

Discussion on the Rudiment, Transformation and Fusion of Opera Music

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Abstract: Music is the core power to promote the development of opera and to thoroughly understand its early form and development track in the domain of opera art. It plays an important role in the comprehensive understanding of the artistic nature of opera music. Opera music originated from the inheritance of excellent music culture in history, the song and dance drama in Tang Dynasty, Zaju in the Song Dynasty and Jinyuanben (a kind of Chinese ancient traditional opera) had began to form the rudiment of opera music before forming into independent musical system. The reform of the development of the opera music is based on the prototype of the opera music, with the development of the music itself and the combination of the opera art produced by external conditions of the dual effects.

Keywords: Opera Music; Rudiment; Transformation; Fusion

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1. Introduction

The formative period of opera music has always been a topic constantly discussed by music circles. The main reason is that the three significant marks for opera art, namely, the appearance of the concept of "opera", the formation of first-person narrator singing art and the perfection of the opera music system, are not established at the same time. In terms of opera music, it is a kind of complicated music system that has experienced constant development and changes after nearly one thousand years and is extracted and purified from those excellent achievements such as folk songs, rap and song and dance, and the existing vocal cavity dramas are diversified and with their own characteristic. Therefore, this article takes the early rudiment, transformation and fusion of opera music as the entry point to collate its development to thoroughly understand its development track and nature comprehensively.

2. The Early Rudiment of Opera Music

Opera music is an important stage for the development

of Chinese music after the dance accompanied by music in the Pre-Qin Period and Jiyue in mediaeval times. It is the inheritance of the previous music art, and also forms its unique development mode due to the decline of royal music and the rise of folk music after the Song Dynasty. In terms of the origin relations, the song and dance drama in Tang Dynasty, Zaju in the Song Dynasty, Jinyuanben and "Yongjia Zaju" (the early form of southern drama) etc. have formed the artistic characteristic of "telling stories by singing and dancing". The early opera music is mainly "inheritance" and "borrowing" of those artistic forms, therefore, the above-mentioned music that hasn't formed independent system considered as early rudiment of opera music.

The song and dance drama in Tang Dynasty can be divided into two categories: with a story and without a story; the former refers to Tagedance and Wufang Lion Dance, etc. which is featured by dancing while singing, but without telling stories. The latter refers to Tayaoniang and BoTou etc, which is featured by singing, dancing and telling a story, but in accordance with the description of BoTou in Yuefu Miscellany • GujiaSection written by Duan An-

jie: based on an old saying "mountains are winding, so is ancient music", we know that a drama is set with one song for the song and dance drama in Tang Dynasty, but it doesn't form into an exclusive system for stylized opera music. Both of them coexist simultaneously and belong to song and dance (the latter develops into song and dance drama since it tells stories by singing and dancing), which proves that the common foundation of their art forms is songs and dances. The latter is with a story and also with orchestral accompany, especially singing and dancing. The song and dance drama in Tang Dynasty are not only the rudiment of the opera music in later ages, but also the rudiment of the song and dance drama in later ages.

And what is the music of Zaju in the Song Dynasty, Jinyuanben and "Yongjia Zaju" (the early form of southern drama) like? It can be said that these names are only the tiles in this historical period, and there is no obvious difference between Zaju in the Song Dynasty and Jinyuanben in essence. "Yuanben" is the basis of opera troupe and gains its name from the script performed by opera troupe. These art forms cannot develop into a completely independent music style due to the change of the artistic form in the historical period of "collective creation" created by Chinese non-composers. They respectively absorb the melody of large-scale dance accompanied by music and the elements of rap music and folk music. It even can be asserted that it uses the music of that time to serve as "the song in the drama" to "perform the story by singing and dancing".

Based on the record in Nanci Description written by Xu Wei, Ming Dynasty, "Yongjia Zaju" (the early form of southern drama) is as follows: "Yongjia Zaju springs up and it is mainly formed by village ditties without unified requirements for tune or rhythm, just naturally expressed as one wishes?" From this we can know that there's no unified and formal opera music form at that time and it is only the music formed by village ditties and the ballad generated in streets and lanes. At the same time, Zaju in the Song Dynasty also borrows other music to serve as the music of the drama, but the provenance is different. Though we haven't got the script of Zaju in the Song Dynasty unit now, we can see the relationships between Zaju in the Song Dynasty and large-scale dance accompanied by music from its name. e.g. Zaju in Song Dynasty includes Yingying Liuyao and Cuihu Liuyao, etc. and the large-scale dance accompanied by music in Tang Dynasty includes Liuyao. There are also some Zaju in Song Dynasty that can correspond with the large-scale dance accompanied by music in Tang Dynasty, such as Siseng Liangzhou and Shidian Liangzhou, and Liangzhou, large-

