

On the Development and Change of Chinese Elegant and Vulgar Music

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Abstract

The dispute between elegance and vulgar in the history of Chinese music has continued for more than a thousand years, but by sorting out different kinds of elegant music and vulgar music in different periods, the positioning of elegant and vulgar music is not fixed, but transformed with the continuous development of social history. Today, the fundamental relationship between elegance and vulgar music is not a confrontation, but the boundary is increasingly blurred.

Keywords

Chinese music; Elegance music; Vulgar music.

1. What Is Elegant Music, Vulgar Music

Since ancient times, Chinese traditional culture has put forward the differences between elegance and custom, and thus produced the dispute between elegance and custom. Up to now, there are still many people who maintain opposing views of elegant and vulgar music, but the author believes that the two are not opposite. From the perspective of historical dynasties, the form and content of elegant music and vulgar music are not unchanged, but interchangeable.

"Elegance music" and "vulgar music" were first seen in the Annals of the New Book of Tang Dynasty in the Northern Song Dynasty. Later, the Music Book compiled by Chen Yang clearly explained "elegance music" and "vulgar music". "elegance music" means to emphasize the orthodox music of the Central Plains, only using ancient Chinese instruments and composing music according to the ancient music theory. Emphasize that pentatonic etc. should be related to the cosmic order and used for sacrifice. The so-called vulgar music is not the "vulgar" music, but the "custom" music. Most of this kind of music comes from folk creation, with various content forms and absorbing foreign music, and "changes customs" with different time and region. Nowadays, the division between elegant music and vulgar music is more musical in style. elegant music refers to the delicate music with taste, and vulgar music refers to the extensive and easy to understand music based on folk self-entertainment.

In the long history of China's music development, elegant and vulgar music is not inherent in the palace or the people. For example, the music used in the daily entertainment of the palace is mostly vulgar music, while the folk Confucius sacrifice activities use elegant music. It can be seen that elegant and vulgar music often blend between the palace and the folk.

2. The Interconversion of Ancient Elegant Music and Vulgar Music

During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Confucius was distressed by the collapse of rites and music. He believed that Zheng Wei nation, the representative of vulgar music, was not conducive to education. Therefore, he opposed Zheng Wei. He once called "Zheng Sheng is too unrestrained." Later, some people began to attach their importance to elegant music and wanted to follow the ancient system, which opened the first battle between elegance and customs music. However, elegant music and vulgar music integrated each other as early as the end of the Zhou Dynasty. After King Wu of Zhou destroyed the Shang Dynasty,

the Zhou people inherited the tradition of the Xia Dynasty and regarded themselves as the Xia people. Zhou music absorbed shang music elements, and influenced by Heluo, Hanjiang region and finally formulated the Zhou's elegant music, but not directly manage the central plains is not popular this music, Ping after the relocation of Zhou capital regional music and central plains music fusion, music is no longer limited to the Zhou dynasty dignitaries, at the end of the spring and autumn period, the boundaries of refined music is not clear, the Shang music and vassal folk music plus Siyi music began secular.

In the Han Dynasty, China had a strict hierarchy, but vulgar music was popular from the top to the lower people. In the reign of Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty, Guchui Music was the ruling class as honor and military music. According to the different official positions and occasions, the use had strict grade regulations. However, the later generations of the people were secularized and evolved into folk gongs and drums.

Ji Kang once put forward the "sound without music and sorrow theory", believing that the music itself has no joys and sorrows, but in the mood of the listener. In Ji Kang's opinion, there is no refined distinction between music. The development of Qing Shang Music verified his theory. In the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Qing Shang Music absorbed the folk music at that time, which was also used for the palace New Year's Day, sacrifice and other activities. However, due to the war between the Jin Dynasty, the Qing Shang music in the north spread to the south to "vulgarize" with the local Wu ballads and Xi ballads. When Emperor XiaoWen of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Qing Shang Music came back to the north again because he made great efforts to promote the Han culture. He called it "Chinese voice" in the palace and set up a special organization to take charge. Qing Shang Music experienced the development from elegant to vulgar to elegant due .

