

# On the Development of Vocal Music Literature Courses in Colleges and Universities

-- Taking Chinese Art Songs as an Example

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**Abstract:** Art songs are a splendid treasure in the long history of China. Art songs are a symbol of China's excellent culture and have been widely valued throughout the ages. Chinese art songs are a kind of historical culture with special charm, and it is a kind of music with profound history and cultural connotation. Vocal literature class in colleges and universities is an important part of art education, and with the development of China's economy and society, vocal literature education in China's colleges and universities has also developed greatly. At present, as China's foreign relations become closer and closer, with the increasing diversification of social life, various foreign cultures are penetrating into the vocal literature teaching in colleges and universities. Chinese art songs are an important part of Chinese traditional culture. Chinese art songs play an important role in the teaching of vocal literature in China. The dissemination of Chinese art songs in China is the key to promote the healthy development of vocal literature education in China's colleges and universities, and all relevant colleges and universities should pay enough attention to it. The article makes an in-depth analysis and discussion on the status and position of Chinese art songs in the vocal literature education of colleges and universities, in order to draw reference to the relevant work in the future.

**Keywords:** Colleges universities, Vocal literature, Chinese art song.

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## 1. Introduction

In today's information technology, China is in the era of big data, and there are more and more international contacts and interactions. Along with the collision and intermingling of various cultures, vocal literature education in colleges and universities is facing an unprecedented impact. Under the predicament that the power of traditional culture is diluted, students blindly seek reform and innovation, while neglecting to draw artistic nutrition from the traditional superior culture. In such a general environment, the role of Chinese art songs in vocal literature teaching in colleges and universities has not been fully played out [1]. At present, many colleges and universities do not properly educate Chinese art songs in vocal literature classes, so that students cannot really appreciate the beauty of Chinese art songs in the learning process [2]. In the teaching process, teachers do not understand some songs thoroughly enough and only mechanically impart singing skills to students without really touching the essence of the works, which is one of the main reasons for the decline of teaching quality. In this context, we must pay attention to the right attitude towards culture shock, so that the art market can move towards healthy competition and push the forgotten traditional art songs to a new height [3].

## 2. The Relevance of Chinese Art Songs

### 2.1. The Role of Chinese Art Songs in the World Culture

Excellent art songs can express people's emotions. Writers' songs can make people's emotions be fully conveyed. And the only way to make a writer's song more vibrant is to infuse it with real experiences and feelings in its composition and

interpretation. All songs have to express their thoughts and feelings, only the methods of expression are different. These different forms of expression give each song its own character [4]. Different styles of songs can bring different emotional pleasures to people. In the course of thousands of years, the Chinese people have left a large number of magnificent artistic heritage in their long and hard history, and our art songs are a kind of songs with distinctive national characteristics. In the context of global economic integration, cultural exchanges and collisions among countries have become increasingly frequent. In the process of development, Chinese art songs are bound to encounter many new challenges. The exchange of diverse cultures has injected new nutrients into Chinese literary and artistic creation, and at the same time this has added pressure on the survival of many excellent traditions. On the basis of inheriting and learning from advanced international cultural concepts, we further promote the development of literary and artistic creation. Chinese art songs present a new vitality under the influence of China's diversified culture, while the world culture also presents a multi-colorful color due to its essence [5].

### 2.2. Let the Development of Chinese Art Songs Maintain National Identity

Chinese music culture has a long history and has left a lot of wonderful music in the long history. It is unique in its musical form and system, and has obvious national characteristics. Art song is an important part of traditional Chinese music culture, its connotation and expansion are very wide. There are several particularly outstanding art songs that have been widely disseminated through centuries and even millennia [6]. In the teaching of vocal literature in colleges and universities, the outstanding Chinese art songs should be the main content, so that they can better appreciate the

important role of Chinese art songs through the study of music. When teaching Chinese art songs, in addition to giving students a good grasp of the basic skills of singing and composing, students should also have a comprehensive understanding of the connotation and background of the songs so that they can fully express their feelings and allow them to gain full freedom. It can be seen that Chinese art songs play a pivotal role in the vocal literature of colleges and universities. Chinese art songs have a special charm and national identity amidst the collision and fusion of multiple cultures [7].