scale song and dance in Tang Dynasty; Cuoqu Bomei and Zheng Sheng met Drakan Bomei, the Dragon Lady, Zaju in Song Dynasty, and Bomei, large-scale song and dance in Tang Dynasty, etc. Though there's no script and score handed down from ancient times, we can know that Zaju in Song Dynasty has borrowed music from Liuyao, Liangzhou and Bomei, etc. of large-scale dance accompanied by music in Tang Dynasty

In conclusion, the early rudiment of opera music can be roughly divided into two types: the first type is music in other artistic forms with the characteristics of opera art, such as the song and dance drama in the Tang Dynasty. It is a kind of song and dance, but due to there is plot in it, the "drama" appears. The second type is that it borrows other music as the song in the drama, such as Yongjia Zaju, Zaju in the Song Dynasty, Jinyuanben. The primary rudiment of opera music can be summarized into the following stages: the opera in the song and the story played by the "borrowed" song. The dramatic music with independent artistic value, different from other music forms, has not been truly formed.

3. Reform and Fusion of Opera Music

"Reform" is the internal momentum of the constant development of opera music. Li Yu, the drama theorist at the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty emphasizes that the development of opera is actually "to turn the ancient tones into the modern tones". "Change leads to newness and invariability leads to corrosion; change leads to vitality and invariability leads to rigidity." From the primary rudiment of opera music to the system of opera music, namely, the establishment of Qupai style, to the newly formed dramatic music system formed out of the constant evolution of Qupai style, namely, the establishment of Plate-cavity and Multi-cavity styles, are accompanied by the constant maturity of dramatic art and the constant increase of theatricality, which is the "reform" product of music.

The previous reforms of opera music are not done independently. It is produced with the dual function of the external conditions of "fusion" of dramatic music and the internal momentum of music itself. Therefore, we can understand "fusion" from two aspects: First of all, the external conditions for the development of opera music. From the south-north assemble of Qupai style, to the north-south confluence of Plate-cavity style, to the relocation of the development orientation of opera music made by Western and Chinese music culture exchanges, are done in the "stipulation" of the objective conditions of histor-

ical development, including the political, economic and dramatic rheology. Second, the fusion of opera music is the demonstration form that integrates the previous internal reforms of drama and music. It is the music reform of higher level. Kun opera and Beijing opera are the splendid pearls in the dramatic history of China. They are the classic examples that integrate the excellent results of opera music reform in the development process.

3.1 The First Fusion of Opera Music

In Southern Song Dynasty, the two opera music systems of classical local opera of Wenzhou in the South and Zaju in the North are formed out of the political pattern of south and north division. The unity of the political power of Yuan and Ming Dynasties objectively lays the foundation for the fusion of opera music. In the process from division to fusion, the opera music undergoes the following several important reforms:

3.1.1 From the Early Rudiment of Opera Music to the Primary Establishment of the Opera Music System.

As previously mentioned, the main feature of the early rudiment of opera music is to play the story by "borrowed" songs. The opera music with independent artistic value that is truly different from other music forms has not been formed yet. When it develops to the north-south drama phase, it is no longer one song and one drama, instead it uses the formula method to flexibly apply the Qupai to different dramas. The representative formula structure has the single collocation and head-changing of the southern drama; The song cycle structure of one drama with four folds, one fold with one sound level. During this period, the north-south drama is of different characteristics, which independently develop. Wang Jide in the Ming Dynasty summarizes the music features of south-north dramatic music into: "the southern drama is 'mainly quiet and remote' and 'its changes are fluent', and the 'lyrics have fewer words and the tone is slow'"; the northern drama is 'strong and magnificent', and 'its changes are simple'; 'the words in the lyrics are rapid'."

