

# RESEARCH ON THE SINGING TEACHING OF HUANG ZI'S ART SONGS

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## Abstract

The study is experimental teaching research. The population totals 47 vocal undergraduates from the Faculty of Music and Dance, Zhoukou Normal University, Henan province China. Through simple random sampling, 7 students from 47 students. This experimental teaching research consists of six steps: (1) Query and read literature, conduct literature research, understand the creative background of Huang Zi's art songs, and study the musical traits of Huang Zi's art songs. (2) Learn the singing method of Huang Zi's art songs with Professor Li Xinxian, summarize and improve the teaching method, and write Huang Zi's art song guide and teaching plan. (3) Four experts were invited to evaluate Huang Zi's art song guide and teaching plan. (4) Securing experts' opinions and using them to revise guidebooks and teaching plans. (5) Carry out experimental group teaching, and perform the formative test for students in every class and summative test at the end of learning. Three experts judge the summative test data. (6) Analyze the data, evaluate and evaluate the teaching effect. Major Findings: (1) Research results of singing techniques: After the experimental teaching, the scores of the seven students improved by an average of 25.7%. (2) Research results of emotional expression in art songs: After the experimental teaching, the scores of the seven students improved by an average of 21.3%. (3) Stage performance research results: After the experimental teaching, the scores of the 7 students improved by an average of 27.1%. (4) Comprehensive average score research results: After the experimental teaching, the comprehensive average score of the 7 students increased by an average of 24.6%.

**Keywords:** Huang Zi's art songs; teaching method; singing techniques; emotional expression; stage performance

## Introduction

Huang Zi (1904.3.23-1938.5.9), a famous modern composer and music theorist in China, the founder of early music education in China, was the first to systematically and comprehensively teach modern European and American professional composition theory to domestic students (Wang, 2015).



Figure 1.1 Huang Zi

The Chinese art songs written by Huang Zi can be regarded as a model. This kind of music genre also represents his creative style and artistic value and has a high quality. Artistic songs are composed of "the trinity of music, poetry and piano accompaniment" creation technology, with unique creativity and high artistic quality. When Huang Zi creates artistic songs, he values the combination of lyrics and music and is good at expressing the artistic conception of poetry with refined musical language. The lyrics are

full of poetry and high artistry. Huang Zi introduced Western creative techniques to China. He combined the composition techniques, theories, and professional skills learned in the West with traditional Chinese music elements. He used Chinese poetry worked as the lyrics of art songs, and expressed them through vocal melody. Poetic and picturesque, this "combination of Chinese and Western" approach enables Chinese art songs to achieve a perfect combination of poetry and melody, with unique charm and characteristics of the times. Because of the historical period that Huang Zi is in, his works still have distinct characteristics of the times and patriotism (Wang, 2019).

As a specific song genre, art songs prevailed in Europe at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, some advanced elements in China realized China's backwardness and started a new cultural movement. Under the development of the New Culture Movement, Chinese students studying abroad have returned to my country one after another. They brought back to China the advanced systems and culture of western developed countries, including art songs. These musicians integrated Chinese traditional culture and created many excellent art songs with strong national charm and distinctive characteristics of the times. Among these musicians, Huang Zi is one of the representative musicians. The lyrics and songs of his artistic creations are mostly derived from the poems or Chinese classical poems of the Chinese professors of the National Academy of Music. The melody and piano accompaniment mostly follow the traditional tonality. The structural principles of music; the subject matter is mostly combined with the background of the time and has a poignant literary, artistic conception. Huang Zi's art songs have been circulated to this day and are widely sung in major music colleges. They are an important part of contemporary vocal music teaching and singing that cannot be ignored.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To study the singing techniques of Huang Zi's art songs.
2. To write the guidebook on teaching method of Huang Zi's art songs.
3. Teaching students to singing techniques of Huang Zi's art songs.

4. To find out the efficiency of teaching by using guidebook of Huang Zi's art songs for Zhoukou Normal University.

## **Literature Review**

After consulting books, monographs, literature, and periodicals, it is found that the research results of the academic circles around Mr. Huang Zi's art songs have been increasing year by year (Huang, 2020). The author uses the CNKI database to search for the keyword "Huang Zi Art Songs": from December 2002 to June 2021, there were 84 articles, which can be roughly divided into three types according to the research content:

### **The Research on Huang Zi's Specific Art Song Creation Characteristics**

"The Life and Creation of Huang Zi," published by Mr. Qian Renkang in 1997 by People's Music Publishing House, is the only monograph on Huang Zi in mainland China. It is based on Huang Zi's life, thoughts, and study abroad. The experience, music creation, writing, and other aspects were detailed. "A Talk on Huang Zi's Artistic Song Creation," Yang Yi published in "Chinese Musicology," this article points out: that Huang Zizai strives to make the music image bright, beautiful and smooth in the creation of the music, paying attention to the perfect combination of lyrics and melody, he has meticulous creation Conceived and rigorous music structure and creatively explored the national style of music (Lin, 2015).

