



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Formation and Future Direction of Chinese Vocal Music in 100 Years of Development History

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 7, 2024 Accepted: Jun 19, 2024	<p>The history of Chinese vocal music can be traced back to ancient music culture. As early as during the Shang Dynasty, silk-stringed instruments were used in China and a complete system of music theory was formed. As time went by, elegant music during the Tang Dynasty, court music during the Song Dynasty and opera music during the Yuan Dynasty laid the foundation for the development of Chinese vocal music. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, opera became a widely popular art form, of which Beijing opera is the most representative one. Peking Opera, with its unique vocal style and exquisite singing skills, became an important genre of Chinese vocal music. Meanwhile, folk songs and flower-drum operas also enriched the diversity of Chinese vocal music. In recent times, Chinese vocal music has undergone many changes and fusions. The introduction of western music made Chinese vocal music begin to accept the influence of western singing style, forming a Chinese-style western singing style. This unique way of synthesizing Chinese and Western singing styles has preserved the traditional characteristics of Chinese vocal music, but also possesses modern expressiveness. With the development of the times, Chinese vocal music faces some challenges and opportunities. Firstly, traditional vocal music is still the core of Chinese vocal music and should be better protected and inherited. Secondly, internationalization is also an important direction for the development of Chinese vocal music. Through exchanges and integration with other cultures, Chinese vocal music can show its unique charm on the world stage. In addition, the advancement of technology also provides brand-new opportunities for the development of Chinese vocal music. The popularization of the Internet has made vocal music education more convenient and learning resources more abundant. Meanwhile, the development of modern recording, audio and video technologies has also brought great convenience to vocal performance and dissemination. All in all, Chinese vocal music has a broad development prospect by virtue of its long history and rich cultural heritage. Protecting and inheriting traditional vocal music, keeping in line with international standards, and utilizing technology to improve vocal music education and performance will be an important direction for the future development of Chinese vocal music. At the same time, we also expect that Chinese vocal music can show its unique charm on the world stage and make greater contributions to the world cultural and artistic exchanges. This paper briefly introduces the development history of Chinese vocal music and expresses its own views on the future development trend of Chinese vocal music.</p>
Keywords Chinese vocal music Music culture Theoretical system Art forms Traditional vocal music Future development	
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INTRODUCTION

As a valuable treasure of human civilization, vocal culture carries the musical spirit of the country and the nation. [1] In its long history, Chinese vocal music has formed unique traditions and styles and become one of the symbols of Chinese civilization. However, under the impact of the wave of modernization, traditional Chinese vocal music faces the challenge of survival space. Traditional Chinese vocal music encounters many problems in modern society. [2] First of all, the impact of foreign vocal culture makes the market share of traditional vocal music gradually eroded. New musical forms and techniques such as pop music and western singing have attracted the attention of young groups, making the inheritance and development of traditional vocal music somewhat limited. Secondly, the fast pace of modern life and diversified entertainment methods have also gradually weakened people's interest in and appreciation of traditional vocal music. [3] In the face of this reality, Chinese vocal music needs to develop a modernized development path and find a way to develop vocal music with Chinese characteristics. First of all, traditional vocal music should be combined with modern music, absorb the elements of modern music, and innovate the form and style of traditional vocal music to adapt to the tastes and needs of modern people. [4] By fusing with pop music, rock music, jazz and so on, traditional vocal music can be revitalized and attract more young people's attention. Secondly, strengthening the popularization and enhancement of vocal music education is the key to promoting the modernization of Chinese vocal music. Increase the curriculum of vocal music in school education, cultivate more vocal talents, and improve their professional level and artistic cultivation. [5] At the same time, the development of Chinese vocal music is promoted through vocal competitions, performances and training activities to stimulate people's interest and love for vocal music. In addition, the active use of modern technical means is also an important way to modernize the development of Chinese vocal music. [6] Through audio, video, network and other means, Chinese vocal music is promoted to a wider audience group, enhancing the spread and influence of vocal music. At the same time, combining with virtual reality, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, innovate the form of vocal performance and provide a richer and more diverse musical experience. In conclusion, Chinese vocal music needs to seek innovation and development in the wave of modernization. By integrating with modern music, strengthening vocal education and utilizing modern technological means, Chinese vocal music can find a development path with Chinese characteristics, renew its vitality and add new splendor to Chinese civilization.

