



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Study on the National Characteristics of Modern Chinese Opera Music**

Xiaobo Fu<sup>a</sup>, Surapol Nesusin<sup>b</sup>, Chalerm Sak Pikulsri<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a,b,c</sup> Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

<i>ARTICLE INFO</i>	<i>ABSTRACT</i>
Received: Oct 26, 2024 Accepted: Dec 17, 2024	Opera is known as the "pearl on the crown of music art" and has a history of over 400 years in Europe. The development process of modern Chinese opera over the past century is essentially the sinicization of European opera, mainly manifested in actively exploring the integration and inheritance of traditional Chinese music, mainly traditional Xiqu (traditional Chinese opera) art, based on learning and borrowing from European opera art. In addition to the general characteristics of European opera, modern Chinese opera music also exhibits distinct national features of Chinese music culture. The author starts with a music analysis of many representative opera works, focusing on the national characteristics of modern Chinese opera music from three aspects: music system, creative techniques, and instrumental accompaniment. At the same time, this article objectively analyzes the problems and difficulties in the current creation of modern Chinese opera music, attempting to deeply examine the national characteristics of modern opera music from the perspectives of epistemology and methodology to promote the creative practice of modern Chinese opera music.
<p><b>Keywords</b></p> Chinese modern opera Music system National characteristic Composition Techniques	
<p><b>*Corresponding Author:</b></p>	

Opera is a comprehensive stage art form that combines music with poetry, theatrical performance, dance, stage art, costumes, and more. It originated in Italy in the 17th century and later spread to various European countries. In the early 19th century, missionaries and diplomats introduced Western opera to China. After the New Culture Movement in 1919, modern Chinese opera became the general name of the opera art form created by Chinese people based on learning from European opera creation concepts and techniques, inheriting the excellent tradition of Chinese traditional music, especially Xiqu music and combining Chinese language, drama, dance, and other elements.

It has been 104 years since the birth of China's first children's musical, Sparrow and Child (1920, by Li Jinhui). During the exploratory period (1920-1949), the main form of imitation was Western opera, and the musical style was relatively "westernized". Historical progress was made in combining exploration with traditional Chinese Xiqu music. During the development period (1949-1999), more attention was paid to social reality issues, and the music style became more realistic, gradually establishing the essential positioning of modern Chinese opera. During the prosperous period (2000-2024), emphasis was placed on reflecting modern social issues, and the music style became more modern, diverse, and international, forming the unique national characteristics of Chinese modern opera music and laying a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the further prosperity of Chinese modern opera. However, modern Chinese opera art is still far from reaching a genuinely prosperous stage, and it is in a relatively weak position on the stage of world opera art exchange. The creation and performance techniques of modern Chinese opera need to be further improved, and the research and creative practice of the national characteristics of Chinese music in opera music still

need to explore its profound connotations. Enable modern Chinese opera to be accepted, welcomed, and disseminated on a broader scale.

## **2. Research Objectives**

This research aims to examine the national characteristics of modern Chinese opera music by analyzing its integration of traditional Chinese music elements, particularly traditional Chinese opera, with European operatic art. This study aims to investigate the unique features of modern Chinese opera music through three critical dimensions: the music system, creative techniques, and instrumental accompaniment, to identify how these aspects reflect the essence of Chinese music culture while maintaining operatic standards, offering insights that support the continued development and innovation of modern Chinese opera within a national and cultural framework.

## **3. METHODS**

This study is a fundamental research project employing developmental research methods, focusing on exploring the national characteristics of modern Chinese opera music. The research adopts a dual approach to data collection, combining literature research to analyze the historical, cultural, and theoretical foundations of modern Chinese opera music with field investigations to obtain firsthand insights into its current creative practices, performance styles, and reception. The primary focus is to examine the integration of traditional Chinese musical elements, particularly Xiqu (traditional Chinese opera), within the framework of European opera music, analyzing key aspects such as music systems, creative techniques, and instrumental accompaniment.