### **Research on Huang Zi's Art Song Singing**

"Analysis of Huang Zi's vocal work's creative characteristics and artistic song singing style," Gao Xiuzhu published in "Music Creation" this article explains its uniqueness from the aspects of Huang Zi's works inheriting excellent classical culture, national music, and borrowing from Western composition techniques Artistic charm. "Research on Huang Zi's Artistic Songs," Xu Qian's master's degree thesis of Shandong Normal University (Hu, 2019). This article starts with the factors that affect Huang Zi's artistic song creation and analyzes Huang Zi's lyrical art songs, ancient poetry art songs, and realistic art Songs, and elaborates on the creative characteristics and singing style of Huang Zi's artistic songs. "The Creation and Singing Style Characteristics of Huang Zi's Art Songs," a master's degree thesis of Ma Huiqiong, Northwest University for Nationalities. This

article points out that the singing style of Huang Zi's art songs should be grasped from breath, strength, speed, timbre, character, pronunciation and singing experience. It also emphasizes that singers should have a good artistic accomplishment to grasp the spirit of the times and correctly express the artistic conception of the song.

### **Research on the Aesthetic Value of Huang Zi's Art Songs**

"Art Songs in the Changing World-On Huang Zi's Music Aesthetics," Jin Tingting was published in "Journal of Sun Yat-sen University (Social Science Edition)." This article uses the New Culture Movement as the source to explain the "time song" in the development of the times, "Sound of Salvation," and "Art Song." The analysis of the theme connotation of art songs and the arrangement of the piano accompaniment discusses the aesthetic characteristics of Huang Zi's art songs. "The Creative Features and Aesthetic Implications of Huang Zi's Art Songs," published by Wang Ying in "Music Creation." This article takes Huang Zi's art songs as the research object, analyzes and summarizes their characteristics and connotations, and further elaborates "on "Emotion," "Harmony," and "Environment" to more accurately understand the aesthetic meaning of Huang Zi's art songs (Lei, 2017).

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a mixed method of qualitative research and quantitative research. Use quantitative research methods to study the musical characteristics of Huang Zi's art songs, study the value of Huang Zi's art songs in vocal music teaching, and compile "Huang Zi's Art Songs Music Features Guide." Use quantitative research methods to collect teaching data, analyze and evaluate the vocal teaching methods of Huang Zi's art songs at Zhoukou Normal University, and find out the efficiency of teaching by using a guidebook of music traits of Huang Zi's art songs.

**Population:** 47 vocal undergraduates from the Faculty of Music and Dance of Zhoukou Normal University.

**Sampling:** 7 students are selected through simple random sampling.

### **Key informants:**

1. Professor Li Xinxian, Dean of Faculty of Music, Henan University of Technology.
2. Li Yang of Peking University Opera Research Institute.
3. Professor He Xin, Dean of Faculty of Music and Dance of Zhoukou Normal University.
4. Professor Zhang Li, Ph.D., academic technical leader of Faculty of Music and Dance of Zhoukou Normal University, Part-time Master Instructor of Xinyang Normal University.

### **Working processes**

**Step 1:** Query and read literature, conduct literature research, understand the creative background of Huang Zi's art songs, and study the music traits of Huang Zi's art songs.

**Step 2:** Learn the singing method of Huang Zi's art songs with Professor Li Xinxian, summarize and improve the teaching method, and write Huang Zi's art song guide and teaching plan.

**Step 3:** Three experts were invited to evaluate Huang Zi's art song guide and teaching plan.

**Step 4:** Securing experts' opinions and use them to revise guidebook and teaching plans.

**Step 5:** Carry out experimental group teaching, and perform formative test for students in every class and summative test at the end of learning. The summative test data are judged by three experts.

**Step 6:** Analyze the data, evaluate and evaluate the teaching effect.

### **Data analysis method**

Doing teaching experiments, assuming the experimental results, through teaching Huang Zi's art songs, can improve the vocal singing ability of college students. I would evaluate students' vocal performance before and

after teaching and compare the two results to see if the assumptions are correct.

