

A Study On The Musical Style And Performance Characteristics Of Chinese Zither Genre In Zhejiang

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Abstract: As a traditional plucked stringed instrument in our country, Chinese zither has experienced more than two thousand years of historical inheritance and development. Influenced by many factors such as regional environment, political economy, language culture and national folk custom style, it has formed various Chinese zither genres with different performance skills and different musical characteristics. In the following, through the melody and plate, musical style and performance techniques of Chinese zither genre in Zhejiang, the paper analyzes the formation reasons of the style of Chinese zither genre in Zhejiang, and explores the future development of Chinese zither genre in Zhejiang.

Chinese zither, also known as “qin zheng”, is a plucked stringed instrument with a long history in our country. The earliest written records of Chinese zither are recorded in “knock tile instruments, clap thighs and play Chinese zithers” in the book of Li Si’s Jian Zhu Ke Shu in Records of the Historian. At the beginning, qin zheng was a plucked stringed instrument from the land of Qin. The description of Chinese zither can also be seen in Cao Zijian’s Kong Hou Fu in the late Han Dynasty. Therefore, it can be generally seen that Chinese zither has a long history, and spread in a wide range and field at that time, which laid a certain foundation for the development of different genres of modern zither.

1. The Formation of Chinese Zither Genre in Zhejiang

Zhejiang mainly refers to the ancient Hangzhou area. At that time, Hangzhou, as an economically prosperous area, had a humid climate and superb craft skills. Therefore, in the Song Dynasty, the zither had been paid to the imperial court as a tribute, which represented the extensive production and degree of spread of the zither in Zhejiang area at that time. At the same time, Zhejiang has a performance form of Tanhuang, which has a long history and is performed together with traditional stringed and woodwind instruments and zither. Therefore, literati at that time integrated and compiled a whole set of accompaniment music about Tanhuang for Tanhuang’s performance accompaniment, which is a strong evidence for the spread and development of zither in Zhejiang area, and also promoted the formation of the basic situation of musical style of zither in Zhejiang area. With the continuous research and exploration of some music experts and predecessors, the zither solo music handed down in Zhejiang area has been summarized and induced, which lays a certain foundation for the formation of zither genre in Zhejiang. What’s more, with the joint efforts of experts and scholars, according to the characteristics of zither music left over from history, the transformation and manufacture of the zither’s shape and structure has been realized, which brings a new direction for the performance of the art of zither of Zhejiang genre. For example, the zither in Zhejiang is mainly S-type with 21 strings, which greatly improves the playing volume of zither, expands the pitch range of zither by increasing the number of strings, and greatly increases the quality of timbre, so the performance has been greatly improved. It can be said that this has laid a solid foundation for the development of zither genre in Zhejiang.

According to the analysis of the zither music handed down from Zhejiang genre, since ancient Zhejiang was also known as the Wulin area, the zither music in Wulin mainly appeared in combination with the performance form of Tanhuang in Wulin, and there were few zither solo performances. Therefore, some traditional zither music is rich in drama and lyricism. This also

makes the zither of Zhejiang genre form a distinct and unique regional artistic style and characteristics in the spread and development. Therefore, on the whole, the zither of Zhejiang genre has a long history because of its fine and soft beauty and rich and unconstrained aesthetic connotation. In this paper, the classic zither music *High Mountains and Running Water* is taken as the analysis object. As *High Mountains and Running Water* is an ancient music, which has a high singing degree in all parts of our country, therefore, taking *High Mountains and Running Water* as the analysis object, we can better get the uniqueness of the musical style and performance characteristics of the zither of Zhejiang genre, so as to separate it from other zither genres. In the zither performance of Zhejiang genre, it is mainly based on the frame of eight plates. Influenced by the local environment, the zither of Zhejiang genre has the gentle and delicate melody aesthetic feeling of small bridge, flowing water, family, and daughter of a humble family, which is the musical style and performance characteristics that other zither genres do not have.

2. The Musical Style of Chinese Zither Genre in Zhejiang

The development of art is influenced by economy, politics and environment and other factors. For the Chinese zither genre in Zhejiang, it lacks the bold and unconstrained style of Shandong genre. However, under the influence of local folk music and dialect culture of Wu Nong warm language; its zither music has a lingering feeling. Taking the zither music of *High Mountains and Running Water* as an example, this paper analyzes the musical style and characteristics of zither genre in Zhejiang. In the whole tune of *High Mountains and Running Water* in Zhejiang genre, the tune of G-gong D-zhi is adopted. The musical composition is mainly divided into two parts, the first half is mainly to use two octaves to perform a stepwise and extended performance up or down in the traditional way of playing and the tune of playing, therefore, the whole melody is gentle and beautiful. The second half mainly adopts higher musical scale and beat strength of notes to conduct gliss of Li tone, the overall tune begins to slow down, therefore, the tune is soft and lyrical, with a strong sense of picture. It can be said that in the zither music of *High Mountains and Running Water*, the whole structure of the tune of Zhejiang genre is not limited to the traditional eight plate structure specifications, but to realize the mutual application of many large and small eight plate structures. In terms of music structure, zither genre in Zhejiang still keeps the variant style of the old eight style in the musical style and characteristics of traditional zither, but in the skill of plucking and the emotional color contained, the zither of Zhejiang genre is influenced by folk music, opera, etc., its final musical style is more delicate, and the playing skills are more refined, such as more simple plucking based, and chanting, pressing, trembling, sliding and other skills are used properly, so the lingering and euphemistic characteristics of the south are reflected.