The study applies aesthetic and cultural theories to evaluate the artistic and national values inherent in modern Chinese opera music. It explores how these elements can be further adapted and reinterpreted to align with contemporary artistic and societal expectations. Researchers undertake analytical and creative work, producing detailed evaluations of representative modern Chinese opera pieces while critically examining the challenges and limitations in their development. This dual approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the sinicization process of modern opera music. It identifies strategies to enhance its artistic dimensions, preserve its cultural authenticity, and address contemporary cultural needs. Ultimately, the research contributes to modern Chinese opera music's sustainable development and transmission. It offers insights into its integration within cultural education and its potential for broader dissemination and innovation in global musical contexts.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1 The National Characteristics of Modern Chinese Opera Music**

The characteristics of modern Chinese opera music include the general features of contemporary world opera art and distinct national features. These features are formed in the context of Chinese social history and culture, drawing on the excellent achievements of Western opera and inheriting traditional Chinese music, showing significant stability, uniqueness, historicity, cultural diversity, etc. The following will delve into the ethnic characteristics of modern Chinese opera music from three main aspects: music system, creative techniques, and instrumental accompaniment.

#### **4.1.1 Music system**

The world music system is mainly divided into three major music systems: the Persian-Arabic music system, the European music system, and the Chinese music system. European opera art is mainly formed under the thematic framework of the seven-tone scale, major and minor tone system, and the construction of harmonic fabrics in the European music system. It has become the basic paradigm of world opera art creation and has influenced and dominated the development of world opera art.

Modern Chinese opera art development has followed the path of "combining Chinese and Western elements and using foreign elements for Chinese purposes," with a long cultural heritage of traditional Chinese music. It is characterized by the organization of music language in the Chinese music system as its core feature, with the pentatonic organization of scales, the horizontal dimension of texture and ideology, the flexibility of beat and rhythm, and the melodic nature of music as its main features. It has distinct cultural attributes in Chinese music, namely nationality.

The pentatonic organization of Chinese music scales refers to the modes of pentatonic scales or pentatonic melodies composed of pentatonic as the backbone. The pentatonic step comprises five notes: gong, Shang, jue, zhi, and you, which indicate fixed interval relationships and the essential characteristics of progressive tones in melodies. The pentatonic mode includes the pentatonic mode and the sextonic and heptatonic modes with added consonants such as Qingjue (#Jue), Bianzhi (bZhi), Run(#Yu), Biangong (bGong). The pentatonic mode is widely present in ancient Chinese folk music, and on this basis, various changes in Chinese national modes and a complete music theory system have been formed. Therefore, although pentatonic modes can be seen in traditional music in many countries and regions, they are often called the "Chinese mode" or "national mode." The horizontality of music texture thinking refers to the emphasis on horizontal development in texture thinking, that is, the emphasis on the horizontal flow and variation of melody rather than the vertical construction of harmony. The flexibility of rhythm and beat is mainly reflected in the combination of the length and strength of the notes, as well as the diversity of rhythm combinations related to the measure, rather than strictly following the rhythm rules of Western music. For example, the use of "sanban" and "youban," as well as the simultaneous use of "youban" and "sanban" in different voices, all reflect the uniqueness and freedom of rhythm in Chinese music; The Sound cavity (It is a specific style of sound process that contains components of particular pitch, intensity, and timbre changes) of music emphasizes the fluidity of melodies in Chinese music, with rich variations in pitch and rhythm, and intense emotional and artistic expression.

For example, the soprano aria Love Song in the opera Cangyuan (1995, written by Huang Weiruo and Feng Boming, composed by Xu Zhanhai and Liu Hui) is a binary form consisting of a prelude + A + interlude + B + coda. The A section is the F-Zhi mode, and the B is the F-Yu mode. Its specific scale arrangement and interval relationship endow music with specific emotional colors and stylistic characteristics, making it a typical Chinese ethnic music mode.

