



EXPLORING THE VOCAL ART OF CHINESE FOLK SONGS THROUGH TECHNIQUES EVOLUTION AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract

This article explores the vocal art of Chinese folk songs by examining the evolution of singing techniques and their deep cultural significance. Chinese folk songs are not only artistic expressions rooted in the daily lives of the people but also, important carriers of regional identity and traditional values. The study delves into the three main vocal styles including true voice, falsetto, and mixed voice. Analyzing their technical characteristics, aesthetic functions, and emotional expressiveness. By highlighting the rich diversity of regional vocal styles and the influence of local dialects, geography, and customs, this article illustrates how these elements shape the unique vocal traditions across China. Furthermore, **the research emphasizes** the importance of preserving and revitalizing these folk traditions in the context of modern education and performance, while considering their potential contributions to global music exchange. As Chinese folk songs increasingly appear on international stages, understanding their vocal artistry and cultural roots helps promote a more inclusive appreciation of world music and fosters deeper intercultural dialogue. This study contributes to the broader discourse on how traditional vocal arts can



be innovatively sustained and integrated into contemporary cultural and educational contexts.

Keywords: Vocal art; Chinese folk songs; Technique evolution; Cultural significance

Introduction

The Chinese nation has a long history, after five thousand years of splendid civilization, gave birth to a rich classical culture. Music, as a special symbol, is the sustenance of the national spirit and the expression of the literati feelings. In the new historical period, folk music is blooming with new brilliance. Through effective integration with composition, the weak material world adds a strong spiritual color. National music mainly refers to music with national characteristics and contains the national spirit. This music is formed with the development and evolution of the nation. It has a typical national style and is also an important component factor of the national culture. With the extension and development of national culture, the influence of national music is expanding, and folk music has gradually formed a complete system and become a model in the music field. China has 56 ethnic groups, different nationalities corresponding to different cultural customs, each nation has its own music, therefore, China's ethnic music is extensive and profound, vast scope, forming a unique pattern of ethnic music culture. For example, in northern Shaanxi of China, the land is barren, and the loess is thick. Under the birth of the Yellow River, the unique folk customs of northern Shaanxi were formed. In the early development, the folk songs in northern Shaanxi were actually to meet the needs of communication, and later gradually became a unique musical element, bold and bold, graceful and melodious. This is another style compared with Jiangnan minor. Ethnic music on the land of China is distinctive due to ethnic cultural differences, which also makes Chinese ethnic music colorful. Overall, Chinese folk music has remarkable value characteristics (Yu, 2024).

Folk music is a kind of culture gradually formed in the development of the nation. This culture is closely related to the local folk customs and people's livelihood. To a certain extent, it can also meet the cultural and living needs of the nation. In addition, most ethnic songs are created in production and life, which can express their own emotions and have strong melody. Under normal circumstances, songs can encourage people to engage in productive activities or achieve inspiring effects. Music and dance are never independent, especially in ancient times, when music creation was often combined with dance to highlight the beauty of dance with music and show the musical melody with dance. Every nation has its own traditional culture. In the grand cultural activities, songs and dances always accompany them and create a magnificent scene together. For example, being good at singing and dancing is a typical feature of ethnic minorities in China, which is mainly closely related to the ethnic culture of ethnic minorities. In important festivals, ethnic minorities all sing and dance to express their feelings. Many excellent songs and dances in China are extended from the national culture or are adapted by composers to make them become classics and spread through The Times. Ancient Chinese poetry has a strong rhythm, mainly because the essence of poetry is a form of song lyrics, and poetry is used for singing. Both the poems in the earliest Book of Songs and the poems of the Tang and Song dynasties are rhythmic and can be sung as songs. After all, rhyme can increase the influence of singing and enhance the charm of poetry. Most ethnic music is produced gradually through practice and exploration, and it is consistent with people's aesthetic view. This way of music playing can resonate with people and make the song more attractive. The development and innovation of ethnic music in China are all built on the basis of poetry and music and have the characteristics of ethnic flavor and elegant poetry. Chinese national songs pay attention to the display of artistic conception and can often be integrated into the corresponding scenes through the lyrics and rhythm, and the scenes depicted in the poems are often fascinating. For the song singers, it is hoped that the song can integrate the listener and feel the charm of the song. Of course, this not only has strict requirements for the composition, but also has high requirements for the singing skills of the singers. In the inheritance of ethnic music, there are strict requirements for music writing lyrics and singing, which need to conform to the

ethnic rhythm and reflect the artistic conception of lyrics and music, so as to present the unique charm of ethnic music (Cao, 2024).

