

Exploration of Musical Aesthetic Ideas in Ci-Tune Music Composed by Jiang Kui

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Keywords: Jiang Kui; ci poetry of the Song Dynasty; music; aesthetics

Abstract: Ci-tune music in tonal patterns of ci, a unique and vibrant music, once brought an utterly-new artistic aesthetic enjoyment to people with its lively rhythm and rich connotation in the combination of long and short sentence. At that time, people in accumulating numbers began to write poems and songs. As a combination of ci and music, this kind of songs became a milestone product in the Song Dynasty with high cultural and artistic value. Jiang Kui was a typical representative of ci-tune music in the Southern Song Dynasty.

1. Introduction

Social economy reached an unprecedented prosperity in the Song Dynasty of China, during which the focus of social music activities was no longer the enjoyment of royal nobles. Instead, Ci and music were widely spread among ordinary people. Folk music in the Song Dynasty shows unique creativity and vitality and promotes the unprecedented prosperity of ci. The reason why it has become a classic is the irreplaceability of this language. The literary genre of "ci" was originally a kind of lyrics which was singing in tune. With the change of the times, some literati omitted the part of singing, making "ci" an independent literary genre.

2. Jiang Kui— Poet of the Southern Song Dynasty

With the middle and late Southern Song Dynasty coming after earlier stability, ci of Song Dynasty ushered in the last stage of its development. In this stage, the subtle and concise school and the powerful and free school were managing to releasing their own extraordinary splendor. Same as Li Qingzhao, Jiangkui, the outstanding representative of the subtle and concise school, was also a famous patriotic poet in the Song Dynasty. Styling himself Yaozhang, Jiang Kui bore an assumed name of "White Stone Taoist priest" as a poet in the late Southern Song Dynasty. Instead of being an official in his life, he remained as a high-minded poet traveling all corners of the country and compared himself with a reclusive poet in the Tang Dynasty, Lu Guimeng. Touring along Huai River in north and Xiang Jiang River in south, Jiang Kui earned his living by selling calligraphy and accepting friends' help. He lived in Hangzhou in his later years and died on the bank of West Lake. Leading a self-reliant life of scanty means, Jiang Kui entertained himself with literary and artistic creation and was proficient in poetry, prose, calligraphy and music, developing himself into a rare artistic versatile talent. Although he was in an austere situation all his life, he enjoyed high fame shining all his life and high praise from famous scholars. The gloomy, desolate atmosphere in his poetries, together with vivid communication of spirit, helps him develop a new different style. Jiang Kui devoted most of his time into the composing of ci, which mainly inherited Zhou Bangyan's style. Pursuing a realm of pure elegance and mellow, he aimed to develop a more elegant style, and eventually became the representative of "Elegant Ci". Like Liu Yong and Zhou Bangyan, Jiang Kui was also good at creating songs in new tonal patterns and marked Gong-Che Notation in 17 songs of this kind composed by himself. As the only literature of ci left from Song Dynasty and the only tune collection of ci left for later generations, these works have important value in the history of music. In addition, his calligraphy was also praised by the people at that time. He once wrote a book named "Book Charts Sequel" which makes comments on the handwriting and was handed down.

3. Introduction to the Aesthetic Characteristics of Jiang Kui's Major Works

3.1 "Memory of invasion never fading away in Yangzhou"

"Slow Tune of Yangzhou" is the representative work of Jiang Kui. At the age of twenty, Jiang Kui left Hanyang and started a travel around his country, passing by Yangzhou once ravaged by the Jin people. Seeing that the flourishing commercial capital in the past was "an empty city full of scattered buckwheat in the desolate whimpering horn echoing, he was overwhelmed by sorrow and hatred, and then he improvised "Slow Tune of Yangzhou". The use of white sketch in this work truly reflects the desolation of Yangzhou after the looting of the Jinbing and expresses the mediation on the past.

