and crisp singing style. The singing style of Huaxiao is determined by the character's personality. If

the character has a positive image, the singing style is soft and charming; if negative, the singing style is wild and frivolous.[10]

The "Da" or "Jing" role mainly portrays male characters, with a bright and robust tone. It is categorized based on the color of the face paint, including "Honglian Jing" (red-faced painted face), "Heilian Jing" (black-faced painted face), "Bailian Jing" (white-faced painted face), and "Lvlain Jing" (green-faced painted face). Honglian Jing is often used to portray honest and loyal characters, while Heilian Jing is often used to portray characters with a straightforward personality and quick temper. Bailian Jing is often used to portray cunning and treacherous characters with devious intentions, while Lvlain Jing is often used to portray characters with an upright and outspoken personality.[11]

The "Ran" role has a singing style similar to the "Sheng" role, but with a more hoarse and dull tone. It emphasizes the use of the throat to produce sound and is often used to portray middle-aged or elderly male characters.

The "Huasheng" role, also known as the "Chou" role, mainly portrays negative male characters and is roughly divided into positive and negative types. It originated from the "big flower face" (printed face) in traditional drama. The "Chou" roles include "Wenchou" (civilian clown), "Wuchou" (clown of martial art), "Laochou" (old clown), and "Xiaochou" (young clown). Their movements are generally more fancy and humorous, and their singing style is varied, combining both true and false voices.

### 3.2 The Characteristics of Its Singing Style

The singing style of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is based on the Tangshan dialect and intonation. The Tangshan dialect and intonation can be divided into three main types according to the region: the first type is the Tangshan dialect, which includes Fengrun, Yutian, Zunhua, and the urban area of Tangshan; the second type is the Leting dialect, which includes Luanxian, Leting, Changli, Funing, Lulong, Luannan, and Tanghai; the third type is the Qianxi dialect, which includes Qian'an, Qianxi, and even various regions upstream of the Luan River. The music and singing style of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry are mainly combined with the local dialect and intonation, forming a unique singing style that fully embodies the linguistic characteristics of the "Laotai'er" language. The melodies of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry music are mostly derived from folk songs and local tunes in the Tangshan region, among which the most direct influence on the puppetry singing style comes from the "shouting tone" and the "mourning tone". The interlude music also directly incorporates certain segments of folk songs and local tunes.

The singing style of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry music has been reformed and created by generations of people, and can be divided into various types such as Pingdiao (flat tone), Huadiao (flower tone), Qiliangdiao (desolate tone), Beidiao (sad tone), Huanyangdiao (resurrecting tone), Youyindiao (wandering tone), Mengdiao (dream tone), and Songjingdiao (chanting tone).

Pingdiao, also known as Pingqiang or Pingchang, is the most common singing style in Tangshan Shadow Puppetry. It can be used for various characters and is versatile in its use. It is characterized by simplicity and is particularly adept at expressing emotions. Pingdiao can be further divided into male and female versions, with the final note of the male version falling on the Shangdiao scale and the final note of the female version falling on the Gongdiao scale.[12]

Huadiao, also known as Huaqiang, is a singing style exclusive to the Xiaodan (young female lead) role. It is formed by adding embellishments to the melody of the Pingdiao singing style and is used to express cheerful, lively, and humorous emotions. The final note of Huadiao falls on the same note as the Pingdiao singing style, and the first half of the lyrics often use the Yu (feather) tone, while the second half uses the Gong (palace) tone.

Qiliangdiao, also known as Lubeidiao, is a singing style exclusive to the Xiaodan role. It is often used to express sorrowful and pitiful emotions, with tears but no sound, and a mixture of grief and indignation. Actors need to focus on the "weeping" aspect and sing with a sense of sorrow and sadness. The melody of Qiliangdiao is strong and can finely showcase the complex emotions of the characters, with the final note falling on the Gongdiao scale.

Beidiao is used for various roles, and each role has its own Beidiao. It is characterized by extreme sadness and tears, with a melody that is sorrowful and tearful. The melody has large fluctuations, which is why it is also commonly known as "loud crying and wailing".