Definition of Chinese vocal music

During the actual development of Chinese folk vocal music, different academic names such as "ethnic singing", "American vocal singing", "ethnic vocal music", "Chinese vocal music", etc. have been produced. Chinese Vocal Music", "Ethnic Vocal Music", "Chinese Vocal Music", and other academic names. [7] In the 1980s, three singing styles were formed in singing competitions in China, the American singing style, the ethnic singing style and the popular singing style, as well as the original singing style that was gradually formed afterward, which had triggered debates in academia. In the trend of diversified development of art, many different singing forms, such as the "American Tongue Singing Method" and the "Folk Singing Method", came into being in the mingling of tradition and modernity. From the above, it can be seen that the current conceptual structure of Chinese folk vocal music is still imperfect, with divergent opinions, and there is also a great deal of confusion between the media and the general public in China. [8]

Some scholars have suggested that the development of "Chinese vocal music" has gone through a process from "Yan'an folk singing" to "ethnic vocal music" to "Chinese vocal music". "Its content is broad, including all kinds of art genres expressed in Chinese language, including Chinese music works sung by western vocal music and ethnic vocal music adopted by China's music academy, as well as folk singing, opera singing, singing and rapping and singing by ethnic minorities, etc., which not only expresses the traditional Chinese culture, but also demonstrates a deep appreciation for all the

excellent cultures in the world. It not only expresses the traditional Chinese culture, but also shows a tolerant and open attitude to all the excellent cultures in the world. At present, if Chinese vocal music wants to go to the international stage and have equal dialogues and exchanges with the arts of other countries, Chinese vocal music must make a clear positioning on its connotation and academic symbols, so as to obtain a higher degree of recognition.

The dictionary definition of the word "vocal music" is: music sung by the human voice. The terms "Chinese folk vocal music", "ethnic vocal music", "Chinese vocal music" and "Chinese contemporary vocal music" are all characterized by their own academic expressions. Many academic terms have their own characteristics in academic expression. Chinese vocal music, the essence of Chinese culture, has held an irreplaceable position in different stages of history, celebrating all times and expressing people's voices. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that we should be able to have firm cultural confidence, grasp the pulse of the times, listen to the voice of the times, dedicate ourselves to the people with fine works, and lead the fashion with virtue, which gave Chinese music the historical mission of "recording the new era, writing about the era, and singing about the era". [9] "Chinese vocal music is in a period of unprecedented development. Driven by different cultural backgrounds, the academic symbol of Chinese vocal music art represented by "Chinese vocal music" is an important symbol of Chinese vocal music research, which reflects the common wish of Chinese vocal music scholars. It reflects the common wish of Chinese vocal music scholars.

A Century of Chinese Vocal Music

Early germination and exploration stage

Taking an overview of the history of the development of Chinese vocal art, it can be said that it is a road full of changes and innovations, as well as a vibrant road. At different stages of history, the great changes in society have had a profound impact on vocal music. After the New Culture Movement in the 20th century, a large number of music colleges appeared. There were numerous musical works, including children's song and dance programs, folk songs composed for the revolution, new folk songs sung for the Red Army, mass musical activities in the early 1930s, and singing campaigns for anti-Japanese salvation. It can be seen that the art of Chinese vocal music, based on the inheritance and borrowing of the excellent traditional Chinese music culture, has undergone continuous innovation and development at specific historical stages and significant moments of the Chinese nation. [10] In the last century, after the Xinhai Revolution, due to the impact of Western culture, the government of the Republic of China abolished the old education system, changed the "academy" into a "school", made the music course compulsory, and mainly taught Western religious music, and established the "Vocal Music Society". "Vocal Music Society" was established. Cai Yuanpei and Xiao Youmei established the National Conservatory of Music in Shanghai in 1927, and most of the teachers returned from abroad to teach Western vocal music, and there were also foreign teachers invited from abroad, and the contents of the lectures were based on "Western Opera Singing", "Art Songs" and "Chinese Music". The contents of the lessons were mainly "Western opera singing", "art songs" and "Chinese literary songs", which were the earliest prototypes of professional vocal music education in China. [11] As shown in Figure 1, it is an old picture of the first videotaping of the National Conservatory of Music. During this period, many famous singers emerged, such as Yu Yixuan, Zhou Shuan, Zhou Xiaoyan, and so on, who carried out unremitting explorations in their singing practice and provided valuable experience for the development of Chinese folk vocal music.