The teaching and development of Chinese folk song singing methods reflect the rich cultural heritage and vocal artistry unique to China's diverse ethnic traditions. Rooted in daily life, geography, and customs, these methods emphasize emotional expression, tonal clarity, and breath control, creating a distinct sound system that differs significantly from Western bel canto techniques. As Chinese folk singing evolved through stages of tradition, innovation, and integration with Western vocal approaches, it has maintained its core principles—highlighting the authenticity of voice, the fusion of true and falsetto tones, and the importance of resonance and breath support. Understanding these vocal techniques not only helps preserve traditional music culture but also contributes to the growth of a uniquely Chinese vocal art form in contemporary music education and performance (Xu, 2024).

Teaching and Development of Chinese folk Song Singing Method

Ethnic singers themselves need to have a wide range and be able to fully master the skills of high and low, true and false conversion. For the parts that need to highlight the high mood, the singer needs to use the real voice singing as much as possible and use the shock power of the real voice to strengthen the emotional transmission of the vocal music performance potency dimension. In some songs that need to be gradually progressive and derived emotions, the singer can use the form to adjust the vocal mode by blending true and false. For example, in the high pitch area falsetto singing, the appropriate mixing of true sound, in the appropriate use of falsetto singing. In general, the singing of national vocal music should not only highlight the mood, but also be flexible and coordinated, to achieve the artistic charm of the singing process of national vocal music, it is also a very important performance. The singer's words should first be clear, and then "bite", that is, the voice of each word should be very compact and must not be loose and discouraged. Only by achieving compact pronunciation can the expression of emotions be more accurate, and there will be no problems such as drift, so as not

to affect the artistic experience of the audience. But at the same time, the singer should not put too much emphasis on the writing of words (Chen, 2025).

The correctness of the sound should also adjust the specific details of the pronunciation according to the rhythm and rhythm of the accompaniment as far as possible, so that the pronunciation and sound are flexible, clear and not compact. This way of biting can ensure that the singing atmosphere is sufficient as much as possible and will not affect the pronunciation of the singer's pronunciation mood, the use and handling of these skills are inseparable from the action of "breathing". Therefore, breathing is also one of the very important categories in the vocal skills of national vocal music. National vocal music emphasizes "Dantean power", that the sound from Dantean can be more concentrated and lasting, making the contraction of the lower abdomen stronger. The controllable abdomen means that the breath is stable, which can reduce the sound of actors as much as possible, so that the audience can be highly immersed in the artistic performance, and the sound will not be affected by the current artistic understanding process, so as to enhance the artistic value of vocal performance. In general, the skill of breathing ultimately serves the stability of artistic expression. National vocal music is the treasure of the traditional Chinese music culture. If you want to really learn and inherit the national vocal music well, it is necessary to analyze the types and characteristics of its singing method. Through the technical points of this paper, it can be seen that the national vocal music has a special sound system and pays attention to the expression of the song emotions. In addition to adjusting the state of voice through sound, biting and breathing, singers also need to provide corresponding performances, to truly inherit the "characteristics" of national vocal music and realize the inheritance and protection of traditional music culture (Lu, 2024).

