

Teaching Methods of Composing Chinese Pop Songs

Liang Liang and Nicha Pattananon

Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand

Corresponding Author, E-mail: nicha.musiced@gmail.com

Abstracts

Many excellent pop songs appeared in Shanghai in the 20th century, such as a large number of excellent pop songs created by Mr. Li Jinhui, such as "Drizzly Rain", "Sister I Love You", "Taohua River", etc., which showed great brilliance in the early Chinese pop songs in the film, radio and other media. This paper classifies the melodies of pop songs into several categories, and uses different works to make a theoretical summary of the melodies of different musical styles. The paper analyzes the conventional melodies, electronic melodies, Chinese style melodies and so on. The author also explains about some elements of creating and constructing melodies in the current market and teaching method of composing Chinese pop songs which now mainly uses the application and synthesizer to create the variety of sound from different music instruments.

Keywords: Teaching Method; Composing; Chinese Pop Song

Introduction

In 1937, Singing by Zhou Xuan, lyrics by Tian Han and composition by composer He Luting, Song Girl of the End of the World is one of the ten classic works. This song has a graceful melody and beautiful melody. It is a theme song in the movie Road Angel. Many works with beautiful lyrics and melodies came out at this time, which made people at that time see a brand-new look of song creation.

Yao Min was also an excellent composer, and his song "Under the Moon" was both popular and artistic. His song "Beautiful and Beautiful" has also won a major award. This jazzy Chinese pop song is unique. "Two for Two" is also an excellent work by this composer.

In the early 1970s, Teng Lijun's works were also widely circulated in China. For example, the song "A Thousand Words" is composed of Chinese national melody, interwoven with brass, strings and saxophone. It is a popular song with Chinese characteristics. Although there are Western orchestral instruments in it, the highly national musical core makes the work unique.

In Teng's style, there are also playful and lovely songs, such as the popular song "Sweet Honey" in the 1980s. The combination of electric bass and wind music in the song and the singer's unique singing style make the music sound very three-dimensional. The prelude also has a very unique instrumental vibes, and the use of mixed timbre and orchestration mixed with the strings makes this interlude sound very special. Among them, Erhu is added in this piece, which is very characteristic of Chinese pop songs.

"The Moon Represents My Heart" is also a famous work of Teresa Teng. The melody design is very clever, very simple and affectionate.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were also many outstanding singers in the Hong Kong music scene, such as Andy Lau, whose singing styles were magnetic and very distinctive,

such as "Freezing Rain" and "Today". At this time, it seems that due to the improvement of arrangement equipment and the improvement of recording conditions, music sounds more intense. In addition to Andy Lau, singers such as Jacky Cheung, Aaron Kwok and Meng Tingwei all have a large number of synthesizer timbre in their works, but the electronic drums do not seem to be as sophisticated as they are now, and the sound of some works seems to have too much reverb. During this period, there were also rock music works by bands such as "The Sea and the Sky", "The Earth" and so on.

Meng Tingwei also had many excellent works such as *You Look at You Look at the Face of the Moon*, *A Cloud Made of Rain in the Wind*, etc. At the same time, in addition to singers, there also appeared many excellent songwriters in this era, such as teacher Chen Xiaoxia and teacher Tu Huiyuan. "You Look You Look at the Face of the Moon" is the work of teacher Chen Xiaoxia. These teachers also had a large number of excellent masterpieces, such as "Listening to the Sea", "Agreement" and "Next Morning", which were widely sung.

Then around the millennium, it seems that R&B, rock, electronics and other styles entered the Chinese market, such as singers Jay Chou and JJ Lin were relatively popular in that period. Jj Lin's lyric songs were his signature at that time, such as "One Thousand years Later" blues works were also popular in this period, such as "Black Sweater", of course, there were also Chinese style works. For example, Song Xu "On the Rain during the Qingming Festival", Jay Chou "Maiden" and other works of this period seem to have begun to have a variety of styles, but the national character of Chinese style still affects many Chinese composers. In this period, there were also lyricists such as Fang Wenshan and Xu Song who wrote Chinese songs. Chinese songs would retain the melody characteristics of five or six tones in popular songs, but sometimes they would add the more fashionable arrangement methods at that time, such as guitar rhythm in rhythm and blues style, and bass with rhythm. However, in this period, there were relatively few songs with strong electronic style, which seemed to be biased towards the era of love songs. It was a convenient time to write ballads. Because it seems that the main songs of many albums are love songs, there are many descriptions of people's feelings in the songs during this period. During this period, such band works as "Your Smile" and "Our Love" were also popular songs in the market, and some overseas singers such as Stefanie Sun and Leong Jingru released music works in China (Cao, 2017: 217).