Huanyangdiao, also known as Huanhundiao, is used to depict a character who has been frightened or shocked and has recovered after being called back to consciousness by others. The melody of Huanyangdiao is used to depict the process of awakening. The final note of Huanyangdiao falls on the same note as the Pingdiao singing style.[13]

Youyindiao, also known as Yindiao, is mainly used by "Qingyi" (young female) and "Guimen" (lady of the house) roles to depict characters who are extremely sorrowful and powerless. The melody of Youyindiao is characterized by a lack of energy and strength.

### 3.3 The Characteristics of Its Performing Music

Tangshan shadow puppetry is an art form that "utilizes shadow to transmit sound" and requires manipulation to depict characters and narrate stories. Therefore, singing is crucial to the performance. To master the art of singing, one must possess the following skills: recognizing characters, distinguishing scripts, enunciating clearly, and delivering rhymes smoothly.

"Recognizing characters" refers to the ability of performers to distinguish between various roles such as young, old, bearded, flower, and so on, as well as the good and evil, loyal and treacherous, and other personality traits of each character. For instance, the singing style of a bearded character should be hoarse, dim, and with a slightly heavier throaty tone, in order to display a character with an old, vigorous, and composed personality. The singing style of a young character should be bright, graceful, gorgeous, and beautiful, with a soft and sweet tone for the dialogue. The singing style of a Qingyi character should be dignified, elegant, and noble. The singing style of a Guimen character should be delicate, exquisite, and emotional. The singing style of a Daoma character should be strong and powerful. The singing style of a flower character should be charming and captivating. When portraying positive characters, the singing style should be graceful and charming, while when portraying negative characters, the singing style should be licentious and frivolous.

"Distinguishing script" requires performers to analyze the script and understand the plot and character traits. This requires the performer to be proficient in common performance scenarios. In addition to possessing the knowledge of recognizing characters and distinguishing tones, performers also need to pay attention to enunciation and delivering rhymes. Enunciation, referred to as "mouth technique" by performers, requires precise mouth movements to ensure clear pronunciation. The basic principles are: clear articulation of the lips, teeth, tongue, throat, with clear emphasis; proper mouth opening, with breath supporting the voice. Delivering rhymes is a special method of changing the melody in singing, referred to as "Ah Kou" by performers. The rhyming sound of male tones generally falls on the rhyme, while the rhyming sound of female tones uses a method of changing the melody with the "Ah Kou" character.[15]

Furthermore, there are also singing techniques such as "qiang", "shan", "dui", and "duo", which can be used appropriately to achieve good results. "Qiang" and "shan" refer to the technique of changing from strong to weak. "Qiang" means to start singing on the weak beat of the previous measure before the strong beat of the current measure, while "shan" means to skip the strong beat and start singing after it. "Dui" means to compress the rhythm and sing the lyrics densely, creating a contrast with the regular singing style. "Duo" means to sing each character and note separately, enhancing the strength of the singing style.

In terms of accompaniment, the most significant difference between Tangshan shadow puppetry and other stage performing arts is the "qia-sao" singing technique. The so-called "qia-sao" technique refers to the use of the thumb and forefinger to pinch the back of the tongue, artificially increasing the gap between the tongue and the thyroid cartilage, creating an inverted funnel-shaped fundamental sound tube in the throat. The pressure on the tongue is adjusted according to the pitch of the voice. Each performer's finger technique is similar, but some performers only use their thumb to support the back of the tongue to produce a strong, bright, and penetrating voice.[16]

### 3.4 The Type of Tempo for Its Music

The singing and musical structure of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry is known as Banqiangti (tempo), commonly referred to as "Banyan". There are four main types of Banqiangti used in Tangshan Shadow Puppetry: slow, medium, fast, and scattered.

Slow Banqiang (slow tempo), also known as "Da Ban" or "Head Ban", has a structure of one board and three eyes, with a 4/4 beat. It is one of the most important Banqiangti in Tangshan Shadow Puppetry. The slow Banqiang can be further divided into slow three eyes, medium three eyes, and fast three eyes according to its speed. The slow Banqiang has a slow tempo and a relaxed rhythm. Its singing melody is strong, with a beautiful and melodious tune that is capable of expressing emotions like crying and lamenting. It is often used for roles such as the bearded, the young, the old, and the big.

Medium Banqiang (medium tempo), also known as "Erxing Ban" or "Erliu Ban", has a structure of one board and one eye, with a 2/4 beat. It can also be further divided into slow, medium, and fast Banqiang according to its speed. The medium Banqiang is generally of medium speed, with a flexible rhythm and clear dynamics. Its tune is smooth and is often used to express emotions such as narration and lyricism. It is widely used in various roles.

