

Research On The Performance And Musical Features Of Pi Huang

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Keywords: Pi Huang; Piano Music; Music Features

Abstract: With the popularization of piano, many music works blending the west and the east have appeared in China, and they have also been praised by both home and abroad, which has opened up a new field for the development of Chinese music. Pi Huang is a piano piece with distinctive Chinese characteristics written by the famous Chinese composer Zhang Chao. When Pi Huang was created, the main reference element was Peking Opera, which was fully integrated into the piano music to realize the combination of Chinese and western musical elements. Therefore, its market acceptance is relatively high and it is loved by many Chinese and western players. This paper first introduces the author of Pi Huang and related overview, meanwhile analyzes its performance skills and musical characteristics in depth.

1. Introduction

Zhang Zhao's works are full of national style and skillful composition skills. The most important feature of his composition is to express his pursuit of art and expression of emotion through his works. The analyses of the creation background of Zhang Zhao's works and actual creation experience plays a positive role in enriching and improving the performance way of the players as well as in their intuitive and objective shaping and expressing the images in the works. Therefore, we must pay attention to the performance of *Pi Huang* and the study of its musical features.

2. About the Author of Pi Huang

Zhang Zhao is a very famous composer and pianist in China, and has a very high status in China's music field. He graduated from and taught at the school of music, Minzu University of China. Zhang Zhao grew up in a minority settlement in Yunnan. He began to perform on the stage in his teens, and even created outstanding works such as *Haiyan* when he was sixteen. He graduated from the Yunnan Academy of Arts in 1983 in piano. He then studied at Minzu University of China and graduated with a dual degree in piano and composition in 1987. Even so, Zhang Zhao did not stop learning, and obtained a master's degree of Central Conservatory of Music in 1998.

In terms of music creation, Zhang Zhao has a wide range of creations, and each music piece is filled with the style of national music. Moreover, through the appreciation of his musical works, we can find that he has a unique view on each piece of his music, with a deep love for the Chinese nation. His representative works include *Sorrowful rhapsody*, *Totem*, *Grassland Memory* and *Pi Huang*, among which the most significant one is *Pi Huang*, which has a great influence on Chinese piano music.

3. He Creation Background of Pi Huang

The inspiration for the creation of *Pi Huang* is mainly from the beautiful scenery of the Dian Lake next to Zhang Zhao's school. When he was young, Zhang Zhao was attracted by the scenery next to the school, and he would play beside the Dian Lake every day, which provided him with rich ideas for the creation of *Pi Huang*. In the process of composing *Pi Huang*, Zhang Zhao mainly used the plate structure of Peking Opera, and created the piano song called *Pi Huang* based on the beautiful memories of his childhood. It not only reflects the magnificent landscape of the Dian Lake, but also depicts his beautiful expectation of natural tranquility and spiritual freedom.

The work went through more than a decade of repeated revisions before it was finalized, and Zhang Zhao has been working to make it perfect. Elements of Peking Opera run through the work from beginning to end, which also reflects his love and respect for Chinese traditional culture. *Pi Huang* has promoted the creation of piano music in China to a new level. The combination of Chinese and Western expressions has promoted the overall development of national music in China.

4. The Playing Skills of Pi Huang

When appreciating *Pi Huang* for the first time, it is inevitable to be attracted by its strong Beijing flavor. The model structure of the Peking Opera has an innovative application in the piano music *Pi Huang*.

In the process of playing it, we can analyze and master the playing skills of *Pi Huang* from the aspects of timbre control, rhythm change and melody performance.

4.1. Timbre Control

There are many Peking Opera elements involved in *Pi Huang*, and there are also many percussion instruments such as gongs, drums and wooden knocker. Not only that, Zhang Zhao also adds a lot of imitations of the sound cavity. In the process of playing, it is necessary to pay attention not only to play the corresponding keys of the notes accurately, but also imitate the scene described in the paragraph skillfully, so as to imitate the sound of human voice and instrumental music as much as possible, and requirements for timbre are also more precise.

There are four parts in the adagio, which need to be paid attention to in the process of playing, not only ensure the clarity of the parts, but also notice the strong and weak. Some of the adagios imitate the sound of water dripping down, while others imitate the sound of the bell. The characteristic of the bell sound is the feeling of floating from a distance. In the imitation of the bell, the resonance of the bell when it is hit should be played out, while other parts are relatively easy to control. Although one note of the part on the right hand side always appears in octaves, due to the different sound volume, the timbre changes are also different. The timbre in the high range is very bright, while the timbre in the middle range is long.

4.2. Rhythm Change

In music, rhythm is one of the most important forms of expression. Specifically, the rhythm mainly includes the following aspects: speed, strong and weak section, music duration and so on. These aspects are related to each other to gradually form a rhythm pattern with many different structures, thereby promoting the music to become richer and more vivid. In addition, there is a difference between strong and weak beats in music. The regular repetitive phenomenon between them is the beat. In traditional music, the name of the beat is “ban yan”. In the expression terms, “ban” mainly refers to strong beat, while “yan” is the opposite, so it is also defined as weak beats and subsidiary strong beat. When combining them, it will form rhythm form. There is a certain difference between the rhythm form and the strong and weak beats in modern experience. Its main structure is determined by different rhythms, speeds, tones and emotions.

Zhang Zhao just masters the characteristics of this rhythm form and applies it flexibly to *Pi Huang*. *Pi Huang* is mainly composed of ten paragraphs, including Daoban, Yuanban, Erliu, Liushui and so on. The changes between the plates make the music become full, and the content gradually becomes richer. In addition, from the change of rhythm, we can see the important role of the rhythm form in Chinese traditional music elements. However, Zhang Zhao does not limit his creative thinking to the elements of Chinese traditional music, and he also uses the composing elements of Western for reference.

