

Enriching the Charm of Folk Songs with Multi part Forms: A Practical Exploration of the Creation of Multi part Chorus of Qiang Folk Songs

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Abstract: The Qiang ethnic group is a long-standing ethnic group in China, and its historical changes, religious beliefs, customs, and customs have great research value. Qiang folk songs are a vivid display of their ethnic customs and living customs. Qiang folk songs have a rich flavor and diverse forms, including love songs, labor songs, mountain songs, wine songs, and other types. Folk song choir is an important way to inherit and promote Qiang folk songs. This article introduces the types of Qiang folk songs and creates a multi part choir to enrich the charm of folk songs with multi tone sound, in order to enable more music enthusiasts to understand Qiang folk songs and culture.

Keywords: Qiang Ethnic Group; Qiang Folk Songs; Choral Creation.

1. Introduction

The Chinese nation is mainly composed of 56 ethnic minorities, each of which has its own culture, and various cultures together showcase the diverse ethnic cultures of the Chinese nation. Folk songs are music and culture that showcase the unique characteristics of various ethnic groups. Qiang folk songs are one of the oldest folk songs in China, with a cultural history of over a thousand years. Qiang folk songs are primitive and simple, reflecting unique ethnic characteristics in terms of lyrics, singing style, and expression forms. This article introduces the types of Qiang folk songs and creates a multi part choir to enrich the charm of folk songs with multi tone sound, in order to enable more music enthusiasts to understand Qiang folk songs and culture.

2. Introduction to the Qiang Ethnic Group

The Qiang ethnic group is a long-standing ethnic group in the Chinese ethnic family. According to the oracle bone inscriptions of the Yin Dynasty, there were activities of the ancient Qiang people as early as 3000 years ago. According to research, some Neolithic cultures in the Gansu Qinghai region of northwest China may be related to the ancient Qiang people. According to historical records since the Qin and Han dynasties, during the Yin and Zhou dynasties, the ancient Qiang people lived in the vast northwest and central plains of China. During the Qin and Han dynasties, there was a nomadic lifestyle in the areas of the Yellow River, Huangshui, and the upper reaches of the Minjiang River, where people lived in pursuit of water and grass. (Therefore, to this day, the Qiang people still call themselves "Erma" or "Erqian", and the Qiang characters refer to sheep as herders.). At this time, the Qiang people had already had much contact and interaction with the Han people. At the time of Emperor Wu of Han, the upper reaches of the Minjiang River were renamed as "Ran" and the Qiang people of the "Ran" tribe were included in the rule of the Han Dynasty, establishing the "Wenshan County". Afterwards, during the long historical process, some ancient

Qiang people settled in the Central Plains and gradually merged with the Han people; A portion of the ancient Qiang people migrated to the Qinghai Tibet Plateau and merged with the local indigenous people, gradually developing into certain ethnic groups of the Tibetan Burmese language family in China. One of them, the Qiang people of today, migrated to the upper reaches of the Minjiang River in a continuous stream. Currently, they mainly reside in Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, upstream of the Minjiang River. Here, there are towering peaks, steep mountains, turbulent water flow, dangerous traffic, and frequent disasters. The Qiang ethnic group has lived for generations on the steep mountainside or hilly plateau, mainly engaged in agricultural production and also engaged in animal husbandry and other activities. The Qiang ethnic group has no written language and belongs to the Qiang branch of the Tibetan Burmese language family in the Sino Tibetan language family. In the past, due to high mountains and deep ditches, traffic was blocked, and each township and village often had their own local language, which was not smooth for each other. In areas along highways and bordering the Han ethnic group, Chinese is generally understood, and local Qiang language is only used in remote mountainous areas.

The Qiang ethnic group usually consists of thirty to fifty households living in a village, mainly in high mountains, mid mountains, and mountainside terraces, hence it is called a mountain village. The flat roof of the house is square in plan and made of fragments of mountain stones, with a unique architectural style. There are two types of residential buildings: three floors and two floors, both of which use sawn staircases made of single wood to go up and down. Three layers, with livestock raised in captivity in the lower layer, weeds piled up, and manure composted; Middle level residents, in addition to bedrooms and storage rooms, also have pot piles (kang stoves), etc; The upper layer stores grain and miscellaneous items. On the second floor, people live downstairs, while upstairs they store grain and pile up debris, and livestock pens are set up separately. In addition to most of the Qiang people's villages being built on mid or high mountains, there are also sturdy stone "Qiong cages" (stone

watchtowers) that can reach tens of meters high, used to store food and defend against enemy attacks. The large number of stone watchtowers can be considered the world's greatest. The residential center is a pot pile, also known as a fire pond, with an iron or copper tripod on top for cooking and drinking. Above the pot pile is a place for worshipping ancestors, where family gatherings, dining, festival music and dance, reception of guests, and ancestor worship are all around the pot pile.