Fast Banqiang (fast tempo), also known as "Sanxing Ban", has a structure of a board without an eye, with a 1/4 beat. It can be divided into two types: tight beat slow singing and tight beat fast singing. Tight beat fast singing can be further divided into flowing water Banqiang and fast Banqiang, while tight beat slow singing has a free accompaniment. This Banqiangti has a fast speed and strong force, with a compact rhythm and exciting emotions. It is often used to express emotions such as passion and excitement.

Scattered Banqiang (free tempo) has a structure of no board and no eye. This Banqiangti is generally used at the beginning of a singing section and is not used independently. The rhythm of scattered Banqiang is free and it is good at expressing emotions.

### 3.5 The Characteristics of Its Accompanying Music

The accompanying music of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry plays an important role in the performance of the puppet show. It is indispensable in grasping the plot rhythm, creating the atmosphere, portraying the characters, and supporting the singing tune. The accompanying instruments of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry can be mainly divided into two parts: "La" and "Da". "La" refers to the music played in the civil scenes, while "Da" refers to the music played in the martial scenes.

#### 3.5.1 Civil Scenes

The main accompanying instrument in the civil scenes is the sihu, accompanied by the yangqin (hammered dulcimer), erhu (two-stringed fiddle), pipa (pear-shaped lute), sanxian (a three-stringed plucked instrument, also known as Suzhou beng or Nanxianzi), and dihu (a bass fiddle) as auxiliary instruments. The sound of the copper tube sihu is strong and has a unique metallic quality, with a wide range, large volume, and rich singing quality. It can be cleverly combined with the singing tune of the shadow puppetry, and with the accompaniment of other stringed instruments, the entire orchestra becomes more harmonious and unified, making the music fuller and more solid.

The pitch of the singing tune is usually set in 1=D, 1=bE, 1=E, 1=F, or 1=G, depending on the singer's vocal range and the requirements of the script. The sihu is tuned to a fifth interval, with the first and third strings usually tuned to "#C" or "D", and the second and fourth strings usually tuned to "#G" or "A". Performers often use a half-tone pitch corrector blown by mouth to tune their instruments.

The civil scene orchestra has three main characteristics in singing sections: "dragging the tune and maintaining the pitch", "pulling the shadow curtain" (transition between scenes), and playing "qingxian" (a type of melody played on stringed instruments).

"Dragging the tune and maintaining the pitch" refers to the accompaniment and chorus maintaining a harmonious and consistent sound, playing a supporting and enhancing role.[17]

"Pulling the shadow curtain", also known as "transition between scenes", includes three forms: introduction, interlude, and ending. The introduction, also known as the opening shadow curtain, is mainly used to determine the singing tune's Banqiangti, rhythm, and speed, and to prepare for the following singing tune, playing a predictive role.[18] The interlude, also known as the interlude shadow curtain, is the part that connects the singing tune. Its general rule is to fall on the same note as the singing tune, and can be developed as needed to supplement the singing tune. The ending is used at the end of the singing section, as an accompaniment that sometimes runs parallel with the percussion.

"Qingxian", also known as "xingxian", is actually the performance of music pieces with instruments. Its main function is to coordinate with certain dramatic plots, create a story atmosphere, promote the development of the plot, and play a role in setting the mood. The music pieces are divided into two parts: stringed instruments and suona.

### 3.5.2 Martial scenes

The main instruments in the martial scenes are drums, clappers, cymbals, gongs, and other percussion instruments. The main role of the martial scene is to direct the civil and singing scenes, control the speed of the entire performance, and create an environment atmosphere to better portray the characters and the development of the plot. The martial scene accompaniment is divided into three parts: the opening gongs and drums (also known as "datong er", used to attract the audience before the show and prove that the performance is about to begin), the accompanying gongs and drums (to match the movements of the shadow puppets), and the fighting gongs and drums (used in intense scenes).