From the very beginning, this poem points out that Yangzhou is a famous city in the east of Huaihe River and there is a famous and beautiful place named Zhuxi Pavilion, where the hero stops and unsaddles. It can be seen that these contents are a scenery description. This section uses the touch writing technique and has compact continuity. At that time, it was evident that sorrow and a feeling of helplessness came up to his mind. Then, the subsequent appearance of semitone relationship adds a strong feeling of dismal. It had been a flourishing scene in the Yangzhou before the invasion. While, it was replaced with a desolate scene where grass and wheat growing wildly everywhere. During two invasions of Jin into the south of Yangtse River, Yangzhou City suffered serious military disasters. Thus, the whole city refused reminding of it again. Dusk quietly arriving and waves of the bleak trumpet sounds seem to bring a little chill and spread it throughout Yangzhou City after the robbery.

Lamenting the past and the present, the author wrote "Slow Tune of Yangzhou" with the sadness and remembrance of the past as its emotional keynote. The excellency of this work is the means of expression. Instead of himself, Jiang Kui chooses Du Mu as the hero of this poetry. As a scholar who has a close relationship with Yangzhou City, Du Mu once came to Yangzhou City for many times and lived there for a long time, leaving behind many beautiful poems and various praises of Yangzhou City, like "young beauties all over the Yangzhou", "Twenty-Four Bridges in moonlight" and so on. If he caught a sight of the desolate scenery, he might wonder that how come prosperous and beautiful Yangzhou City would fall into decline like this. It is actually the question Jiang Kui wanted to ask. The hypothesis in the last part of the poetry reflects the feeling directly with the lines "even though refined expression and beautiful poetic connotation, it is difficult to express deeply-sad feelings at this moment". The four words mentioning Du Mu are also the most ingenious part of the whole poetry.

At the end of the poem, the feelings of the hero are expressed through the natural scenes such as waves and silent cold moon, which serve as a historical testimony of the prosperity of Yangzhou City. Afterwards, it was witnessing the decline of Yangzhou City. Finally, Jiang Kui focused his eyes on the bridge, where lots of peony flowers were in blossom. However, being sad about the desolate situation, no one had the mood to appreciate it anymore. Seeing this, the author wrote "Who the flowers are waiting for every year", expressing infinite feelings about the prosperity and decline of Yangzhou City. For music creation techniques, the whole passage of this poetry adopts the creative techniques of touch writing. With half tone, bass and seven-tone scale, this poetry shows a compact and sad feeling.

3.2 Sweet Plum Scattering across Straggling Branches

There are two famous descriptive ci wrote by Jiang Kui in the history of literature, namely "Plum" and "Scattered Blossom". These two poems are deemed as his representative works by later generations. The thoughts, feelings and implications expressed in these two poems are very distinct. During the period, there were various opinions about the two poetries. In the light of the background and the living environment of Jiang Kui, these two poems are in fact a scenery description which implies the author's feelings and sentiments. They reflect not only the author's feeling about the decline of Song Dynasty but also sorrow at his own desolate situation.

As far as social value is concerned, these two poems are not very representative, but their contents enable readers to fully appreciate the lasting appeal. As a chant poem about plum, it shows

complex and compact connotations and unique style with allusions related to plum blossom as its internal representation. As for the tune of the poetry, it reads smoothly in simplified words and sentences which express deep affection and plain feelings. At that time, no one can surpass him in artistic creation techniques. With the allusion of plum, Jiang Kui expresses inner misery and desolation felt in his poor and hard life. And the contrast between decline and past prosperity displayed in the lines impresses readers deeply.

