The Inspiration of Zhao Yuanren's Art Songs to the Chinese Vocal Music Creation

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Abstract

This paper discusses the creative features and writing techniques of Zhao Yuanren's art songs. It draws lessons from western composing techniques, makes use of new poems created by the Chinese progressive poets, fuses elements of Chinese traditional music culture, provides the overall dialectical idea for the creation of Chinese art songs, and lays a solid foundation for the development of art songs of our country.

Keywords: Art songs; creative characteristics; writing technique; whole; dialectic

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence and development of any thing has its profound cultural and historical background. Zhao Yuanren was deeply influenced by the Chinese national music culture from childhood, in the teenage years he had learned the piano, during the study in the United States, in addition to studying mathematics, physics and philosophy, he also insisted on learning to compose music, piano and vocal music. Studying European classical music and modern music had broadened his knowledge and opened his eyes, this has a profound impact on his music business, make him a profound Chinese composer with artistic attainments. The pinnacle of the creation of Zhao Yuanren is the period of the new culture movement in our country. All kinds of idea and ideology mutual absorption, mutual learning, and mutual integration. Influenced by the spirit of the times, he contacted and collected a large number of folk songs, folk rhyme, and so on, which has created a brilliant chapter in his artistic creation. The works created by Zhao Yuanren is One hundred and thirty-two altogether, among them art songs are eighty-three, the allocation of the chorus are twenty-four, folk songs with accompaniment are nineteen, instrumental pieces are six. Through every piece of work is not difficult to find out the impression of Chinese traditional culture. From another point of view, Zhao Yuanren is a master of linguistics, he had received education on the western music culture, and deeply influenced by western social ideology. He strived to travel all over China to investigate and study dialect. The cultural reference, absorption and fusion are fully established on the global concept of works fused organically. Zhao Yuanren is known as the founder of Chinese art songs.

2. The Characteristics of Creation

Chinese folk music, opera music is broad and profound, is the most traditional art treasures with Chinese characteristics. Chinese folk music is rich and colorful, which has a large number of tunes, such as folk songs, minor, embellish cavity and local accent, and so on. Zhao Yuanren's art songs fully absorbed the music elements of folk music and drama. Such as Ballad of Selling Cloth, this song is a melody based on the five scale, which based on the tone of Wuxi dialect and combined with Western harmony. Zhao Yuanren in the notes of the song said:“This song with quintuple meter seems strange, in fact, in the music theory of China although there is no 'one downbeat four upbeats' music, while reading four words rhyme, such as some funeral oration, nearly always use quintuple meter, tunes are mostly 'China style', to these words' homespun is coarse, calico is smooth’, because it is about foreign goods, so in the respect of harmonic also use foreign goods.” The words of the song

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Go up the Mountain is produced by Hu Shi, about the song Zhao Yuanren said in the note: “This song analysed from harmonic includes three parts. From the beginning to the ‘okay, okay, to strive to run’ is B key, in which the part of “be careful” get into related minor, again back to the original tune; In the second paragraph, from 'on the top it was really a flat road' to 'cries shouted loudly also went out' is a key of G (this part has the most ‘Chinese flavor’). The third section seems to be back to the original tune, actually half-tone higher, so can hear the loud feeling of see the sunrise on the top of the mountain.” As another example, the familiar art songs Teach Me How to Forget Him, composed by Zhao Yuanren in 1926 and Liu Bannong wrote the lyrics. About this work Zhao Yuanren wrote in the note: “This song is easy to please” Chinese and western people", the door inside is mostly ‘Chinese style’, the tunes except 'ah! swallow, what words do you say’, and 'withered trees swaying in the wind, wildfires burning in the twilight', are all 'Chinese style', and the singing method of the first three sentences of Teach Me How to Forget Him, is a bit like the cipri original plate door. But every time it would changes key: the first is E tone, the second is fifth B tone, the third is from e minor to G major, the fourth is back to e minor, after two sentences it is back again to the same name major E major to end. The first, the second, the third, and the fourth Zhao Yuanren said here refer to the four part of the song Teach Me How to Forget Him, namely, the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter, the representative lyrics are cloudlet and breeze, moonlight and sea, falling flowers and swallows, withered trees and cold wind, represent the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter respectively. Through the idyllic description of the four seasons scenery of the spring, summer, autumn and winter, this song represents the feelings of the youth wandering alone and chant, and deeply cherish the friends and hometown.