## 4. The Inheritance and Innovation of Music Art of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry

In his book "Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry", historian Gu Jiegang pointed out that "having a history of four hundred years, it is extremely popular among the people in the entire North China region. It has once intoxicated the souls of many people, moved many people's tears, inspired many people's ambitions, and aroused the generosity of many people. It is a crystallization of folk art... Unfortunately, its inherent reasons are: first, the script cannot keep up with the times; second, the tune is too familiar and not fresh. Of these two, the latter is especially important..."[20]

Mr. Gu Jiegang expressed regret and made suggestions on the development of Luanzhou shadow play, pointing out that the outdated scripts and unoriginal singing styles have hindered the progress of Luanzhou shadow play. Through collecting a large amount of literature, visiting folk artists, and conducting on-site research, I have discovered that the issue of inheriting shadow puppetry in folk culture is a significant gap. The majority of folk artists are around sixty years old on average (the Luanzhou Shadow Puppetry Troupe's artists are around seventy years old on average), and they use mobile phones or the internet less frequently. They do not use advanced equipment to promote and inherit their art. Modern young people have limited knowledge of Tangshan shadow puppetry, due to its outdated scripts and unoriginal singing styles. In addition, some artists hold relatively conservative views and do not believe in modern media, which has led to the further loss of folk skills.

### 4.1 The Self-Breakthrough and Innovation of Music Art of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry

The inheritance and development of any art must follow the objective laws of its artistic development. Government policies, social protection, and academic research can only provide some assistance to a certain extent. However, the power for change, innovation, and breakthroughs must come from within the art form itself in order to achieve new development. Many facts have shown that shadow puppetry has gradually departed from the aesthetic values of the times. Therefore, it is necessary to innovate from within, constantly create new Tangshan shadow puppetry plays and scripts, and change the current situation of outdated shadow puppetry plays. Innovations in shadow puppetry

singing style and tone should also be made to create more original singing styles. By enriching the performance forms of Tangshan shadow puppetry with colorful elements, it can become more interesting and loved by audiences.

In terms of play and script creation, it is possible to write content that is in line with the times and keep up with the times. This can be achieved by introducing film and television works that are suitable for all ages and creating works that are more in line with the contemporary pace of life. It is important to keep up with the pace of the times, such as the changes in the new era of China, and to sing praises for the true, the good, and the beautiful in human life. Through collecting information, I have seen the use of shadow puppetry in promoting pandemic prevention and control. The presentation was novel, innovative, with pleasant melodies and scientific lyrics. This presentation style, which contains both traditional culture and modern elements, is highly appreciated by audiences.

On the genre level, modern elements can be added to the singing style and tone to achieve a new expression of old language. For example, the lyrics of "Red Plum Blossoms," a well-known song, can be adapted into a Tangshan shadow puppetry version with the unique singing style and charm of Tangshan shadow puppetry. This song not only reflects the ideology of the Communist Party, but also has a certain historical significance and is widely known to the public. Through field research, it is found that the performance of the shadow puppetry play "Red Plum Blossoms" by Zhongshan Experimental School in Luanzhou was very successful. They borrowed the performance style of the dance "Pretty Sunset" and continuously innovated, integrating the elements of opera into shadow puppetry, making it more novel and interesting. This unique expression of Tangshan shadow puppetry in dance performance, singing style, and tone is more easily accepted by the public. This is the breakthrough and innovation of the music and art of Tangshan shadow puppetry.

#### **4.2 The Creation of Shadow Puppetry Music Works Combining with Contemporary Digital Inheritance**

The dissemination and development of any art form requires breakthroughs in self-innovation and also needs to be combined with contemporary digital methods to expand its channels of dissemination and increase its scope of influence. Music works are the essence of outstanding musical characteristics that combine composers and performers (singers). Only by organically combining music works with contemporary digital methods can the development of Tangshan shadow puppetry music and art be greatly enhanced.

The methods and creation of Tangshan shadow puppetry music art innovation in modern times cannot be separated from the creation of Tangshan shadow puppetry tunes. Some excellent composers have adapted and created music based on traditional Tangshan shadow puppetry tunes, ultimately forming excellent instrumental solos and ethnic orchestral ensemble works. For example, the ethnic orchestral ensemble piece "Moonlit Shadow Puppetry" is a typical work that changes and creates traditional Tangshan shadow puppetry tune music. Its singing style and musical style are based on the core musical elements of the "Da Shuai Qiang" music in Tangshan shadow puppetry, which represents the iconic vocal intonation of the Tangshan dialect. There are also some instrumental solo works, such as the suona piece "Victory Yangko" (composed by Zhao Yanchen and Fan Guozhong), the erhu pieces "Shadow Puppetry Tune" (composed by Zhao Yanchen), "Jidong Expressing Feelings" (composed by Gao Feng) and so on, which all borrow and absorb the musical elements of Tangshan shadow puppetry tunes to create music works that are widely accepted by the public, forming a unique music system with its own style.