In the opera, The Long March (2016, written by Zou Jingzhi and composed by Yin Qing), a soprano aria called March Peach Blossoms in the Heart adopts a parallel binary form with a G-Yu pentatonic mode, 4/4 beats, and medium speed. Through the careful design of the introduction, interlude, and epilogue, as well as the repeated appearance of these materials, the tonal characteristics of the Yu tone in Jiangxi folk songs are fully reflected. The melody is beautiful and pleasant, fully satisfying the auditory aesthetic needs of the audience, reflecting the rich local characteristics of Jiangxi, expressing the emotions of the revolutionary base people towards the Red Army soldiers, and showcasing the unique charm of the national character of the Chinese pentatonic music system.

In short, opera music creation based on the Chinese music system is a fundamental characteristic of modern opera creation in China, and it is a universal writing rule and inevitability. Although some excellent works are written according to the European music system in the creation of modern Chinese opera, few works are absolutely "westernized." "combining Chinese and Western elements and using foreign elements for Chinese purposes" is a universal understanding and principle. The extensive application of the Chinese music system in creating modern Chinese opera showcases the artistic style, national characteristics, and cultural confidence of Chinese modern opera music.

#### **4.1.2 Composition methods**

Today, the creative method of theme throughout European opera is still widely adopted and dominant worldwide. This technique mainly involves shifting, reversing, and transposing the core theme material, changing the beat and duration of the music, adding prefixes or suffixes, filling intervals with sound, and repeating and changing the core material to appear throughout the theme segment. These themes have an attractive melody and play a role in structurally unifying the musical material of the entire play, forming a musical thread that runs through the entire play. These techniques demonstrate the composer's meticulous global thinking and superb compositional skills and enable opera's musical materials to present diverse thematic forms in unity, enhancing the attractiveness and expressiveness of the music.

Overall, the creative techniques of modern Chinese opera music are a fusion of Chinese and Western styles, mainly reflected in the borrowing of Western opera creative techniques and the inheritance and innovation of traditional Chinese music, especially Xiqu music creative techniques. There are roughly two modes of creation: one is to use ethnic music materials and imitate the mode of Western opera for creation; Another type is mainly based on traditional Xiqu music, using certain folk songs, quyi, and Xiqu music materials, musical structures, and creative techniques from ethnic music for creation. We commonly refer to them as Chinese Xiqu creative techniques. These two modes not only preserve the essence of national culture but also absorb the successful expression techniques of Western opera. Therefore, pure and singular creative techniques are extremely rare or non-existent in modern Chinese opera. At the same time, new elements of the times will inevitably be integrated into actual creative practice, forming a more diverse range of writing techniques.

The techniques used in creating traditional Chinese Xiqu music represent the characteristics of modern Chinese opera music writing techniques. There is a relatively systematic theoretical inheritance and successful creative practice in applying traditional Chinese Xiqu music factors. This technique is mainly reflected in the inheritance and development of the traditional Chinese opera's Banqiang and Qupai creative techniques. However, this is only an inheritance, reference, and integration of creative concepts and methods. It is an innovative concept and technique for opera music creation, and there is no such thing as opera created purely using a single Banqiang style and Qupai style creative techniques. Therefore, exploring the characteristics of modern Chinese opera music creation techniques here is exploring the Chinese characteristics in the creative techniques of "combining Chinese and Western elements." The following mainly elaborates on modern Chinese opera's creative thinking and application in creating Banqiang style, Qupai style, and Song penetration and folk song concatenation method.

#### 4.1.3 Banqiang style creation technique

Banqiang style, also known as Banqiang variation style, uses symmetrical upper and lower sentences as the basic unit of singing and evolves into various Ban forms (beats and rhythm forms in traditional Chinese Xiqu music) through certain variation principles. Then, through various transformations of different Ban types to form the music for a play, characterized by concise basic music materials and flexible development forms. The use of Banqiang-style writing techniques in modern Chinese opera is mainly applied to the singing passages of the main characters in the opera. Through Ban forms changes, it promotes the development of the plot and the unfolding of dramatic contradictions.

