

# The Learning Pastoral Song in Inner Mongolian Music of China

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## Abstracts

The study of Mongolian music culture in China mainly focuses on the inheritance, protection and development of ethnic music in ethnic minority areas. The research on the combination of Mongolian music style and western bass education is relatively insufficient, and the education method of national music in the double bass performance course in colleges and universities is not perfect and comprehensive. According to the Mongolian music style and western string bass, it shows different types and structural divisions of different Mongolian instruments and double bass. At the same time, this paper studies the musical style of Mongolian style double bass solo. It mainly expounds the basic concept of traditional folk songs in Inner Mongolia and the basic development of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to promote the double bass music of Mongolian music style.

**Keywords:** Learning Pastoral Song; Inner Mongolian Music; China

## Introduction

Inner Mongolia is located at the northern border of China and slopes from northeast to southwest. 126 degrees east longitude, 97 degrees west longitude, and 29 degrees transverse longitude. When the sun rises in Hulun Buir, Alxa is still dark. Inner Mongolia starts from 37 degrees north latitude in the south and 53 degrees north latitude in the north, with a longitudinal span of 16 degrees. It is about 2400 kilometers long from east to west and 1700 kilometers long from north to south. Inner Mongolia is located in the hinterland of Yezhou, which is the junction of Mongolia's high and Central Plains. The ridge composed of Daxing Anyin, Shan, and Maoshan is the dividing line of Inner Mongolia's ecological environment. Because Inner Mongolia is crescent-shaped and extends to 2852 from east to west, the difference in brightness can be seen in the east and west of the three zones. Behind the mountain is the Inner Mongolia Plateau, the southern part of the Mongolian Plateau. The fault subsidence plain in front of the mountain includes the Hetao Qiantao plain, the West Lamulun river plain, and the Yellow River Basin. There are great differences between the three parts regarding topography and climate.

Standing between the Mongolian Plateau and the piedmont plain as the boundary between the two, the greater Hinggan Mountains and the Maolan Mountains extend more than 2600 kilometers from the Bank of Heilongjiang to the southwest, with a width of tens to 300 to 400 kilometers and an area of 246700 square kilometers. In ancient times, the forest here was densely covered and a paradise for hunters. Up to now, the northern section of the greater Hinggan Mountains is still the home of ethnic minority brothers who live by hunting.

The terrain of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region slopes from the northeast to the southwest in a narrow shape. The whole area belongs to the plateau landform area. The area covers plateaus, mountains, hills, plains, deserts, rivers, lakes, and other landforms. The climate is dominated by the temperate continental climate, crossing the Yellow River, Erguna

River, Nen River and Xiliao River. [natural geography. People's Government of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region [citation date: January 28, 2019]. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has jurisdiction over 9 prefecture-level cities and 3 leagues, including Hohhot, Baotou, Wuhai, Chifeng, Tongliao, Ordos, Hulun Buir, Bayannur, Wulanchabu, Xing'an League, Xilin Gol League, and Alxa League. Administrative division. The people's Government of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. On April 25, 1954, Hohhot city changed from Guisui city to Hohhot City, becoming the capital of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.



**Figure 1,** Terrain of Inner Mongolia, China

**Characteristics of Inner Mongolia Music:** As one of the important means of communication among the Mongolian nationality oral communication is used. Regarding the historical, cultural, and geographical conditions of the vast territory and sparse population in Inner Mongolia, oral communication is the oldest and most widely used way of cultural communication. As ballads, praise words, proverbs, aphorisms, riddles, folk stories, epics, storytelling, singing, local operas, and chanting of scriptures. They are all carried out in the form of oral communication. It can be one-to-one, such as oral instruction and face-to-face communication in daily life; It can also be a couple or a group of people, such as storytellers, folk singers, and shaman dancers.