Figure 1 Old image of the first camera at the National Conservatory of Music

Stages of Formation and Development

From the students and teachers of the Lu Xun School of Fine Arts in Yan'an in the late 1930s, as well as the compositions and performances of the soldiers, civilians, and literary workers in the border areas, it can be seen that the development of the art of Chinese vocal music began and gradually developed during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation through the practice of revolutionary music under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Chinese people were united in their struggle for salvation and survival, and Yan'an became the main battlefield of the national anti-Japanese war. A large group of progressive young people with revolutionary passion came to Yan'an to join the anti-Japanese forces, starting a great artistic movement of national salvation, which led to a great development of national vocal music. [12] Lu Xun Fine Arts School was founded in 1938. As shown in Figure 2, it is an old picture of the actual Lu Xun Fine Arts School. The students of Luxun Art School went deep into the life of the masses and held a powerful mass singing competition, which set off a vigorous new rice-planting song movement, and produced a number of good songs such as "Brother and Sister Opening up the Land", "Li Youcai's Plank", "Husband and Wife Learning to Read and Write", and "Xiao Erhei Getting Married", which expressed the great period of national liberation. In order to inspire the people's anti-Japanese enthusiasm, a large number of classic plays with national characteristics such as "Yellow River Cantata" and "Nanniwan" emerged. In 1945, "The White-haired Girl" was collectively created by the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts in Yan'an, and led by the famous singer Wang Kun, marking the birth of the new opera, and in this way, later on, Guo Lanying, He Jiguang and others even made great contributions to the unification of the Chinese national vocal music. As shown in Fig. 3, it is the poster picture of "The White-haired Girl". China's national vocal music is an independent discipline formed in the 1950s. The Shenyang Conservatory of Music and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music opened two departments of folk music and folk music respectively. The China Music Research Institute was founded in 1964, and, on this basis, set up two majors, vocal music and opera, and established the cultivation goal centered on "national vocal music", and China's national vocal music career ushered in an unprecedented development. [13] In the field of Chinese vocal music, due to the conflict between Chinese and Western cultures, there was a singing battle between "foreign voices" and "native voices". Some scholars have testified that the "war between foreign and native voices" was a major ideological clash in the early years of the founding of the People's Republic of

China over the relationship between China and the West. In 1957, the Ministry of Culture held the National Conference on Vocal Education, and put forward the need to combine the traditional singing methods of Europe with the traditional arts of the nation and the actual situation in China, to achieve the purpose of "nationalization", that is, to express their own language, style, and ideology and emotion in a more in-depth and perfect, so that our people can really like it. That is to say, to express our own language, style, thoughts and feelings more deeply and perfectly, so that our people can really like it. After the subject was raised, after several generations of vocalists explored, researched, summarized and refined, in the inheritance of Chinese traditional folk vocal music and the absorption of Chinese and Western vocal music characteristics, the two kinds of vocal music were organically combined, which made great contributions to the development of the cause of Chinese vocal music.



Figure 2 Old picture of Lu Xun Fine Arts School



Figure 3 Poster of "The White-haired Girl"

The New Era

The development and construction of Chinese vocal art has been carried out at every stage since the founding of the People's Republic of China. It has publicized the Party's policies and guidelines, glorified a prosperous country, the spirit of a new era, and the great people who have created history,

and it is a very popular art form. From this point of view, every journey that Chinese vocal (ethnic) art has taken over the past one hundred years has been intertwined with the Chinese revolution and the construction of socialism. [14] With the dramatic changes in China's society and economy after the reform and opening up, and the prosperity and flourishing of the Chinese vocal music industry, a group of vocal music educators represented by Jin Tielin put forward the implementation concept of "scientific, ethnic, artistic, and contemporary" from the perspective of China's music education system and singing practice. Based on the reality of China, adhering to the essence of traditional Chinese culture, actively absorbing the excellent cultural forms of the West, and integrating the language of singing with the scientific way of vocalization, Chinese vocal art has created a large number of famous singers, and made outstanding contributions to the cause of China's national vocal music. With the deepening of reform and opening up, western modern music, pop music and Hong Kong and Taiwan music have been pouring into China, western American voice has also flooded into the major music schools, and many famous singers, such as Geno Becchi, have come to China to give lectures, and Chinese traditional music has been hit to a considerable extent under the strong impact of foreign culture.

