

The Artistic Expression Paths of Fusion between Tuba and Traditional Chinese Music

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Abstract: A collaboration between the tuba and traditional Chinese music has been organised to promote both modern brass performance and cross-cultural creation. Although the tuba is often used to support the harmony and add weight to the orchestra as the bass instrument, it has a wide range and many colours, so it can also be used in other ways. How to explore ways for artistic expression of the tuba in combination with traditional Chinese music that do not reduce Chinese materials to mere ornamentation or have the instrument imitate a specific style. The four kinds of discussions are acoustic compatibility, adaptation of melodic and ornamental language, compositional and ensemble strategies, and pedagogical performance paths. Good fusion should not be based on the superficial quotation of pentatonic melodies, but on an in-depth study of modal logic, phrase breathing, heterophonic texture and culturally informed collaboration. The tuba is a relatively rich and warm Western brass instrument that can express emotions; as it is in harmony with other sounds, it is suitable for fusion models and has strong technical idioms and aesthetic harmony. Thus, the model can extend the scope of tuba solo works and offer new directions for the contemporary inheritance of traditional Chinese music.

Keywords: Tuba, Traditional Chinese Music, Cross-Cultural Fusion, Artistic Expression, Brass Pedagogy.

1. Introduction

Meetings of Western brass bands and traditional Chinese music are no longer infrequent artistic projects. In contemporary concert life, conservatory education, recording practice and intercultural festivals have all been ways for musicians to create new sound worlds by combining instrumental traditions that developed in very different historical and aesthetic environments. Within this general tendency, the tuba is relatively out of step. The violin, flute and piano are relatively well-established historical resources for interacting with Chinese music, but the tuba is still generally regarded as a low-register orchestral or band instrument and is not frequently used for the delicate expression of culture. Therefore, few have been investigated in this regard.

Nevertheless, the tuba has some qualities that require such a discussion. It is a large-bodied instrument that is not stiff; it can have various types of tones, such as dark, round, solemn, funny or gentle. It comes from the breathing process and, when performed with technique, has a certain vocal colour. Its range can serve as a bass foundation and middle-range support, or in some cases, a singing solo line. Based on the above attributes, the tuba is not only needed to support other instruments in Western classical works with Chinese elements but can also be used to introduce traditional Chinese melodies and present rich colours and stories independently. Artists have moved beyond stereotypes to show the remarkable lyrical quality of the low brass family.

However, it is not serious. Traditional Chinese music generally has a lighter texture and a smaller range; it often uses non-equal temperament for pitch adjustment and is relatively free of ornamentation. Many genres are also culturally embedded in terms of breathing, speed and rhetoric, and these cannot be directly applied to Western instrumental techniques. If the fusion is only at the level of surface borrowing, it will be too superficial; for instance, a pentatonic melody over heavy Western accompaniment, or a low-brass

section that overwhelms a light acoustic texture. Therefore, in order to create a harmonious work of art, we need to find a way to unify the internal logic of both instruments and the origins of their materials.

Therefore, the fundamental artistic question is not whether the tuba can play Chinese music, but rather how to do so sensitively in terms of structure, intelligently in terms of technique, and gracefully in terms of expression. Therefore, this paper will explore whether the tuba technique and Chinese musical language are compatible at a basic level, how performance and composition have achieved effective integration, and what teaching paths can be established to create an enduring repertoire and performance culture. Based on the above analysis of the paths, this study will propose an all-round system for musicians who wish to create new works at the intersection of Western brass and traditional Chinese music. With globalisation, many changes have also occurred in the study of musical arts over the years. With the development of society and the growth of the audience, more and more people are starting to be interested in new kinds of cross-cultural shows. The above will provide a platform for new development of the tuba. Traditionally used only in the back row of a symphony orchestra or as the rhythmic support of a military band, it is now being used for individual expression. Over a long period of study, tuba players have come to know more about the delicate changes in expression and deep emotions conveyed by Chinese music. Systematically learn to decode the complex musical language of Chinese folk and classical music, and thus develop new ideas for breath control, vibrato and phrasing. Therefore, the combination is no longer limited to a musical scale; now it can also be used in all areas to explore what the tuba can express in the 21st century.