The characteristics of music culture in Inner Mongolia are closely related to the nomadic life of the Mongolian people. Living without a fixed place on the grassland gives the Mongolian people the characteristics of being strong, bold and, unrestrained, good at singing and dancing. From their music culture, it can be concluded that the initial Mongolian music creation mainly focused on Shamanism and hunting songs and dances. Then the Mongolian people entered the nomadic grassland from the mountains and forests. The long-tune folk songs gradually replaced the original short-tune folk songs and became the main body of Mongolian music in history. The characteristics of Mongolian music can be divided into different style regions, such as Horqin, tile thorn, and central region (Emsheimer & Carroll, 1986 : 1-19).

A long tune characterizes the music culture of Inner Mongolia, and its music will be sung slowly with the cooperation of Matouqin music. Most of the song's content shows the praise of life and maternal love.

**Technique :** The singing method is mainly based on the true sound, closer to the natural sound. The singing method has a variety of rich decorations, such as glide, echo, and front and back-dependent sounds. At the same time, there are also unique vocal characteristics of twists and turns. Its vocalization achieves a kind of facial sound through the complex combination of the pharynx and mouth. This singing method makes the Mongolian Long Tune have distinctive characteristics. This long key singing method leads to various free hair effects due to the differences in singers and habits. The song's main body is mostly the description of grassland scenery, such as Baiyun, cattle, sheep, and horses.

**Melody:** mode contour/rhythm and melody : Mongolian folk songs can be divided into long and short tunes. Generally, a long tune has existed for the longest time, characterized by few words and a long tone. This musical feature comes from the folk song form created by nomads in their work. Generally, they sing in festivals and wild grazing. The song is divided into upper and lower lyrics, which singers mainly create according to the natural scenery and life experience they see. There is no unity in the rhythm of singing. Long-tune folk songs mainly show the characteristic rhythm of Mongolian songs, characterized by the free fluctuation of beat and the sharp contrast between the length of rhythm and the free and large melody. In terms of singing, it has been in a state of natural formation until today. There is no unified specific system form and system. Most of them belong to improvisation. In terms of rhythm, the upward melody is slow, while the downward melody can introduce a sense of living waves to express the state of life on the grassland.

**Aesthetic :** Inner Mongolia music is a valuable culture full of national history and regional characteristics. As a kind of wordless nourishment, it spreads naturally and moistens silently. It goes deep into the daily production and life of the people of Inner Mongolia, making their life full of artistic taste and their art full of life. This long-term infection, the interaction between culture and life, and the integration of art and life have laid a rich resource foundation for developing and disseminating Inner Mongolia culture.

Mongolian music occupies an important position in the history of Chinese music. The content of Mongolian music shows all aspects of Mongolian People's life. As a part of Mongolian culture, music is not only a phenomenon, but also shows the politics, economy, culture, rich folk customs, language, and aesthetics.

Mongolian culture is an important part of Chinese culture. The Mongolian grassland culture in East Asian grassland culture is the most complete, largest, and most distinctive culture so far. The grassland culture in the Xiongnu period integrated Shamanism, rock painting, heroic epic, long tune, and other art forms and deeply affected the formation and development of Mongolian grassland culture. Its historical track can still be traced from the heritage of folk dance music, folk songs, storytelling tune, and Qupai in Mongolian traditional music. Mongolian folk songs were officially included in the second batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list on June 7, 2008. Inheriting Mongolian music culture is one of the important future goals of national music development. In the long history of music development, Mongols have created a unique culture and history in their nomadic life, and music culture is the most eye-catching pearl. In the long history of Mongolian music, traditional musical instruments and unique singing methods gradually appear, such as Matouqin, Humai,

long key, and short key, which gives it an irreplaceable important position in the world music stage (Colin, 1983 : 17-38).

As a "native" double bass player in Inner Mongolia, he has deep feelings for the Mongolian nationality's thick history and colorful music culture. As a Western bowstring instrument, the double bass receives the teaching mode from western music. When performing the Mongolian music style double bass solo "Grassland Song," "Pastoral Song," and "Horse Racing," the composer integrated and innovated the western traditional performance mode with the performance skills of the Mongolian representative instrument Matouqin. For example, the performance skills not commonly used in western music and the more free and singing performer's way have further expanded the double bass performance technology and personal understanding of music style, which is the double improvement of the performer's performance skills and thoughts.