3. Types of Qiang Folk Songs

Qiang folk songs have an ancient and long-standing tradition, covering from ancient legends to today's social life. They have great significance in all aspects of Qiang people's social life. Qiang folk songs are mainly divided into five types.

3.1. Love Song

Love songs are songs used by young Qiang men and women to express their admiration for each other during social activities, known as "Tiaoxi" in Qiang language. Representative songs include "Hua'er Naji", "Lang Xiangmei Laimei Xianglang", "Qibu Xiaomei", and so on. According to Qiang customs, young men and women cannot have romantic conversations at home. When searching for a partner, one should take advantage of outdoor field work or holiday evenings, freely sing and talk to each other at mutually agreed locations, under trees or by the pond, confide in each other's hearts, and understand each other's hearts.

Hua er na ji



Figure 1. Hua er Na ji

The above example "Hua'er Naji" is a pentatonic mode with a D-sign, changing the beat, and the song structure is irregular, not a square whole sentence. The clever use of eight six beats and eight five beats in the song enhances the rhythm of the song by constantly changing the beat; The song also uses segmented rhythm multiple times, further enhancing the rhythm and hierarchy of the music, reflecting the progressive emotional expression of young Qiang men and women towards their admirers.

3.2. Mountain Song

Mountain songs are songs sung by the Qiang people who live in deep mountains and forests all year round during their labor or spare time, and are called "Nala" or "Lasuo" in language. According to content and form, it can be divided into two types: labor folk songs and lyrical folk songs, which are mostly sung in labor occasions or in the mountains and fields. Representative songs include "Farmland Folk Songs" and "Helnagi", which are widely circulated, numerous in quantity, diverse in style, and have a relatively free beat. Composed of two or four phrases, some with a beginning or ending line, forming three or five phrases. People usually sing whatever work they do, such as the "Niushan Song" when driving cows and plowing land, and the "Wheat Cutting Song" when cutting wheat. The singing forms include solo and duet.

Shou ge shan ge



Figure 2. Shou geshan ge

The above example of 'Harvest Mountain Song' is a D-sign pentatonic mountain song in four or three beats. It can be divided into two musical phrases, most of which have a long rhythm. The melody of the song is short and simple, with a focus on progression. The melody is strong and catchy. The first sentence, bars 1-8, revolves around the palace sound as a whole, and finally returns to the palace sound; The second part of the rhythm is refined and more dense, focusing on the gradual progression of Shang Yin. Later, it jumps from Yu Yin to Shang Yin, and finally the overall melody line descends back to Zheng Yin. The overall melody is cheerful, reflecting the joyful and joyful mood of the Qiang people during harvest.

3.3. Folk Songs

Folk songs mainly refer to folk songs that reflect folk customs and etiquette during sacrifices, funerals, and wedding wishes. Sacrificial folk songs are sung by religious professionals known as "Duan Gong", with a simple melody and a combination of rhyme and allegro, similar to rap music. Funeral Requiem Song is a mournful song sung during the funeral after the death of an elderly person. The melody is simple and dull, or sung in tears, and the content is mostly about funeral etiquette and longing for the deceased. Wedding wish songs, also known as festive songs, are mostly composed of auspicious and wishing words. The main recorded folk songs now include "Jinong Jisha", "Val Ozu", "Wedding Song", "Funeral Song", "Etiquette Song", and "War Song", all of which are mainly sacrificial songs and dances for the gods of heaven and mountain. Representative songs include "Singing Happiness", "Thank You Song", "Praising Qiang Village", etc. Most of these songs are improvised lyrics, sung in the same melody, with free rhythm and a gentle melody at the end of the sentence, monotonous and simple.

Song fu ge



Figure 3. song fu ge

The above example "Song of Sending Happiness" is a folk song in the six tone mode of E Yu, with a change in beat. In the song, clever use of changing beats and "long and short" rhythm types is used to enhance the rhythm and dynamism of the music. The song can be divided into three parts. The first part of sections 1-10 starts with Gongyin and mainly focuses on jumping in. The melody develops around Shangyin and ends with Yuyin; The second part, sections 11-19, developed from the first part, and the overall melody backbone tone did

not change, but began to revolve around the palace tone; The overall melody line of the third part, sections 20-27, is carried out downwards, mostly based on the tones of the first and second parts, with changes and repeated development, continuously expressing the emotion of blessing the people. The main idea of the lyrics of this song is: Respected master, sing! We have brought the blessings of the goddess to drive away evil spirits and diseases, and to bless you with the prosperity of the six beasts and a bountiful harvest of grain.