Since 2010, a lot of music works with unique styles have emerged. In this period, some new people began to welcome. As the equipment and software have been updated, the works have become diversified compared with before. In this period of Zheng Nan, Qian Lei and other composers of the work also began to become popular very wide singer Lin Yu Jia in 2011 album used Zheng Nan teacher composition "Want to be free", this song piano sound beautiful, strings interwoven very beautiful. The arrangement of love songs also began to become exquisite, a variety of music, such as "I am a singer", "The Voice of China" and so on. In it, many covers were also adapted from the original works, such as G.E.M. 's cover of Jay Chou's work Tornado and Li Ronghao' s cover of Xiao Fang. During this period, some modern Chinese songs emerged, such as Huang Ling's song Wind and Moon, which had obvious electronic colors and seemed to have a blurred tone. It is worth noting that the timbre of the arrangement has a suction electronic timbre. This seems to be rare or absent in the previous pop songs. In the film and television works of this period, there are also excellent Chinese-style works such as "The Sound of Snow Falling". Lu Hu is the singer and composer, and perfectly performs this song with a very suitable singing style and expression.

In a certain period, it seems that the high pitch is the password of the traffic. It seems that cover singing at one stage really did affect the motivation of some composers to create original works. In particular, composers who were not good at writing high notes and technical works seemed to suffer at that time. Some variety shows appeared a large number of popular songs with high notes.

Around 2010, there also emerged many excellent love songs such as "Gentleman", "Cruel Moonlight", "Waste" and so on. Among them, Zheng Nan, who has cooperated with the author, is the composer of the love song "Waste".

Maybe later, after the electronic style began to pour into the market, the aesthetic also began to be more diversified. With the launch of music variety shows such as "Summer of the Band" and "Youth has You", the market began to receive songs of different styles, including rhythm songs, band songs, lyric songs, rock songs, etc. Even singers or bands participating in the music comprehensive would create their own music. There are also a lot of independent musicians who do not sign a record company began to try to create their own music, the quality is not bad. At this time, there also appeared Zhang Yixing, Huang Zitao and others who integrated electronic music into their works. For example, there were songs that combined traditional Chinese culture with electronic music, such as "Love Lotus" and "Flying Sky". Of course, dance music was also widely seen. Film and television songs are also a lot of melodious works, such as "Big Fish", "Our tomorrow", etc., love songs are also a lot of works such as "nothing to you", etc., sweet love songs such as Ju Jingyi's "Love crisis" also has a high degree of transmission. In short, in the contemporary era, all kinds of works have opportunities in the market. With the ease of production, recording, etc., anyone who learns some basic music techniques and is interested in music can create their own works, and there are more ways to publish them (Yang, 2016: 134.).

The characteristics of contemporary Chinese pop songs

Easy to understand

Chinese pop songs have their own characteristics. In terms of paragraphs, the current record companies and copyright companies usually do not like songs with too many paragraphs, it seems that three paragraphs is the most. Chinese pop songs are catchy, beautiful and easy to remember, while more paragraphs are relatively difficult to remember.

From the perspective of melody, Chinese audience's aesthetic preference is still easy to remember, strong repetition, melodic melody, although in the current dance music, rap and other strong rhythm style is not rare in Chinese pop songs, but difficult to remember, chaotic, multi-paragraph pop songs are still relatively unpopular in China. At the time of receiving songs, the content side seldom chooses such songs.

It seems that the number of lyric songs in foreign lists is smaller than that in China. From the aesthetic point of view, Chinese listeners are very fond of love songs with beautiful melodies, sincere feelings and strong emotions. Therefore, no matter how The Times change, it seems that good love songs have always played an important role in the development of Chinese pop music. Content providers always seem to be happy with this type of songs when they hear them. However, no matter how they are created, in Chinese pop songs, easy to understand and catchy are still a common theme. Both lyrics and songs need to be understood by the audience. Therefore, some songwriters try to choose more popular words to create songs, and some songwriters think about brainwashing melodies, which is to make the

listeners remember them more easily. Play a role in spreading widely (Lv, 2011).