2. Acoustic and Cultural Compatibility

All serious fusions of the tuba and traditional Chinese music should begin with a study of sound compatibility at the level of sound, not merely the selection of repertoire. Brass

scholarship is a study that describes the depth of resonance, width of tone and excellent flexibility in dynamic modulation for the tuba at an advanced level [1]. At the same time, Chinese instrumental traditions are not organised in terms of Western brass projection or harmonic mass; rather, they often use modal concentration, contour nuance, timbral contrast and linear expressivity [2]. Therefore, the tuba cannot directly be used in Chinese music as is. It should be able to lower the volume of sound, redistribute its weight differently, and consider how it can work in a texture based on lines and breath rather than on vertical harmonic structures [3].

First, tuba is relatively suitable for many of the parbolets in Chinese music because it is a light-spoken instrument. As a tuba is generally sustained by controlled airflow and not struck, it is more suitable for creating long, continuous melodic lines that align better with the phrasing of Chinese songs than percussion. It can provide support for melodies that need to be performed with changes in contour and release rather than by reaching a high point in harmony. The other is the register distribution of the tuba. Although the lower register will be too heavy for delicate chamber music, the middle and upper-middle ranges can also produce an unusually soft and intimate tone that is more suitable for harmony with plucked strings, bamboo flutes, or low-reed colours. Thus, the problem is not whether the tuba's sound is inherently foreign, but rather whether the performers can identify regions of timbral overlap where the instrument supports and extends the other instruments in the ensemble [4].

Modal language is also required to be adapted flexibly. Studies of Chinese musical materials have repeatedly pointed out that pentatonic organisation, modal inflection and phrase identity are all important carriers of musical style [9]. Due to cross-cultural differences, these are often perceived as "exotic foreign sounds", and as a result, it is more convenient to refer to them as "structural features". The tuba can offer the following support for such structures: clarification of the modal centre, a drone-like foundation, doubling of the melody at certain times, or pentatonic themes with reduced articulation and moderate vibrato. The purpose is not to emulate the sound of an old-style Chinese instrument, but rather to feel the mood and pacing of the tunes in this work. Research on Western music encounters with non-Western traditions warns against cultural appropriation that merely decorates Western forms with borrowed signs [4]. The application here of that warning is that real fusion requires the tuba to enter the world of Chinese music through listening, reduction of excess, and attention to the internal stylistic logic.

3. Performance Techniques and Stylistic Adaptation

First of all, it must be compatible; otherwise, the results of combining them will not be good-looking. For a long time, the focus of Tuba pedagogy has been on regulating articulation, legato, breath pace, resonance control and register balance for expressive performance [5]. The above general skills need to be employed in practice to achieve specific styles for traditional Chinese music. Soft-edged attacks, flexible phrase-end tapering, subtle portamento-like connections achieved by valve movement and embouchure control, and an approach to rubato that retains melodic rhetoric rather than strict adherence to meter should be displayed by the player. The above modifications will help the

tuba perform some Chinese tunes more flexibly.

The technical modification should be done more carefully for folk materials with a rich sense of ornament and rhythm. Recently, some research has been carried out on performing the Mongolian-Chinese folk song "Ga Da Mei Lin" with a tuba; it has been found that, by integrating oral tradition and formal notation, breath control, glissando-like motions, and rhythmic flexibility can be achieved effectively with this instrument [6]. Therefore, it is not necessary to choose between the accuracy of the conservatory and the looseness of vernacular style. Tuba players need to be good musicians and, to achieve successful fusion, learn to absorb the style through listening, singing and working with others who have been playing it for a long time.

Use all the instruments to conduct cross-instrument comparisons. Scholars studying the integration of the Western flute in Chinese music have pointed out that adapting modal, rhythmic and melodic systems is required rather than simply borrowing notes [7]. Although this applies to a woodwind instrument, the core lesson is directly applicable to the tuba; fusion can be achieved when the musical expression is idiomatic in both directions simultaneously, and the physical and acoustic characteristics of the instrument being played are also respected in line with the structural logic of the original music. Modify the combinations of the valves to create microtonal bends and employ other fingerings to adjust the natural pitch; thus, tuba players can reproduce the rich slides of string and vocal parts in traditional Chinese music without appearing artificial.

