

Pop Singing Education in Music Universities and Conservatories of China

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Abstracts

The development of popular singing in China has experienced rapid and complex development. With the implementation of China's reform and opening-up policy, the development trend of China's pop music industry is generally positive. Chinese pop music lovers focus on relevant research and strive to develop pop music to a higher level. Pop singing majors have been established in various music colleges and universities and incorporated into the formal teaching system. It means that pop music is a professional discipline. The promotion of music variety shows and the widespread of new media in China have given rise to several excellent singers and artists and produced some new popular creations. This academic article presented pop singing education in music universities and conservatories in China.

Keywords: Pop Singing Education; Music Universities; China

Introduction

In the 21st century, the information age is developing rapidly. On the one hand, people's material life is getting richer and richer, so their demand for spiritual life becomes more urgent. On the other hand, with the increasing integration of China and the world, the development and popularity of TV culture and network culture, and the development and integration of Hong Kong and Taiwan pop music to the mainland due to saturation, Chinese pop music has entered an era of diversified development featuring fast propagation speed, international style, a popular variety, and differentiated audience groups. In 2004, the "Super Girl" talent show was born. In 2007, the "Happy Boys" talent show was held for the first time. The era of pop music talent shows has lasted for nearly ten years. In 2012, "The Voice of China" premiered, and in 2013, "I Am a Singer" debuted, and pop music entered the era of variety shows. Today, the twentieth century will soon be over, the first twenty years of Chinese pop music to internationalization tide and adapt to the appreciation of the people level. It came in the process of continuous change, and today's Chinese pop music, while its development is not in terminal decline, but the approximate period of "stagflation." On the one hand, the development of pop music keeps up with the international pace, excessively copies mature foreign communication forms and means, and blindly promotes new scientific and technological means. The commercialized atmosphere is too strong, which has lost the "Chinese characteristics" that should be firmly grasped.

On the other hand, in the development process of pop music and merely content with the service the fond of young people, the growth of the young people concerned about insufficient attention is not enough in respect of personal development and the individuality demanded. At the same time, they cannot well realize the value of a lead to young people. In other words, the excessive importance of meeting young people and ignoring the connotation,

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the form of pop music developing power is insufficient. Pop music education is lagging, which seems to be thriving but hides a development crisis. Where Chinese pop music should go and how to develop is becoming an issue of deep discussion in academic and educational circles (Piao, 2018 : 7)

The pop singing

Since the development of pop music in the late 19th and early 20th century, the public has different opinions on its definition. Pop music originated in Britain in the mid-1950s as a description for Rock and Roll and the new youth music styles it influenced. It was a spin-off from pop art, and the pop word 'Pop' was used to refer to non-classical music and was usually interpreted as songs performed by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and ABBA. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music 5th,2007) It generally refers to a kind of music that is easy to understand, easy to live, easy to spread, and has a large audience; culture, coined slightly earlier, refers to a whole range of new, often American, media-culture products. The etymology is less important than the sense, widespread at the time on both sides of the Atlantic, that a decisive break was taking place in both musical styles and cultural patterns.

Pop music originally referred to music that appealed to a large audience. In 1858, the London Pop Concert was founded. Later in the 1950s, it became different from serious music, classical music, and traditional folk music, also known as flow music. Some people regard stream music as commercial music, used to relieve and entertain people, and pop music as the manifestation of 'industrialization' (Encyclopedia of China, 1989 : 54) European and American pop music is an inherent and specialized word, a new type of music art category born in modern times' new social and cultural background. It is an art form developed with the rise of modern industrial civilization and industrial cities in Europe in the first half of the 19th century. It developed rapidly in the United States in the early 20th century. Pop music in Europe and America is an art genre composed of many types and styles of music, including blues, jazz, country music, rock, and roll.

Moreover, many schools, celebrities, and masterpieces have emerged and have a wide social influence. The pop music of developed countries in Europe and America has occupied an important position worldwide (Xu, 2015 : 21-25)

The pop singing in China

Music is an inseparable branch of culture influenced significantly by the current social context. Reviewing China's history, the Qing dynasty's regime was in turbulence because of the 1840s Opium war. The imperialist powers were forced to sign unequal treaties with the Qing dynasty and seized "concessions." Gradually China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. During this period, western culture started spreading in China. Many Chinese intellectuals thought about the situation and tried to figure out how to fight back those invaders who seemed to have dominated them. They got chances to travel through western countries and bring many important values that later integrated with Chinese ones. At the same time, some pieces of western culture were brought to China, and foreign and local cultures were mixed deeply. In the 1915s, the writers of New Youth magazine launched a new culture movement, where those intellectuals revolted against Confucianism and promoted a new Chinese culture based on advanced, modern, and western ideals like democracy and science. Li Jinhui (often cited as the "father of Chinese popular music") became involved in the

movement. He found music was the better form to promote their ideals and then advocated a new musical movement.



