

# *Kindness, Beauty and Zither of Shanxi--Foresight and dynamic analysis of the development of Shanxi zither*

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**Abstract:** This thesis combines Shanxi's current development trend of zither. The author intends to further explore and integrate Shanxi folk songs, Shanxi opera music, and Shanxi Buddhist music, and use zither as a "benefit and wisdom tool" that is good at "filling rhyme" to express it. On the one hand, it develops Shanxi folk music. on the other hand, it maximizes the use of zither. Thus expresses Shanxi's art form and tells Shanxi stories with zither. This thesis makes the zither have more forms of artistic expression, the artistic expression will be richer, and it will also further develop the thought of Mr. Cao that "the vast nine schools flowing in China".

## **1. Introduction**

General Secretary Xi pointed out at the literary work symposium that the most important thing in current culture is to "avoid impetuosity, seek innovation, and build a team". Then what sparks "seeking innovation" will collide with the theme of "zither and Shanxi Music"? The perfect combination and continuous development of abundant cultural resources and soft and beautiful "rhyme" is the new point of this article. The dynamic research and analysis of the development of Shanxi zither in the new era is the new focus of this article. Hope that the developing Shanxi zither will add a touch of ink to the zither art of "Nine Schools of China"!

## **2. Foresight and dynamic analysis of the development of Shanxi zither**

Forward-looking means to have a long-term vision and be able to think of things that have not yet happened but may happen. Dynamics in this article refers to the activity of the artistic image, but also refers to the changes and development of things. Shanxi's culture is Sanjin culture, but it is not only limited by Shanxi, but it is the ancient birthplace of Chinese culture and an important birthplace of Chinese civilization. Xihoudu culture, from Yihe culture, Dingcun culture, Xujiayao culture, Qiyu culture to Zhuchuan culture more than 14,000 years ago, became the complete sequence of the development of primitive culture in the late Paleolithic period in China. The ancient civilization of Chinese culture that develops in Shanxi, an ancient civilized land, is an important cornerstone for the development of Shanxi's culture.

Shanxi's local opera has a long history and a wide variety of categories, which occupies an important position on the stage of Chinese opera. Jin Opera, Pu Opera, Beilu Bangzi and Shangdang Bangzi are the four pillars of Shanxi local opera, and they are also called "Four Great Bangzi".

1-2]In the 1980 census, in addition to the “Four Great Bangzi”, Shanxi had 52 types of dramas, which ranked among the top in the country. Folk song is one of the old traditional folk arts, and it is spread widely in Shanxi. According to statistics, there are more than 20,000 Shanxi folk songs collected, and they have obvious regional style characteristics. Many folk songs have an extremely wide spread and far-reaching influence even throughout the country. Shanxi Buddhist music is represented by the Buddhist music culture of Mount Wutai and belongs to the northern Buddhist music. It’s style is simple, elegant, solemn and solemn, but independent of the east and west, it forms a system of its own and is the combination of music and religion. In Chinese music culture, Buddhist music of Mount Wutai also occupies an important position. In addition to these three different forms of folk music that have a great influence in Shanxi, there are also a series of folk tunes that have been spread throughout various places, such as Dao Qing in North Shanxi and Jiangzhou drum music. To sum up, the preservation of the integrity of different ethnic folk music in Shanxi Province provides a steady source of nourishment for the development of Shanxi music culture, and of course it also provides a more powerful material guarantee for the zither expressing Shanxi music style.

Throughout the development of zither, the genre is formed in the form of local folk music, separated from the ensemble form, and continuously integrated. [3]Combining the left hand of zither that “complementing the sound with rhyme” with the right hand that combines special technique derived from the characteristics of local music achieves the unique artistic expression form of “solo and tasteful”, and the development history of zither has also gone through a long and bumpy journey. More than two thousand years, the increase in the number of strings, the changes in the shape, and the wearing of the braces have changed a lot, forming more mature playing techniques of the zither, which are mainly divided into left-hand trembling, right-hand shaking, and Play a few big types. In addition, the development of zither has its advantages that distinguish it from other musical instruments. First, the sound range is wide. Since the development of zither, the form has changed from the original five-stringed string to the current twenty-first string, and the range has become wider, suitable for expressing large-scale music, and more suitable for configuring music with rich harmonic effects. Secondly, the various techniques of the left-hand “complementing the sound with rhyme” make the zither more suitable for expressing works of lingering, singing and melody. The different performances of the left-hand “glide up”, “glide down”, “back glide”, “click, press, vibrate, and rub” make the “rhyme” of music richer. Third, the zither’s sound is ethereal, long aftertaste, simple and elegant, soft and rigid, the high range is crisp, clear and grainy, the low range is thick and long, with a sense of vicissitudes. And the combination of high and low sounds will make the work more complete and comprehensive. Fourth, the development of zither’s skills provides a strong guarantee for the diversified interpretation of the works. From the single fingering in the traditional zither’s music at the beginning, it has developed into perfect left-handed skills and richer right-handed skills, which is multi-directional and multi-skill development and exploitation coupled with scientific performance methods, make the ancient instrument of zither more vivid in the new era. Compared with the situation before 1940s (the watershed of the development of zither), the development and performance characteristics of all aspects have more systematic, more standardized, and more diverse advantages and possibilities than other musical instruments.

