

Analysis of the Singing of the Excerpt from the Ethnic Opera *Blood and Fire in the Soul*

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Abstract:

Chinese national opera is one of the most important components in the field of Chinese literary and artistic creation, which is mainly produced by the combination of some western music creation forms and ideas on the basis of local music features. The representative work, *The Daughter of the CPC*, is one of the best works of the revolutionary history of the end of the 20th century, and one of the most influential classic operas in the field. And in 1992, the work won the highest award "Wenhua Award" in the field of Chinese drama art, and the classic songs in the play were widely sung. In this article, the author will analyze and discuss the excellent singing *Blood and Fire in the Soul* in the opera *The Daughter of the CPC* through the creation of background, content, style, lyrics, stage art and emotional expression of six aspects, and study the character characteristics and emotional development of the protagonist - Tian Yumei in the work. At the same time, through the analysis of the content of the work, combined with the theory and practice of the emotional expression, singing processing analysis, so as to more complete interpretation of the work on the stage.

Keywords:

Tian Yumei, Singing Analysis, Ethnic Opera

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the Songwriters and Composers

Songwriter, Yan Su, born in Baoding (formerly Dingxian County, Hebei Province), primitive name is Yan Zhiyang, is a literary giant and playwright, a famous songwriter in China, and has a long-standing reputation. He has been engaged in art for over 60 years throughout his life, and has always adhered to and firmly to the people as the center oriented creative ideas, Mr. Yan Su is sincere, and his works are upright, full of passion. He has never forgotten to practice the Chinese people's road of literature and art, and has been fighting in eulogizing the melody of the times, carry forward the national spirit of the literary and artistic front line, created the song *I Love the Blue Sky of the Motherland*, the opera *Jiang Jie*, the *Daughter of the CPC* that we analyze today, and so on a large number of classic red patriotic.

Songwriter, Mr. He Dongjiu, who joined the army in 1969, was born in Susong County, Anhui Province. During his military career.

Mr. He Dongjiu served as a soldier, a military document, a military director, and frontline creator of the song and dance troupe of the Nanjing Military Region (now called the Nanjing Theater Command), creator of the general political troupe (now called the Opera Troupe of Political Work Department of Central Military Commission), and also a first-level screenwriter in our country.

Composer, Wang Zujie, a civilian rank major general, and is a Chinese first-level composer. His representative work *Fragrant Grass Heart*, in 1984, won the first prize of opera drama and music creation issued by the Ministry of Culture, and the theme song *The Grass* is widely known in China and has won various awards. His other famous works include the opera *The Daughter of the CPC*, *Wildfire* and *Spring Breeze Fighting the Ancient City* and *Such a Forest in the South* (chorus set) and so on.

Composer, Zhang Zhuoya, is a famous Composer with representative works include *Eternal Mood for Love* and *Thinking of Children* and so on.

1.2. Creation Background

Creation process face great changes in the international situation, such as the breakup of the USSR and the Eastern Europe upheaval. Faced with such a creative background, Yan Su's political stance was very firm, with firm ideals and beliefs about the organization. Whether the music or lyrics, the opera creators infiltrate this international background into the plot, shaping a story of ordinary people who still adhere to the ideals and beliefs of the organization in the most difficult time, under the white terror, under the mutiny of the district CPC secretary. As for the composer Yan Su, who is in his sixties, Wang Zujie, the composer of the play, said: "With 18 days to complete, and under such circumstances, he is an old man after all, if there is no such political enthusiasm, firm ideals and beliefs, it is impossible to be completed, which is a miracle in opera creation."

1.3. Introduction to Work Content

The opera *The Daughter of the CPC* tells the story of the Red Army's Long March northward to resist Japan on the Dujuan Slope in the Jiangxi Soviet Area in 1935. By describing the stories of Tian Yumei, Gui Ying, Ma Jiahui and the White Army, it reflects the heroic spirit and dedication of the communist members for the Chinese nation, unity, the war of resistance, and the final victory. The opera was warmly welcomed by the general public, showing the charm of Chinese national opera to the audience.

Blood and Fire in the Soul is the classic singing of Yumei, and also the first song of the characters, played a role of "wind vane". In the spring of 1935, somewhere in Jiangxi Province, outside the Dujuan Slope, Yumei spent the rest of her life under the protection of the people. After escaping from the Dharma Hall, on this stormy night, she called out to her loved ones, but couldn't wake up and calling out no response. Yumei decided to sacrifice the villagers and comrades to protect her, and struggle with the enemy to the end for the cause of communism.

2. Work Analysis

This work has a three-part melody structure, with an introduction, part A, part B, part C, and a coda.

The introduction part is based on the D-quotient mode as the main tone, and the beat is scattered shooting. Starting with a D-quotient mode vibrate and from the strength to the weak, creating a low and depressing atmosphere at the beginning of the work.

The melody of part A starts with the Shang note, continues to the next section, with a downward trend after the second degree of ascent. The phrase ends on the tonic note with 2/4 beats, with the addition of large dot notes and Bi-syllabic Rhythmic Type, highlighting the characteristics of opera and alternating use of 2/4 beats and 4/4 beats, reflecting the artistic style of scattered shooting.