For example, in the opera *Jiang Jie* (1964, written by Yan Su, composed by Yang Ming, Jiang Chunyang, Jin Sha, etc.), the core area *Five Continents People Laugh Together* cleverly uses the "Banqiang style," creative technique for music layout. The Banqiang style structure of the song is: Sanban (slow pace, irregular free rhythm)—Lento—Allegro Qingban (sung unaccompanied) — Sanban—Lento — Allegro. This work has a three-stage structure consisting of 1/4, 2/4, and 4/4 mixed beats and a scattered beat. Each part's rhythm, speed, and intensity are different, and the musical emotions and

feelings expressed are also different. In the introduction section, the speed is relatively free, the rhythm is slightly faster, and a scattered beat is used, followed by a 4/4 beat. The first paragraph adopts a "seven sentences" structure, changing from a Sanban to a Lento with 4/4 beats. The speed of the second paragraph is faster than before, with a cheerful rhythm and significant fluctuations. The emotions shift from lyrical to narrative, using a 4/4 beat with drag as a transition and then entering the fast-paced part of the segmented song. The third paragraph returns to the Sanban, a slow-paced and emotionally free music that climaxes the entire play. The Ban form has various changes from Sanban—to Lento—to Allegro, followed by the phrase "one person falling, ten thousand people rising," becoming one beat, one Ban. Finally, use a slow tempo and enter the end with 4/4 and 2/4 beats. The music structure is prosperous and progressive, enhancing the dramatic aspect of the music and pushing it to the highest point of the entire drama.

In the opera *Yimeng Mountain* (2016, written by Wang Xiaoling and Li Wenxu, composed by Luan Kai), the musical characteristics of traditional Xiqu, such as "Duo Ban" (refers to the chopping-like quality of the rhythm, A rapid, percussive, and repetitive rhythm pattern, often used in traditional Chinese music to create a sense of urgency or excitement), Tuo Qiang (refers to this technique of elongating and embellishing a melody for emotional effect, often characterized by a slow, lingering quality that extends beyond the expected duration of a note or phrase), and Jinla Manshang (rapid accompaniment with slow singing), are integrated into the melody and rhythm of the singing sections, enriching the variations of the singing sections. The drama's main vocal passages that use the flat Banqiang style writing technique include *Open Your Eyes in the Sky*, *Waiting for Me*, *Dear Daughter of Yimeng*, *Path Retreat Life Death*, and *Looking at Relatives Again*. In addition, this opera perfectly integrates the local folk song *Yimeng Mountain Tune* with the plot by using the technique of Banqiang style and adding elements with a sense of the times. It combines the creative mode of the Banqiang style with the standard narrative genre of segmented songs in folk songs to narrate the plot and showcase characters, which conforms to the audio-visual habits of Chinese people watching opera and reflects the innovation and exploration of Chinese national opera in inheritance and development.

#### 4.1.4 Qupai style creation technique

Qupai is a general term for the tune names used in traditional lyric writing and notation. Because the syllables of the tune were written on the sign in ancient times, it is called Qupai, commonly known as a sign. Qupai mostly comes from the folk, with some developed from ci, so there are also Qupai names that are the same as ci pai names (It refers to the name of the melody in ancient Chinese poetry). Qupai style, also known as Lianqu style, is a set of suite music designed according to the needs of singing style. It uses Qupai as the basic structural unit. It combines several different Qupai to form a complete set, including the variation of Sanban—Lento—Allegro—Sanban patterns. The structure of Qupai ensemble has gone through the development process from Changchun (which refers to a form of traditional Chinese folk music and performance art), Zhugong tune, Zaju, and Nanxi, to the maturity stage of Kunqu opera, which has had a significant impact on the development of traditional Chinese music and opera.

The Banqiang style emphasizes more freedom and rhythm changes in singing, while the Qupai style emphasizes the combination of Qupai and the standardization of structure. Chinese modern opera music creatively inherits this technique and has produced some excellent works.

