

Analysis of Regional Genres of Yu Opera and Its Musical Characteristics

Yinuo Zhao

Music and Dance, college of art, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua City, Zhejiang Province, 321000, China

Abstract: Yu Opera was produced in the central part of China--Henan Province, which is mainly in plains and has a favorable climate, and has been an area with abundant produce and good economic development since ancient times, therefore, opera and music flourished here in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and the most representative type of opera is Yu Opera, which is very popular in Henan Province, and has been spread to different places. In Henan Province, Yu opera is very popular and has been spread to different places, combining with different local music to form different genres of Yu opera and different musical features, each of which has its own characteristics and has been developed to different degrees, this paper will take this as the basis to analyze the genres of Yu opera music and its musical features.

Keywords: Yu Opera; Musical Genres; Singing Characteristics; Artistic Features.

1. History of Yu Opera Music

Yu Opera, also known as “Henan Bang Opera”, is a type of opera belonging to the Bang Opera family, which can also be called Tu Bang Opera. It is a famous Chinese opera genre, famous for its boldness and roughness, simple humor, we can not accurately know when and where it arose, but only to explore its initial written records, was in 1745, the Qianlong years of revision of the “Qixian County Records,” which the “Customs” of the “customs” recorded, “fools, fools and fools, more than good ghosts and wizards, burn incense and stand up to the Buddha, but also good dating play.” Can be seen, in the Qianlong period, or earlier nodes of time, in Qixian County, this place has been “bang opera” is loved. This “bang opera” is very likely to be “Henan opera”.

From the 1930s, some researchers have begun to Henan opera that Yu opera to explore the origins. Scholars do not agree, some believe that the Yu opera is derived from the East Road Qinjiang, the birthplace is located in Shaanxi; some believe that the Yu opera was produced in Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi intersection of the triangle, and then spread to all parts of the world. Some believe that Yu opera was born in the triangle where Henan, Jin and Shaanxi meet, and then spread to other places. The saying that Yu opera was born in the triangle where Henan, Jin and Shaanxi meet is in fact a kind of “west to say” for Yu opera, and this saying is supported by more scholars.

With the Xinhai Revolution, the New Democratic Revolution and the New Culture Movement, Yu Opera began a powerful change. 1914, Yu Opera began to enter the tea garden performances, which opened the history of the development of Yu Opera, the stage from the countryside to the expansion of the prelude to the city theater. In 1918 and 1919, the “New Voice Society” and the “Youth Society” were established in Kaifeng, publishing periodicals such as “Heartbeat Magazine” and “Youth”, advocating a “new culture” and a “new culture”. They published periodicals such as “Heart's Voice Magazine” and “Youth”, advocating the ideological concepts of “new culture” and “new morality”, and adapting to the times. The vigorous development of these movements pushed forward the reform of Yu Opera. Since most of the Yu operas faced peasants, when expressing the

characters, they often adopted the way peasants treated dealing with things in their daily lives, and the words and deeds of the emperors would be expressed in a peasants' way. In the early days, the acting and singing in certain Yu operas did not grasp the degree of characterization and closeness to the people's lives, making Yu operas quite vulgar. But after the Yu opera entered the city, a brand new cultural atmosphere came, the Yu opera began to learn to absorb the new culture, and the original vulgar components divested, and gradually to the opera art of the more good purity and aesthetics closer.

The invasion of Japanese imperialism broke the change and development of Yu opera. During the years of war and chaos, many theaters as well as related contents and facilities were destroyed in the war, a large number of Yu Opera classes and societies disintegrated, and actors were displaced. However, in the liberated areas, some troupes and societies were established, and a series of opera reform activities were carried out, with some revolutionary elements added to enrich the repertoire as well as the ideological content of Yu opera.

After the founding of New China, under the influence of the government, the organization was established and three reform campaigns were carried out - to change the people, to change the system and to change the plays. To change people means to change the old ideas of some opera artists and establish new ones; to change the system means to abolish all the feudal systems in the old opera troupe and re-establish the democratic troupe system; to change the theater is the landing point of the three reforms to make all the performances of the repertoire have healthy ideas, beautiful forms, and conform to the environment of China's new atmosphere and to the aesthetic needs of the general public.