In addition, Zhao Yuanren combined different forms of eastern and western cultures together through music creation, to achieve a "combine" effect. He thought: “Anything there must be a combination, the combination there must be up and down, left and right, outside and inside, beautiful and evil, good and bad, happy and angry, cold and heat, day and night, these are all the combination.” The art world is an interconnected organism. What attract us is to cognize the relationship of the growth of art, interattraction, mutual traction, mutual repulsion, these are the most common dialectical relationship, but in this ancient Chinese dialectical thought, we can appreciate the essence of this kind of dialectical thought, thus highly appreciate the overall dialectical relationship of the art songs created by Zhao Yuanren.

3. Poetry and music writing techniques

Zhao Yuanren is a master of linguistics, he teaches general linguistics, Chinese phonology, Modern Chinese Dialects and other course in Tsinghua University. He said: “Poetry with melody and rhythm, is not as natural as the original natural tone, and impacts the expression of poetry, thus lost some special flavor of the poem. Although the combination of the two has contradiction, they can complement each other, benefit by associating together, generate new artistic value, give people a new sense of beauty.” Zhao Yuanren successfully solved the problem of song tones are difficult to match with poetic language and poetic rhymes. The fluctuation of melody and the cadence of poetry pronunciation of his works are coordinated, which are more able to make the audience to accept. Such as in the song Go up the Mountain, change “open a line” into “open a road”; In the song Bottle of Words, change “not envy candle illuminate champignon” into “not envy the Illumination and champignon”; In the song Labor Song, change “talk about making brick and building house” into “he built houses for people to live in”, and change “eight o’clock” into “what time”, and so on.

Zhao Yuanren thought the lyrics should be easy to understand, in order to make the singer and the recipient express and receive music better, lyrics can be properly adjusted. In order to make his music works better express its content and emotion, he used his knowledge of linguistics, through the method of adding words, deleting words and modifying words, made poetry and melody combined perfectly, and created a great number of outstanding works. Zhao Yuanren used new poetry as the lyrics, and used western composing techniques, combine the rhythm of ancient Chinese Poetry to
create art songs, the artistic creation technique of combine Chinese and Western elements, and adapt ancient forms for present-day use, fully embodies the philosophy dialectical thought of art. If Zhao Yuanren and his works are regarded as individual or special things, other contemporary Chinese composers and their works are general or universal things. Of course, special or individual and universal or general associate to exist, it is the unity of particular and universal, individual and general, promotes the great development of music culture of that special period. Zhao Yuanren is a giant who dares to practice, dares to protect and defend in exploring the traditional Chinese music. His research on “Chinese melody” and “Chinese flavor harmony” opened the prologue of people use western techniques to develop local music. Just think, in that time Zhao Yuanren combine Chinese traditional ancient poetry rhythm with western creative techniques to create music, this composition technique is a bold attempt and innovation in the special historical period, meanwhile, it is also a challenge to the people's psychological and cultural identity of our country. While drawing lessons from western composing techniques, the art songs made by Zhao Yuanren have always reflected the artistic thought of Chinese national music, whether it is the choice of lyrics (new poetry as lyrics), melody creation (application of opera music), or the combination of music and lyrics, all reflect the connotation of Chinese national music culture. The dialectical creation method of Zhao Yuanren dad opened up a new way for Chinese art song creation and exploration at that time, namely, enrich the performance of the Chinese music, and formed his own creative features. What he left us is not just lively musical works, more important is the created idea of explore music development, which is worth learning and studying.

4. CONCLUSIONS
Just as Wang Defeng described in his book Philosophy of Art:“The traditional problem is a very important and difficult problem, especially in the field of art, which is characterized by innovation. How should we look at the tradition in the field of art? Tradition seems to be the opposite of innovation, as we have stressed, art can't sing the same old song, can't be a repetitive process. It is true, but at the same time we must stress: Only through tradition, real innovation is possible.”

References