Figure, 1 Li Jinhui (Tuan Jie Press, 2011)

Li Jinhui is the most outstanding composer in modern Chinese popular history. He created a new musical form moving away from the established musical form and took Chinese music in a new direction. From the 1920s, Li stayed in Shanghai, a commercial city that attracted people from different cultural backgrounds to invest in it. The prosperity of the city inspired Li's creativity greatly. Western music, like American Jazz, flowed into China via various media. Those soft and lilting melodies corresponded with the demand of local cultural life. Under such circumstances, Li wrote those songs which combined Chinese musical elements with western music and were well known as Shidaiqu. 'Drizzle' (Mao Mao Yu) and 'sister, I love you are marking the birth of Chinese pop songs and have become popular in China. Li created this form of Chinese Pop song. Wang Yong concluded, "In popular vernacular or ballad style and slightly Chinese classical rhyming lyrics, the music with Chinese national folk flavor song tone, but supplemented by foreign dance rhythm type (such as jazz, tango) band accompaniment. This model, the artistic style, adapts to the average public taste and can use a variety of media such as movies, radio, music, and stage widespread, has communication in the sense of modernity. This pattern is the attitude of 'folk music,' the present popular music creators follow for Chinese popular music. Even the development of the whole mass culture has an enlightening effect; The important carrier of Li Jinhui's musical dream -- Mingyue Society, the meaning of its original name is enough to show that Li Jinhui regards' folk music as the great treasure of national culture: We hold high the banner of folk music, just like the bright moon in the sky, sharing the beauty of moonlight, and everyone can enjoy it. Let us call it 'Mingyue Concert'" (Wang & Bao, 2009 : 6) His greatest source of Jazz influence came from American Buck Clayton, who worked with Li for two years.

Clayton played a major role in shaping the musical scores written by Li. Li's revolutionary Chinese jazz music dominated the nightlife scene, and it was performed at cabarets, cafes, and nightclubs around southeast Asia. Li himself led the first all-Chinese jazz band, which played at an upscale Shanghai nightclub. Li's songs were often performed by different "song-and-dance troupes" composed of female singers and male musicians, many of whom had formerly

been members of Li's groups (Jones, 2001 : 43) He fostered many female singers like Zhou Xuan and Wang Renmei, who later became superstars in China. From 1931 to 1936, Li also composed music for many films, such as "Fairies on earth," most of which were pop songs. At the same time, he was also engaged in other styles of music: ballroom music, jazz, and folk. Record companies like "EMI" and "victory" published many of his pop songs. Li achieved great success in his career though his work was stigmatized in the specific era. His pop music creation was rooted in Shanghai. In the 20th century, it became the main genre of music in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Despite Li making great contributions to Chinese pop music, his music creation was criticized as "vulgar" and "common" for a long time, so he died in fear and loneliness in his old age. For a long time, the orthodox history of music appraised Li Jinhui and his works as follows. These so-called 'adult songs and dances' and various love songs quickly flooded movie theaters, dance halls, and other entertainment venues, forming a wave of vulgar waste in coastal cities in China in the early 1990s. Although the current was resisted by the cultural and art circles and criticized by the educational circles at the time, it still criticized the development of the early stage of electronic film music in China. Moreover, the entertainment pop music in Taiwan and Hong Kong had a considerable influence (Wang, 2005 : 6)

After the Japanese invasion, the whole of China descended into chaos and warfare heavily. Leftist music creations became the main scordatura full of patriotic enthusiasm and counter-Japanese sentiment, while Shidaiqu faded on the mainland stage. Under the emergent situation, many musicians from Shanghai sought another habitable place, "Hong Kong, "to escape the war. They brought away lots of valuable resources, which completely shifted the pop music industry's focus. The migration brought unprecedented flourishes in the Hong Kong music scene and later stimulated the development of the Cantopop. Recording companies were not just satisfied with restoring Shidaiqu. They were committed to discovering those talented local singers and released new works such as "Spring breeze kiss my face" and "Nan Ping evening bells." As an ideal medium, Song and dance movies became an effective and important form soon to propagate new singles by the companies. With the increasingly fierce competition and demands of citizen's mental life, the creative inspiration of composers takes time to follow the pace. In that case, recording companies started buying musical copyrights from Europe and America filled with Chinese lyrics. It is conceivable that Hong Kong developed into an international metropolis based on inclusive culture at that time. Bright prospects gave the citizens a strong sense of belonging, encouraging them to search for a way to show their cultural confidence. The Cantonese dialect, a perfect selection, was embedded in the melody as a distinguishing territorial feature. It marked the birth of Cantopop, which gradually developed into one of the most important parts of Chinese pop music and became the representative of Hong Kong culture in the following years.

