

Analysis on the Integration of Bel Canto Singing and Chinese Art Song Singing

Qindong Wang^{1*}, Raja Iskandar Raja Halid¹

¹ University Malaysia Kelantan, Kota Bharu, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: qindong777@sina.com

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Abstract: *The integration of Bel canto singing and Chinese art song singing is the concrete embodiment of the localization process of bel canto singing in China. This paper discusses the characteristics of Bel canto singing, the singing characteristics of Chinese art songs and the practice and significance of their integration, analyzes how Bel canto singing infuses new vitality into the singing of Chinese art songs, and tries to find the localization integration of Bel canto singing with Chinese national cultural elements in the process of spreading in China and promotes the development of Chinese vocal music art.*

Keywords: Bel canto, Chinese art song singing, Music localization, Music fusion

1. The characteristics of Bel Canto singing and its integration with Chinese national singing

Bel Canto singing, originating in Italy in the 17th century, is renowned for its scientific approach to vocal technique, its beautiful timbre, and its expressive power. This vocal method is characterized by its emphasis on proper breathing techniques, the use of the resonating cavities, and the unity of the vocal registers. These elements work together to produce a sound that is round, smooth, and sustained over time. The beauty of the timbre is also an important feature of Bel Canto singing; it seeks purity, richness, and resonance, aiming for a sound that is both penetrating and full of emotional depth. The flexibility of the voice allows for dramatic shifts in volume, speed, and pitch, facilitating the communication of varied emotions and musical imagery. Chinese folk singing, on the other hand, is a vibrant and diverse form of expression shaped by the various ethnic groups within China, each with its own language, customs, and traditions. It is marked by a range of unique vocal techniques and musical styles. The diversity of China's ethnic structure contributes to the wide variety of approaches to singing. In comparison to Bel Canto singing, Chinese folk singing often features a more forward sound position, with resonance locations that align more naturally with the vocal anatomy typical of East Asian voices. The tone is often bright and direct, reflecting the cultural and linguistic differences across the nation's many peoples. One of the most notable distinctions between Bel Canto and Chinese folk singing is the emphasis on breath support and vocal resonance. While Bel Canto focuses on a stable, scientifically grounded approach to breath control, sound coherence, and vowel resonance, Chinese folk singing incorporates a more intuitive, culturally specific approach to these elements. Folk singers often rely on natural resonance and a deep connection to the music's emotional content, but may lack the precise, methodical training that Bel Canto provides. This difference sometimes leads to a more variable approach to vocal style and, at times, an inconsistent vocal quality (Hu, 2012).

The integration of Bel Canto singing into Chinese folk music education is an exciting development. Over time, elements of Bel Canto's scientific methods have been incorporated into the training of Chinese folk singers, particularly in ethnic minority areas. This fusion improves the longevity and stability of folk singers' voices while preserving the emotional expressiveness of their music. For example, the incorporation of breath training and resonance control into traditional folk singing helps stabilize the vocal performance of singers who may not have had access to formal vocal training (Liu, 2017). Furthermore, the addition of Bel Canto methods into the training of ethnic singers helps to enhance the overall musicality of Chinese folk songs, blending the richness of both traditions. The most significant benefits of integrating Bel Canto techniques with Chinese folk singing are the improved control over atmosphere and the more deliberate use of sound resonance. In the case of the grassland songs of China's ethnic minorities, for instance, many singers who have not undergone formal training often possess a naturally beautiful timbre but struggle with maintaining vocal stability. This can result in an uneven performance, where the stylistic essence of the music is lost. By integrating the principles of Bel Canto, such as breath management and sound consistency, these singers can maintain greater vocal control while still conveying the emotions inherent in their traditional music.

2. The characteristics of Chinese art songs

Chinese art songs are vocal music works created by Chinese composers since the beginning of the 20th century by drawing on the form of western art songs and combining the elements of Chinese folk music. Its characteristics are mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the nationality, the melody, rhythm, harmony and other aspects of Chinese art songs are integrated into the elements of Chinese folk music, with distinct national characteristics; The second is literature. (Liu, 2017) The lyrics of Chinese art songs are mostly selected from Chinese classical poetry or modern poetry, which has high literary value. At the same time, it is also artistic. Chinese art songs pay attention to the perfect combination of music and poetry, and pursue the artistic effect of profound artistic conception and sincere emotion.

A good culture must have a good lyricist, and China has produced a large number of excellent songwriters and excellent Chinese art songs. Some of the most representative composers are Xiao Youmei, Zhao Yuanren, Qing Zhu, Ren Guang, Ying Shangneng, Zhang Hanhui, Huang Zi, Liu Xuan, Xian Xinghai, He Luting, Ma Sicong, Jiang Wenye, Jiang Dingxian, Chen Tianhe, Tan Xiaolin, Ding Shande, Nie Er, Huang Youdi, Xia Zhiqiu, Lu Huabai, Lin Shengxi, Huang Yongxi, Sang Tong, etc. Typical works include: "Ask", "Teach me How to miss Her", "Three Wishes of the Rose", "Homesickness", "On the Songhua River", "Hometown" and so on (Li, 2014).