The drama reform is the largest and most effective drama reform in the history of Yu Opera, so that Yu Opera has a brand new look. 1952, the Henan Provincial Opera Troupe was established, in the creation of modern opera music and singing has made outstanding contributions. Soon after its establishment, it performed such plays as “New Conditions” and “Luo Han Qian”, which already had the artistic form of Yu opera's modern opera. The performance of “Xiao Er Hei Marriage” in 1953 made a major breakthrough in the expression of modern life and the dramatization of modern themes, and Xiao Qin, the main character of the play, was

warmly welcomed by the audience because of her subtle role modeling. The Henan Provincial Henan Opera Theatre was established in March 1956, which made the Henan opera have a provincial level. Henan Yu Opera had a provincial-level troupe, which was a historic moment in the development of Yu Opera. For a long time, Henan Henan Yu Opera Troupe has been engaged in staging modern operas, and has become a “red flag troupe” in staging modern operas in the whole country, which has gained great fame.

In the 1980s and 1990s of the twentieth century, the third large-scale reform of Yu opera took place. At this time, the spring breeze of reform blew to every corner of the earth, and people's long-barred thoughts were finally liberated. After the confinement of thought was lifted, the demand for opera suddenly swelled to a great extent. The demand for all kinds of operas increased day by day, and where there were operas, there would be audiences flocking to them. The Yu Opera also needed to prepare itself for the high expectations of the audience. In order to adapt to the audience's ever-changing aesthetic psychology, creators of Yu opera strive to strengthen the rhythm of the drama, improve the singing and performance style of Yu opera, and strive to make Yu opera in tune with the times. At the same time, strengthening psychological portrayal was also an important goal of the reform of Yu opera. During this period, the creation of Yu opera tried to abbreviate the course of events and portrayed the psychology of the characters as a big change. The Golden Beach performed by Henan Henan Yu Opera Troupe reflects this feature very well. Riding on the wind of reform and improving the opera in the era of reform, the artistic level of Yu opera has been qualitatively improved. And in today's society, the era still throws problems to the reform of opera constantly. Keeping the characteristics and following the innovation of the times are the important requirements for realizing the development of Yu opera.

2. Yu Opera Music Genres

Due to the differences in speech and the influence of local folk music, Yu Opera has formed different musical styles with regional characteristics in the course of its development. It is subdivided into four regional genres: First, Yu Dongtong, a branch of Yu opera centered in Shangqiu, which has an extremely close relationship with Shandong Bangkas (high-pitched bangkas). The traditional repertoire is basically the same, and the singing style is mostly changed from Da Ben Cavity (real voice) to Er Ben Cavity (fake voice). It is also known as “Lower Road Tuning” or “East Road Tuning”; the second one is “West Yu Tuning”, which is also known as “Xifu Tuning” in Luoyang, Zhengzhou, etc. It is slightly Qin style, pleasant to the ear and clear in spitting; the third one is “Fuxiang School”, which is based in Kaifeng. Fuxiang faction, centered in Kaifeng, is the standard Zhongzhou rhyme, style rude, high-pitched, exciting, euphemistic and bright; four is Shahe tune, formed in Henan Shahe generation, in Luohe, Zhoukou and other cities, it is also known as the Henan faction, lively and gentle, exciting and loud and clear, and the people of Anhui Province called the “Bang Bang Theatre”. These four Yu Opera schools are “Henan Opera” spread throughout Henan, with the local music structure integration, resulting in a distinctive Yu Opera schools, the next will be introduced to the musical characteristics of each school.

2.1. The Yu Dong Tune and its Musical Characteristics

The formation of Yudong tune has a close relationship with the language, culture, living environment and customs of Shangqiu and the surrounding areas. It is rooted in the flat and vast wilderness of Yudong, which fully reflects the breadth of this land, and the people living on this land are industrious and kind-hearted, plain and simple, with a broad mind, and speak with a thick voice and a large volume of volume, which is extremely infectious. The singing style of Yudong Tunes is in line with this kind of rude and bold folk style, showing a kind of bright and bright colors and characteristics.