For example, the primary musical materials of the opera *Jiang Jie* (1964, written by Yan Su and composed by Yang Ming, Jiang Chunyang, and Jin Sha) extensively draw on the musical vocabulary of Sichuan Opera, Wu Opera, Yue Opera, Hangtan, Yangqin, Sichuan Qingyin, Beijing Opera, and other

genres, using traditional Qupai such as Huangyue Diao Shanpo Yang, Qingyang, Erban Qingyang, and Gaoqiang Luntan to create a musical work full of dramatic tension and artistic appeal.

The opera *Peach Blossom Fan* (2023, adapted from Wang Jingyi, composed by Pan Lei) is based on the legendary play *Peach Blossom Fan* by the Qing Dynasty writer Kong Shangren and tells the social reality of Nanjing in the late Ming Dynasty and the reasons for the decline of the political power. In terms of music, the traditional Kunqu opera style was borrowed for creation, retaining classic pieces such as *Beixin Shui Ling*, *Biyu Xiao*, *Li Ting Yan Dai Xie Zhi Sha* from the original work. The Qupai were also developed according to the needs of the plot, innovatively incorporating new musical elements, singing out the joys and sorrows of the play, and expressing the prosperity and sorrows. The selection, application, and innovative development of these Qupais reflect the inheritance of traditional culture and represent the inheritance of traditional culture and a modern interpretation of Eastern aesthetics.

#### **4.1.5 Song penetration and folk song concatenation method**

The song penetration method mainly uses one or several theme songs throughout the play, forming a unified artistic image and emotional expression through theme songs' repeated appearance and changes. It is often used in creating opera music that expresses strong ethnic styles, often based on innovative applications of characteristic music elements in specific ethnic regions. It is not a commonly used technique in modern Chinese opera creation, but it has also produced classic works with distinct national and contemporary characteristics. The opera *Yingshan Hong* (2023, written by Yu Rongjun and composed by Zhang Qianyi) adopts the method of song penetration and becomes an important creative feature. It blends different musical materials to form a muscular musical drama tension. Incorporate the song "Ai ya la" from the Hakka folk songs of southern Jiangxi as musical material and cultural symbols throughout the play. In addition, opera uses choir, solo, trio, and other forms as important means throughout the song, which appears multiple times in the work. The song *There is a Shining Star in the Sky* accurately conveys revolutionary heroism through solo, trio, and other forms, making the musical style grand and emotional, touching people's hearts, and giving this work profound significance and influence.

The folk song concatenation method organically connects and combines multiple folk songs or melodies to form a new musical structure. This method showcases China's rich and diverse folk song culture and provides abundant materials for opera music creation. The opera *He Luting* adopts the method of folk song concatenation, connecting several folk songs, such as *Shan Dan Dan Hua Hong Yan Yan* and *Hua Er*, and developing them into instrumental music based on the original folk songs. These folk songs are recombined and endowed with new artistic expression and emotional depth. Similarly, the opera *Yingshan Hong* showcases a rich and diverse musical style and regional characteristics by connecting folk songs from different regions. This method of connecting folk songs showcases the rich diversity of Chinese folk songs and reflects the creators' innovative practice of traditional Chinese music culture.

In short, the application of creative techniques with Chinese characteristics reflects the continuous innovation and development of modern Chinese opera music based on inheriting tradition. It not only retains the essence of ethnic music but also incorporates modern aesthetic elements, mainly represented by techniques such as Banqiang style, Qupai style, song penetration, and folk song concatenation, to construct a specific Chinese style theatrical atmosphere and emotional expression. It also provides new inspiration and possibilities for the creation of modern opera music, making Chinese modern opera music rich in cultural heritage and distinctive in national characteristics and era features, demonstrating profound national cultural connotations and humanistic spirit.

#### **4.2 Band accompaniment**

Band accompaniment mainly undertakes the accompaniment function of vocal music, playing an indispensable role in setting off the singing style, shaping the form and image, portraying the character's psychology, describing the plot environment, and supporting the performance movements. It is an important part of opera music writing, and together with the vocal music, it forms a complete musical artistic image. The development of accompaniment in modern Chinese opera bands has gone through a continuous exploration, development, and maturity process from simple to complex, from traditional to modern, forming distinct national characteristics of Chinese modern opera in band configuration, accompaniment techniques, and other aspects.