3. Advantages and disadvantages of Bel canto singing

3.1 Advantages

Scientific and stable: Bel canto singing focuses on scientific vocal skills, such as correct breathing support, the use of resonating cavity and the reasonable operation of the vocal cords, to help the singer maintain long-term stability and avoid damage to the voice. Through systematic training, the singer can better control the volume, pitch and timbre, with a very high voice performance and stability (Liu, 2016).

Purity and roundness of timbre: Bel canto singing emphasizes the purity, roundness and penetration of the sound, making the singing sound have a high artistic charm in hearing and attract the attention of the audience.

Rich emotional expression: Through the accurate control of sound skills, singers can carry out detailed changes in volume, speed, strength and other aspects, showing rich emotions and musical connotations, suitable for the interpretation of a variety of emotional complex opera and art songs.

Adapt to a variety of musical styles: Bel canto singing is not only widely used in Western opera, art songs, but also can adapt to other forms of music singing, with high cross-cultural adaptability.

3.2 Disadvantages

High technical requirements: the skill training of Bel canto singing is very rigorous and complex, and beginners need a long time of basic training to reach a certain level. Therefore, the learning process can be difficult for students who lack time and resources.

Too much emphasis on skills: Sometimes Bel canto singing may pay too much attention to the perfection of skills, ignoring the natural flow of music and the intuitive expression of emotions, which may lead to the singer in the excessive pursuit of technology at the same time, the emotional expression of the lack of agility and personalization.

Not suitable for all voice types: Bel canto singing requires a high range and is not suitable for all voice types. For example, certain singers with low timbre or special voices may have difficulty singing bel canto.

4. Advantages and disadvantages of Chinese art song singing

4.1 Advantages

Integration of culture and emotion: Chinese art song singing pays attention to the correspondence with the lyrics and cultural background, and emphasizes the accurate expression of national characteristics and language pronunciation. It can convey a strong Chinese emotion and cultural connotation through the perfect combination of sound and lyrics, and has strong national characteristics (Yang, 2013).

Clarity and expressiveness of timbre: Chinese art song singing pays more attention to the clarity of sound, and attaches great importance to the accurate pronunciation of Chinese characters and the expression of sound quality when singing, so that the singer can accurately convey the emotion of the song while retaining the traditional sound quality.

Artistry and affinity: The singing techniques of Chinese art songs are more flexible, which can not only show skills, but also take into account emotional expression. The singer can maintain a strong affinity and expressiveness when expressing emotions, so that the audience is easy to resonate.

4.2 Disadvantages

Lack of technical standards: Compared with Bel canto singing, the singing skills of Chinese art songs lack a unified and systematic training method, resulting in some singers may have

unstable situations in vocal range control, breathing support and the use of resonating cavity, thus affecting the overall effect of singing.

Simplified skills: Chinese art song singing emphasizes less on the fine refinement of timbre and the strict training of skills, which may be slightly insufficient in the continuity of sound and the fullness of timbre, especially in complex art song singing, which may not meet the high standards of bel canto singing.

Limited by language and cultural background: Although Chinese art songs incorporate national characteristics into songs, this approach may also be limited by language and cultural background. When learning songs in other languages, there may be a lack of effective mastery of foreign singing techniques and expressions, limiting the variety of singing styles (Yang, 2013).

5. The fusion of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art song singing

The fusion of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art songs is the inevitable trend of the cultural exchange between China and the West, and also the inevitable requirement of the development of Chinese vocal music art. This integration is mainly reflected in the following aspects: the integration of vocal methods: on the basis of maintaining the scientific vocal methods of Bel canto singing, absorbing the enunciation and enunciation skills of Chinese national singing to make singing more clear and natural; The integration of timbre: on the basis of maintaining the beautiful timbre of Bel Canto singing, it integrates the timbre characteristics of Chinese national singing to make the timbre more rich and diverse; The integration of expressive force: on the basis of maintaining the rich expressive force of Bel Canto singing, it integrates the emotional expression of Chinese national singing to make the singing more delicate and moving (Xu, 2013).