Due to the influence of the Northern Quartet, Yudong Tuning has the most extensive use of the levistic mode. The range it uses is E-flat, and the falling tone is mostly on “sol”, which is also known as “upper five tones”. In terms of the composition of the tune, the Yudong tune often adopts a seven-tone scale with a five-tone framework, with “sol---si---rel” as the backbone. It also establishes a tonal singing style in which the levitation is the main tone. In terms of accompaniment, no matter what the accompanying instrument is, the ending note basically falls on “5”. So no matter from the point of view of tuning, or from the point of view of accompanying instruments, Yudong Tuning is a typical Zheng tuning.

Yudong tunes have always been singing to excel, a popular saying in the industry called “a cavity to cover up a hundred ugly”, fully reflecting the importance of Yudong tunes on the degree of singing and the actors to have a solid singing skills. Yudong tune actors not only can sing and good singing, they are in the long-term performance practice, get the exercise and improve, not only can sing well, and high skill. The male voice is tough, upright and high, and it is a form of singing with “shouting” in the big voice; the female voice is high-pitched and delicate, with more florid accent, and it mostly uses the fake voice in the traditional singing process. The singing style of Yudong Tunes is mainly based on the voice of Shangqiu area, and the voice is loud and bright and likes to put the final sound on the “go sound” when speaking. The music of Yudong Tunes also integrates the local folklore and local dialect of Yudong, therefore, its singing is characterized by the main tone of “5”.

In opera singing, it is important to pay attention to the spitting and biting of words. The lyrics and word sounds of Yudong tune are based on the standard sound of Yudong local language, so it is very important to pronounce the dialectal tones accurately. According to the characteristics of the tone, tone and intonation of Yudong dialect, Yu Opera has formed the unique sound value of yinping to go high, yangping to go low, and de-voicing to go low with a twist of the sound characteristics. Secondly, it is necessary to pay attention to distinguish the sharp tones, such as “Zhizi, Shishi, Ruoxi”, etc., when singing, the biting words are not the same sharp tones. Similarly, we should pay attention to the singing of the mouth skills, in the mouth to accurately grasp the word “focus point” mainly refers to the throat, tongue, teeth, lips and other parts of the breath combination, coordinated force, so that the word rush, powerful outbreak.

Yudong tune also has many famous performers, there is a generation of Yudong tune master Tang Yucheng, known as “Yudong red face king”, “Yu opera unicorn child”. His singing style is unique, combining true and false voices, strong and soft, with a thick and simple tone. He is especially

good at stealing words, embedding words, flashing boards, and other clever singing methods that make people sound both rough and bold, but also intriguing. Li Sizhong, the famous “black face” actor of Yu Opera, is one of the main representatives of Yu Dongtong, whose voice is bright and resonant. In terms of singing style, he draws on a wide range of techniques from other singing styles to enrich his own singing experience.

2.2. Yu Xi Tune and its Musical Characteristics

The voice of the traditional Yuxi tune is based on the sound and tone of the western region of Henan, which is centered on Luoyang, and the end of the voice is more downward and roundabout. The singing cavity is mostly used for the big voice, and its vocal method is mostly used for the back-of-the-head and rifled voice, which is the biggest characteristic of the singing cavity different from that of the “East Yu Tune”. The rhythm of the singing is directed by the drummer, and the clappers are used to control the beat and the eyes of the singing; the general repertoire has more singing and less recitation, and the singing is steady and generous, with delicate and implicit feelings, subdued and staccato, and the use of weeping is more suitable for the performance of tragedy, especially those big fluttering accents in the traditional “Yuxi Tunes”, which are delicate and graceful.” The backbone of the singing structure of “Yuxi Tunes” consists of several tones, such as do, re and sol, and the melody is often carried out between dol, mi, sol, la (soprano) and do, which is called “lower five tones”; the basic melodic line of the tunes is the direction of the melody, which is mostly downward; the syntactic structure is generally a board, usually with a pair of The syntactic structure is usually a pair of upper and lower sentences constituting a paragraph, with the upper sentence falling more freely and the lower sentence falling more often in do; the modal structure of “Yuxi Tuning” belongs to the E-flat mode. These are the main features of the Yuxi vocal cadence.