In this research, seven sophomore students majoring in vocal music were evaluated for their singing ability before and after the teaching experiment, and three experts will judge their singing performance. The data collection procedure is as follows:

1. Collect the feedback from Key informants' discussions.
2. Score the singing performances of 7 students and keep the evaluation scores.
3. After the teaching process, score the students' singing performance again and keep the score data.

## **Data Analysis and Results**

According to the research methods in Chapter 3, this chapter conducts experimental teaching for 7 students and tests them at different teaching and experimental stages. The test is divided into three aspects: singing techniques, emotional expression of art songs, and stage performance. Experts evaluate and score students' performance at different stages, record test data of each student at different stages, observe data changes, and analyze data results.

### **Research Title: Comprehensive Average Score and Grade**

**Instructions:** In this part, the scores of 7 students in the comprehensive average scores and grade before the teaching experiment were recorded, and the comprehensive average scores were obtained in three aspects: singing techniques, emotional expression of art songs and stage performance, with a total score of 40, We refer to 0~10 as E, 11~20 as D, 21~25 as C, 26~30 as B, 31~35 as A, 35~40 as A+.

**Part I:** Seven students I,II,III,IV,V,VI,VII

**Part II:** Comprehensive average score and grade

Student	Singing technique	Emotional expression of art songs	Stage performance	Comprehensive Average Score	Grade
I	29	28	31.5	29.5	B
II	34.5	36.5	35	35.3	A+
III	31.5	33	32.5	32.3	A
IV	33	34.5	33.5	33.7	A
V	31.5	32.5	32	32	A
VI	32	34.5	34.5	33.7	A
VII	32	32	32	32	A

Table 1 Comprehensive average score and grade before experimental teaching

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IV	33	34.5	33.5	33.7	A
V	31.5	32.5	32	32	A
VI	32	34.5	34.5	33.7	A
VII	32	32	32	32	A