The political-economic forces shape Taiwanese musical diversity in different periods, including native folk songs, Japanese songs, Shanghai Shidaiqu, and English songs. Taiwan was under Japanese colonization between 1895 and 1945. The recording industry developed rapidly and set the modern conditions for the production, distribution, and consideration of "Taiwan music." Gramophones and records were taxed heavily as luxury goods, prompting domestic labels to enter merger and co-investment deals with international companies from the West. In the 1930s, colonial Taiwan, Columbia, Victor, and about ten other companies with varied Japanese and western investments competed in the making of pop songs. Sung in classical Chinese or Taiyu, these songs expressed prevailing social sentiments. The music style revealed familiarity with traditional Han music, aboriginal tunes, Japanese ryūkōka, jazz, and even religious hymns. (Eva Tsai,2020) In 1949s, the KMT (the ruling party in Taiwan 1949)

took over Taiwan with the support of the American army. (Fang- Chih Irene Yang,2008) Due to powerful containment measures, the Taiwanese lived in a repressive atmosphere while American entertainment deeply influenced the local music scene. Compared with Shidaiqu, fashionable western pop music walloped existing aesthetic ideas of music. It brought ideological freedom and the concept of equal rights, which inspired local youth to obsess over the writing and singing of their original works (in Mandarin), later becoming known as the campus folk-song movement. With the local economic soaring, Taiwanese pop music began to emerge as a capitalistic trait in the 1980s. Mandarin pop, the mainstream music type, evolved into the fierce commercial competition that produced many superstars. It generated a significant impact on mainland China in the future. It is worth mentioning that the most important pop diva of Asia—— Teresa Teng (Deng Lijun), was born in Taiwan. Her sweet, clear voice attracted many fans who span a wide range of ages. She passed away many years, but her works are still alive and quite popular. When Teng's songs began to spread among the people of the mainland, they were denounced as "decadent songs of the bourgeoisie." This should have a certain relationship with the popular songs at that time. Teng's singing style had matured, with a slow, lyrical tone and a low pitch that met their criteria. For most people, Teresa Teng's lyrical voice comes as a fresh touch, accustomed to catchy songs that preach and extol content. In particular, the theme of love in the song brought a kind of "eager" driving force to the young people who had not completely broken away from the "blue and gray" atmosphere at that time. Although the mainstream media never play Teresa Teng's songs, in daily life, Teresa Teng's songs have almost become fashionable symbols of young people. According to Teresa Teng's song "instigated" about love, many young people talk about love. Lovers also dare to hold hands and hug shoulders in public. It is hard for young people today to imagine the impact Teresa Teng's singing had on the social life of the mainland at that time (Wang & Wang, 2011 : 246-247)



Figure, 2 Teresa Teng (An Hui Literature &Art Press, 2008)

In the mainland, the establishment of the reform and opening policy has the most obvious impact on the development of Pop music. After experiencing the "Cultural Revolution" period from 1966 to 1976, China's economy, culture, and other aspects were affected. After the third Plenary Session of the eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held, the national musical trend of thought began to change, and "pop music" began to return to the life of the people. In 1984, The CCTV Spring Festival Gala invited Hong Kong singers Zhang Mingmin and Xi Xiulan to sing "My Chinese Heart," "My Grandmother's Penghu Bay," "Why are Flowers So Red," and "Girls from Alishan." In this way, CCTV Spring Festival Gala gave mainland audiences a chance to better understand pop music in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In April 1985, the British band WHAM held a concert in The Workers' Stadium in Beijing, the first concert by a foreign pop band in China after the reform and opening-up policy. In 1986, pop music called "decadent music" was officially accepted by mainstream culture. From 1986 to 1990, the law of the People's Republic of China on "the national economic and social development of the seventh five-year plan" period.