Yuxi tune is mostly based on folk stories, the people's life is the source of opera, but also will return to life, Yuxi tune in the accompaniment of gongs and drums, silk strings, singing more, reading less, the scene is lively, mostly full of the stage to go twisting and jumping, is the work of the public after work, the main recreation of the life during the holidays. And Yuxi tune from folk stories, real and believable, and people's lives are closely related to the form of simple and rustic performances, stage image close to the actual farmers, in line with the taste of the working masses.

“After many improvements and innovations by the artists, the main schools named after individuals are: the Chang School represented by Chang Xiangyu, the Ma School represented by Ma Jinfeng, and the Cui School represented by Cui Lantian, who are the five famous dancers of Yu Opera, and have played an irreplaceable role in the maturity and development of the Yu West Tunes. The first and foremost is teacher Chang Xiangyu, a Yu opera performing artist, who is an innovator of Yu opera as well as an innovative composer of Yu opera, and has successfully portrayed excellent plays such as *Mulan*, *Cuffing the Reds*, *The Legend of the White Snake*, *Chaoyang Gully*, and *Li Shuangshuang*, which has pushed the singing of Yu opera to a new stage. Teacher Ma Jinfeng, still in her 80s, is still in command on stage, representing plays such as “*Mu Guiying in Command*” and “*Flower Fighting Dynasty*”, etc. Her singing voice is clean and bright, mellow and clear, with a soft tone, and she

combines the use of false voices with true and false voices to form the unique artistic style of “Ma School”, which is known as the “True National Color” of “Luo Opera”. “Cui Lantian is also a member of the “Luoyang Peony”. Cui Lantian is also a famous master of the “West Yu Tune”. Her singing style is mainly based on the “lower five tones”, and she combines the tones of the Qinqiang, Qu Opera, Peking Opera, Kun Opera, and Hebei Opera, forming an artistic style with rich melodies, nasal resonance, and a wide range of tones, and her masterpieces include *Qin Xianglian*, *Peach Blossom Nunnery*, *Miaolang for Sale*, and *Three on a Sedan Chair*, which is called the “Cui School”. His masterpieces include “*Qin Xianglian*”, “*Peach Blossom Nun*”, “*Selling Miao Lang*” and “*Three Sedan Chair*”, which are known as the four tragedies of the “Cui School”, and are the outstanding representatives of the excellent repertoire of the western Yu tune.

2.3. Xiangfu Tune and its Musical Characteristics

“Xiangfu tune” is known as the ‘mother tune’ of Yu opera. Like other Yu opera genres, ‘Xiangfu tune’ has been a genre that attaches great importance to singing since the beginning of its development. In the singing, the combination of true and false voices is often used. It can be found from many “Xiangfu Tunes” repertoire that Xiangfu Tunes are better at singing melodies in the middle register, in which “do” and “sol” have the highest frequency, and are found in many of the “Xiangfu Tunes” repertoire. Xiangfu tune repertoire in the end of the section, most of the end in the “sol”, Xiangfu tune selection of the combination of true and false voices to make up for the perfect combination of the real voice of the characteristics of low, heavy, so as to be more close to the aesthetic characteristics of the middle range. People can feel unprecedented peace and comfort in the process of appreciation, which is also one of the most important features of Xiangfu tune. “Xiangfu tune” more often used plate style, that is, [two eight plate], [running water plate] and [slow plate]. The choice of these three patterns is also determined by the musical style of Xiangfu Tunes. Singing and acting are both important to “Xiangfu tune” since its development has been adhering to the concept, and this fine tradition has laid a solid foundation for the development of Yu opera. The most important feature of the performance of “Xiangfu Tunes” is that it attaches great importance to the details of the performance, such as the treatment of the eyes, hand movements and precise facial expressions during the performance. Unlike the exaggerated and atmospheric performances of many local opera genres, it is often the changes in such details that better reflect the attainments of the opera actors and attract the audience's attention, so that the audience, while enjoying the music of the opera and experiencing the beauty of the art of singing, is also able to watch the plot and the treatment of the characters with great concentration and interest. Yan Lipin, a famous “Xiangfu Tune” artist teacher, is a master who pays great attention to the details of her performances. Before each performance, she carefully studies the characteristics and psychology of the characters, and then elaborately designs and presents her performances, striving to portray each character in a more detailed way in her repeated thinking and pondering. Ms. Chen Suzhen, the founder of the “Chen School of Art”, also performs with beautiful postures and vivid facial expressions. Throughout the performance of the “Xiangfu tune” artists, regardless of the style, are inseparable from the Xiangfu tune

subtle, elegant features, and these predecessors and masters of the serious attitude towards the performance, but also become the Xiangfu tune heritage in the fine traditions, and become an example for future generations to learn.