4. Compositional Strategies and Repertoire Building

Beyond the technique of a single person, new compositional ideas and a larger repertoire need to be formed for art. Rewriting a Chinese tune for the tuba and piano is not an ideal method of cultural fusion. The composer needs to determine the purpose of the tuba in building the dramatic structure of the work. The first is the lyrical way, in which the tuba takes on the role of the narrator to present large-scale melodic material supported only by reduced-texture accompaniment from the percussion section and occasional harmony. Another is a dialogue, and in it, the tuba works with traditional Chinese instruments in alternating or heterophonic ways. Research on the integration of Chinese and Western composition techniques has shown that pentatonic materials can be used productively with Western harmony under the condition of maintaining structural balance, rather than being overly emphasized [8].

A strong plan is to reduce the density of harmony. Western-trained arrangers frequently over-harmonise traditional Chinese melodies with a rich series of chords and thus reduce their contour clarity. Tuba is particularly difficult to write because of its dense low-frequency harmonic layers; thus, the required transparency of traditional Chinese acoustic texture may be out of reach. Selective harmonic implication is an alternative that opens fifths, drones, modal pedal tones, and parallel interval writing to support the line without being confined to the harmonic constraints of the late Romantic era [11]. The most intense parts of composition in tuba fusion frequently feature ornamentation, pauses, breath, and resonance. Thus, the volume of the tuba is kept relatively low so that the traditional musical instruments in the background can be heard.

A sustainable path for art should not be isolated performances, but rather coordination among the entire world in expanding repertoire and educational reform. The relative lack of well-established tuba works based on traditional Chinese materials has led some performers to favour new programmes that feature fusion as a one-off phenomenon. In light of the above, repertoire development should also incorporate the creation of new original works and chamber music formats that integrate the tuba into cross-cultural ensembles. Research on the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese national musical instruments indicates that genuine communication occurs through equal dialogue rather than one-sided adaptation [10]. Therefore, the revised teaching and research will focus on listening-based study of regional Chinese genres, collaboration with Chinese instrumentalists, and culturally integrated approaches to timing. A cross-cultural music education system believes that, in today's world, new works of art need to be co-created in a diverse cultural setting [12]. By teaching this in the conservatory, the tuba will be given more prestige in modern Chinese music fusion.

5. Conclusion

Tuba is often used in conjunction with traditional Chinese music, but it is also technically demanding and highly artistic. Performers, educators and composers are invited to break out of their traditional roles and explore new applications for the tuba in expressing life and culture. The main content of this study is that true cross-cultural integration does not require the simple adoption of Chinese tunes or spectacular, superficial newness. However, it is based on disciplined listening, proportional sound production, deep assimilation of modal and phrase logic, and compositional strategies that respect the textural and rhetorical attributes of traditional Chinese music at its foundation.

The three artistic paths will be necessary for the future development of this integration. First of all, the performers need to create an independent, style-aware technical system focused on tonal modulation, flexible articulation, phrase-oriented expression, and integrate the mechanics of Western brass with the melodic fluidity of Eastern music. Second, composers and arrangers can create various types of works for the tuba to serve different functions, such as providing support for other modes, participating in gentle dialogues, adding space, and occasionally being lyrical, rather than continuously bearing the weight of harmony. Third, music institutions and performers should invest in cooperative teaching and repertoire construction to establish a standard, repeatable artistic practice of intercultural fusion rather than relying on occasional, exotic experiments.

Given the above strict conditions, the tuba can offer a new feature for the modern Interpretation of Traditional Chinese Music: solemnity without stiffness, large-scale resonance without showiness, and a broad new expressive space for cross-cultural musical ideas. In the end, the future of this work of art will not be to replace or diminish tradition, but rather to allow every world of music to show new colours and

emotions through the respectful collaboration of many. With the spread of various styles and cultures around the world in recent years, Western brass instruments will likely be introduced into traditional music from other parts of the world in the future. The methods and ideas that have been developed in the combination of tuba and traditional Chinese music can serve as a model for future cross-cultural collaborations of other instruments and cultures. Promote mutual respect among musicians and, through deep study and joint exploration of new ideas, move beyond the previous division in world music. This ongoing exploration of art will add new works for tuba players and, at the same time, give old Chinese songs a fresh, lively feeling that will continue to appeal to people all over the world today. The end result of this integration will be a deeper sense of humanity among the people; it will connect them all, regardless of language or culture, through the universal language of sound.

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