#### **4.2.1 Band configuration**

In the embryonic period of modern Chinese opera, the band configuration was influenced by Western music creation thinking and methods, and combined with the objective social needs reflecting the New Democratic Revolution at that time, a style of accompaniment similar to early Chinese art songs appeared. Subsequently, various forms of opera emerged one after another, such as Nie Er and Tian Han's *Yangtze River Storm*, Xian Xinghai and Li Bozhao's *Rural Song and Military Civilian March*, Wang Dahua and Li Bo's *Brothers and Sisters Clearing the Land*, and Marco's *Husband and Wife Literacy*. These different types of opera works are mainly reflected in the band configuration's concise band composition, prominent core instruments, and innovative accompaniment techniques.

After the emergence of the opera *The White Haired Girl*, the development of modern Chinese opera entered a new stage, and the fusion and innovation of band configuration in its music formed a representative style at that time. In terms of band configuration, the mixed arrangement of traditional Beijing opera bands and Western orchestras successfully combines traditional Chinese music elements with Western composition techniques.

The band configuration of the opera *Wilderness* has undergone multiple adjustments and changes in years of stage practice and has become a typical example. In early performances, the standard symphonic accompaniment was used, providing rich harmonic colors for the opera, enhancing the personalization and impact of the music, and making it more auditory and three-dimensional. In a specific performance, the original symphony orchestra accompaniment was innovatively changed to national band accompaniment, which not only deepened the plot and increased visual effects but also brought a new auditory experience to the audience. This change pioneered the creation of Chinese opera. In the *Wilderness* version, China Conservatory of Music launched to celebrate its 60th anniversary; a symphony orchestra was used as accompaniment. These changes reflect the flexibility and diversity of the band configuration in the opera *Wilderness*. Different attempts and innovations have become a form that can be accepted and loved by the audience, opening up new ideas for exploring and developing the band configuration and accompaniment in modern Chinese opera.

Since the 1980s, modern Chinese opera has entered a new stage of development. In the configuration of accompaniment bands, live band accompaniment has become a standard feature of opera accompaniment. At the same time, diversified and diverse opera accompaniment practices are constantly developing.

The accompaniment band configuration of the opera *Li Qingzhao* (2024, written by Jiang Wei and Cai Fujun, composed by Bai Shui and Wang Chigeng) is characterized by its unique sound of guqin, pipa, and bamboo flute, occasionally jumping out of the band, as if bringing the audience into Li Qingzhao's life scene. This configuration not only showcases the charm of traditional instruments and preserves the characteristics of national opera but also incorporates elements of modern symphony, providing the audience with an immersive auditory experience, making the stage performance of the entire work more vivid and enhancing its artistic appeal.

#### **4.2.2 Accompaniment techniques**

The accompaniment techniques of modern European operas retain the essence of traditional operas and integrate modern elements and technologies. The styles and forms are diverse, with a distinctive spirit of experimentation and innovation. In addition to drawing inspiration from European modern opera accompaniment techniques, Chinese modern opera bands mainly inherit the essence of Chinese traditional music (including Xiqu and folk music) accompaniment techniques. Their distinctive national characteristics are mainly reflected in the reference and innovation of Tuoqiang, Baoqiang, and Chenqiang.

Tuoqiang accompaniment is an essential technique in band accompaniment, which maintains the variation in the height, length, strength, tempo, and rhythm of the singing voice, forming a cohesive consistency with the main melody of the singing voice, allowing the singing and instrumental sounds to be consistent, with both urgency and relaxation complementing each other. The opera *Honghu Red Guard* uses techniques such as Tuoqiang from local folk songs in the singing and accompaniment of the characters, achieving a perfect blend of musicality and drama. The opera *Jiang Jie* also successfully uses accompaniment techniques such as Runqiang and Tuoqiang to grasp the national style of the work accurately.