Current Status of Vocal Music Development in China

Chinese vocal music, since the New Culture Movement in the 20th century opened the period of enlightenment of Chinese singing, to step into the university education system, has experienced a hundred years of arduous and brilliant course. [15] Until now, there are 11 specialized music colleges and universities in China (the Central Conservatory of Music only accepts postgraduates), the China Conservatory of Music, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the Harbin Conservatory of Music, Shenyang, Tianjin, Xinghai, Sichuan, Harbin, and other five music colleges and universities, all set up departmental teaching institutions, and comprehensive colleges and universities, most of them have opened a national vocal music major. In the teacher strength, teaching environment, teaching conditions, enrollment, teaching quality has reached a high level. It can be said that the development of Chinese vocal music has reached a flourishing stage, but at the same time, it also faces many problems. [16]

The first aspect is that the direction and orientation of vocal music education is unclear, and the mission is not clear. The vocal music majors of some colleges have unrealistic and unclear objectives in talent training, such as textualized syllabi, randomized teaching plans, failure to quantify teaching content, and failure to select appropriate teaching materials. There are also some vocal music majors in art colleges, which have been expanding their enrollment scale, but there are also problems such as "specialization but not refinement" and "massification".

The second aspect is that the teaching of vocal music and theoretical research cannot be well combined. [17,28] The main content of professional vocal music teaching is teacher-centered individual lectures, and teaching, theoretical research and practical activities carried out in the teaching and research room is very little, and some even do not carry out any activities at all, closed classroom teaching, closed research, did not form a special problem-solving vocal music teaching, vocal singing, theoretical research group, "fist! The power of "fist" has not been formed. Therefore, there is also the formation of "each family and each school", which is also called the phenomenon of "the benevolent see benevolence, the wise see wisdom".

Thirdly, vocal music education is not compatible with the construction goal and development direction of the school. Specifically manifested in the syllabus, personnel training program, the curriculum and teaching content specified in the syllabus of the generalization, formatting arrangements, there is no change, there is no innovation, decades ago everything was the same. Some colleges and universities have made some adjustments in these years, but they have not combined the direction of vocal music development, the goal of talent cultivation, and the ability of artistic

practice with the curriculum and the preparation of teaching materials, and have not formed a system, which is still far away from the goal of the development and construction of the institutions.

The fourth aspect is the gap between teachers' theoretical literacy and practical ability. The theoretical level and practical ability of teachers in colleges and universities around the world are uneven, and due to the expansion of enrollment, the number of vocal music teachers is obviously insufficient, and the quality of teaching is uneven. [18] Some teachers are too busy to study theory, carry out artistic practice, patiently analyze students' singing problems, or formulate rigorous teaching programs due to the fact that they are too busy to teach, and their teaching is ineffective. In addition, the large number of vocal teachers recruited in a short period of time has resulted in a mixture of good and bad teachers, ranging from those with strong teaching ability, high singing level, and strong theoretical research ability, to those who are indiscriminately recruited. Therefore, how to effectively control the scale of enrollment is an urgent problem to be solved, and it is also an important topic to strengthen the teachers' theoretical research and teaching practice capacity building.