The part of "literature and art career" emphasizes the emphasis on literature and art career. The planning for the determination of the reform and opening up fully reflects the country for the rapid development of popular music and provides a good social system guarantee. During this period, there were two gorges. The improvement of shore relations promoted the exchange of music culture at that time. Suri's "Follow my Feelings" and other records were introduced earlier. In the 1990s, China's culture and art industry developed vigorously after the deepening of institutional reform. As for pop music, the pop music style is more diversified, and the signing company and artist signing system prevail. During this period, due to the "explosion" of signed singers, many mainland albums were released, reflecting the original ability of pop music and the singing ability of singers who released records at that time (Song, 2018 : 34-36)

Chinese pop music golden age was not long continuous, in the late nineties, because of the outbreak of the Asian financial crisis affected by the larger society economy, combined with the "rampant piracy, loss of the system, the music split, external shock," the influence of many factors, such as Chinese pop music at the turn of the century. There was an inconceivable rapid decline. The decline of a direct impact on the understanding of pop music is fresh by the Renaissance period, yearning to the gold period of excitement and the pursuit of decline thinking. Looking at such a significant change, people began to calm down and think about the future development of Chinese pop music, starting with the new development of popular music in the new thousand.

Pop singing education in Chinese Universities and Conservatories

In 1989, the Vocal Music Department of Wuhan Conservatory of music began to train pop music singers. The teacher was Professor Yaofeng (the father of singer Yao Being). Subsequently, Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Beijing Institute of modern music, Xinghai Conservatory of music, Nanjing Academy of art, Xi'an Conservatory of music, PLA Academy of art, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Tianjin Conservatory of Music and Jilin Academy of art began to recruit undergraduates majoring in Pop music performance, performance, composition, and theory. The cultivation of talents related to the direction of pop music in universities and conservatories will force the establishment of the discipline of Pop music in the future, which will promote the development of the discipline of Pop music to be more scientific, standardized, and systematic. Pop musicology's real significance and value are mainly in universities and conservatories because universities and conservatories are the main base for Pop music education and theoretical research (Wang, 2017 : 92-104)

There are eleven professional music conservatories in China, among which China Conservatory of Music, Central Conservatory of Music, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Xi'an Conservatory of Music, and Harbin Conservatory of Music have not set up the Pop singing major. The article gives a brief overview of several conservatories of music with popular singing majors.

The popular Singing Department at Xinghai Conservatory of Music was established in Oct.2015. The brand major of the college -- Pop Music Singing, is one of the music performance majors with the most social influence in South China. In 2013, it was rated as the Excellent course of Guangdong Colleges and universities and won the second prize in the sixth Guangdong Higher Education Teaching Achievement Award. The whole chain of the pop music industry system into the course, the international pop music industry system, and other aspects of beneficial exploration and practice. Adjust professional direction and content according to the rapid change in the pop music market. Increase the integration, communication, and cross of talents training among majors, and promote the integration of teaching practice in all majors.

The pop music department at Si Chuan Conservatory of Music was established in 2001. Cultivate the all-round, having both abilities and political integrity, has high artistic accomplishment. A popular singing performance and theory of professional quality and ability can adapt to the contemporary popular music industry. Development needs and the future of globalization set "sing, play, create, and Xuan" comprehensive ability in one popular music professional compound applied creative talents. Senior professional music talents capable of performing, creating, teaching, and researching pop music in relevant professional art organizations, media organizations, and colleges. In 2013, in order to adapt to the law of development of popular Music, this major, major teaching reform in the national popular music education in the first courses in pop music features, such as "popular music rhythm and rhythm," "harmony" popular, "pop music style analysis," "popular songs writing," "popular songs cover and adaptation," "music recording practice lesson." In the teaching of pop Music, the major always follows the characteristics of "diversity, individuality, and creation" and adheres to the teaching principle of teaching students according to their aptitude.

The pop music department at Zhe Jiang Conservatory of Music was established in 2016. The Department of Popular Music takes "both performance and creation, science and development" as the purpose and "exploring the growth rules of popular music talents and cultivating outstanding popular music talents in line with the requirements of The Times" as the discipline construction characteristics. It actively explores the school-running mode of fully relying on the traditional professional basis of the school of Music and setting up high-quality popular music education. It is a vigorous science teaching and research performance entity. Based on studying and drawing lessons from the major of pop music performance at home and abroad. The Department of Pop Music has always taken Music as the guide in the setting of specialized courses, specialized basic courses, and elective courses, optimized and improved the curriculum system, and paid attention to the all-around cultivation of students.

The Academy for performing arts in Wu Han Conservatory of music was established in 2003. As vibrant new departments to training to adapt to the market demand of new music talents as the goal, adhere to the "equal emphasis on academic and application, teaching and practice" for the discipline construction characteristic, based on the principle of practical, enhancing the application, in pay attention to the traditional music of steady development. At the same time, actively explore the popular direction of subjects, and perfect the education mode of cultivating high-quality music performance and applied talents.