Baoqiang accompaniment is a musical surround and contrast formed around the singer's singing voice during a band performance, thereby enhancing the artistic effect of the performance. It allows the singer to rest in the middle of the singing segment. It drives the subsequent tone changes through the surrounding accompaniment, guiding the emotional fluctuations in the middle and achieving an extension and interweaving of the atmosphere. This technique is not commonly seen in opera accompaniment, but there are also some successful practices; the accompaniment creation of the opera *Meng Jiangnu* (1945, written by Qiu Xingjie and composed by Qiu Xingjie) reflects this creative technique, showcasing a unique artistic flavor by combining Beijing opera performance with Western band accompaniment on the same stage.

Chenqiang accompaniment is a variation technique of Tuoqiang accompaniment, which also plays a role in coordinating with the singer's singing style. However, in addition to maintaining the same melody, it also requires certain adjustments in emotions and rhythm. For example, the opera *Qu Yuan* (1972, written by Han Wei and Shi Guangnan, composed by Shi Guangnan) uses musical elements such as alternating rhythms and rich and accurate lyrics and tones in its accompaniment music, making the work full of exciting and wonderful emotions and profound ideological connotations.

In summary, the development process and characteristics of accompaniment forms and techniques in Chinese opera reflect the evolution from traditional to modern, from simple to complex. In the 21st century, Chinese modern opera has achieved the "standard configuration" in the live band configuration, focusing on matching with the plot, theme, and cultural elements and creatively adjusting the instrumental configuration promptly, especially for the use of some characteristic instruments, to enhance the unique Chinese characteristics and artistic charm. The band's accompaniment techniques have maintained distinct national characteristics based on diversification, achieving scientific reference and innovation in Tuoqiang, Baoqiang, and Chenqiang.

## 5. DISCUSSION

During its century-long development, modern Chinese opera has created classic works that are widely sung. Especially in the past two decades, modern Chinese opera art development has presented the best historical opportunity, with strong national support, improving creative systems, forming talent training mechanisms, and improving infrastructure. However, there have yet to be widely beloved and sung classic opera works. The emergence of such a phenomenon must have multiple objective reasons, and understanding this phenomenon and solving one of the problems urgently needs to be discussed.



The national character of modern Chinese opera music creation is the essential feature of modern Chinese opera, which reflects the level of understanding and practical ability of Chinese composers towards Chinese music culture. Today, there are issues with the attitude and methods of borrowing and adapting materials related to traditional Chinese music in some original works, which affects the basic requirements for opera originality. On the contrary, some creators have shown a lack of development, innovative thinking, and courage in applying the Chinese music system, as well as a lack of deep understanding and confidence in local music culture. They find it challenging to integrate the essence of traditional Chinese music culture into opera creation, and their works generally cannot withstand the test of stage practice.

Chinese modern opera music creation inherits the essence of Chinese traditional music based on the successful experience of Western opera. Within the general understanding, opera belongs to the "high art" category. What can be inherited from traditional Chinese music and called 'elegance'? What are the characteristic attributes? How do we apply these "elegant" musical elements to modern opera music creation practice? These are serious issues worth exploring.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The characteristics of modern Chinese opera music are mainly manifested in the application of Chinese ethnic music elements, including the music theory system, creative techniques, and the inheritance of excellent music culture with Chinese characteristics. It is a highly integrated and comprehensive fusion of its national, traditional, and cultural characteristics. In the development process, Chinese modern opera music not only absorbed the successful experience of Western opera but also highlighted its advantages and characteristics in inheriting excellent traditional music, forming a modern opera music style with Chinese characteristics, and achieving the initial prosperity of Chinese modern opera. However, there are also apparent shortcomings and deficiencies. The key to understanding and solving the problems in development lies in a deep understanding of the essence and connotation of Chinese music culture and the combination of opera creation practice. There are also some omissions and issues that need to be further explored in the discourse of the paper. This study will provide valuable references for relevant research on modern Chinese opera art.

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