Breathing is the source of power to support the singer to sing smoothly. Human breathing needs the help of the mouth, pharynx, lung and other organs to complete. The human thorax is like a cage, composed of cervical spine, thoracic spine and lumbar spine. These bones are tightly connected by different muscles and can move under muscle traction. When the intercostal muscles contract, the ribs will be affected, the chest cavity will expand naturally, and the outside air

will enter the lungs through the nasal cavity to complete the inhalation, and contrary to the above process, when the intercostal muscles contract, the ribs will naturally pull underground, and the chest will shrink, and then exhale gas. When breathing the gas, the diaphragm plays an important role and can be breathed by pulling the abdominal muscles. In terms of breath, ethnic singing emphasizes "qi" in heaven and tries to use the whole channel way to breathe. This way can form corresponding pressure on the glottis through breath, and then obtain the clear, sweet and moist timbre effect, so as to show the meaning of ethnic songs more vividly. On the left and right sides of the thyroid cartilage in the human larynx, a muscle grows, and each muscle is wrinkled. Below the bottom is an important organ of sound, that is, the vocal cords. When singing, it can not only block the breath but also can make a sound through vibration. The cartilage grows at the opening above the vocal fold, together with the wrinkles above, can assist the pronunciation of the vocal cords. In fact, national singing is the result of breathing and vocal cord, and the level of glottis vibration determines the effect of singing.

Applying National Singing Method for Teaching Vocal

In the use of national singing method, the voice is generally more concentrated, the position is relatively forward. Resonance is the phenomenon that different objects sound because of common vibration. When two objects have the same frequency, the sound can also interact with the air column in the container. When singing a song, the vocal cords vibrations interact with the air in the mouth and pharyngeal cavity, making the voice more beautiful. For singer, resonance theory is extremely important, is indispensable a basic ability, breath from the vocal, will cause certain stimulation to the vocal, and then sound, namely base, although the base is very weak, but when it's after the resonance space, will cause acoustic resonance, and form the material sense of song. Resonance can significantly enhance the effect of the voice, making the sound appear more beautiful. From its generation to its maturity, ethnic singing roughly experienced three development stages: the 1940s to the 1950s were the early stage of the development of ethnic singing in China. The representative figures in this period were mainly Guo Lanying and other singers. At this stage, the most prominent



feature of national singing is that the real voice singing, which is relatively front, through the way of oral resonance and head cavity resonance, oral voice is extremely important, with sharp words and clear timbre. The 1960s to the 1980s were the second stage of the development of national singing. At this stage, the representatives of national singing are mainly Li Changjiang and other singers. At this stage, the national singers broke the traditional way of singing, opening their throat more thoroughly, adding part of the falsetto to make the sound more transparent. The 1980s is the third stage of development. The most prominent feature of this stage is the combination of traditional singing methods and western singing skills, so that the vocal range and volume are further expanded, breathing and sound are more natural, the difficulty of song singing is also increased, and the style is richer and more changeable, pointing out a new direction for the future development of national vocal music. The vocal type is the form of the different voices of the singers combined with each other, and most of the case is the combination between the vocal and singing features. Through a systematic study of the development process of various ethnic singing methods, it can be concluded that the style of music singing mainly comes from people's daily life, the living environment of each region is different, and the timbre formed by individuals is also different from the timbre of singers in other places, that is, the difference in vocal patterns (Zhang, 2024).

Such as China's northern Shaanxi folk customs are very simple, the style of vocal music singing also appears vigorous and vigorous. And Mongolia area for most herdsmen, singing when the tone is extremely stretch, long charm. The characteristics of the different vocal types are specified as follows:

(1) True sound: True voice is also sung with the original voice, also known as the "true voice". However, it does not mean that there is no need to modify the voice. If the singer wants to make a beautiful sound, he must retain his own vocal characteristics, process the real voice through reasonable skills, and enhance the artistic value of the voice shape. The most prominent feature of the true sound type is that it only needs to sing through the vibration of the vocal cords.



(2) falsetto: When using falsetto singing, you can be completely without the real sound. Although this singing skill also requires vocal cords, the whole process of sound mainly depends on the edge of the vocal cords. In the use of falsetto singing, the singer should pay attention to control the sound of good breath, skillfully stimulate the vocal cords, this skill for the singer is difficult, not every singer can master. Although some singers have mastered the skills of national singing, they also need professional practice to skillfully use the falsetto type.