### **3. Analysis of the Value of Chinese Art Songs in Vocal Literature Courses in Colleges and Universities**

Art songs are very different from other music textbooks in terms of subject matter, singing style and singing style. In vocal literature courses, there are a large number of western art song materials, so many teachers tend to focus on western art songs. The basic theory and teaching materials of Chinese art songs are still relatively lacking. How to construct a knowledge system of Chinese art songs and how to make Chinese art education resources richer is a very important topic in college vocal music teaching. Generally, when singing, the voice is neglected when singing, so that many listeners are unable to comprehend the artistic intent when listening, which affects the mood of the performers. As a result, the forefathers of Chinese art singing proposed a singing strategy that combined Western and Chinese singing styles, which is the principle that Chinese literature and art songs must follow the "use of words to form a cadence". This advanced singing theory is of great value in practice [8]. Chinese art songs are very important in portraying the inner emotions of characters. This song is well structured, with lyrics that go from light to deep. During the education process, the teacher needs to educate through emotion, voice, and character, as well as understand the dramatic styles of different authors.

#### **3.1. Passing on the National Culture**

Chinese art songs are fused with the national characteristics of our country to present traditional Chinese art and culture in a western way. In the historical process of Chinese literature and art creation, traditional culture and art elements such as "Tang Poetry", "Song Qi", "Shi Jing" and "Han Fu" have been used in large quantities and have achieved remarkable success, which is an important carrier of Chinese culture and art. Therefore, the introduction of Chinese art songs in college vocal literature classes helps students to understand traditional culture and art, thus promoting their inheritance of the nation's outstanding culture. Chinese artists have also shown a strong national spirit in their Chinese art works. Among them, works such as Liu Wenzheng's "The East Flow of the Great River" and Huang Zi's "A Gift to the Soldiers in Front of the Enemy" show patriotism and national sentiment. In the works, applying them to education can effectively influence students' hearts and spread the national spirit [9].

#### **3.2. Developing Students' Musical Perception Skills**

Chinese art song is a kind of music art that combines the essence of Chinese and Western cultures. It combines Western composition techniques with the rhythmic beauty of the East and incorporates the composer's passion, which is an attitude

and characteristic of traditional Chinese art and culture. Therefore, introducing the teaching of Chinese art song composition into college vocal literature classes can help students improve their understanding of music. Through Chinese art songs, students can experience the beauty of oriental culture, as well as connect spiritually with Chinese music masters and get a spiritual and thus aesthetic sublimation, which can effectively improve the perception of music. The more exposure students have in their lives, the more their own aesthetic interest and musicianship will be enhanced. Thus, it can be seen that Chinese art songs play an important role in developing students' musical awareness.

#### **3.3. Improving Students' Singing Ability**

An excellent art form also needs an excellent performer so that its charm and essence can be expressed. Chinese art songs are composed with melody and connotation, but also with their own imagery, technique and singing voice. At present, the pronunciation of the five Italian vowels, namely: A, E, I, O, U, is a common problem in vocal music classes in domestic universities, and students encounter many difficulties in learning English due to the lack of understanding of Italian culture and improper pronunciation of Chinese. However, Chinese art songs are another matter, Chinese art songs often combine the pronunciation of different countries and regions' culture and dialects. Take the Sichuan folk song "When the Sophora Blossoms" for example, which is very rich in dialects. It is a good practice for pronunciation. On the other hand, Chinese art songs are simple in structure, small in form and rich in subject matter, which is both an excellent choice for beginners to learn pronunciation and a good time to learn. Therefore, when learning to sing Chinese art songs, students can greatly exercise and improve their singing skills.

#### **3.4. Increasing the Performer's Cultural Knowledge**

Performing a song well requires a deep understanding of the song's content and context. Chinese art songs have a deep creative background and high artistic value. The study of Chinese art songs is of great significance to enhance the understanding of our country's history and culture and to understand the connotation of its music culture. Through the study of vocal music courses in colleges and universities, it can better stimulate the creation and performance of music, realize music sharing, music expressing emotions, and convey emotions through music.