2.4. Shahe Tune and its Musical Features

“Shahe tune” less information exists, the degree of circulation is not as good as the other three schools, in the music of smooth tunes, rhythmic distinctive, soft and smooth literary field, martial arts field blazing strong, bold and exciting art style. From the “xiangfu tune”, “yudong tune”, “shahe tune” singing style, these regional branches of the style difference is not very big, geography, politics, economic conditions are generally similar. These three regional branches of the singing melody, mainly in the “徵羽宫商角”, more upward marching, the main tone falls on the “徵”, commonly known as “on the five notes. The lyrics are easy to understand, mostly seven-character sentences or cross sentences, and there are also five-character, six-character, eight-character, nine-character and even more than ten-character sentences. The word pattern is mostly “two, two, three” for seven-character sentences and “three, three, four” for cross sentences, which can be used flexibly when there are works. In terms of the board style, “Shahe Tunes” has a unique board structure, forming four major board styles, such as [two-eight boards], [flowing boards], [slow boards], and [flying boards]. The singing of “Shahe Tunes” is in the same key for both men and women, and all of them are in the seven-tone levy mode. In the melodic process, it is mostly upward to introduce the main tone, which is one of the important factors constituting the melodic characteristics of “Shahe Tunes”. The accompanying instruments are made of high clappers, which are often made of sandalwood or jujube wood and have a resounding and clear sound.

In the role of the line, the roles of Sheng and Dan sing in high tones, mostly using the “upper five tones”, and because men and women sing in the same tone in the same cavity, the male voice has to use the “second voice” as the main voice, and the voice of Sheng's line is generally more slender, while the melody of Jingsheng's line is generally around the main tone, which is called the melodic character of Shahe tune. Generally speaking, the voice of the male voice has to use the “two-born voice” when singing high notes. Generally speaking, the voice of the male voice is more slender, while the melody sung by the pure line character is generally around the main voice, which is called “face cavity”, and the voice combines true and false voices. Sheng and Dan roles use the big voice when they sing the “rolling white” crying voice. It seems to have the flavor of cold rhyme, with thick, sad and deep characteristics.

In the 1940s, the development of Shahe tune was at its peak, and the people in the fields were able to sing a few phrases of the red-faced and black-faced clapper clapper - a very distinctive singing style. The farmers around Shahe liked its rough and bold performance and its concise and exaggerated movements. If you are angry, you blow your beard, puff out your cheeks, shake your head, stomp your feet, clench your teeth, swing your hands, and stroke your arms, etc. If you are happy, you raise your beard with both hands and move your arms in front of you. If it expresses happiness, it raises its whiskers with both hands, leans forward and backward, shakes its head and waves its hands, and laughs loudly. These actions vividly show the charm of Shahe Tunes.

“Shahe Tunes” in the specific development process, due to

various reasons, did not get good development, several times almost lost, and in this case, how to do to protect the traditional culture not to be buried by history, how to innovate its inheritance, is our contemporary scholars, opera creators and actors need to think about things!

3. Conclusion

Yu opera is a very glorious treasure in the traditional Chinese opera art, which was nurtured in the folk music, geography, and humanities of successive dynasties, and is an indispensable part of our many cultures. The four genres have constantly changed and adjusted throughout history, evolving to better reflect the regional characteristics and people's preferences, the subtleties of which are worthy of our repeated deliberation and deep thought. Under the aura of the Yu opera, how to develop the charm and advantages of these four schools in the new period of time, how to highlight Chinese culture, how to do a good job in integrating and innovating the scripts with the new era, how to perform every play in a practical manner, and how to reawaken the young people's love for the Yu opera and the audience is what many scholars devoted to the study of the Yu opera need to do, and it is also something that every Chinese needs to think about.

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