The Sui and Tang Dynasties were an important interactive period of elegant and vulgar music. Yan music of the Sui and Tang Dynasties was originally developed on the basis of vulgar music such as "Zheng Sheng". Although it is palace music, Yan music is recognized as vulgar music in the palace music system. Later, Yan music promoted the prosperity of Taoist music. Since then, Taoist music has continuously evolved and inherited. In the Song Dynasty, Taoist music was further developed, and the king set up YunAo department to administer Taoist music. During the Jin and Yuan period, Quanzhen Taoism music was highly respected. In the Ming Dynasty, the development of Taoist music reached its peak. The court set up ShenLeGuan department, and Taoist monks served as music officials. So far, Taoist music became the standard elegant music in the real sense.

The Song and Yuan Dynasties were a period of musical transformation, because the court music gradually decline, citizen music rise, music focus began to shift to the folk, in this case, Folk artists perform at the palace, communicate with court musicians, the court music and elegant music have a subtle influence.

An important artistic representative in the Ming and Qing Dynasties was Kunqu Opera. Kunqu Opera was originally created by Gu Jiancao, a native of Kunshan Province, and was spread among the people. At first, During the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty, Wei Liangfu reformed it on the basis of Kunshan cavity, which absorbed the advantages of the other three voices and formed a new sound cavity. Later, it became popular during the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty and reached its peak, when Kunqu opera was even regarded as an "official cavity". In the middle of the Qing Dynasty, Kunqu Opera was once known as "elegant music" and "prosperous voice". At this time, Kunqu Opera can be said to move from vulgar to elegant. However, Kunqu Opera has been so elegant that it is difficult to understand the lyrics and labels, and then the Peking Opera gradually replaced Kunqu Opera. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, Kunqu Opera was on the verge of extinction. Due to the national support and protection, Kunqu opera was revived. In 2001, Kunqu Opera became the first of the "masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of mankind" declared by UNESCO. In recent

years, Kunqu Opera has continuously reformed and created many "new" Kunqu Opera combining contemporary elements. In 2019, the first Kunqu Opera "Six Stories", produced by Shanghai Grand Theatre was well received.

3. The Modern Elegant and Vulgar Music

Since modern times, due to the impact of western culture, the mainstream academic circles believe that the traditional culture is mostly dross and should be abandoned. This also heavily influenced the music world, with Western music seen as elegant and traditional music seen as vulgar. In this difficult environment, traditional music is constantly transformed and finally carried forward.

In the Republic of China, the erhu music "Erquan Yingyue" created by the famous folk artist Abing has also realized the transformation from custom to elegance. Around the 1930s, Abing was making a living begging on the streets. While hungry and cold, he developed exquisite erhu skills. The fixed music "Erquan Yingyue" could only be little-known in the market, which can be described as vulgar music. In 1947, Abing had lung disease, vomiting blood and getting worse. Fortunately, in 1950, Yang Mengliu and other professors made a special trip to Wuxi to record the music by Abing with tapes, and "Erquan Yingyue" was preserved. In 1978, Ozawa Seiji and the Chinese Central Orchestra played the "Erquan Yingyue". Since then, "Erquan Yingyue" from vulgar to elegant, has been praised by the world music industry.

4. Contemporary Elegant and Vulgar Music

The boundary between contemporary elegant and vulgar music is more blurred. Art Songs Change from Elegance to Vulgar and Pop songs hit the big stage. Lin Hai and Fan Zongpei and other musicians to create a mixture of elegant and vulgar elements music. This kind of music can be described as varied. In addition traditional music has been processed and re-emerged. The trend of appreciating is irreversible.

The Chinese art songs has witnessed the change of music from elegance to vulgar. Artistic songs were gradually introduced to the east, and they were not known to the masses in the early days. In the 1950s, composers such as He Lvting began to join ethnic materials for integration and flexibility, which greatly narrowed the distance with the people. In the 1980s, With the efforts of musicians such as Shi Guangnan, a large number of works emerged, which made Art songs is accepted by more people, and began to move from elegant to vulgar.