3. The Performance Characteristics of Chinese Zither Genre in Zhejiang

In terms of performance characteristics, zither genre in Zhejiang is quite different from other zither genres, mainly because zither in Zhejiang is played in the way of fast quarte, that is the right hand completes a group of fingering of “ $\wedge \perp \backslash \perp$ ” quickly. The melody changes rapidly under this fingering, therefore, after the whole group of fingering is played, it gives people a sense of rhythm of big pearls and small pearls fall on jade plate, at the same time, it also reflects a kind of grain sense of melody of the music, giving people light and smooth hearing enjoyment. At the same time, in fingering skills, Zhejiang genre also achieved the creation of the technique of “point finger”, through the middle and index fingers of the right hand and the index finger of the left hand to accomplish, to make the fingering of “ $\wedge \backslash \backslash \backslash$ ”. This fingering is characterized by its fast playing, which is generally used to express the tension or lightness of some scenes. In the plucking of Zhejiang zither, this fingering is often used to express some fast changing melody, which makes the dynamic change of the whole melody more different before and after.

In zither genre of Zhejiang, the technique of finger shaking and plucking is mainly to drive the small arm shaking by taking the wrist as the axis. In this way, the strength brought is larger, the changing density is also large, and the strings that can be driven are also more extensive. Therefore,

it can be used to imitate vocal music and stringed instrument. For example, long shaking can form a unique melody structure, which can move freely on the strings to achieve the melody effect of stringed instruments and vocal music. It can be said that the innovation and development of zither genre in Zhejiang in skill fingering makes it possible for playing of zither genre in Zhejiang to realize the combination of multiple melodies through complicated technical characteristics, and to combine vocal music and string music organically, which adds to the beauty and rich musical style of Zhejiang's zither, although it has no bold melody characteristics.

The style and music performance of zither music of Zhejiang genre is mainly based on the inheritance and development of the traditional eight plate style. At the same time, according to the different emotional content of the music and the different connotation of the performance of the music, it realizes the application of the deformation of plate style, so it can be said that the randomness and creativity are stronger.

All of these characteristics above are the important reasons for the musical style and performance characteristics of Chinese zither genre in Zhejiang. According to the analysis of its performance style, due to the different cultural and environmental background, the current zither performance of Zhejiang genre is developed on the basis of the traditional stringed and woodwind instruments. Therefore, the style of zither solo has its own characteristics and creativity. Wang Xunzhi, a famous zither scholar, is the main representative of Zhejiang genre. When playing the zither, he uses the fingering of finger shaking composed of the support and split of the thumb, so that he can connect the staccato more flexibly and express his feelings better. The whole performance maintains the simple and elegant music style of the zither genre in Wulin.

4. The Exploration of the Future Development Trend of Chinese Zither Genre in Zhejiang

Based on the above analysis, we can see that the creation, performance and performance style of zither genre in Zhejiang are closely related to local folk music and cultural traditions. For example, in terms of the technical characteristics of playing, the implicit regional environment characteristics of Zhejiang genre make it use finger shaking with wrist as the core in the creation of fingering. Although it can play a variety of melody characteristics, it can be roughly found that the movement and change of the overall position of the player's hand is very small, basically relying on the finger to change and move on 21 strings. In the final analysis, this is mainly caused by the following reasons.

First, the influence of geographical environment factors. Zhejiang has always been an economically developed area in the history of our country, and as one of the birthplaces of traditional culture of our country, the development of Zhejiang's music art has far-reaching historical characteristics. Therefore, the melody and style of the music created here has a happy meaning of being content with the situation. For example, the creation of *High Mountains and Running Water* is based on the allusions of Yu Boya and Zhong Ziqi, but its basic purpose is to express the love for the great rivers and mountains of the motherland. According to the creation background, there is a broader space for the exchange and development of art and culture in Zhejiang. Therefore, the zither style developed with the help of this is more open.

Second, the cultural deposits of Zhejiang make the zither playing not the mainstream, but a form of accompaniment. In this process, in order to achieve a harmonious effect, playing will unconsciously achieve the integration of all expressive forms of music, thus giving the music style of zither more unique and rich connotation characteristics. For example, at the beginning, the zither of Zhejiang was attached to the performance of Tanhuang and traditional stringed and woodwind instruments, and the music of zither was in the form of accompaniment. In order to match the fresh, elegant and smooth performance style of traditional stringed and woodwind instruments in regions south of the Yangtze River, the performance of zither genre in Zhejiang also has such music style and characteristics.

Third, the influence of Zhejiang's dialect culture. Our country has the regional language characteristics of different sounds within 2.5 kilometers. Zhejiang dialect, as a family of Jiangsu and Zhejiang languages, has the development characteristics of multiple initials and finals, and also

has the characteristics of rhotic accent, which also makes the selection of zither genre of Zhejiang in the melody and rhythm have the characteristics of sweet and graceful, such as three or two degrees as the main, playing with flat and slow melody, at first listen as if it is the same, but seriously experience, we can find that the melody of zither is based on the slight change of timbre to create a smooth and comfortable feeling, but on the whole, it still has a great difference in hearing.

Conclusion

To sum up, as an ancient plucked stringed instrument that has been handed down for more than two thousand years, and has a long history and spread, zither represents the master of excellent traditional culture of our country. Each genres of zither and its music style and performance characteristics are the important expression of the cultural opening of our country and the development of art and culture. As an ancient region south of the Yangtze River, Zhejiang presents a high artistic quality on zither genre. From the perspective of argument, at that time, the zither manufacturing technology in Zhejiang was relatively developed, and the population was large. As an economically developed area in our country, the zither spread in Zhejiang genre is inseparable from the help of the traditional stringed and woodwind instruments of regions south of the Yangtze River and Hangzhou's Tanhuang instruments. It was not until later that a complete set of zither accompaniment music was spread, which lays a certain foundation for the formation of the musical style and performance characteristics of zither genre in Zhejiang.

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