Part B belongs to the narrative singing segment of the protagonist Yumei, the melody is singing and the rhythm is slow, and alternating use of 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 beats. Each melody starts from weak, which not only follows the above theme, but also adds new elements, and has stronger fluidity.

The whole part C adopts a slow beat, and more appoggiatura is used. The accompaniment alternates between tremolo and column chords, gradually pushing the passage to a small climax as the intensity increases. As the melody moves down in a wave like manner, it gradually slows down, expressing Yumei's sadness and despair to the extreme. The melodic line is long, and the scale of the corresponding segment has also increased. Following this, the rhythm of the ending phrase was continued, starting from weak and two sentences running through the theme. Afterwards, the accompaniment immediately responds to the theme in a question-and-answer manner. The accompaniment uses column chords to increase the intensity of the melody, and the left hand accompaniment also continuously descends to increase the protagonist's firm revolutionary figure image. The D-quotient mode has a single harmony and unified with melody.

The last four sections of the epilogue play the role of summary, and the harmony rising and then falling, implying the ups and downs of the plot, forming the echo, reflecting the layout of the musical form of transition. The whole song has a strong national color and rich harmony changes, which reflects the character of Yumei from all aspects.

3. Experience in Singing the Selected Opera Segments *Blood and Fire in the Soul*

3.1. Understanding of Lyrics

In order to sing this work well, it's very important to master the tone of the lyrics. This work is created by the author based on the real story in the revolutionary history, and the main melody of this section is created based on the plate cavity of Pu Opera, a local opera in Shanxi. In ethnic operas, there are also many creations using drama or local characteristics, which we can learn from [1]. Although it follows the performance form of foreign opera, national opera also has strict requirements for enunciation and rhyme returning. Most are using the tone of the statement, for the narrative, there are much more ingredients being said than being sung, each Chinese

voice need to express clearly to expand, finally at the end of a very short ending rhyme returning, pay attention to the coherence of the lyrics. For example, in the introduction section, in the continuous progression of the left hand vibratory sound of the accompaniment, the strength is also changed from medium weak to medium strong. After two bars, the piano accompaniment form by the decomposition of the slow chord into column chord. The big jump of the right hand octave chord adds the triplet sixteenth note rhythm pattern, and the intensity also becomes strong in the fifth bar, making the color more intense, with the left hand to the octave bass gradually descends, the intensity also changes from the previous to the middle and weak, making the mood of the music more heavy. Under this atmosphere, the opening of “faint sky” requires the breath to flow first, biting the initial consonant of each word under very weak strength, slowly unfold the vowel with the piano, and the rhythm is free. And the opening of “dully” will highlight a little, but cannot cause a spout, which needs biting the air when enunciating the word, and the vowel slowly unfolds with the breath. Reflect the endless hatred and suffering. In the narrative part, attention should be paid to the changes in emotions, strong and weak, and handling of breath. For example: section 57-60, twice from the weak to the strong, “impressive knife marks, covering tears” the character needs to focus on the initial consonant, from weak to strong reflects the inner suffering and physical pain after escaping from death. In the section 98-114 there were obvious changes compared with the previous section in the interlude. In the 112th bar, there was a slowing process of the rhythm, a sudden change in allegro, with four octagonal chords alternating with an octave rest, and a turning point. The mood of the protagonist also changed accordingly, and the melody was strong in jumping. When singing, I need to pay more attention to precise pronunciation, and the vowels should be unfolded quickly. Supported by abdominal breathing, singing is forceful, clean, and understand the lyrics through the development of the story [2].

The first part of the song tells the situation of the protagonist Yumei, who narrowly escaped death under the cover of the village secretary. The narrative of the bleak environment reflects Yumei’s sadness and despair. For example: in the C part, the sections are divided and then divided again, and the sections are compact, which makes the atmosphere become tense, struggle in the final pain, need to use crying cavity processing. The latter part is the transformation of the character’s personality, which puts away all the sadness, and the grief and anger into a strong fighting spirit, and in terms of emotions, there is also a process of easing to excitement and then to ease the emotion finally pushed to the climax, to express the revolutionary determination of Yumei.

In the development process of the full story, the emotional changes are well controlled, it will become easier to understand and interpret each lyrics,, which we can refer to [3].