#### **3.5. Realize the Improvement of Teaching Quality**

With the development of our country's economy and society, the vocal music literature education in colleges and universities has also been paid more and more attention. With the changes of the times, the quality of vocal music literature education in colleges and universities is also constantly improving. One of the important factors is that students' interest in learning has declined, and some students cannot concentrate on their studies. Fragmented information on the Internet will affect students' attention, thereby affecting the efficiency of learning, which in turn affects the enthusiasm for learning, which will form a vicious circle. In vocal music classes in colleges and universities, teachers should vigorously promote the teaching of Chinese art songs and adopt scientific and efficient teaching methods, so that

students can better feel the charm of Chinese art songs and the essence of Chinese traditional culture. This can mobilize the students' enthusiasm for learning to the greatest extent, so that it can achieve the teaching effect.

#### **4. Problems Faced by Chinese Art Songs in College Vocal Music Literature Courses**

Under the influence of today's Internet fast food culture, students are more and more interested in popular songs that are easy to understand, lively and energetic. In the current various music competitions, the more popular singing forms are some original singing forms. The above singing methods can better reflect the ability of the players, highlight their personal characteristics, like to learn, and like to imitate. At the same time, with the rapid popularization of modern online music, online songs have also gained a large number of fans. These conditions have a great impact on the traditional singing art. Many students follow the trend of music and show greater interest in imitation and performance. In order to pursue efficiency and interest, students imitate teaching works, many of which have a single connotation and lack inner feelings. This situation is not conducive to cultivating the core of students' music culture. Secondly, the school does not pay enough attention to the teaching of art songs and vocal music, so that the majority of teachers and students do not pay enough attention to the attractiveness of art songs themselves, resulting in little interest in music. In addition, when teaching art songs in the classroom, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of songs. Many teachers don't understand this song very well. They only teach skills and knowledge about singing in their teaching, but they cannot really apply the excellent traditional culture of our nation to art. [10] Advertising has caused the superficial learning of students, and cannot effectively cultivate the aesthetics of music perception.

##### **4.1. Inadequate Understanding of the Value of Chinese Art Songs**

Chinese art songs have a strong western color from the very beginning of their birth. In addition, in recent years, due to the rapid development of Westerners and the massive import of culture, they have also profoundly influenced the educational concepts and teaching methods of colleges and universities. Similar to colleges and universities, they also have an "indispensable" attitude toward traditional Eastern culture and art while receiving Western education. Many colleges and universities do not know the value of Chinese art songs deeply enough, and in terms of teaching contents, most of them are mainly western art songs, while Chinese art songs are minor or elective courses. The status and role of Chinese art songs in our education make it an unconscious phenomenon in the transmission of national culture, the promotion of national spirit, the cultivation of music perception ability, and the cultivation of singing ability. People do not know the value of Chinese art songs thoroughly enough and fail to treat Chinese art songs as an important resource for learning.

##### **4.2. Irrational Selection and Combination of the Content of Chinese Art Songs**

At present, there are still serious unreasonable phenomena in the selection and combination of the content of Chinese college art songs. In the selection of teaching materials,

foreign art songs far exceed Chinese art songs in quantity and quality. Most of the vocal students are dominated by foreign art songs, and Chinese art songs are limited to boundless taste. In addition, there is much time in the mixed curriculum that is unreasonable. Original Chinese songs are a combination of traditional Chinese culture and local ethnic characteristics, and without a certain level of literary skills and cultural cultivation, it is impossible to comprehend their meaning and pass them on. However, many colleges and universities only teach Chinese art songs as teaching materials, but neglect the cultivation of traditional culture and local culture. Students can only sing and cannot deeply comprehend and express Chinese art songs. In the teaching of Chinese art songs, the teaching of Chinese art songs is greatly hindered by the unreasonable teaching materials and the unreasonable curriculum structure.

##### **4.3. Insufficient Excavation of Teaching Resources for Chinese Art Songs**

At present, the teaching effect of Chinese art songs is not satisfactory, mainly because of the lack of educational resources. On the one hand, original Chinese music demands more and more from composers, requiring considerable knowledge of literature, linguistics, history, music, etc., so as to be able to produce works of high standard. Domestic composers can achieve this goal, but at the same time it leads to a shortage of educational resources and a lack of a large number of excellent works to use as learning materials. On the other hand, universities do not pay enough attention to the teaching of Chinese art songs, and they lack in-depth discussions on the discovery of Chinese art songs, and it is far from enough to evaluate and discover new work. There is a shortage of new work on Chinese art song learning resources, and there is a shortage of Chinese art song learning resources [11].