In the early days of liberation, Mr. Cao Zheng pointed out the idea of “the vast nine schools of Chinese zheng” in the early days of “academicization” and “specialization” of zither teaching, which strongly protected the zither schools. But the author believes that another interpretation is to let more folk musicians and more professionals who engaged in zither will develop, explore and integrate more and more valuable and new territories of zither. Therefore, the author has a bold idea to further develop, excavate and integrate Shanxi folk songs, opera resources, Sanjin culture, and

Sanjin music, and use the unique expression techniques of zither to develop new branches of the “Nine Schools”. Thus creating more for the development of zither, adding fresh blood to Shanxi's cultural industry and realizing the great situation of the “the club of Kindness, Beauty and Zither of Shanxi”. Of course, this is a long historical formation process, and it is also another historical mission that Shanxi people playing zither need to work hard to accomplish! The development of “Shanxi’s zither” is not all going well, and there are the following problems and limitations:

1)zither is difficult to transfer, which brings inconvenience to the adaptation and development. There are some short and succinct in Shanxi folk songs, and some have transfer problems, which need to be solved urgently. This kind of transposition problem also exists in operas. 2) Shanxi folk music mostly appears in the form of percussion. The style is mostly bold and generous, with special percussion instruments added. Whether the zither transplanted into creation can retain its style and have its own unique rhythm has to be discussed.

3)Many art forms in Shanxi originate from the folk and have a strong folk character. This kind of folk character is not only manifested in the performance style, but also has a certain degree of flexibility in the performance form. How to integrate the elegant timbre of the sitting instrument of the zither into the folk art form, so that it can not only play a soft and lyrical music style, but also express boldness and excitement. This is a problem we must consider.

Of course, while raising problems, we must actively think of ways to solve them. For this, the author has also practiced and tried.

1)Regarding the issue of modulation, on the basis of keeping the traditional original flavor, pressing the string with the left hand to increase its tension to complete the modulation, or using the method of two pianos to switch the high-pitched part to the performance of the steel kite, and low-pitched to use the 21-string zither, so as to avoid the problem of inaccurate tone of the modulation technique, and also make the tone more rich.

2)Imitate the timbre of characteristic musical instruments, such as whether percussion music “four tiles” can be used with zither panel wheel to finger timbre, whether the big jump up and down tones of Sihou can be replaced by zither glide and so on.[4] In addition, in opera music, the singing part of some qupai should highlight the characteristics of zither in the “run tune”. (Runqiang: A set of unique techniques for beautifying, decorating, and embellishing vocals formed during the long-term development of Chinese national vocal art. Using words to run the tune, with emotions, and sound is the style that forms the Chinese national vocal art, flavor, and an important factor with strong artistic appeal. The author believes that in instrumental music performance, “filling with rhyme” is a broad sense of “Xingqiang”, and “sounding with tune” is a more concrete embellishment of music and beautify).

3)Zither's performance has always been single sitting and standing, which restricts the diversified development of its performance. Of course, this has a lot to do with the elegant music that has been circulating in the court, and the spread of Shanxi folk music has its mass character. [5]Regarding this point, the author believes that any art form exists within the “existing” and is also independent of the “existing” which is a long stage of development. Moreover, what really makes the zither “walk” is not the “internal change” or “qualitative” change of it’s reforms. Then can we “seeking common ground while reserving differences” and let the “walking” people watch the “sitting” “zither”, Turning the “deficiency” of the form into the “richness” of the content, and the “external” into the “internal quality” may not be a solution, but it is a solution channel.

Supplements: 1. In Shanxi folk songs, the problem of modulation is mostly the conversion of close relations, while in Shanxi operas, the mode is more single. Of course, it does not rule out the addition of new composing techniques in the creation of zither music, which can be easily completed in the actual operation of zither.

### 3. Conclusion

This magical land of Shanxi has nurtured the early Chinese civilization and produced rich folk art. However, due to the geographical limitation, it has been in a relatively “embarrassed” situation for a long time, and the development of zither is the same. “No genre, no college” makes its development lagging behind. However, from a philosophical point of view, everything has its two sides to analyze, which is another positive aspect in which its development space can have unlimited possibilities. Using its undeveloped beneficial national folk music resources to integrate and utilize them, can zither's playing techniques and styles be independent and eclectic? According to Mr. Cao Zheng's necessary conditions for the formation of the zither genre 1). It has the basis of its music origin; 2). It has the characteristics of its musical rotation; 3). It has its own technical characteristics; 4). It has its own representative repertoire; 5). It has its own representative characters). It can be seen that the development of Shanxi zither is still in the exploratory stage. It requires a lot of manpower and material resources to write more works with the characteristics of Shanxi style and skills coupled with continuous practice, and to sum up a set of normative, regular and feasible works for people to study. I look forward to the Shanxi people playing zither joint efforts to create a new chapter of Shanxi's zither, adding another faction to the “Nine Schools”!

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