Simultaneously, with the production of musical works, modern digital media platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili, Tencent Video, Video Account, Weibo, and WeChat, as well as numerous self-media outlets, have been utilized to promote and widely publicize Tangshan shadow puppetry and musical art through collaborations. In addition, with the strong support of government policies and the advantages of various media outlets, the dissemination power and cultural influence of Tangshan shadow puppetry and musical art have been significantly enhanced.

## 5. Conclusion

Tangshan shadow puppetry has a long history and rich cultural significance as a cultural and artistic treasure of the Chinese nation, and a unique form of folk art with local characteristics. Through its performances, Tangshan shadow puppetry continuously portrays the joys and sorrows of life and conveys moral values that inspire people to pursue goodness. The music of Tangshan shadow puppetry, including its singing, lyrics, accompaniment, and musical structure, possesses unique artistic charm and a complete artistic form. Efforts should be made to promote and develop the musical art of Tangshan shadow puppetry, deepen scientific research into its historical connotations and functional components, and create more outstanding works. With joint efforts, the artistic flower of Tangshan shadow puppetry music can bloom even more brilliantly.

## Notes

[1] Wei Liqun. *A History of Chinese Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Wenwu Publishing House, 2007, p. 29.

[2] Wei Liqun. *Jidong Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Science Press, 2009, pp. 7-8.

[3] Wei Liqun. *A History of Chinese Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Wenwu Publishing House, 2007, pp. 46-47.

[4] Gu Jigang: "Luanzhou Shadow Play", *"Literature"* Vol. 2, No. 6, 1934, pp. 1229-1230.

[5][6][7] Wei Liqun. *A History of Chinese Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Wenwu Publishing House, 2007, p. 188-190.

[8] Liu Rongde, Shi Yuzhuo. *An Introduction to the Music of Leping Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1991, p. 9.

[9] Wei Liqun. "A History of Chinese Shadow Puppetry" [M], Beijing: Wenwu Publishing House, 2007 edition, pp. 416-417.

[10][11] Jiang Liming. "A Study on the Music Culture of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry". Dissertation, Hebei University, China, 2007, p. 11.

[12][13][14][15] Zhang Jun. *A Study on Luanzhou Shadow Play*. Zhengzhou: Daxiang Publishing House, 2010, pp. 228-230.

[16] Zhang Jun. *A Study on Luanzhou Shadow Play*. Zhengzhou: Daxiang Publishing House, 2010, pp. 303-304.

[17][18][19] Le Lei. *Music of Heilongjiang Shadow Puppetry*. Harbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 2004, pp. 37-40.

[20] Gu Jigang. "Luanzhou Shadow Play". *Literature*. Vol. 2, No. 6, 1934, p. 1235.

[21][22] Zhen Huixia. "The Dissemination and Development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry Art". *Art Education Research*, 2018, p. 38.

## References

[1] Wei Liqun. *A History of Chinese Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Wenwu Publishing House, 2007.

[2] Wei Liqun. *Jidong Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: Science Press, 2009.

[3] Liu Rongde, Shi Yuzhuo. *An Introduction to the Music of Leping Shadow Puppetry*. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1991.

[4] Jiang Liming. "A Study on the Music Culture of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry". Hebei University, China, 2007.

[5] Cao Peipei. *A Study on the Artistic Style of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry*. Tianjin Conservatory of Music, 2012.

[6] Zhang Jun. *A Study on Luanzhou Shadow Play*. Zhengzhou: Daxiang Publishing House, 2010.

[7] Hou Qiuwan. "A Study on the Singing Techniques of Jidong Shadow Play". Chongqing Normal University, China, 2019.

- [8] Le Lei. Music of Heilongjiang Shadow Puppetry. Harbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 2004.
- [9] Zhen Huixia. "The Dissemination and Development of Tangshan Shadow Puppetry Art". Art Education Research. Vol. 14, 2018.