Lyrics

In Chinese pop songs, the meaning of Chinese lyrics is still very important, whether it is a slightly ambiguous singing style or a well-written singing style. Although most pop songs have the song before the lyrics, good lyrics are always rewarded.

The creation of lyrics is different from the creation of literary and artistic works. In addition to the wonderful content, the lyrics must meet the requirements and planning direction of the content party. Sometimes, when a song is selected, it is possible to change the words in the meeting before the production of the album, because the lyrics sometimes have to accommodate the content of publicity, planning or movies and TV series

However, the difficulty of the lyrics cannot be too high sometimes, because the obscure Chinese lyrics may sometimes be very literary, but it ignores a certain popularity. The lyrics of pop songs are a very important part of music creation.

For example, teacher Tang Tian's "Cage" and "The Lone Warrior" not only maintain the requirements of the plan but also have a certain popularity, and the content is relatively rich, so it has a high degree of transmission.

Melody

Although the arrangement of contemporary pop songs is becoming more and more rich, the melody is still the first thing in the song. From a certain point of view, the arrangement is just clothes. Especially in Chinese pop songs. It seems that horizontal melodic development is more important than in Western pop songs.

Horizontal melody is the first aesthetic of Chinese listeners, and a good melody popularity will make the song more popular. When record companies collect songs, melody comes first. If the arrangement and packaging are good but the melody is not good, it will be difficult to be selected by the company. Because there are more and more styles now, and the tastes of the audience are more and more diverse, if the melody is not good, it is difficult to gain popularity even if it is published.

Although The Times have been changing, melody construction still has certain rules. For example, the sense of contrast in paragraphs is still needed. If the sense of contrast in the verse and chorus is very small, it is difficult to give the audience a certain sense of surprise, but if the sense of contrast is not like a song, it is still not possible. In popular songs, there are not necessarily many opportunities for modulation, and there is the possibility of being out of tune, but basically it remains in the same key. Although some choruses may be tuned as a whole, in short, the contrast of melody of the verse, chorus and connecting paragraph of popular songs mainly depends on the comparison of materials, so it is worth thinking about when designing popular songs as big as a phrase or as small as a motive. If the melody created is exciting enough, then the probability of being chosen is high.

No matter how the melody is packaged in the arrangement, the melody is still very important, and some composers will think that if a song is written without the accompaniment and just listen to the melody, then if the melody is good, then it means that the song is good. If only the use of melody packaging to let people ignore the good or bad melody, then it is not advisable

Teaching methods of composing Chinese pop songs

Whether to use software to create

In the current era of such advanced technology, the use of software for recording, arranging, production can be hired software such as cubase, logic, FL studio and so on. These software is very convenient to choose different instrument timbre to make music becomes convenient, of course, some composers still like to record some guitar, strings, etc., because there are some techniques, expressions, etc., electronic timbre can not replace real people.

However, in some of the more popular styles such as electronic music, in fact, the software is more convenient, because the synthesizer's timbre is easy to produce in the software, in addition, the electronic timbre that comes with its own software can sometimes have a good effect and make a good music dynamic. For example, some popular songs have a piece of music that is not sung but filled with electronic music, which can be well completed by software. If it is the type of dance music with a sense of science and technology, then you can actually see the advantages of software production.

Then software production greatly facilitates the teaching work and allows students to better play their imagination. However, the disadvantage is that some acoustic drums, such as drums or guitars in rock music, seem to require a good musical sense and hearing. Because sometimes the timbre is not necessarily what you want, you need to adjust, but also to adjust the strength of the performance, expression and so on. These instruments sound more like they are played by real people. So there are some composers who prefer to live guitar when they are writing some kind of British rock, heavy metal and so on. Or they are willing to invite the band to play the lyric songs, because sometimes the texture of the recording is irreplaceable by electronics.

And one of the advantages of using software to produce is that you can choose the timbre more freely, for example: If you want a piano with clear sound, sometimes if you do not use the sound source, you may not find a very suitable piano, nor may you find a good microphone or venue for the sound, and the built-in tone of the software or by adjusting the built-in tone, you may be able to easily get the tone you want. In addition to the piano, other Musical Instruments are the same truth.

To sum up, when using software, we must still choose whether to use software to create according to our own songs. Can not be generalized.