Table 2 Comprehensive average score and grade after experimental teaching

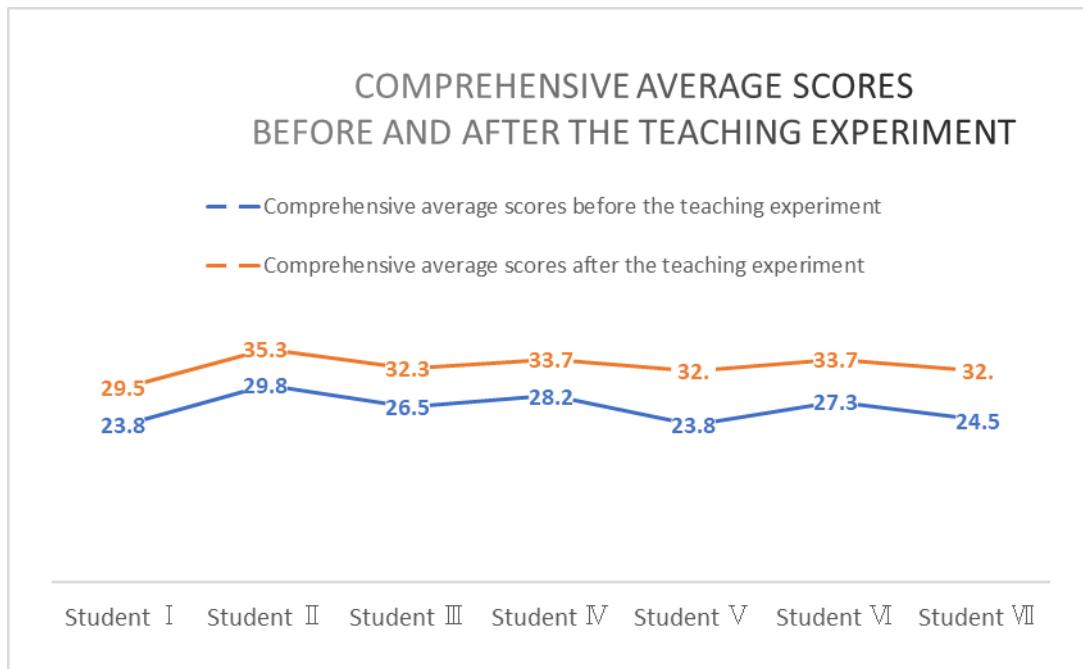


Figure 3 Comprehensive Average Scores Before and After the Teaching Experiment

This part records the comprehensive average scores of experts on Singing techniques, emotional expression of art songs, and stage performance before and after the experimental teaching. Table 1 and Table 2, respectively, record the different scores of students before and after the experiment; figure 3 records the comparison of scores before and after the experiment. Regarding comprehensive average scores: Student I's comprehensive average score increased by 23.9% after experimental teaching. Student II's comprehensive average score increased by 18.5% after experimental teaching. Student III's comprehensive average score increased by 21.9% after experimental teaching. Student IV's comprehensive average score increased by 19.5% after experimental teaching. Student V's comprehensive average score increased by 34.5% after experimental teaching. Student VI's comprehensive average score increased by 23.4% after experimental teaching. Student VII's comprehensive average score increased by 30.6% after experimental teaching.

After the experimental teaching, the comprehensive average score of the 7 students increased by an average of 24.6%.

## Results

### **Research result of study the singing techniques of Huang Zi's art songs**

If Schubert is the representative figure of European art songs, then Huang Zi deserves to be the pioneer in the field of Chinese art songs. As a generation of masters who have systematically mastered the Western music system and are deeply rooted in the ground, Mr. Huang Zi has thoughtfully and spared no effort to explore how to use Western composition theory and techniques to express the connotation of Chinese national music better. He combined Western creative techniques with Chinese national elements and achieved great success in active practice. The artistic charm of his works conquered generations of scholars and accumulated valuable experience for the nationalization of Chinese early art song creation.

The 1930s was a prosperous period for Huang Zi's artistic song creation. The lyrics he chose in his creation were full of profound artistic conception and highly artistic. He was good at expressing the artistic conception of poetry with refined musical language, not only focusing on the combination of lyrics and music. and useful exploration of the national character of melody and harmony. Huang Zi's art songs are rigorous in structure, delicate and short, with distinct layers and vivid images. The creation of Huang Zi's art songs has strongly promoted the development of modern music culture in China, especially in music education. It is the most creative value and influential.

The creation of Huang Zi's art songs is mainly divided into three types:

**1. Lyrical art songs:** The first lyrical art songs, representative works include: "Homesick" 《思乡》, "Longing for Beloved in Spring" 《春思曲》, "Three Wishes of a Rose" 《玫瑰三愿》, etc.

**2. Ancient poetry and art songs:** The second is ancient poetry and art songs, representative works include: "Flowers are not Flowers" 《花非花》, "Reflections at the Beigu Tower, Jingkou - To the Tune of Southerner

township" 《南乡子·登京口北固亭有怀》, "On Ascending the Tower - To the Tune of Rouged Lips" 《点绛唇·赋登楼》, "Downstream to Jiangling" 《下江陵》, etc.

**3. Realistic art songs:** The third is realistic art songs, representative works include: "Song of the Happiness of a Family Union" 《天伦歌》, "Song of Resisting Enemies" 《抗敌歌》, "Sleeping Lion" 《睡狮》, etc. (Ping, 2018).

### **Research result of write the guidebook on teaching method of Huang Zi's art songs**

The "Guidebook of Huang Zi's Art Songs" is divided into five chapters:

**Chapter 1 Introduction to Huang Zi's Art Songs:** This chapter introduces composer Huang Zi, in detail the creative process and artistic characteristics of the Huang Zi's art songs, so that students can have a full understanding of Huang Zi and Huang Zi's art songs and get ready to sing Huang Zi's art songs.

**Chapter 2 Singing of Art Songs:** In the singing of art songs, the three aspects of singing techniques, emotional expression of art songs, and stage performance are an inclusive relationship that relies on each other and are indispensable. This chapter will elaborate on the three aspects of singing techniques, emotional expression of art songs, and stage performance, so that students can understand the singing requirements of art songs.

**Chapter 3 Composition Traits of Huang Zi's Art Songs:** This chapter consists of five songs by Huang Zigu, "Flowers are not Flowers" 《花非花》, "Downstream to Jiangling" 《下江陵》, "Reflections at the Beigu Tower, Jingkou - To the Tune of Southerner township" 《南乡子·登京口北固亭有怀》, "On Ascending the Tower - To the Tune of Rouged Lips" 《点绛唇·赋登楼》, "Written at Dinghui Monastery, Huangzhou - To the Tune of Divination" 《卜算子·黄州定慧院寓居作》. The above five songs are analyzed in detail from three aspects: profound understanding of poetry, melody and musical form, so that students can deeply understand the creative characteristics of Huang Zi's artistic songs.

