

On the Yangqin Accompaniment in Shaanxi Opera

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Abstract: In Qinqiang Orchestra, dulcimer is often used as an accompaniment instrument to perform. Because of its beautiful tone quality, wide range and because of its beautiful tone quality, wide range, and powerful dual coordination function, it occupies an important position in the performance of Qinqiang Opera. This study will focus on dulcimer This study will focus on dulcimer coordination and discuss how to use this coordination to improve the effect of Qin opera. Through in-depth exploration of the ancient Qinqiang culture Through in-depth exploration of the ancient Qinqiang culture and interpretation of different types of classical works, we can better appreciate and understand the unique charm and essence of these works, and provide more inspiration and inspiration for their singing.

Keywords: Dulcimer; Shaanxi Opera; Accompany; Joyful Tones.

1. Introduction

The dulcimer, also known as the "foreign qin", was introduced to China through the Middle East in the Ming and Qing dynasties. After the instrument was introduced to China, it was widely used in the accompaniment of rap and opera because of its own characteristics. In the development of Shaanxi opera music, the role of yangqin accompaniment is very important, providing rich resources for Shaanxi opera accompaniment and promoting the development and spread of Shaanxi opera. However, as most of the yangqin accompaniments are without music scores, this is a practical problem that needs to be solved in the accompaniment of shaanxi opera by yangqin. With the continuous evolution of the society and the vigorous development of folk music culture, the yangqin, as the main accompanying instrument, needs to be constantly improved and enriched to maximise its rhythmic, harmonic and accompanying roles.

2. Research Background

2.1. Origin of Yangqin

With a long history and many varieties throughout Europe, Asia and America, the yangqin is one of the world's most distinctive and fascinating musical instruments. Zhou Jingbao's "Mukam Exploration" recorded: "In the past, it was believed that the yangqin was introduced from the sea through coastal places in the Ming Dynasty, and it had been introduced to the north and south of the Tianshan Mountains a long time ago, and there is a great possibility that it was introduced to the mainland from the Xinjiang region, and it was an Arabian musical instrument, which was inherited by Uyghurs and eventually spread in the mainland of China. The "santur is the first of the yangqin" mentioned on the Land Silk Road. According to the Grove Dictionary of Music, the original shape of the santur can be seen in the harp, which was placed flat and struck with two mallets. This greatly accelerated the spread of the santur. The santur is characterised by a trapezoidal or rectangular case, with dozens of steel strings spread over the board, and a yard supported two thirds of the way up the strings, so that each string can produce two relationships of fifths. This santur has been handed down to present day Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Central Asia and India. After nearly 400 years of spreading and evolving in China, the

yangqin, whether in terms of instrument production, performance art or music composition, has acquired the traditional characteristics and national styles of China, and combined with regional folk music, has developed many schools of music with outstanding local and musical characteristics.

2.2. Origin of Shaanxi Opera

The artistic heritage of Shaanxi opera has a long history of precipitation and development. As early as the Western Han Dynasty, more than two thousand years ago, China's working people began to sing stories in Shaanxi opera. Shaanxi opera originated in the Qin Dynasty, improved in the Han Dynasty, flourished in the Sui Dynasty, became complete in the Tang Dynasty, was inherited in the Ming Dynasty, and reached its heyday in the Qing Dynasty, when the term "Shaanxi opera" was used to refer to the soundtrack of the Panchuan style of opera that was prevalent in the northwestern regions of Shaanxi and Gansu. However, before the Qing Dynasty, Shaanxi opera was only a general term for all the vocal chambers according to the Qin dialect, which is quite different from the Shaanxi opera that we all think of nowadays. During the 1200 years from the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, the Qin region became a political, economic and cultural centre, which provided a strong guarantee for the emergence and development of Shaanxi opera. In the 40th year of Qianlong's reign in the Qing Dynasty (1775), Li Tiao Yuan, a native of Mianzhou, Sichuan Province, mentioned in his "Theatre Words" that, "It is commonly said that there is Shaanxi opera in the collection of Qian's Duplicating the White Fur, which began in Shaanxi Province, and it is performed with bangs on the boards, and the Yueqin responds to it, and there is also a tightness and slowness, and it is commonly known as the Bang Bang Cavity and called the Chaos Bombing by the Genus." This shows that before the Qing Dynasty, Shaanxi opera was mainly accompanied by clappers and Yueqin, and was also known as "clapper chamber", "mussy bomb" and "Kun Bang".