3.4. Wine Song

The marriage, funeral, celebration, festivals, and hospitality of the Qiang people are inseparable from drinking Zaji, and the song of drinking is accompanied by drinking Zaji. There are certain rules for drinking Zaji. The Zaji altar is placed under the altar or above the fire pit, and the old man solemnly recites the "opening words" first. After opening the seal of the Zaji jar, the elder dips in the wine and sprinkles it in all directions to show respect to the gods of heaven and earth. Then, several bamboo tubes are inserted on the Zaji jar, and the elder takes the first sip (if there are distinguished guests, please invite them to take the first sip). Then, each person takes a sip of Zaji according to their generation and age, and starts toasting each other. Sing wine songs while drinking. Wine songs can be sung in unison, duet, or solo. When singing, the subject and guest sit side by side, with a slow rhythm and beautiful melody, a high pitched voice, and a graceful and elegant melody, possessing an elegant and simple style. There are two main types of representative songs in wine songs. One type is sung by toasters to guests or elders, such as toast songs and persuasion songs. These types of wine songs have a short structure of mostly three to five phrases, clear clauses, strong melody, and regular rhythm. The other type is the duet and carol singing of Qiang people during drinking. At this time, people often feel slightly intoxicated and the song is lively. The wine songs they sing are improvisational, with a gentle and free rhythm, slower speed, and a smooth and smooth melody.

The use of wine songs is very extensive. According to the different singing occasions, they can be divided into five categories: wedding wine songs, festival wine songs, birthday wine songs, welcome and send off wine songs, and other wine songs. Common songs include "Xiyalasha", "Backing Yousha", and "Wine, Drinking from Cup to Cup".

Xi ya la sa

Figure 4. Xi ya la sa

The above example "Xiyalasha" is a G emblem five tone wine song, with a fourth and second beat. The song structure is irregular, and the length of the lines varies, with mostly five bars as one sentence or eight bars as one sentence. The

melody of the song is mainly progressive, supplemented by small jumps in the melody, which enhances the melody and flow of the song. The use of segmented rhythm in the rhythm further enhances the rhythm of the melody. At the same time, long notes are often used at the end of the sentences in the song, reflecting the respect of the Qiang people towards their families.

3.5. Labor Song

The agriculture of the Qiang ethnic group is mainly based on planting barley, wheat, corn, and potatoes, with labor methods similar to those in the Han mountainous areas of Sichuan. There are corresponding songs for various production processes, including plowing, digging, planting, weeding, composting, harvesting, and threshing. In addition, there are songs accompanying labor such as chopping firewood, carrying goods (i.e. carrying baskets), and repairing houses. These folk songs that accompany labor are called "Zhibule Jiamu" in Qiang language.

The lyrics of "Zhi Bu Le Jia Mu" are mostly related to labor and have the function of calling on people to work and inspiring labor emotions, truly reflecting the labor and production situation of the Qiang ethnic group. The lyrics are simple and often contain vocative or vocative phrases. The lyrics have a short structure, and the rhythm and melody are influenced by outdoor labor methods. They have a simple and rough style of mountain songs, with lyrics such as "cough, le, yo, dahi, oh, luo" often used as interludes. Representative songs include "The Song of Plowing the Land", "The Song of Harvesting", "The Song of Weeping the Grass", "The Song of Tearing [Corn Peels](#)", "The Song of Fighting", "The Song of Picking Firewood", "The Song of Beating the House and Backing", and so on. Some have free beats, similar to folk songs, while others have regular beats, similar to dance music. Labor songs have forms such as solo singing, chorus singing, and double line duets with the same lyrics and songs.

Da qing ke ge

Figure 5. Da qing ke ge

The above example "Da Qing Nu Ge" is a labor song in the G symbol pentatonic mode, with a fourth and second beat. The melody characteristics of the song are obvious and can be divided into three parts. The first part, bars 1-5, starts with palace notes and is supplemented by progressive melodies, developing wavy melodic lines around palace notes; The second part 6-12 starts with Shang Yin and repeats homophones, with a stable overall melody that reflects the neat and uniform movements of the Qiang working people during their work. Later, the overall melody advances towards the lower level and returns to the symbolic sound. The overall melody development of the song is mostly progressive and homophonic, which enhances the appeal and narrative of the song, reflecting the vigorous work of the Qiang people.

4. Discussion on the Process of Chorus Creation

Chorus is a highly expressive and infectious form of music

performance, and its creation process involves structural analysis, harmony design, texture design, voice writing, audition modification, and other links.