### **Mongolian musical instruments: Matouqin**

**The basic structure of Matouqin :** Matouqin has appeared in Mongolian People's life for at least a thousand years. The Mongolian people, a horseback people who are nomadic in the grassland, have created the pastoral songs Wuri Tingduo and Matouqin with free rhythm and broad breath in the blue sky, white clouds, and green grassland. The Mongolian people combine the two and make the development of long-key music and Matouqin gorgeous.



**Figure 2, Matouqin**

The Matouqin is 1 meter long and has two strings. The whole body of the piano presents a square ladder shape. Because the head of the piano is carved into the shape of a horse head, it is called "Matouqin." It is one of the most representative musical instruments of the Mongolian nationality, which is called "Molinhur" in Mongolian. The structure of Matouqin includes a head, rod, string axis, code, resonance box, and an independent bow. Like stringed instruments, the piano box has a panel, back plate, side plate, and tail pillow. Two sound holes are distributed in the center of the panel. The bow has bow hair bow rod, and the body of Matouqin is generally made of hardwood such as elm, rosewood, and mahogany (Leirong, 2022 : 11-15).

The horse head shape is most recognizable, which is required to be square cylindrical. The requirements of carving are very exquisite. In terms of form, some are running, and some are standing, lifelike. The biggest difference and prominent feature between Matouqin and other ethnic musical instruments are that the piano box's front and back are usually covered with horse skin, cowhide, or sheepskin. The traditional Mongolian patterns can be painted on the leather, which makes the Matouqin more distinctive. If the panel's material is not well selected, it will greatly affect the performance effect of Matouqin. The material of the panel is generally made of white pine and Paulownia. Because of its weather resistance and sound conduction velocity, white pine is better than Paulownia. The bow of Matouqin is also a very important part of it. The bow rod is made of very tough rattan. The bow hair and the string are made of horse hair, and the tone is melodious and thick.

**The artistic development of Matouqin :** According to the documentary records, the Matouqin was developed by the Xi Qin of the ancient Kumoxi nationality in Northeast China. Its formation has a long history, and its timbre and sound quality are excellent. Mongolian style is unique, melodious, and deep. It is the most representative of Mongolian music culture and musical instruments.

Since the 1960s, the reform process of Matouqin has accelerated, and several types of Matouqin have appeared. The utility model relates to a frame board totaling 100 cm, decorated with Python skin or nylon strings that are directly stretched on the wood surface. Trapezoidal wooden speakers are decorated with national patterns, such as Yuntou flowers. The Matouqin has two strings with four degrees of fixing. It is played outside the strings with a horsetail bow. The timbre is beautiful and long. In particular, it can play two tones. The timbre hovers low, showing the rich emotions of the Mongolian people. On the endless grassland, the unique long melody of Matouqin makes people aftertaste and daydream. The solo of Matouqin adopts trills of three degrees and four degrees.

Matouqin is the pride of Mongolian people, the symbol of Mongolian traditional music culture, and the spiritual symbol of expressing emotion and sustenance. Matouqin combines the natural beauty of the grassland with the historical experience of the Mongols. It plays the beauty of the grassland and the vicissitudes and heroic history of the Mongols. It is the best medium to reflect the inner world of the Mongols. The unique melodious melody of Matouqin, the sad and beautiful sound of the piano, and the overall optimistic tone perfectly show the pastoral and vivid beauty of the grassland and the heroic life course of the people living here. The emergence of Matouqin is closely related to Mongolian grassland life. The beauty of nomadism and the prairie created the unique and beautiful art of Matouqin, which reflects the Mongolian people's living environment and spiritual world. Other musical instruments cannot reflect the artistic beauty of Matouqin art.

From the basic structure and ancient legends of Matouqin, we can see its relationship with the whole nature, the Mongolian nation, and society. Matouqin is a unique musical instrument representing grassland. It contains the inseparable relationship between Mongolian and horse. It is an indispensable musical instrument in herders' daily life and festival celebrations. It is a musical instrument formed for grassland people to talk about their lives and emotions. Matouqin, which represents grassland music culture, has created much excellent music works in its development process. It perfectly combines man and nature in the grassland national culture.