2.3. Relationship between Yangqin and Shaanxi Opera

In the Shaanxi opera music accompaniment, because the yangqin can bring people a greater auditory resonance, so it has a wide range of sound, crisp, bright and other

characteristics, in the Shaanxi opera band, often can make a lot of musical instruments to maintain harmony and unity of tone, to raise the strengths of the shortcomings of the practical role, without losing the individuality of the charm of Zhang Zhang. Therefore, the yangqin is regarded as the leading instrument of the opera band and a unique and important part of Shaanxi opera music. It has a unique and important position in Shaanxi opera music, which consists of two main categories: lyrics in performance style and tunes in performance style. The orchestra is usually responsible for playing a variety of tunes, and two of its duties are to play transitional tunes to enhance the audience's listening experience and emotional expression. The yangqin is rich in musical expression, capable of wrapping the actor's singing voice and of playing fluently in different registers. In Shaanxi opera performances, the yangqin is an important accompanying instrument, often used to enhance the infectiousness and atmosphere of the performance. Through the flexible use of various playing techniques, we are able to imitate the musical characteristics of the drums and gongs and blend them with rapid arpeggios. As an important accompanying instrument for many local operas and operatic arts, the yangqin has become increasingly expressive in recent decades with the continuous exploration and innovation of musicians, and has been able to cope with the changes of the times and the changing demands for the plot, the characters, the changes and ups and downs of the characters' joys, anger, sorrows and joys, as well as the singing, reciting, acting and playing. For example, in Shaanxi opera's "slow tempo" method, the main melody instrument and the yangqin are not the same, and the yangqin, by its own characteristics, can play the main melody tune, or the chordal "plus flower" effect. As far as Shaanxi opera bands are concerned, no matter what size the Qin opera band is, it is inseparable from the yangqin, and the influence of the yangqin on Qin opera accompaniment is becoming increasingly significant. The yangqin takes the word "accompaniment" as the core of its singing, echoing and complementing each other with the orchestra, thus creating a mutually reinforcing and complementary atmosphere, making the performers more prominent and the coordinators more amiable. Yangqin's playing technique not only enriches the means of expression of the work, but also embodies it perfectly, thus adding new colours to the art of playing. The yangqin plays an indispensable role in the musical accompaniment of the two singing styles of "Huan Yin" and "Bitter Yin", and its importance and value are even more prominent.

3. The Use of Yangqin in Shaanxi Opera Accompaniment

3.1. Yangqin Accompaniment in Shaanxi Opera Traditional Repertoire

Many excellent Shaanxi opera repertoires have been handed down to the present day by the old generation of artists through oral and mental transmission, but the scores have not been completely recorded, which is precisely the real dilemma often encountered in Shaanxi opera performance. How to achieve excellent accompaniment in the absence of scores in traditional operas has become one of the issues that need to be explored in depth. When performing traditional opera without a score, one needs to memorise the elements such as plate style, plate head, and gate crossing, and incorporate more improvisation and accompaniment

experience in order to achieve the best results. Improvisation is one of the forms of playing, which refers to the use of an instrument to accompany the main theme without any prior preparation, based on the main theme and supplemented by colourful harmonies and patterns. The yangqin has always occupied an important position in the orchestra with its wide range and unique sound. In the accompaniment of local operas, the yangqin is often in the position of the accompanist, which is particularly important. In the timbre of the yangqin, the sound emitted from the bass area, with its hazy, strong and deep timbre, is often used as a backing for the harmony; the mid-range area presents a soft, pure and transparent quality, which is mostly used for the lyricism of the melody; and the soprano area is clear, handsome and impassioned. In specific performances, the accompaniment is optimised by the strength and weakness of the yangqin's own timbre and by adjusting the speed of the instrument. At the same time, it also makes use of the combination of playing techniques such as monotone, diatonic, whorl, ornamentation, arpeggio, overtones, legato, and glissando, to bring into play the advantage of the Yangqin's accompaniment of the lingering sound, and to improve the artistic effect of its consonance and cushioning.

In order to interpret a piece of music better, the accompanist and the player must play a specific role together, so it is especially necessary to analyse and study the content of the piece in depth, and to explore the expression methods. After acquiring a piece of music, the accompanist must have a deep understanding and analysis of the piece's ideological content, style, rhythm, structure, tonality and accompaniment patterns, so that they can work together as one in the stage performance. In addition to understanding as thoroughly as possible the composer's life, thought and artistic creativity, only with a deep understanding of the content and expression of the work can one be able to skilfully use the tempo, strength, syntax, tone and other elements of the accompaniment. When there is a repertoire in the Shaanxi opera repertoire, the notation indicated in the score must be followed when playing the piece. In terms of acoustics, the soprano and bass registers present very different performances, with the former sounding clear through clever accompaniment weaving and pattern design, as well as chord arrangement, giving full play to the accompanist's technical ability and imagination to realise the perfect co-ordination of the intro, interlude and outro, and ultimately achieving the realm of perfect fusion with the performer. The latter, on the other hand, presents a steady and thick sound, so it is more important to have an accurate grasp of the rhythmic strength. The rhythm is sharp, grainy, soothing, steady and measured. In the mastery of strength and weakness, it needs to be rendered appropriately according to the thoughts and emotions of the piece and the different styles of the singers, in order to achieve the artistic effect of combining the two. In the accompaniment of traditional Shaanxi opera, the yangqin plays a supporting role, but occasionally it also plays a leading role.