Department of Modern Music in Tian Jin Conservatory of music in 2001. The Department of Modern Music has a team of teachers and experts with great experience in pop music teaching and stage performance. They take responsibility for training senior talents in modern pop music singing and performance. In terms of school philosophy, the Department of Modern Music of Tianjin Conservatory of Music insists on laying a solid foundation, strengthening practice, actively expanding the extension of knowledge, and paying attention to cultivating students' creative spirit and practical ability. In the professional setting, curriculum system, teaching reform, artistic practice, and other aspects, we strive to cultivate a wide range of knowledge, strong practical ability, and high comprehensive quality of "one specialty, multi-ability" type of composite talents.

The Institute of modern music in Shen Yang Conservatory of music was established in 2016. There are 97 teachers, 17 with senior professional titles, 13 master supervisors, and an excellent undergraduate teaching team at Shenyang Conservatory of Music. Some teachers have been under the State Council special government allowances of Liao Ning province, Liao Ning distinguished professor, "pacesetter project" one hundred level, one thousand level, outstanding teachers, colleges and universities in Liao Ning province, Liao Ning province outstanding young scholars growth plan, a higher education teaching achievement, the second prize in Liao Ning province, Shen Yang model workers, the May 4th medal in Shen Yang, Shen Yang music college teaching masters such as the honorary title.

With the promotion of the construction and development of pop music specialty in Chinese colleges and universities, the academic activities and achievements related to the construction and education of pop music specialty in colleges and universities are increasing year by year. In 2017, Guangzhou University successfully held the "2017 National College pop music singing and teaching seminar" this is the first nationwide academic seminar with the theme of pop music singing and teaching. The conference has launched a new discussion on many issues, such as "pop music singing and methods, pop music teaching theories and methods, pop music curriculum construction in Colleges and universities, and the development status of contemporary Chinese pop music" (Luo, 2017 : 55) In 2018, the China pop music theory research and professional construction high-end forum was held in Beijing. The conference conducted extensive discussions on "College pop music education, pop music creation and performance, pop music styles and genres, pop music history, pop music aesthetics, culture and criticism, and pop music theory and research methods." It established the college Pop Music Education Alliance. Two conferences marked that the construction of pop music majors in Chinese universities has entered a new stage (Piao, 2018 : 7)

Throughout the development of pop singing in China, we can see that the change in musical form is profoundly associated with human interest, political environment, and culture. Compared with the traditional music style, people did not accept pop singing at the beginning. It was criticized for being decadent and vulgar. However, it could not stop pop singing from spreading widely as a virus and gradually becoming mainstream music. During the developing period, it generated many valuable albums and outstanding singers, which gave an indelible impression. Unfortunately, in recent years some practitioners have chosen to earn "quick money" in the environment of musical commercialization. Many scholars consider this issue a serious risk to the music ecosystem. Recently, pop singing was criticized for its vulgarization tendency. Most works showing violence and pornography meet public criticism and restrict their development (Ren, 2012 : online). Having just one single and becoming famous is very common nowadays. These singers even need to gain proper knowledge and understanding of what they do. The thing they care about is the fame (Tang, 2021 : 78-80) Facing the current

dilemma, scholars should not only focus on the problem's origin but also explore the corresponding solution that will benefit the growth of pop singing in the future.

The establishment of Pop singing education in Chinese Universities and Conservatories is of great significance and plays an important role in guiding the direction of pop singing in China. On the one hand, educators should clarify professional training objectives to construct and optimize the teaching system actively. On the other hand, educators should intentionally strengthen the connection between school and society. For example, academic lectures and practical artistic activities are beneficial to improve the public's aesthetic. Pop singing education in Chinese Universities and Conservatories should pay attention to developing the level of major and comprehensive quality and a humanistic spirit to cultivate professional talents with both virtuous and artistic abilities (Shao, 2019 : 172-174)

Conclusion

The development path of Pop singing in China is short but pretty complicated. Having reached its peak, pop singing in China gave birth to many talented artists and works. Furthermore, nowadays, we have the opposite picture. All the things in our life face some challenges, so make music. We should be focused on something other than the bad sides of development, but we need to understand how to gain some opportunities for a prosperous future. Quality should become our priority. More and more pop singing education was established in universities and conservatories. Educators should confront the challenge and analyze the current situation instead of complaining about it. Besides, they can combine the native cultural characteristics with excellent experiences from abroad to explore a new style and distinctive development path, which prepares for the secondary heyday.

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