**Playing skills of Matouqin :** To understand the performance of the horse head Qin, you first need to know the posture of the performance. In most cases, the horse head Qin is played in a sitting position. The standard posture is: the hip sits on the front end of the stool and cannot lean against the back of the chair. The left foot is connected with the right foot in the middle. The legs appear to sandwich the piano box, and the piano rod is left. Raise your arms, open your left hand's mouth slightly, and gently hold the harp with your thumb. When playing the low grip position, the fingernails of the index finger and the middle finger to the string instead of pressing the string. The ring finger presses the string, and the tip of the little finger presses the string. When playing the high handlebar position, each finger presses the string with the fingertip because the distance between the notes is relatively close. The fingering of the left hand is divided into playing, jumping, vibrato, playing, sliding, double tone, plucking, kneading, overtone,

When holding the bow with the right hand, hold the bow handle with the tiger's mouth of the right hand. The index finger and the middle finger are above the bow bar. The fingers controlling the bow hair use the ring finger and the little finger. During the bowing, it is necessary to ensure that the string and the bow hair are kept in an upright state of 90 degrees and that the bow hair is completely pasted on the string. There are more abundant bows in the horse head Qin: long bow, half bow, short bow, jump bow, double bow, double jump bow, pause bow, strike bow, break the bow and shake bow.

## **Formation and characteristics of Mongolian Long-Tune**

**Historical origin :** According to historical records, the long tune has a history of thousands of years, which existed as early as before the formation of the Mongolian nationality. Mongolian Long Tune folk songs are closely related to their nomadic life on the grassland. They carry the history and culture of the Mongolian people and are a way to show the spirit and character of the Mongolian people.

The characteristics of music culture in Inner Mongolia are closely related to the nomadic life of the Mongolian people. The characteristics of Mongolian music can be divided into different style regions, such as Horqin, tile thorn, and central region. Living without a fixed place on the grassland gives the Mongolian people the characteristics of being strong, bold, and unrestrained, good at singing and dancing. From their music culture, it can be concluded that the initial Mongolian music creation mainly focused on Shamanism and hunting songs and dances. Then the Mongolian people entered the nomadic grassland from the mountains and forests. The long-tune folk songs gradually replaced the original short-tune folk songs and became the main body of Mongolian music in history (Hu & Su, 2015 : 664).

**Function :** More than 1000 years ago, the ancestors of the Mongols moved out of the banks of the Erguna River and from the mountain forest to the Mongolian Plateau. The mode of production also changed from hunting to animal husbandry. The new form of folk song, long tune, has developed rapidly. In quite a long historical period, it gradually replaced the hunting songs with square structure, occupied the dominant position of Mongolian folk songs, finally formed the typical style of Mongolian music, and profoundly impacted other forms of Mongolian music. According to the historical origin of Mongolian music culture and the current music form, *the long tune* can be defined as a folk song created by the nomadic people of the northern grassland in the production and labor of animal husbandry and sung during field grazing and traditional festivals. Generally, it is composed of two lyrics from the top and bottom. Singers play according to their life accumulation and perception of nature, and

their singing rhythms differ. In Mongolian, a long tune is called "Wu RI Tu Dao," a long song. Compared with a short song, it not only refers to a long tune but also has a long history. Most long-tune lyrics describe grasslands, horses, camels, cattle and sheep, blue sky, white clouds, rivers, and lakes. The basic themes include pastoral songs, homesickness songs, hymns, wedding songs, and banquet songs (also known as wine songs).

**Singing method :** The melody of the long tune is long and soothing, the artistic conception is broad, the words are few, the cavity is long, and the breath is long. The melody is very decorative (such as front leaning sound, back leaning sound, sliding sound, echo), especially the colorful singing method formed by the singing mode of "Nogura" (Mongolian phonetic translation, meaning twists and turns or decorative sound), which is suitable for narration and good at the lyric. The long tune has also been used in many songs and music. In the song of grassland, a large number of Mongolian Long Tunes appear.