3.2. Accompaniment of Yangqin in Modern Shaanxi Opera

In modern musical works, many accompaniments tend to use ethnic orchestral music, and Shaanxi opera music is an important representative of this. In the process of development, Shaanxi opera music not only integrates traditional Chinese elements, but also absorbs the timbres of western instruments, presenting a unique foreign style. The

diversity of Shaanxi opera music adds rich connotations, and the art of the yangqin has always maintained its unique charms, both in traditional and modern repertoire. Over time, the development of the yangqin and the combination of Shaanxi opera have become more and more important for performers to acquire higher skills and performance abilities. Although some people may think that the accompaniment of Shaanxi opera repertoire does not require much skill, the truth is that all these skills need to be mastered through constant practice. This view is not entirely correct; mastering Shaanxi opera accompaniment skills is very important in modern Shaanxi opera repertoire. Through exquisite playing skills, we can greatly improve the standard of Shaanxi opera accompaniment. The yangqin has been used in the accompaniment of many modern Shaanxi opera repertoire, and this journey, the process of which will make appropriate changes to the pitch, will enable the Shaanxi opera rhythm to be maintained and controlled in a variety of pitches.

4. The Practical Solution of Yangqin Accompaniment in Shaanxi Opera

Shaanxi opera can be said to be the originator of Chinese opera. There are two special tones in Shaanxi opera, the joyful tone and the bitter tone, and the music of Shaanxi opera consists of two very different colours of melody, and the two tones of the yangqin, si and fa, are considered to be the most traditional pitches, especially the si, which occurs frequently in the singing of bitter tone, needs to be changed appropriately to maintain and control various pitches. Especially in the bitter tone cantata, si, which occurs frequently, needs to be accompanied by descending si, while fa, which occurs in the joyful tone cantata, needs to be accompanied by ascending fa, so si needs to be rendered in the native si.

4.1. Joyful Tones

In the scale of huanyin, two tones, fa and si, are integrated, and after upgrading from the pentatonic scale to the septatonic scale, their tones present a joyful emotion, which is the most expressive in depicting the characters and expressing the emotion, and can convey the joyful and bright emotion and the impassioned emotional characteristics. fa in Shaanxi opera is between the original fa and the ascending fa, a little higher than the original fa, and a little higher than the ascending fa. The fa tone in Shaanxi opera is between the original fa and the ascending fa, slightly higher than the original fa and lower than the ascending fa. In some specific tunes, this unique tone will show the characteristics of the major key, which will give the jubilant melody a unique music.

4.2. Painful Tones

The sound of si has a unique pitch in the bitter tone cavity, which is slightly higher than the pitch of descending si, but still does not reach the pitch of si, and is within the range of descending si and si. The addition of the two tones of qingjiao and intercalary to the bitter tone chamber not only gives the music of the bitter tone chamber a unique timbre, but also makes the tune of the bitter tone inclined to a minor key, which is more soft, with a kind of light melancholy, and more profoundly demonstrates the state of mind of the characters in the bitter tone, as well as the profound emotions they carry. The minor key is very useful in the performance of a piece of suffering, as it reinforces the theme of the piece and enhances the sadness of the piece. Compared with many other operas,

the uniqueness of Shaanxi opera lies in its suffering tunes, whose melodies are able to display sadness and depict the psychological state of the characters, as well as create a solemn atmosphere.

In "Bitter Tone Jumping over the Threshold", fa and descending si are the colour tones that form the bitter tone melody. In "Bitter Tone Jumping over the Threshold", although the descending si can reflect the melodic style of the bitter tone, it is slightly lower in comparison with the native si, close to the descending si but not able to reach the descending si. If si is treated as the native si, the melody will be deviated from the style of the bitter tone, therefore, the descending si tone treatment presents the typical characteristics of the bitter tone melody.

5. Prospect of Yangqin Accompaniment in Shaanxi Opera

With the development of science and technology, Chinese music has made great progress, providing a strong theoretical foundation for many art forms. For example, the yangqin accompaniment in Shaanxi opera has a unique style and flavour, which not only has a wide range of tones, but also provides a good timbre, which enhances the melody, rhythm, and harmony of the whole song. The strings and plucks of Shaanxi opera orchestra need to use the yangqin to increase the fluency of the performance. By playing, the orchestra is able to create a solid chord that adds structure to the piece. Additionally, if the orchestra lacks a player, the yangqin is able to act as a key figure and add detail to the piece. Currently, there is a need to change the sound of the Shaanxi opera by altering the vocal characteristics of the players. Traditionally, the vocal character of the banhu is used, however, the vocal character of the yangqin is cumbersome and therefore difficult to change. If one can try to use the yangqin and have the presenter determine the vocal signature of the vocal part, then using the vocal signature of other instruments can be controlled more precisely and thus change the vocal signature faster.

6. Conclusion

In Shaanxi opera band, yangqin accompaniment plays a crucial role as a form of artistic expression that has undergone continuous exploration and development, and has become increasingly rich in its expressive power. The yangqin accompaniment can not only express the musical image, melodic rhythm and other contents, but also accentuate the mood of the piece and make it more charming, thus improving the effect of Shaanxi opera band performance. The art of yangqin accompaniment contains infinite potential, which is worthy of our in-depth excavation. The yangqin plays an increasingly important role in the musical accompaniment of Shaanxi opera, adding more lustre to the performance of Shaanxi opera, and at the same time promoting the common progress of the art of yangqin accompaniment and Shaanxi opera.

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