4.1. Structural Analysis

The preparation work before creating a choir first determines the structure of the created work and the proposed music structure. In terms of musical structure, folk songs are often in the form of one paragraph, two paragraph, etc. The structure of choir creation needs to be adjusted according to the requirements of the work and the performance needs. If the original work is in a single verse, it can be designed as a variation form during choir creation, or a reproduction of a single trilogy or a rondo form.

4.2. Harmony Design

Harmony design is one of the most important parts in choir creation. It is necessary to design appropriate chord structures, the relationship between the main melody and accompaniment, and how to handle conflicts. When designing harmony, it is necessary to follow the laws and principles of music creation, combine the emotions and artistic conception of the song, and create a rich and diverse sound effect. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to the harmony and unity between the various vocal parts to avoid situations that are too abrupt or chaotic.

4.3. Fabric Design

Fabric is one of the structural forms of music. Choosing the appropriate fabric based on the work can more fully express the inner essence of the work. In multi part music, it is divided into two categories: polyphonic music and tonic music. The characteristic of polyphonic music texture is the simultaneous combination of several melodic parts, each of which has equal importance. Polyphony mainly includes two types: imitative polyphony and contrastive polyphony. The main choral texture is mainly composed of one voice part (usually the melodic voice part), while the others are used as accompaniment, distinguishing between two levels of texture: melody and accompaniment. The most typical choral texture of the main tone is the same rhythm choral texture, which also includes textures such as melody and background, melody and accompaniment. The design of fabrics in choir creation needs to be arranged in conjunction with the needs of music.

4.4. Voice Writing

After analyzing the structure of the work and designing the harmony texture, we began to write the voice part. Among them, selecting appropriate vocal forms through specific works, setting the roles and tasks of each vocal part, determining the collaboration between vocal parts, and setting the trajectory of vocal movement can effectively enhance the effectiveness of choir singing. Each voice part should assume corresponding roles and tasks according to its characteristics, such as lead singer, accompanist, etc. The collaboration between vocal parts is the key to the success of choral singing, and reasonable combinations should be made according to the needs of the work. In addition, by setting the trajectory of vocal movements, the overall and dynamic nature of the choir can be enhanced.

4.5. Trial Singing Modification

The final draft of the work is formed through preliminary rehearsals and singing to explore the shortcomings and even

the sublimation of the work, and to modify and improve the work.

5. The Practice of Multi tone Creation of Qiang Folk Song "Qieche"

The Qiang folk song 'Cheqie' was originally a two-part form, written in the main tone texture during the creation process. The form structure is a complex two-part form of introduction+A+B+A+C. The choir is composed of a four-part mixed chorus. The entire song first presents the theme of the song with a lead singer, followed by four voice parts of accompaniment as the introduction of this song. The lead singer freely plays the lead singer, and the long notes in the accompaniment part have rich and strong tension, while giving the introduction part the unique style of mountain songs.

Qie qie qie

Xiang jiajie

Figure 6. Qie qie qie

The main melody of Part A (25-56) falls on the soprano and contralto parts, highlighting the characteristics of mountain songs once again. The tenor and bass parts serve as rhythmic and decorative accompaniment parts, using cheerful rhythms to highlight the overall cheerful emotions of the soprano and contralto parts. The first and second sentences of this section contrast and change in intensity, while laying the foundation for entering Section B.

A Allegretto

Figure 7. Qie qie qie

The B section (57-92) uses Canon's creative technique to repeatedly present the music theme in different parts,

highlighting not only the sense of hierarchy and depth of the music, making the rhythm of the music more distinct, but also making the music more tense and dynamic. Moreover, the rotation between parts makes it easier for the listener to feel the emotions and atmosphere expressed by the music. The C segment reproduces the original A segment, presenting the theme again.

Subsequently, the ending section D of this song presents a faster and emotional contrast with the previous one. It starts with a male and female voice duet imitating dialogue, creating a festive atmosphere. Then, rhythmic rap is used as a connection for the four part mixed choir. Finally, the whole song is completed with the four part mixed choir to elevate emotions in a joyful atmosphere.

6. Conclusion

Qiang folk songs are an indispensable part of China's ethnic minority culture. With the impact of various cultures and the difficulty in recording Qiang folk songs, the loss of transmission has affected the protection and inheritance of Qiang folk songs. The creation of Qiang folk song choirs is not only a new way to deeply explore Qiang folk song culture, but also a new way to inherit and promote it. It can bring Qiang folk songs into the public's view, let more people understand Qiang folk songs, and is conducive to the protection and inheritance of Qiang folk songs.

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