In poem "Plum", the first section describes the past grandeur, and the second section presents the decline of reality; Then, the past prosperity is restated in fifth section, and the present desolation is pointed in the sixth section at the end. The contrast between the current situation and past prosperity is strongly and cleared felt by readers. And the profound description of sharp shift of emotional feelings is an important basis of referring to the poem as a lyric. For example, the three successive turning points in six short sentences of the fourth section highly summarize the emotional fluctuation of the poet, and the feelings described in his words bring readers a wonderful feeling. In the last section, short sentences in harmonious melody exhibit unique charm of the Ci "Plum". Different from his predecessors, Jiang Kui is talented enough to create these wonderful Ci by himself. With sing-song girls' singing in a long time, these ci passed the test of practice at that time. Unfortunately, the music score was not fully inherited today. However, we can still feel the cadence and syllable rhyme while reading ci composed by Jiang Kui. In poem "Plum", it can be found that Jiang Kui attaches great importance to the refinement of words. For example, the word "冷" and "压" not only present a precise and vivid description, but also express euphemistic meanings fully in condensed sentence. In the poem "Scattered Blossom", the first three sentences depict a few jade-like white plum blossoms and a small bird standing aside, and the latter three sentences continue to depict the drooping braches where several kingfishers occasionally stop over. It is just like a flower-and-bird painting where the little bird and the white plum are helpless and isolated in the bleak dusk. The allusion in this poem aggravates the sense of grief. In the former section, the author cites the well-known story of Wang Zhaojun and compares the isolate plum to the heroin, Zhaojun. While passing the dry sandy land during the journey to Xiongnu, Zhaojun feels uncomfortable and misses his hometown in south, wishing that she could return in the evening wearing a jade ring. In the latter section, the love story of Martial Emperor and his cousin Chen Ajiao is cited to point that beautiful plum should be kept in golden house early instead of exposed in the blast of spring winds. Seeing plum blossoms withering away, Jiang Kui was caught by a feeling of helplessness and sadness, saying that "Hidden in golden house, petals still drift with the waves piece by piece". Then, with the conclusion mark "Looking for the plum fragrance, I find that there is only one blossom there", Jiang Kui implies that the way to catch the fragrance of plum blossom can only be found in the memory and old words, showing a sense of pity for the withered plum blossoms. With lively melody and refined words, the two poems "Plum" and "Scattered Blossom" exert far-reaching influence to the later generation. The former was listed as the main body in the book "Collection of Tunes of Ci". The latter was also recorded in the book and another book "Tonal Pattern".

3.3 Deep Memory in the ci titled "Heavenly Shadow of Apricot Flowers"

According to the analysis of historical data, Jiang Kui has made more than 80 works in his life, of which more than 20 works are related to a woman of Hefei. Therefore, it can be inferred that he fell in an unforgettable love since the age of twenty. The above-mentioned poem "Heavenly Shadow of Apricot Flowers" is exactly the work to express the joys of reunion in the past and the current bitterness of missing. Its uniqueness lies in that it belongs to the classics of Ci as far as melody and cohesion between each ci, which attracts countless people imitating. Jiang Kui has some unique creative styles in the creation of Ci. With sadness as the basic tone, words are precisely selected and contain profound feelings. For example, in the ci titled "Admiring Plum in Different Sides of Stream", the line "While coming back, we may no longer find beautiful plum but green leaves growing wildly in the spring wind" reflects a perfect fusion of words and tunes with many lonian and semitones. And it is also the case in "Complaints at Pavilion" and the line "Seeing me leave you

and the jade ring I gave, you kept telling me to come back early to admire the flower".

"Slow Tune of Yangzhou" fully displays Jiang Kui's deep patriotism, while "Heavenly Shadow of Apricot Flowers" shows his tender feelings and love for his lover in younger times. Although expressing sadness mostly, he is a very charismatic and upright gentleman. For the patriotism, it is the helplessness about the irremediable decline of country and personal limited power. When it comes to love, the sadness is mostly yearning and love toward lover, and only one woman from Hefei is mentioned regarding this aspect in all his works. His love is sincere and devoted. In the long history, most of the famous scholars, musicians and literati are dissolute, which gives prominence to the valuable devotion of Jiang Kui.