3.1.2 South-North Assembles in the Starting of the Yuan Dynasty.

The unity of the Yuan Dynasty breaks the situation of relatively independent development of the north-south drama. Since the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, the Zaju in the south has begun to flow into the south. The southern drama begins to use the scripts of Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty and mutually learn from each other in music, thus drawing the curtain of south-north assemble. The south-north assemble is firstly embodied in the breakthrough of the music systems of the south and north. Second, it

forms a new music system of Qupai style. The earliest south-north assemble is seen in Little Suntu collected in Yongle Canon• Three Types of Dramas, where two south-north assembles appear. One of them is "[Duanzhenghao of northern drama], [Jinchandao of the southern drama], [Tuobushan of the northern drama], [Shuazixu of the southern drama]". Seen from the current history materials and the later development of the north-south drama, the southern drama starts from the use of the music system of the south-north assemble, which may be related to the characteristics of the south music, which is folk, flexible and changeable and compatible. The south-north assemble in the early northern drama has not been proved. But seen from Lv Dongbin's Dream of Being Immortal, a Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty, written by Jia Zhongming, the south-north assembling is used in the four folds in the later Yuan Dynasty, thus delaying the declining speed of Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty. The fusion is the phased big reform in the opera development, thus endowing the opera music in the Yuan Dynasty with the main features of the south-north music. In other words, the assembling of the music system also represents the integration of the south-north voice, making the Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty gradually develop towards the southern. By the mid period of the Ming Dynasty, it becomes the lost art. And the southern drama becomes the main form of dramatic art at the end of the Yuan Dynasty and the beginning of the Ming Dynasty.

3.1.3 The Opera Music Reform of Wei Liangfu.

The opera music reform of Wei Liangfu is the milestone reform in the opera history of China. Wei Liangfu said, "when primarily learning the northern drama, I fell behind Wang Youshan, a northern man, then I choose to reform the southern drama". He absorbs the advantages of the Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty and conducts the all-round music reform of the entity of the southern drama under the background of south-north fusion. It is mainly embodied as follows: first of all, clear words. In order to match the libretto with the rhyme and length of music and not influence its clarity and comprehension, singers are required to divide each word into three parts: "head, belly and tail". When singing, they should pay attention to the "difficult words" and sing with "much efforts". Secondly, pure tune, which means to sing by words. As is said by Wei Liangfu in Song Metrics: "The fifth tone focuses on the fourth tone. If the fourth tone is not properly uttered, the fifth tone also becomes waste. The four tones are investigated one by one, and they should be authentic without errors. And if there is any misunderstanding, they are not accepted even with good performance." Thirdly, regular clap-

per. After being reformed by Wei Liangfu, Kunshan Opera learns from the "force in the string" of the northern drama to control the tune with strings and also combines the role of clappers in the singing in the southern drama. It standardizes the format of musical beat. The number of times of the tune name, the location of libretto and the connection of the tune name are much stricter than the previous "old tunes". In relationship of singing and accompaniment, the Song Metrics notes the method of clappers: "If it is the starting clapper, go downwards with the words; if it is the proper clapper, go downwards with the cavity; if it is the final clapper, use all the cavities to go downwards." Regular clapper not only standardizes and improves the music art of Kun Opera, but also lays the early foundation for the appearance of the Plate-cavity style music later. Fourthly, accompaniment. The southern drama starts from the song without accompaniment. Kun Opera is added with flute. Zhang Yetang, who masters the northern drama, reforms the three strings of the northern drama and applies it to Kun opera. It forms the instrumental music combination form of percussion + flute + string. And the use of Huqin in drama mainly starts from the Plate-cavity style opera. According to the records of Xihe Poetry Theory written by Mao Qiling in the Qing Dynasty, the Kun Opera in its late stage also uses the string instrument named violin in the music. In this music reform, the accompaniment band of Kun Opera, on the basis of percussion + flute, applies the four types of beating, blowing, plucking, pulling in the traditional national music instruments to the opera orchestra.

3.1.4 The Kun Opera Music Integrates the Essence of the South and North Art

The Kunshan Opera, before being reformed by Wei Liangfu, is merely the tunes that coexist with Yuyao, Haiyan and Yiyang, which are called the four tunes in the Ming Dynasty by the later generations. In the later period where the southern drama is regarded as the development mainstream, Kun Opera and Yiyang Opera make for the two roads of "elegance" and "vulgarity" respectively. Yiyang Tune "misuses the village sound and changes the tune" and applies the singing style of "rolling tune" to break through the original singing tune system and forms the situation of "Kun Opera and Yiyang Tune in popular" along with Kun Opera. Kun Opera just learns from and absorbs the advantages of Yiyang Tune and Haiyan Tune, and then gradually stands out from the co-existence of four tunes. "Wei Liangfu, from Shiyi, can change the tunes and turn the Yiyang and Haiyan Tune to Kun Opera". From the record of Poetry Theory of Jing Zhiju, we can see that the successful reform of Kun Opera is first to absorb the

tunes of the southern drama. Secondly, he learns from the excellent results of northern drama. Wei Liangfu and Zhang Yetang, who reform the Kun Opera along with him, first learn the northern drama and then the southern drama, which provides the important conditions for the Kun Opera to integrate the essences of the south and north art. Apart from integrating the music advantages of the northern drama with the southern drama in music reform, which is mentioned in the previous part, Wei Liangfu's advocacy of "singing the northern drama in the southern form" also applies the pure tune of the southern drama to the singing of the northern drama. It is safe to say that Kun Opera at this time has integrated the essence of the south and north tunes.