**Inheritance and protection :** Mongolian Long Tune folk songs are a cross-border cultural heritage. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China and Mongolia are the main distribution areas of Mongolian Long Tune folk songs. On November 25, 2005, UNESCO announced the third batch of "representative works of human oral and intangible heritage" at its headquarters in Paris. The "Mongolian Long Tune folk song" jointly declared by China and Mongolia was listed in the list. "Mongolian Long Tune folk song" is the first joint project between China and foreign countries to declare the same intangible cultural heritage to UNESCO. The success of the joint World Heritage Application between China and Mongolia is enough to show that the Mongolian Long Tune folk song, as a cultural heritage, has immeasurable humanistic and artistic value. Over the years, the two countries have conducted close and effective joint actions in the field investigation, research, protection methods, and protection measures of Mongolian Long Tune folk songs. In May 2006, Mongolian Long Tune folk songs were selected for China's first batch of the intangible cultural heritage list. On October 24, 2007, China's first moon-orbiting satellite, "Change-1," carried more than 30 songs into space, one of which is a Mongolian Long Tune folk song.

Due to the lack of systematic and rigorous recording of singing and musical instrument techniques and guidance of music theory since ancient times, Mongolian music is often passed down orally. Its music system still belongs to the five-tone scale mode system. However, the melody has different ups and downs because Mongolian Long Tune folk songs also use other tones in different quantities and situations. In addition to the basic pentatonic scale, Mongolian Long Tune folk songs often use four tones, such as changing palace, clearing horn, changing emblem, and clearing palace, which forms three different large regions, namely seven-tone region, nine-tone region, and comprehensive region (Bao, 2009 : online).

**Art Feature :** Based on the analysis of the mode characteristics of long tune, according to the 142 Mongolian Long Tune folk songs included in the integration of Chinese folk songs into Inner Mongolia volume, the frequency of mode application is ranked from more to less as follows: Feather mode, emblem mode, palace mode, commercial mode and angle mode, some of which play the role of color and decoration.

In terms of rhythm and melody characteristics, the rhythm characteristics of Mongolian Long Tune folk songs mainly take the alternation of sound value as the rhythm element to form a flexible and stable core rhythm combination. However, because Mongolian Long Tune folk songs have always been transmitted orally, their rhythm form characteristics are mainly flexible. Generally, they reflect the law of melody through rich rhythm patterns.

In short, as the representative music of Mongolian nomadic culture, Mongolian Long Tune folk songs finally formed unique musical characteristics under the unique historical, geographical, social, and emotional background: Taking pentatonic scale as the main constituent element, single mode as the mainstream, and integrating multiple musical sounds, thus forming a flexible, beautiful and high-pitched musical rhythm and melody.

In the "Song of the Grassland" cadenza, the long key music played by Matouqin is completely integrated with the double bass. Both playing techniques and musical characteristics are very worthy of research and analysis.

## Conclusion

With the rapid development of electronic information technology, many music styles are full of people's vision and hearing, such as new electronic music and pop music. Mongolian traditional music culture has been impacted by the times to a great extent. Over time, many precious musical materials have been lost. The protection of Mongolian music inheritors and the collection of music materials have become difficult because "oral teaching" is the most important way of learning Mongolian music culture inheritance. Therefore, it is also an important development means to promote Mongolian music inheritance classes on campus, such as promoting the establishment and improvement of Mongolian music-related performance majors and theoretical majors and establishing Mongolian music culture and instrumental performance-related courses in Colleges and universities. Through the research and learning of students in the school environment and the process of performance practice, they can have a deeper understanding of Mongolian music culture and, at the same time, better develop and innovate Mongolian music culture so that performance and accumulation can go hand in hand. As one of the precious wealth of the Chinese nation, Mongolian music culture is an important part of national diversity. Inheriting and developing Mongolian music culture is an important mission of every Chinese musician.

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