4. Major Achievements

Jiang Kui stands out in the circle of ci with the composing mode and description techniques he selects. A common method he used is to connect the real feelings in daily life with the artistic feeling of ci to form a wonderful sense of synaesthesia. While expressing his inner feelings, Jiang Kui mostly make contrast with objects. He inherits Zhou Bangyan's style in the selection of themes, but sets up a new peak in the subtle and concise school of ci. He not only exerts far-reaching influence but also set up a model for later generations. His high artistic accomplishment and reserve. Zhang Yan judges his artistic characteristics by "emptiness". Such emptiness is different from the hesitation of the traditional gentle school, the boldness of the powerful school or the openness of Su Shi. Instead of writing realistically, it is a profound excavation of the ethereal mood which integrates "Sao Rou" technique of poem into ci creation. Borrowing the straight features of Jiangxi's poetry style, he shows a kind of upright and magnificent temperament in his unique empty style. The development of emptiness began with Su Shi, while Saoyao came from Xin Qiji. Both of them realized their own characteristics by means of poetry. But Jiang Kui absorbed their strengths, laid emphasis on ci and added his own characteristics in the syllables of ci, forming a unique artistic style and increasing the diversity and compatibility of ci. The style of emptiness and Saoyao is also the theoretical basis and mainstream trend of Jianghu Ci School in the Southern Song Dynasty. With these two styles as main body, he inherited and improved the music scores of Tang and Song Dynasty so as to cater both refined and popular taste. Quoting the classics reserved in his profound knowledge, he found out the associations with the allusions to express his feelings, making ci more vivid and interesting. With a simple and understandable theme, his works lead to lofty and positive ideas.

With the origin of Ci as the starting point, through various means of cohesion, Jiang Kui led the way in the Southern Song Dynasty with his unique style. Ci is an important aspect to judge the knowledge of Song Dynasty people, and the content of ci is mostly emotional narration. Ci poets are mostly travelers who harbor plain feelings and deliberately avoid politics. Elegant artistic conception in ci composed by Jiang Kui has far-reaching implications and unbound meanings, which arose wide debate on the thematic feelings of "Plum" and "Scattered Blossoms" among lots of scholars. Although there are some other poets which are slightly different and express some specific real feelings, they still follow the tendency of expressing feelings through objects. Respected the origin of Ci, Jiang Kui raised ci to a high level in the blending of emptiness and Saoyao.

In the late Southern Song Dynasty, a large number of Ci writers carried out flexible transformation of Ci style, which are included in Jiang Kui's complex and diverse style. These similar schools of Ci gradually gathered together to form popular school of ci in the Southern Song Dynasty with Jiang Kui as the representative, which left a strong mark in history. Owing to its vivid feature and abundant practice, this school not only accumulated rich experience but also compiled them into books, including three books on ci principle and two selections of ci. During the flexible transformation, the influence of this school was further expanded, which is rare in the long history of ancient China. According to some research data, because of the wide influences of Jiang Kui's innovative style of Ci, he is also regarded as the representative of "Saoyao" school in the Southern Song, including all poets in the late Southern Song Dynasty, the new school developed after the

powerful school. Different from the implicit gentle school and the unrestrained powerful school, the elegant school puts emphasis on the deployment of words and highlights the two main individualities of ci-poems, namely "elegance" and "Sao", thus forming a more distinct style. Elegance is the indispensable spiritual core of the elegant school who regards elegance as its highest pursuit and express feelings by inheriting and innovating the style of Lisao, the Songs of Chu.

5. Conclusion

These Saoya poets have made great contributions for the development of ci. As a high peak in the history, they inherited various styles of the previous dynasties, transformed poetry into ci and innovated the style, thus elevating the artistic and cultural connotations of ci and enriching the content and techniques of ci. However, on the other hand, Saoya school paid too much attention to Saoya and were confined into a small and obscure way. Lacking a broad mind, they misled the development of ci into a narrow and tough road, thus restricting its diversified development.

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