Under the background of the south-north assemble formed by the relatively unified political pattern in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, the internal momentum of opera tune's pursuit of changes and the team headed by Wei Liangfu that master the northern drama and are devoted to the music reform of southern drama make the Kunshan Opera stand out among the three tunes in the long reform process, thus becoming the "great drama" integrating the north and south art essences. If the south-north assemble in the early stage of Yuan Dynasty draws the curtain of the fusion of opera music, the Kun Opera reform by Wei Liangfu leads to one generation of Kun Opera on the basis of inheriting the trend of music fusion, thus forming Kun Opera's governing status in the dramatic stage for more than 200 years (1570-1800) and making the first national tune opera of the real sense in the opera history of China.

3.2 The Second Fusion of Opera Music

At the intersection point of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, although Kun Opera is still the mainstream of opera art, yet it gradually stays away from the common audience out of its difficult tune and lyrics, thus having the tendency of decline. Meanwhile, the local tunes appear in the north, which is the prosperous place of Zaju in the Yuan Dynasty, thus changing the situation that Kun Opera "unifies the whole country". In the Qing Dynasty, the new four tunes of "Kun in the south", "Yi in the north", "Liu in the east" and "Bang in the west" appear after the four tunes in the Ming Dynasty. The fusion of the tunes after the first integration of opera music embodies the inner request for "changes" of opera music. As is said, long period of division must lead to integration. In the constant dissemination process of opera music, it begins the new-round reappearance from division to integration. In this process of big fusion, opera music has undergone the following several important reforms.

3.2.1 The Establishment of the New Music System

The new music system is Plate-cavity style. and the reasons for its appearance include: Firstly, the main features of local common systematic tunes are being local and folk. Compared with Kun Opera with difficult lyrics, the basic structure of upper and lower sentences of Pang-tzu Tune is easily understandable, which is closer to the aesthetic demands of the masses. This is one of the reasons for the rapid development of Plate-cavity style music. Secondly, the "flowing style" plate-cavity changes formed through the variation of the same theme strengthens the theatricality and appreciation of opera. Meanwhile, it also supplements the congenital insufficiency of the disunity of music styles in the Qupai connection in Qupai style. Thirdly, the creation of silk string makes clear the theme of tunes and establishes the music style of different tunes, thus enriching the expressive force of the opera music. Besides the role of music itself, actors can also fully use the figure, expression and other dramatic artistic means through the gap of silk string to fully express the plot and mode the character image.

3.2.2 The Confluence of North-South Plate-Cavity Style

The new music system Plate-cavity Style is popular with people out of its strong theatricality, easy comprehension, strong style and vivid rhythm. So it is soon disseminated from the headstream of Pang-tzu Tune in the radiation form and roots nationwide in the way of rheology. In the northern area, the Qin Opera is produced westwards; then Zhonglu Pang-tzu and Beilu Pang-tzu are produced northwards; Henan Pang-tzu and Shandong Pang-tzu are produced eastwards. After flowing to south to Hubei, Pang-tzu Tune is evolved to Xipi Tune. Apart from retaining Pang-tzu Tune's characteristics of "la mi" tuning and following the beat, and influenced by the folk music and dialects of Hubei, it has also gradually integrated the music characteristics of the south: focusing on grading and being supplemented by jumping. It is safe to say that the Plate-cavity Style music has had the sprouts of north-south fusion since Xipi Tune.