The integration of Bel canto singing and Chinese art song singing has different difficulties in the application of specific vocal technology. For example, the adjustment of breathing and resonance in vocal technology is used in Chinese art song singing. Bel Canto singing emphasizes the combination of chest and abdomen breathing, controlling the breath through the diaphragm to ensure the coherence and penetration of the sound. When singing Chinese art songs, it is necessary to combine the pursuit of "Qi yun" in the national singing method, for example, in "Qinyuan Spring · Snow", the singer needs to adjust through the flexible resonating cavity (such as the balance of the head cavity and the chest cavity), which not only shows the grand mood of the poetry, but also the rounded sense of sound. In the history of modern Chinese music, Mr. Huang Zi is one of the fine creators of Chinese art songs. He integrates literature and music, two seemingly different but essentially similar arts. (A brief analysis of the beauty of Huang Zi's art song "the combination of Chinese and Western lyrics and music" -- taking "Three Wishes of the Rose" and "Homesickness" as examples) The unique language habits of Chinese phonetics make the balance between Chinese articulation and Bel Canto sound need precise control by the singer. For example, in Huang Zi's "Three Wishes for Roses" in the first sentence, third sentence and seventh sentence, "rose", "rotten under the green baluster" and "I wish that the merciless wind and rain that envy me will not blow", the "flower", "next" and "beat" at the end of these three sentences are all hair ruts. End with a final "A". This requires us to be precise in "sound", find the place where the word "sound" begins, and mainly fall on the vowel a after "sound". Pay attention to open the mouth naturally and relax, maintaining the final time value until the end (Xu, 2013).

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of Bel Canto and Chinese art song singing

Singing Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Bel Canto Singing	- Scientific and stable	- High technical requirements
	- Pure and round timbre	- Overemphasis on skills, affecting emotional expression
	- Rich emotional expression	- Not suitable for all voice types
	- Adaptable to various musical styles	
Chinese Art Song Singing	- Integration of culture and emotion	- Lack of technical standards
	- Clarity and expressiveness of timbre	- Simplified skills
	- Artistry and affinity	- Limited by language and cultural background

玫瑰三愿

龙 七词
黄 自曲

Andante

p

玫

p *semplice*

5 *mp*

瑰 花， 玫 瑰 花， 烂 开 在 碧 栏 杆 下， 玫 瑰 花， 玫

mp



The combination of dialect and national language is also the need to pay attention to the combination of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art song singing. If China wants to maintain its

own characteristics and development advantages, it should focus on "localization", and take the essence of foreign vocal music culture and discard the dregs (Discussion on the language problems of Bel Canto singing in the process of "localization" in China) Chinese art songs often incorporate local music elements, such as Yunnan folk song "River Flowing Water" needs to combine the tone characteristics of dialects. Bel canto singing needs to adjust the resonance position of the vowels, for example, in the sentence "the moon comes out bright", through the fine tuning of the resonance of the pharyngeal cavity, highlighting the soft sense of the dialect, while maintaining the unity of the sound. Chinese art songs pay attention to "artistic conception" and "blank", which need to be realized through the contrast of sound. For example, in Zhao Yuanren's "Listening to the Rain", the singer draws on the "stopping" technique of the opera to imitate the sound of raindrops with light staccato, which not only conforms to the implicit beauty of the poetry, but also highlights the fluidity of the Mei Sheng. Bel canto singing needs to break through the misunderstanding of "emphasizing technology and neglecting emotion". For example, in the green master "I live in the Yangtze River", the singer needs to simulate the ups and downs of the river through the strength of the breath (such as gradually strengthening and weakening alternately), combined with the Chinese four-tone tone value, to convey the lingering sense of missing.

6. The significance of the fusion of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art song singing

Bel Canto singing has been widely popularized since it was introduced into China because of its scientificity and appreciation. The integration of Bel canto singing and Chinese art song singing has important practical significance: firstly, it promotes the development of Chinese vocal music art. The introduction of Bel canto singing injected new vitality into Chinese vocal music art and promoted the scientific and standardized development of Chinese vocal music art; Secondly, it promotes the exchange of Chinese and Western music culture. Vocal music art reflects the prosperity of a country and a nation from one side. The fusion of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art songs promotes the exchange and fusion of Chinese and western music culture and enriches the treasure house of world music culture. At the same time, it also improves the international influence of Chinese art songs. The application of Bel canto singing makes Chinese art songs easier to be accepted and appreciated by international listeners, and enhances the international influence of Chinese art songs.

7. Conclusion

The integration of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art song singing is a process of continuous exploration and development. The fusion of Bel Canto singing and Chinese art songs is not only a technological innovation, but also a cultural dialogue. Through the balance of scientific sound and national aesthetic, the refinement of language processing and the deepening of emotional expression, this integration not only promotes the modernization of Chinese vocal music art, but also injects Oriental wisdom into the world music culture. In the future, it is necessary to further explore the cross-border cooperation between traditional opera, folk songs and Bel Canto to form a more distinctive "Chinese Bel Canto" school. It is believed that in the future development, this integration will be more in-depth and make greater contributions to the development of Chinese vocal music art.

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