The fifth problem is that teachers do not have a more consistent standard in the teaching process. Although there is a professional curriculum, many teachers do not strictly follow the requirements of the curriculum, how many works to be taught in each semester is more appropriate, what works to choose for training, what problems need to be solved in different grades, the examination and evaluation criteria, and so on, are relatively blind and loosely managed. [19,27] Teachers have to choose appropriate materials and use a variety of teaching methods based on the actual ability and level of the students, and take into account the singing characteristics of the students and the condition of their voices. Every teacher has his or her own characteristics and his or her own methods, and these are the general rules of vocal music teaching. However, from the viewpoint of the whole vocal music teaching, as a university, we should have an overall grasp of the whole process of teaching, that is, the teaching contents and teaching standards stipulated in the syllabus. Take the amount of homework as an example, how much should be completed in each year, each semester, each teaching stage, and even in four years, and how many vocal works of different styles, styles, and levels should be completed in the whole course of study. [20,29] In the whole learning process, what technical requirements to be achieved, which includes the range, timbre, volume, biting, embellishment, style, and performance, and so on, whether or not it has a relative standard, which is also a problem that needs to be seriously researched, sorted out, and urgently solved by various schools, teaching units, and teaching and research departments.

Sixthly, the artistic outlook, aesthetic outlook, musical outlook of the faculty need to be corrected, and the sense of responsibility and dedication need to be strengthened. In the traditional pear orchard line, people put the "play is bigger than the sky" on the lips, but now, people put the "class is bigger than the sky" on the lips. Some teachers on the class time arbitrarily, content arbitrarily, no progress, no standards, no requirements. [21] They are not strict with themselves, do not have much pursuit of their profession, sing on stage in a casual manner, are not strict enough on the artistic level, and are ambiguous about the content of their works. Teachers' artistic outlook and sense of responsibility refers to the most fundamental perception and judgment of art activities carried out in the process of art teaching, including the audience. Art is an extremely pure art that arises from within people and at the same time soothes their minds.

The Future Direction of Chinese Vocal Music Development

Strengthen the construction of the teaching team

Create a team with excellent political quality, correct artistic concepts, higher quality of teaching, high level of scientific research and strong hands-on ability. Among them, the key to the establishment of innovative programs lies in the training of teachers. [22] After the reform and opening up, due to the

introduction of western culture, China's vocal music teaching has been greatly affected, China's institutions of vocal music teaching is mainly "Western sound" as the main, "national singing" as a supplement, "emphasis on technology and light technology" concept of schooling and technology. The concept of school running and evaluation system of "emphasizing technology over technique" requires the construction of a team of teachers with both "theoretical quality" and "teaching ability". At present, most of the vocal music teachers in major colleges and universities in China, except for a few top specialized colleges and universities, have borrowed the teaching mode from the West, and lacked systematic research on opera, rap, and songwriting. Provinces and cities need to develop appropriate syllabi and teaching materials according to the conditions of their own schools, the student population and training objectives. It needs to be made clear that the development of Chinese vocal art cannot be separated from music creation. Targeted efforts to strengthen the creation of vocal works of different genres, themes, contents and styles are of great significance to the healthy development of Chinese vocal music.

The curriculum should be adapted to the needs of vocal education in colleges and universities in the new era.

A scientific and reasonable music curriculum system is of great significance to the healthy development of Chinese music education. Teachers can actively open folk songs and original folk songs courses. China has a long history, and the folk songs of 56 nationalities, which are the most numerous and widely distributed in the world, represent China's national culture. After 5000 years of accumulation and sedimentation, China's excellent traditional music has become a great source for the development of Chinese folk vocal art. [23] The development of Chinese vocal art has its roots and its own traditions. [24] Most of the more widely circulated folk songs are adapted from folk ballads and folk music. Folk ballads have a long history, and they are a kind of musical culture that first recorded the love of the labor life of various ethnic groups and were passed down by word of mouth. Due to the influence of geographical, customary and linguistic factors, the style of folk songs of various ethnic groups varies, among which, there are Shaanxi folk songs, Xinjiang folk songs, Hunan folk songs, Sichuan folk songs, Mongolian folk songs, which can be classified into three types according to the genre: folk songs, labor horns, and ditties. When singing folk songs, it is necessary to have a certain understanding of the language characteristics, customs, regional characteristics, living customs, and the sound range characteristics of folk songs. Adaptation of folk songs is based on the inheritance of the original folk songs, the innovation of the art form, some of them are direct combing of the original folk songs, and some of them are drawing nutrition from the original folk songs, and innovating in the tone, harmony, orchestration, etc., so that the adapted folk songs, such as "Meng Jiangnu", "Orchid Blossom", "Basket Weaving", etc., have more modern, entertainment and other artistic characteristics. In the teaching process, teachers need to take the initiative to protect the students' original natural singing methods, so that they can naturally sing their hometown folk songs, respecting the most stylistic features, the most flavorful, simple, pure and natural original singing methods, in order to enhance the students' comprehensive music literacy. In addition, in the process of research for the professional curriculum, the theoretical study of national culture should be strengthened and the cultivation of national singing skills should be enhanced. The school can also set up a drama club, which invites a group of excellent Peking Opera performing artists, as well as the inheritors of local folk songs, to give lectures and conduct academic exchanges.