Xipi spread from north to south and Erhuang evolved from Congyang Tune have been existing in the same place, thus providing the regional conditions for the confluence of the two. The real confluence of Xipi and Erhuang has undergone two processes: Firstly, Erhuang is spread to Anhui and forms the Hui Tune along with other tunes in Anhui. Meanwhile, Xipi is called Han Tune when it is spread to Anhui in the last years of Qianlong (an Emperor of China). Xipi and Erhuang appear in the same drama of Anhui Troupe and is perfectly combined with

music, thus forming the first confluence of Pihuang. The accurate year of this confluence cannot be determined, but it is certain that the first confluence of Pihuang is finished in Anhui Opera, and at that time Pihuang has not become an independent tune opera. Secondly, the "Longevity Anniversary" held during the reign of Qianlong becomes the important opportunity for the confluence of Pihuang and the final formation of Beijing Opera. The dramas of various places are brought to Beijing to show themselves. The southern and northern tunes are gathered together in Beijing. Actors of Pang-tzu Tune join in Anhui Troupe for the sake of the livelihood. Multiple tunes exist and learn from one another. The southern opera is influenced by the Pang-tzu Tune again. The second confluence of Pihuang of the real sense did not start until Yu Sansheng and other persons came to Beijing during the reign of Daoguang, an emperor in the Qing Dynasty. The Beijing Opera stood out under the big fusion of northern and southern opera music during the reign of Tongzhi and Guangxu, emperors in Qing Dynasty, thus forming the national opera integrating the southern and northern opera music after Kun Opera.

3.2.3 The Reforms of Original Plate-Cavity Music

The Reforms Done by Beijing Opera for the Original Plate-Cavity Style music are embodied in: Firstly, it has formed the multi-tune music system that integrates multiple tunes into one. The Beijing Opera absorbs the advantages of other tunes through the strong all-embracing ability from the "all tunes in bloom" starting from the late Ming Dynasty. After Beijing Opera is finalized, it owns multiple tunes like Xipi, Fanxipi, Erhuang, Fanerhuang, Siping Drama, Fansiping Drama, Southern Pang-tzu, Gao-bazi, Chuiqiang, etc. which are also integrated through tune and plate type. Therefore, the multi-tune music system, different from the multi-tune co-existing operas, is formed. Secondly, different tunes of male and female professions. The male and female professions in opera are the typical figure images abstracted from life. Meanwhile, these different male and female roles are differentiated through the artistic means such as clothing, facial makeup and figure. In addition, music is the key to build different figures. The early opera music of Qupai style adopts different Qupai to match with the male and female, as well as the professions. However, the limitation of the orientation of Qupai rhythm has not formed the singing in different tunes in the real sense. In the opera music of Plate-cavity Style, the basic structure of the upper and lower sentences condenses the music theme, but it also inevitably leads to the problem of the same tune of both males and females. Beijing Opera, with Pihuang Tune as the music subject,

has utterly solved this problem through the advantage of integrating multiple tunes into one, which has not only solved the inconvenience brought by the vocal difference of male and female voices in singing, but also provided the greatest space for fully depicting the character image, expressing the plot and strengthening the music expressive force.

In the 21st century, opera seems to enter a relative "low ebb" stage again. Just like each reform of the opera music system, when it develops to the extremity, it is bound to bring its own limitations and insufficiency. It requires the internal reform, the exchange and fusion of music to generate the opera music system that keeps in line with the requirements of the times. Seen from the wide view, the two fusions of the opera music are the huge achievements of the replaced and existing systematic tunes in music, which have been combined and separated again and again. By absorbing the quintessence and removing the dross, it leads to the prosperity and splendor of the dramatic art and forms the epoch-making representative drama of the dramatic art—Kun Opera and Beijing Opera. The symphony of opera music in the last century has substantially drawn the prelude of the new reform of opera music, which is the individual artistic phenomenon of the "ongoing" development of dramatic art. It is not appropriate to affirm whether the symphony of opera music is the future development orientation of opera. However, the all-embracing and energetic dramatic art is seeking for the re-appearance of "the new sounds" in its own reform. If the first two fusions in the dramatic history are the local fusion of the north and south in China, in the current days when the world music is widely exchanged, the reform of opera music is bound to be the western and Chinese fusion of "making foreign things serve China".

4. Conclusion

The development of opera music is a long and compli-

cated process. Records of the historical materials and the coarse researches cannot elaborate on it. But seen from the reform of each success and the entire development track, the development of opera music has rules to follow. From the division of "head, belly and tail" of world cavity, to the gradual establishment and re-establishment of the opera music system, and the two north-south fusions, the opera music keeps turning from popular to elegant, from elegant to popular. It is integrated and then separated, separated and then integrated, which embodies the music development mode under the dual function of the internal momentum and external integration. The viewpoint of Li Yu, the drama theorist in the Qing Dynasty, is cited here again: "Change leads to newness and invariability leads to corrosion; change leads to vitality and invariability leads to rigidity." In the 21st century, where is the road of opera music? It should be the reform and re-fusion on the basis of inheritance of "turning the ancient tones to the modern tones"

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