After the reform and opening up, with the production of film and television dramas, film music Hot Blooded is a household music. Later, the famous conductor Yan Huichang played the music at the Concert Hall of the Central Conservatory of Music. In 2019, the Macao Chinese Orchestra performed the music on Broadway stage. In 2020, Yan Huichang and the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra performed again at the Spring Festival Folk Concert. In addition, at the 2017 Vienna New Year's Concert, Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel perfectly explained it to the audience.

In recent years, As the country attaches more importance to national culture, many high-quality orchestras have been set up everywhere, and professional music workers have adapted and brought them into concert halls. such as "One Night in Beijing" and so on.

As a Taiwanese musician, Fan Zongpei skillfully allows his works to walk between classical and popular music. In Taiwan in 2005, with cello, piano, harp, guitar, bass and other instruments, performed Wind Family and other film's music. These music has both traditional Chinese material and blues style. His works are full of a mixture of elegant and vulgar elements. In 2011, his album "A Misunderstanding" crossed into classical, romantic, light, electroacoustic and other music. This "mix and match" musical style is arguably a contemporary feature.

The development of the ancient style of music derived from the network culture has also been qualified to enter the hall of elegance. Ancient style music belongs to popular music, but it is different from popular music. It takes traditional music as the background, and absorbs jazz, RAP, MIDI, etc. The lyrics are mostly based on poetry and allusions, and the rhythm weaves to convey Chinese classical imagination. The creators of ancient style music basically have a high cultural accomplishment, including both amateurs and "academic" practitioners. The audience is mostly students or white-collar workers. In 2013, the "Jinling · Qinhuai Night", staged in the Great Hall of the People in Nanjing, integrated the Guqin skills. This new genre of classical, modern, ethnic, western and other musical elements is hard to tell what is elegant and vulgar.

5. Elegant and Vulgar Music Competition

Ancient elegant music was not given by heaven, and many of them were adapted from the folk music collected by successive court musicians. So elegant music

also used to be vulgar music. Just because of the change of function and from vulgar to elegant. Huang Xiangpeng said in *Yuewen* that there was no clear opposition between elegant music and vulgar music in the pre-Qin period. Since the Qin and Han Dynasties, vulgar music is still used as its content in elegant music. After the Sui and Tang Dynasties, elegant music and vulgar music gradually separated, and the opposite concept was formed after the Song Dynasty. In ancient China, the millennium confrontation between elegant music and vulgar music was mainly rooted in social history, and it has no essential correlation with music itself. The ancient feudal rulers and defenders caused the opposition of refined and vulgar music by emphasizing the educational role of music. The essence is to reflect the class opposition between the poor and the aristocracy.

In modern times, due to the impact of western ideology and culture, western music represented by symphony and opera was regarded as elegant music in China, and many traditional music was regarded as vulgar music because of the western learning to the east.

Contemporary vulgar music is the music represented by pop songs, which is opposite to symphony, orchestra and so on. But the boundaries between elegance and customs are hard to draw. First of all, ancient music required the types of instrumental music, which no longer exists today. Musical Instruments can be used for both music. Secondly, some modern musicians use professional creation techniques to turn vulgar music into elaborate music. Both the transformation of old vulgar music and the creation of new vulgar music have reached the professional level of "elegant". Third, the audience group of refined and vulgar music is wider, different from the ancient music has the division of class and interesting grades. Fourth, concert halls, theaters are no longer only staged elegant music, a large number of vulgar music stage. Finally, because China attaches great importance to the promotion of national culture, western music and national traditional music, there is no longer high and low.

6. Conclusion

Elegant and vulgar music cannot be clearly separated from its initial generation. From ancient times to the present, refined and vulgar music has been performed in the form of the opposite side. Music often changes according to the social change, the accumulation of the total number of works, the change of transmission channels and other factors. Today's refined and vulgar music is even more indistinguishable. The dispute between elegance and vulgarity is just a change and integration in the process of social and historical development.

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