#### **5. Analysis of the Application Strategies of Chinese Art Songs in College Vocal Teaching**

##### **5.1. Correct Understanding of the Value of Chinese Art Songs**

In order to make Chinese art songs better integrated into the vocal literature education in colleges and universities, we need to have a comprehensive understanding of the value of Chinese art song works. In the structure of music, the author's works are short, rhythmic, accompaniment, and a blend of technique and art. Original Chinese songs are a kind of music with strong national characteristics, applied to vocal music teaching, which can effectively promote the spread and transmission of national culture. Higher education institutions should understand the value of Chinese art songs on a national level so that students and pupils can understand the importance of Chinese art songs and thus better understand Chinese art songs. Teachers should provide guidance on the connotation and meaning of Chinese art songs so that students will be more active in learning Chinese art songs and understanding the connotation of Chinese art songs, thus improving their overall quality. The development of singing skills and artistic literacy is an important factor in promoting the overall quality of students.

## 5.2. Reasonable Arrangement and Combination of Chinese Art Songs in Vocal Music Teaching

Chinese art songs occupy a pivotal position in the teaching of vocal literature. At present, English teachers in China's colleges and universities are paying more and more attention to the learning and singing of Chinese art songs, but there are still unreasonable problems in the selection and combination of certain learning songs, thus affecting their use in the teaching of vocal literature. The teaching of Chinese art songs should be open and comprehensive, so the basic knowledge and skills of Chinese art songs should be fully considered in the selection of materials to enable students to better grasp Chinese art through scientific comparison. The knowledge of literature, aesthetics and linguistics behind the songs provides the overall teaching of Chinese art songs. In the specific training, the teaching of Chinese art songs should be strengthened, attention should be paid to the singing of Chinese art songs, the technical and artistic quality of Chinese art songs should be ensured in the learning content, and the curriculum. In the teaching practice, songs with appropriate range, timbre and control should be chosen according to the students' individuality and characteristics, so that students can better feel the rhythmic beauty of the music. In addition, Chinese songs are difficult to pronounce, some are sung in dialect, some are modern songs, and some are difficult, which discourage some students. Therefore, the teacher should proofread the selected songs and pick the right piece for their range and ability.

## 5.3. Strengthening the Development and Utilization of Teaching Resources for Chinese Art Songs

To sing Chinese art songs well, we must start from various aspects such as creation background, cultural connotation and artistic aesthetics, which requires the comprehensive quality of teachers. Teachers should not only have better vocal singing skills, but also have deep cultural heritage; they should have a comprehensive understanding of the connotations of ancient Chinese poetry and a certain knowledge of national literature. For this reason, the comprehensive training of vocal teachers should be strengthened to continuously improve their professionalism so that they can better teach original Chinese songs.

In order to better understand the value of Chinese songs, we should also focus on the development of Chinese art song materials, and we should do a thorough study of Chinese music teaching in terms of singing style, difficulty, composers, and repertoire, and we should do a good job of promoting songs and art songs. Also, traditional textbooks can be used for the development of new teaching materials. In response to market needs, the advantages of popular music and art songs are combined to achieve a multi-level and multi-faceted development of Chinese art song materials and to promote vocal literature education in Chinese universities.

## 5.4. Proper Guidance for Students to Learn Chinese Art Songs

Students are the main component of Chinese art songs, so it is important to pay attention to the correct guidance of

Chinese art songs in the teaching process. Everyone's character is different, and different students have differences in range, timbre, character, and personality. Chinese art songs are a kind of music with great national characteristics and vernacular colors. Therefore, students need to work together in the classroom. Targeted training for the characteristics of the songs, breaking the single mode of learning, improving the flexibility of teaching methods, and applying the essence of Chinese art songs to high quality according to the material.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary for us to combine Chinese art songs with vocal literature teaching in colleges and universities, which has positive effects in many aspects. In practice, teachers, schools and students should take the initiative to combine Chinese art songs with vocal education and actively learn, master and apply them, which is important to improve the quality and teaching level of vocal music in colleges and universities.

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