Targeted teaching practice

Integrate the internship into the curriculum system to make it a benign development mode of "teaching-practice-teaching-practice". We should strengthen the teaching practice and integrate the practice content into the teaching content. Performing arts must be inseparable from practice, detached from the actual, will become empty and meaningless. [25] Therefore, this kind of virtuous circle is the most effective and necessary initiative for the benign development of China's vocal art

career. Teachers should be able to adapt to local conditions and set up localized teaching models. In order to promote the high-level development of Chinese vocal music career, it is necessary to have a set of scientific, artistic and accurate teaching concepts, as well as a group of high-quality vocal music teachers to participate in the process. At present, there are 11 professional music colleges in the country, and vocal performance majors have been set up in all comprehensive colleges and universities as well as second-level colleges of higher teacher training throughout the country. The degree of development of vocal music teaching is not balanced due to factors such as geographic location, teacher ratio, and student population. [26] At present, the curriculum system of vocal music teaching in domestic colleges and universities has always been established in accordance with the Western teaching system, and the basic courses of vocal music majors and the art enrollment exams are all based on the Western teaching system of sight-singing, ear training, music theory, and piano, and in the teaching system of vocal education, the cultivation goal of talents is still ambiguous. In music education, music education has gradually formed a teaching model based on Western American voice, supplemented by local ethnic singing. It is undeniable that the reform of college vocal music teaching is an important topic in the reform of college vocal music teaching. First of all, it is necessary to innovatively open local specialties course, combine opera singing with modern singing styles, and integrate opera music into vocal teaching, which is of great significance to the cultivation of students' aesthetic quality, artistic connotation, and comprehensive singing ability. For example: Sichuan region can start Sichuan opera, Henan start Yu opera, Hebei start Hebei Bangzi, Northeast start "Northeast drums", Hunan start "flower drum opera". The practice of singing local folk songs can be integrated into the process of reform in each region. Secondly, when opening minority courses, we should take into account the characteristics of the student population and adopt diversified and diverse teaching methods. Thirdly, in the process of exploring the reform of the vocal music curriculum, it is necessary to extend the first classroom to the second classroom, to practice singing outside the classroom, to show the spirit that literature and art are for the public, and to reach out to the grassroots, the community, and the masses to carry out a large number of mass singing activities.

CONCLUSION

After more than a hundred years of development and construction, China's vocal music has experienced an ordinary but arduous road of exploration, leaving behind many classics that have been handed down to the world, a large number of popular singers, a large number of dedicated researchers and outstanding educators, a large number of composers who have deeply penetrated into the lives of the people and expressed their feelings, and a large number of theoretical researchers. China's vocal works, to sing the praises of the Communist Party, the great motherland, the great people, the great times, always standing in front of the times, always synchronized with the Chinese revolution, the socialist cause of progress. China's music genres have taken shape. In the further construction of "Chinese Vocal Music School", we should also further enrich, improve and strengthen Chinese vocal music art, recognize and understand Chinese vocal music from various perspectives, such as history, culture, art, China and the West, reality, etc., and continuously strengthen the research and practice on a solid foundation. Chinese vocal music art has a distinctive national character, and it has accumulated a rich cultural heritage and created brilliant vocal music achievements in its long history. On the road of future development, Chinese vocal music must take the road of diversified development, not only inheriting the essence of traditional vocal culture in a comprehensive way, but also absorbing foreign vocal culture and modern vocal culture, so as to combine them with Chinese vocal art and make Chinese vocal art become more perfect, diversified and personalized.

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