3.2. Stage Performance and Artistic Expression

Any singing in an opera has characters and story-lines. In order to interpret the work well, it’s necessary to deeply understand and analyze the content of the work under the correct scientific singing method, in-depth understanding and analysis of the content of the work, and shape the character image well. And the speed of this preferred paragraph has also undergone many changes, because of the addition of opera materials, many scavenging ports have also been adjusted, which is conducive to emotional processing. When the rhythm slows down or gradually faster, it needs

the breath to keep steady, which we can learn from [4]. The highest sound of this work is in the G section of the second group of small characters, for example: bars 88-90, "Crying Yingling", bars 140- 142, "take a walk in front of the Gate of Hell", 150- 152 bars, "I want to fight with you!" These are all places where emotions are very high. When singing, it is important to keep some rationality while being excited, to achieve the emotional promotion, and to ensure the quality of the sound [5]. When the melody of the work in many big jumps, the singer also needs to be consistent with the intonation, the speed change is also very large, so also requires grasp the rhythm accurately, inner rhythm is more accurate than external rhythm, to do these, must be very skilled master spectrum. For the singing of the opera, the stage performance is the embodiment of one's abilities, each singer likes to release themselves on the stage, show themselves, and stage performance is based on the content understanding, the role of emotional analysis in place, on the basis of will reveal the heartfelt emotion, reflects the most natural performance, body language, of course, is also a particularly expressive form of emotions. For example, when the work begins to portray the protagonist Yumei's inner torment and physical pain after narrowly escaping death, she stands on both feet, the upper body maintains relaxed, and eyes also have content, looking from the inside to outside. As the accompaniment pushes the emotion to a small climax, the downward movement of the body, eyes and hands also changes from slow to fast, from relaxation to powerful, which further arouses the listener's thoughts and generating emotional resonance [6].

3.3. Emotive Expressions

In the performance, it's necessary to design the expression of the characters' emotions, and analyze the content of the work is the key, to have a deeper understanding of the work. The protagonist Yumei, under the desperate protection of the villagers, regains her soul in blood and escapes from death. The music is organically combined with different tempo styles such as ragtime, lento, and allegro.

For example: from the question in the introduction of the work, "in a dim and dull sky, how can I regain my soul in Yumei's blood and fire?" whether this is true or a dream, it's necessary to show the doubts about rebirth. In the narrative singing segment of the protagonist Yumei, the melody has singing, such as the description of "rain is falling one after another, wind is blowing, calling out for loved ones" to reflect Yumei's sadness and despair, so in singing to show this desperate situation, to reflect the endless hatred and suffering. At the turn of the rhythm in the second half, the protagonist's emotions also turn accordingly, transforming the grief and frustration in his heart into later tenacious. [7]

The revolutionary image of the characters was then established, which we can learn from it [8]. It describes the Yumei's unyielding lofty revolutionary belief and the grief and anger of the loss of loved ones. The dramatic melody line turns into the concrete description of the emotional line, while the turbulent free rhythm, the painful melody, and the strong dramatic tension perfectly express the situation when Yumei woke up after taking a walk at the gate of death. [9] Throughout the whole work, it's not only necessary to achieve subtle emotional changes, such as: "Crying, Yingling," from the high emotion to the slow down of the "ah" melody, will control the strength, but more important is not from the characters, from the beginning of the accompaniment sound, will get into the characters, with the development of the story to express emotions, until the accompaniment of the final shock of the free singing with the end of the

column chord, and stay seconds can end the role of the deduction, also can't out of the play. Therefore, a good grasp of the character characteristics and details, is conducive to a better interpretation of the works [10].

4. Conclusions

When creating the musical image of *The Daughter of the Part*, the author constantly delves into the masses and deeply dug out their thoughts and emotions. The work is created on the basis of loyalty to the reality, absorbing the creation characteristics of many folk local music, and also referred to the creative experience of the earlier generation of Chinese writers. A serious discussion was conducted on various aspects such as the personalities of different characters in the play, how to dramatize the local folk songs, the relationship between the singing part and the spoken part, and the unity of other musicality. This song is also perfectly demonstrates the loyalty and love of the people towards the organization, people, the country under the environment at that time. For singers, understand works, singing skills, the portrayal of Characters, emotional processing is very important. No matter any work, it's necessary to complete it step by step, starting from multiple aspects to understand the background, grasp the original intention expressed by the author, get close to the characters closer, and clearly understand the structure and the characteristics of the melody, so as to complete the performance of the work on the stage. To aspire to a better performance, singers need to have a deep understanding of the source material before singing and analyze the emotions to be expressed in the aria based on the overall plot development of the opera. Chinese national opera also places great emphasis on pronunciation and requires flexible control over singing skills. However, the most crucial aspect of national opera is the portrayal of characters. The image, eyes, stage presence, and body language are integral in representing the essence of the characters themselves. Moreover, it is paramount to infuse emotion into all these elements and adjust it according to the fluctuations of the melody and the progression of the plot. Whether it is an individual art song or any other Chinese or foreign work, it needs to be approached step by step. One should start by understanding the background and history, clearly grasp the original intention expressed by the author, reflect the social environment, empathize with the characters, and authentically convey the transformations occurring within their hearts. Furthermore, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the structure of musical form, the characteristics of harmony and melody development, and possess a solid foundation in all these aspects. Only then can one fully present exceptional performances on stage, aptly express the essence of the works, seamlessly combine the theoretical knowledge with practical experience, showcase proficiency ranging from the practice room to the stage, summarize and build upon the learning from stage performances, continue to carry forward excellence, improve weaknesses, and learn continuously from predecessors.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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