**Chapter 4 Singing Analysis of Huang Zi's Art Songs:** Some singing of art songs is affected by many factors, so even if the same piece is sung, the singing style will be different. People in different eras have different understandings of the same work. We should give classic works a new singing style according to the characteristics of the current era. This chapter starts with Huang Zi's three styles of works, and expounds and analyzes the singing of Huang Zi's art songs through the artistic treatment of different works.

**Chapter 5 Music Scores of Huang Zi's Art Songs:** This chapter contains the music scores of 13 Huang Zi's art songs - "Homesick" 《思乡》, "Longing for Beloved in Spring" 《春思曲》, "Three Wishes of a Rose" 《玫瑰三愿》, "Finding Plum Blossom Along Snowy Path" 《踏雪寻梅》, "Flowers are not Flowers" 《花非花》, "Reflections at the Beigu Tower, Jingkou - To the Tune of Southerner township" 《南乡子·登京口北固亭有怀》, "On Ascending the Tower - To the Tune of Rouged Lips" 《点绛唇·赋登楼》, "Downstream to Jiangling" 《下江陵》, "Written at Dinghui Monastery, Huangzhou - To the Tune of Divination" 《卜算子·黄州定慧院寓居作》, "September 18th Incident" 《九一八》, "Song of the Happiness of a Family Union" 《天伦歌》, "Sleeping Lion" 《睡狮》。

## Research result of teaching students to singing techniques of Huang Zi's art songs

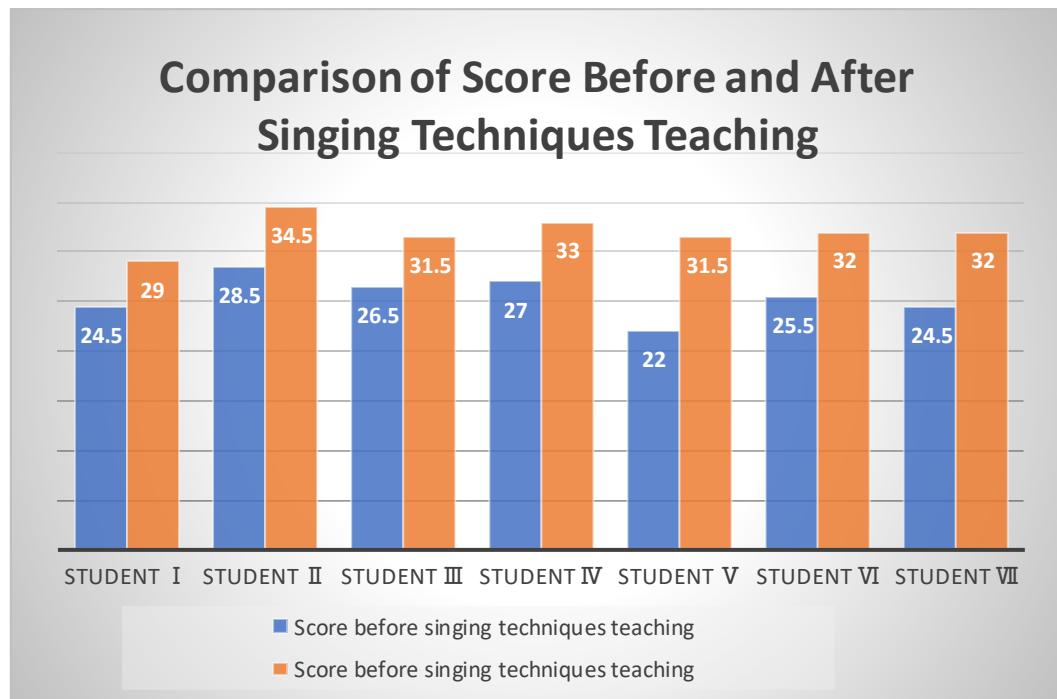


Figure 4 Comparison of Score Before and After Singing Techniques Teaching

In terms of singing techniques: Student I's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 24.5 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 29 points, the score increased by 18.4%. Student II's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 28.5 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 34.5 points, the score increased by 21%. Student III's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 26.5 points, and after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 31.5 points, and the score increased by 18.9%. Student IV's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 27 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 33 points, the score increased by 22.2%. Student V's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 22 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 31.5 points, the score increased by 43.2%. Student VI's singing techniques, before the teaching

experiment, the experts scored 25.5 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 32 points, the score increased by 25.5%. Student VII's singing techniques, before the teaching experiment, the experts scored 24.5 points, after the teaching experiment, the experts scored 32 points, the score increased by 30.6%.