(3) Mixed sound type: In singing practice, mixed vocal type is more common, and usually the plateau people mainly use mixed vocal type when singing. Because the geographical environment of the plateau area is relatively special, the state of the air is completely different from that of the plain area, the sound made by people in this area is very bright and the vocal range is broader, so when singing different songs, the mixed sound shape will be changed, which can fully show the national characteristics of the songs. The traditional national singing method has the characteristics of sufficient breath, large gas and flexible gas. The traditional singing method attaches great importance to "qi", which is also known as abdominal joint breathing. This brings the breath in one place and delivered to the focal point. To make the breath appear long, you need to breathe the breath. In addition, we should pay attention to, to avoid too rigid breath, cannot inhale too much gas, in order to enhance elasticity. When using the breath, we should first pay attention to the breath mouth. Air mouth is a special term in the national singing method. The use of airports can be used through the method of inhalation, but also can flexibly use a variety of ways, fast inhalation and other ways. Secondly, we should pay attention to the support of breath. Ethnic singing method mainly adopts the combination of chest and abdomen for breathing, and the strength is generally concentrated in the waist, which can store more breath. Again, the reasonable adjustment of the breath. When using the national singing method to make a sound, the movement direction of the inspiratory muscle group should be exactly opposite to that of the air flow, to form the effect against the breath, to better sound by adjusting the breath. Finally, we should pay attention to the flexible use of breath.

In addition to the most used way of expiration, we should also strengthen the practice of flexible expiration, to ensure that since the vocal cords and resonance, a variety of cavity sounds can be more smoothly completed. Take "cough sound" as an example, the air flow is relatively coarse and scattered, with strong explosive force, which needs to open the glottis in an instant; for example, "stop sound" is the effect obtained by the continuous confrontation movement at the fulcrum; other methods include "sink sound", "trill" and other methods, different sound methods, in the use of breath. First, the human body needs to mobilize both the chest cavity, oral cavity and head cavity to complete the resonance. When singing songs, the specific proportion of the resonance cavity will change as the volume changes. Usually, the bass area mainly depends on the chest resonance, while the middle pitch area mainly depends on the oral resonance, and the high pitch is mainly based on the head pitch resonance. Mixed resonance is the most common way of bel canto singing. It pays attention to the overall feeling of singing, and it is an overall resonance composed of different sound areas and different sounds. The national singing method mainly adopts the way of local resonance, while paying attention to the resonance, but also paying attention to the transformation of breath, to obtain the timbre of rich national meaning and rhyme. Compared with bel canto, the national singing sound is shorter, the larynx is relatively narrow, the throat is opened properly, and the chin is relatively relaxed. In this way, you can make the voice appear softer.

Ethnic singing pays great attention to the resonance of the nasal part. So, the nasal cavity is close to the mouth, which is mainly responsible for spitting and biting. Although a professionally trained voice can still resonate with the mouth, it is difficult to meet the needs of singing. After the word sound reaches the nasal cavity, it will also form a resonance and strengthen the effect of the sound. Through the overall resonance sound is very loud, to get this effect, you must pay attention to the state of resonance cavity, and to keep the word clear, flexibility will naturally decline, when resonance voice if unable to focus on a point, the sound will become not clear, also cannot bring the audience cordial natural feelings. Secondly, the national singing method pays great attention to the overall effect and requires "correct pronunciation". When singing songs, the singing effect is enhanced by the conversion between true and false sounds. The singing

method in the north is crisp and bright, while the southern singing method is soft. However, no matter which way is used, it needs to be completed through oral resonance, which is also the most significant feature of national singing color. The ethnic singing method weakens the role of chest cavity resonance, increases the proportion of the oral cavity and pharyngeal cavity and throat cavity, and the pronunciation is clear and bright. Thirdly, it is very important to coordinate the relationship between different cavities when using the national singing method (Yang, 2024).