4.3. The Application of Peking Opera Rhythm Form in the Final Movement

From the 102th bars of the final movement, the allegro rhythm form in Peking Opera is used. Its main function is to compress Yuanban (the original rhythm form), and it is also a relatively fast Liushuiban (flowing beat form). This tune is the point of change in the Erhuang mode, which can

create a very intense, urgency, rapid and aggressive feeling for people. Compared with adagio, the drama of piano music is gradually elevated to a higher level. Then there is the Yaoban (shaking rhythm), which is a rhythm form that disrupts the inherent rhythm of Yuanban and is more casual. It can be said that it is the most distinctive rhythm form in Peking Opera. It is also known as the tight playing and slow singing, which modifies the tone of Erhuang for the second time. In the final climax, the gongs and drums are used to perform, expanding influence. In the 178-255 bars, the Duoban structure in Peking Opera is mainly used. Among them, the G zhi and E zhi tones are mainly used. The rhythm is very tight and close, just like complaining, so the allegro of Erhuang is fully displayed, thus giving play to the effect of echoing each other in front and behind. In the 256-270 bars of the ending of the tune, the rule of rhythm form of typical opera is fully broken, showing drop E gong mode. It fully demonstrates Yue Fei's very impassioned heroism.

5. The Musical Features of Pi Huang

Pi Huang mainly uses a wave-like musical structure, which can be divided into three parts and ten small parts.

5.1. Part One

Kuaisanyan, Liushui and two six are variations of the theme. The speed is relatively fast. Putting them together is like the first movement of a sonata. At the same time, its structure is a three-segment music form, which realizes the continuous enhancement of the actual presentation characteristics and integrity of the three sections.

Two six: The period has the characteristic of repetition, and the two contrasting periods belong to four plus four square integer structure. The period is mainly connected by three-bar intros, ^bE gong mode, the theme melody of Yuanban appears here with floral variations, and the F shang mode ends. Then the period begins to repeat, appearing lower octave. From the 45th bar, it promotes faster "Liushui period".

Liushui: generally, it is a beat. Although the song is 2/4 beat, it has the effect of a beat because its structure is relatively fast. The two contrasting periods belong to four plus six non-square integer structure and A Shang mode. The melody is like flowing water, very clear, and it can be contrasted with two six in terms of musical mood and speed.

Kuaisanyan: it refers to fast four beats, one is strong beat, and the last three is weak beats. The period structure realize the reproduction of the two six section. The speed is faster and the intensity is stronger. It can push the music to the first climax. Two contrasting periods belong to four plus four square integer structure, and then eight-bar supplement follows with completed successfully. Tonality returns to ^bE gong mode, and then enters F Shang. After the eight-bar supplement, it ends with ^bB zhi mode. To the 83th bar, the music begins the connecting part.

Period: intro B B¹ link C link D link

Start-end bar: (26-28) (29-36) (37-44) (45-51) (52-61) (62-66) (67-82)
(83-86)

Phrase: c d c¹ d¹ e f c² d² supplement

Bar: 3 4 4 4 4 7 4 6 5 4 4 8 4

tonality: ^bE gong--- F gong --^bE gong—F shang ---A shang -- ^bE gong-F shang-^bB zhi-

5.2. Part Two

Adagio: it mainly uses alternating beats such as 3/2, 4/2 and so on, slow speed, like the second movement of a sonata. Tonality and speed are clearly in contrast to part one, entering ^bG gong system.

During the performance of the 94-99 bars, imitate the bells in the temple to the right-hand high voice. Therefore, during the performance, it is necessary to pay attention to slow down the speed of key drop and the key release and release the key passively.

Period: intro E F

Start-stop bar: (87) (88-93) (94-101)
 Phrase: g supplement h supplement
 Tonality: ^bG gong---

5.3. Part Three

Part three is composed of allegro, duoban and yaoban. When playing, the main difficulty is to master the increasing speed of the elastic rhythm in different sections. The twice duo tone mark the beginning of the allegro and also pays attention to imitating percussion. After that, access from the minor second interval. This music mainly imitates the similar sound effect of percussion instruments such as gongs, drums and forks to enhance the atmosphere. This music mainly imitates the similar sound effects of percussion instrument gongs, drum and forks, in this way the atmosphere is set.

Allegro: two parallel lines, non-square integer structure, the upper and lower lines use the upward mode to consolidate the theme melody, tonality also shifts from A zhi-B yu to [#]C zhi-[#]D yu. Starting from 123 bars, the music gradually realizes the strengthening of the connection function by means of tonal splitting and repetition.

Yaoban: it uses vibrato and other methods to fully display the effects of restlessness and shaking. The period is a three-sentence non-square integer structure and F yu mode. The music mainly uses ascending mode and repetition to continuously strengthen and split, so that the angry emotions in the music can reach a climax.

Duoban: period structure, one beat, period structure, three repeating periods, dual tonality presents the theme, the up is G gong, and the below is E zhi.

Period: G H I
 Start-stop bar: (102-132) (134-175) (176-255)
 Phrase: I i¹ j k l m m¹ m²
 Tonality: A zhi—B yu-[#]C zhi-[#]D yu -F yu -- G gong-E zhi--

Conclusions

In conclusion, the piano music *Pi Huang* not only fully inherits Chinese cultural tradition, but also has a certain breakthrough in the composing. It is an important part in the history of piano music in China. As a musician, in the process of playing piano works, we must pay attention to following the playing methods of national instruments and pursuing the performing style of Chinese piano music. However, we must also learn and refer to Western music styles, so that the piano music in China gradually develops towards the direction of internationalization.

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