After the experimental teaching, the scores of the seven students improved by an average of 25.7%.

### **Research result of find out the efficiency of teaching by using guidebook of Huang Zi's art songs for Zhoukou Normal University**

From the previous chapter Data Analysis and Results, we get the results: After the experimental teaching, the total average score of the 7 students increased by 24.6%.

Vocal singing is a complex and abstract discipline. We not only sing on the stage but also include various aspects of psychology, physiology, and cultural heritage. All of these require that you master a variety of knowledge when learning vocal music to demonstrate vocal music's singing charm better. When studying vocal music, it is necessary to start from the dialectical study of the relationship between skills and emotions, combined with the aesthetics of autonomic theory, heteronomy, and music aesthetics, dialectically analyze the relationship between vocal music singing skills and emotional expression. Skill is an indispensable basic condition for vocal music singing. Still, vocal music singing is not only a display of skills but also a way to express the connotation of the work. Skills and emotions should be integrated into vocal music singing. The two are equally important in vocal music learning and are mutually dependent. The study of vocal music singing should not only start from the aspect of technique or emotional expression. Still, it should dialectically combine the two in vocal music stage singing to express the writing intention of the song better and show the connotation of the work more perfectly.

Nowadays, more and more students think that vocal music singing is a display of skills and dazzling skills, which makes the learning of vocal music deviate from the aesthetic education of music. Vocal singing is not just a display of skills, not just an expression of emotions, but an organic

combination of skills and emotions. In the study of vocal music, we should analyze, research, accurately understand the connotation of the work, and vividly describe the music image to better express the connotation of the work and infect the audience. It can be seen that grasping the dialectical and unified relationship between singing skills and emotional expression in vocal music singing is of great significance to accurately and perfectly interpreting vocal music works and promoting the development of vocal music art.

## Discussion

Huang Zi was a landmark figure in Chinese art songs in the 1830s. Each of Huang Zi's artistic songs is a classic and a dazzling treasure in our country's music creation. The works he created contain both the neatness and elegance of Western art songs and the subtlety and elegance of traditional Chinese music. Huang Zi's art songs reflect nationality, times, and lyricism, not only in the song itself but also in the piano accompaniment and lyrics. Many of our vocal music learners can't always sing many foreign opera excerpts but should inherit and carry forward Chinese nationalized music better. (Lei, 2017)

Learning and studying Huang Zi's art songs can not only improve our understanding and mastery of the singing skills and song processing of the works but also make a more in-depth study of the writing of piano accompaniment and lyrics (Shi, 2021). Second, according to the artistic characteristics of our nation, Huang Zi has well-integrated it with Western art songs to keep pace with the development of world music. The value of Huang Zi's art songs is not only to study the refinement and perfection of his music but also to study the profound national cultural connotation embodied in his creation (Li, 2020). Third, on the issue of nationalization of Chinese art songs, we should adhere to the policy of "making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China," inherit and carry forward the precious experience of China's excellent music culture, absorb and learn from the inspiration of western composition, and at the same time, deeply excavate China's traditional culture, to obtain rich creative inspiration (Ding, 2018).

Chinese art songs are well-known and are more widely spread through the singing of art colleges and professional literary and art groups

(Zhang, 2019). With the changes of the times, various network devices and mobile media devices are constantly updated, and some music channels on the network have also begun to promote and popularize art songs. Some schools also offer music courses. In short, the development and prosperity of art songs will play a positive role in promoting the construction of socialist spiritual civilization in China, and art songs with Chinese national characteristics will surely move towards new glory! Art songs with national characteristics will surely move towards new brilliance.

## Conclusion

The study is experimental teaching research. The population totals 47 vocal undergraduates from the Faculty of Music and Dance, Zhoukou Normal University, Henan province China. Research results of singing techniques after the experimental teaching, the scores of the seven students improved by an average of 25.7%. Research results of emotional expression in art songs: After the experimental teaching, the scores of the seven students improved by an average of 21.3%. Stage performance research results: After the experimental teaching, the scores of the 7 students improved by an average of 27.1%. Comprehensive average score research results: After the experimental teaching, the comprehensive average score of the 7 students increased by an average of 24.6%. Vocal singing is not just a display of skills, not just an expression of emotions, but an organic combination of skills and emotions. In the study of vocal music, we should analyze, research, accurately understand the connotation of the work, and vividly describe the music image to better express the connotation of the work and infect the audience.

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