The Difference between Chinese folk Song Singing Method and Bel Canto Singing Method

At the beginning of this century, the western "beautiful" bel canto was introduced into China. The popularization of new music education and the emergence of new music institutions added rich color to the vocal music culture. Therefore, in addition to the folk and opera singing methods, the Western "bel canto singing method" is added, and the introduction of this singing method is through multiple channels, such as Italian, Russian, British, American, German, French, diverse and colorful styles. The flowers of vocal art, make many singers in the process of singing practice, inevitably appeared influence each other, complement each other, mutual communication and contradictory phenomenon has experienced more than half a century, now the combination of traditional and foreign has coordinated mutual penetration fusion, gradually form a new national vocal music system, and this system is based on the characteristics of Chinese voice, and on this basis, follow the accurate halal, voice comfortable round, song smooth, beautiful, meticulous expression sincere, style rich cordial and so on the traditional principle of vocal music aesthetics, formed in several generations of singing practice, and developed. For example, Guo Lanying, Wang Kun, Li Guy and Peng Liyuan have created the brilliant three periods of national vocal music, which are the female representatives of a generation of national vocal music (Zhu, 2024).



The integration of bel canto, ethnic and popular singing methods is of great significance in the field of music. It can not only expand the boundary of musical expression, create more colorful musical forms, but also promote the communication of different cultures and promote the development of music art. However, in the field of music, the integration of these three singing approaches also faces various challenges. The integration of these three ways of singing by singers not only needs to have superb musical skills but also need to overcome the contradictions between singing methods and find the complementary points between various singing methods, so as to realize the organic integration of the three ways of singing. Bel canto singing is a kind of singing from European opera tradition, which is characterized by the high skill of sound. This singing method requires the singer to have excellent vocal skills to perfect the performance of difficult musical works. Bel canto pays attention to the beauty of sound and pursues the purity, harmony and beauty of sound, which requires the singer to have high breath control ability and a broad vocal range. The timbre of bel canto is usually more mellow, with the sound bright, clear and soft. Therefore, this singing method requires the singer to be able to achieve timbre changes in the singing process, thus showing rich emotions. In addition, the representative bel canto includes Verdi's opera "La Traviata" in the "Flower Quartet" and Puccini's opera "My murmur" in the opera "Bohemia". All these works can perfectly show the superb skills of bel canto. However, the development of bel canto singing cannot be separated from the singer's deep understanding of the music and his accurate grasp of the characters' emotions. Singers need to express the feelings of the characters through their voice, so the singers need to be more delicate and accurate in their performance. At the same time, the singer should also have a good stage performance, so that the audience can feel the connotation of the music while enjoying the music. National singing method with a unique style, shining in the vocal music art. The singing method emphasizes the regional nature of sound, and the pronunciation mode closely combines with the characteristics of folk music, forming a high, bright and charming sound characteristic. Different nationalities have their own singing methods, but overall, the national singing method emphasizes the simplicity and nature of music. National singing pays attention to the sense of reality of voice, voice is usually simple and deep, can truly express the emotion of national culture. Among them, the representative



ethnic songs include Jasmine Flower and Kang ding Love Song. Jasmine Flower shows the charm of traditional Chinese music through its fresh and refined melody, while Kang ding Love Song uses its deep emotional expression to reflect the regional characteristics of Kang ding, Sichuan province. Moreover, the long tone of the Mongolian people, the Tibetan lament, and the Lushing song of the Miao people can all reflect the unique charm of different ethnic singing methods. National singing also pays attention to the combination of music and dance, usually accompanied by specific dance forms, forming a unique dance music art. Dragon and lion dance in Tibet and Mongolian grassland dance music are all manifestations of the combination of national singing and dance art. In addition, the ethnic singing method also emphasizes the sound change skills, and the Tibetan trill sound and the Mongolian long sound can show the unique skills of the ethnic singing method in the sound processing.

At the same time, ethnic singers will also use special music equipment such as Miao Lushing and Tibetan soon to make ethnic singing more regional cultural characteristics. Innovative arrangement and fusion of traditional and modern elements are of profound significance in music practice. The clever combination of bel canto, ethnic and popular singing methods can not only break the boundary of musical style but also enhance the transmission power of music in cross-cultural communication. This integration allows the musical works to reach a wider range of audiences, thus enhancing their artistic influence. In specific arrangement practice, the music team can carry out integration of bel canto, ethnic, popular three singing concert, first of all, selection of wild "La Traviata" as a representative of bel canto singing, cooperate with Chinese folk songs "jasmine" and modern pop songs "Rolling in the Deep", the producer in the arrangement to keep each core melody, into other singing elements, let each song on the basis of retaining the original characteristics, show new artistic style. "La Traviata" can be based on the original piano accompaniment, add guzheng, increase the Oriental charm. Based on the traditional bel canto singing, the vocal part integrates the transformation of national singing and the emotional expression of popular singing, making the singing more layered. Secondly, the stage background needs to be designed into a combination of classical and modern style,

and the costume should also reflect this integration, so that the audience can feel the integration of the three ways of singing both visually and auditory. In the arrangement of "Jasmine Flower", the string part of the symphony orchestra can be added to add the grand sense of bel canto singing. At the same time, the elements of pop music are integrated into the harmony processing, so that the whole song can not only retain the original national characteristics but also be full of modern sense. Based on traditional ethnic singing methods, singers can properly use the resonance skills of bel canto singing methods and the emotional input of popular singing methods to make the voice infectious. The stage design can combine modern multimedia technology, transport LED screen, display dynamic traditional Chinese ink painting, making the visual effect more impact. In the arrangement of "Rolling in the Deep", the chorus of bel canto singing and the accompaniment of ethnic instruments can be added, so that the whole song can not only maintain the original popular elements but also add the classical and ethnic charm. When singing, singers should not only maintain the emotion of popular singing but also combine the vocal skills of bel canto and the charm of national singing, so that the elements of the whole song become richer. The stage design can combine modern lighting and sound technology to create a stage effect that is both modern and traditional charm, making the whole performance more wonderful. Through innovative music arrangement methods, it can not only enrich the content of music activities but also provide a platform for singers to show their musical talents, so as to promote the prosperity and development of music culture (Gao, 2024).

New Knowledges

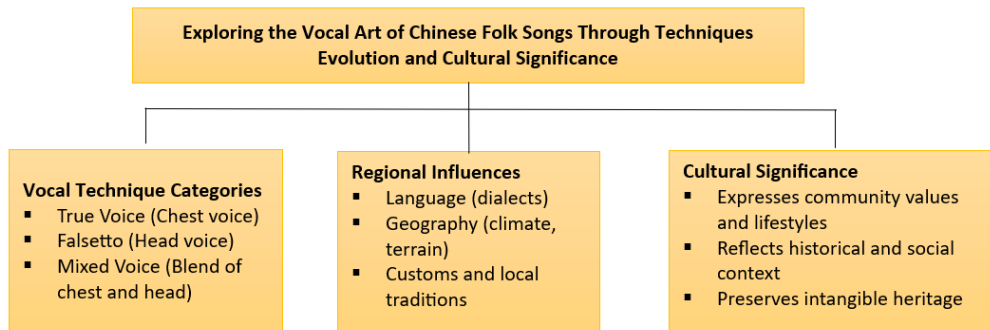


Figure 1. New Knowledges Diagram of Exploring the Vocal Art of Chinese Folk Songs Through Techniques Evolution and Cultural Significance

Conclusions

The teaching and development of Chinese folk song singing methods reveal a rich and intricate vocal tradition that emphasizes emotional expression, technical control, and cultural authenticity. Rooted in specific breathing techniques, vocal cord manipulation, and resonance usage, the national singing style prioritizes clarity of diction, the balance between true and false voice, and the flexible use of breath to enhance expressive depth. Across its historical evolution—from early real-voice techniques to modern fusions with bel canto and popular styles—Chinese folk singing has embraced regional diversity while adapting to contemporary performance demands. This integration not only preserves the artistic essence of ethnic vocal music but also broadens its expressive scope, enabling singers to communicate cultural identity and human emotion with authenticity and sophistication.

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