Engage with different songwriters

This is very critical, the author believes that the lyricist must have his own unique style, which may be related to their growth environment, growth region and even the age in which they live. For example, the author cooperated with teacher Tang Tian, she is a very experienced teacher, you can see very lyrical works such as "Notes", you can also hear very powerful works such as "Lone Brave" in her lyrics, and more communication with such lyricists can broaden their own style of lyrics. In the author's experience, sometimes some lyricists will fall into a calm bottleneck at a certain period, for example, they "can't get out" in a certain style. Sometimes it is necessary to communicate with others to promote their own progress. Watching videos about lyricists on the Internet is one way, but this way is far less direct than communicating with themselves. If the opportunity allows, communicating with lyricists whom you admire can certainly gain a lot of experience.

The author has a friend who is also a very thoughtful lyricist. She is a girl, but there is also a lot of power in her works. There are also singing and dancing style songs in the group. Communicating with her can broaden my vision. Chatting with her will trigger me to create some unimaginative words.

The author will share these experiences with future students, because this kind of experience is more direct than looking up information on the Internet, and it seems that the progress will be faster. Because face-to-face communication with people can more directly understand the feelings of the lyricist when creating, so that the experience and skills can be learned from more directly than from books or the Internet.

Communicate with lyricists

Composition is a job that requires professional knowledge of music, including the structure, form, and even harmony of the song. Although sometimes composing only requires writing horizontal melodies, and arranging can be done by others, a professional composer needs to build harmonic thinking of horizontal melodies. For example, Whether a certain line goes smoothly with a certain line next. Vertical and horizontal to consider the horizontal melody seems to be better. Of course, sometimes you can't think too much. For composition, horizontal melody is still something the composer should think about, and vertical orchestration and harmony seem to be the focus of the arranger.

Therefore, it is very important to discuss the horizontal melody movement with other composers in the process of composition. In my music works, I have cooperated with teachers Zheng Nan and Weng Yiren, and sometimes discussed the construction of melody lines with collaborators. I can find that it is of great help to compose music by understanding the ways and modes of composition by different people. Weng Yiren's control of long melody lines is her advantage, while the author seems to be weak in this aspect. Through communication with her, I learned from her way of writing love songs and applied it to the style that I am good at. Sometimes the works produced may not be like her love songs, but they are unique to the author.

From the author's own experience, it is actually a good way to communicate music through cooperation, and it is also a good way to co-write a song with other composers, because in the process of cooperation, you can communicate so that you can know the strengths of others, reflect on your own creation, and improve your own composition level.

Teaching through the way of comparing manuscripts

When teaching some students who need to work in the popular songwriting industry, they can take direct contact with the record company's copywriting work.

General copyright companies or content providers will directly send us the requirements for copywriting requirements. Then as teachers, we can give some projects to students to try, so that students can summarize and improve in practice.

For example, a certain project may include a popular song with Chinese style, so that students can develop the control of national melody. If a student is also responsible for arranging music besides composing, then he can also develop the arrangement of ethnic strings, ethnic instruments and even pianos in this project. Because there are many styles of arrangements in pop songs, although the arranger is responsible for packaging the melody, a good arrangement can still make the melody sound extra points.

In the actual project, in addition to cultivating students' ability to compose melodies, it can actually improve students in all aspects. If students' songs are selected in a certain project, it can also increase students' confidence. When their songs are really published and flowing

into the market, it is different from their study on paper all the time, and the experience is completely different.

Guiding students to write popular songs with Chinese style

This kind of music style is unique to China, and the lyrics can use many clever collocations, which is not found in western pop songs. His artistic conception needs to be understood in Chinese. It happens that there is a large market of pop songs in China, and this style can be liked by many Chinese listeners.

In the arrangement of tunes, we can hear Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, Yu and other tones that form the tones with Chinese characteristics, rather than the melodies of Western major and minor keys. In the structure and variation of song forms, we can hear the unique characteristics of Chinese style.

In contemporary times, there are many excellent Chinese style pop songs worth learning, such as "A flick of the fingers", "Painting Jiangnan" and so on. For example, the lyrics in the work "Entering the South of the Yangtze River": "A city of sunshine and a city of rain, led me into the play, adding to the drunk, Yu Garden a touch of tea, drink a cup of elegant." Among them, there are many unique artistic conceptions in Chinese words, which I am afraid cannot be accurately expressed in any English words. Studying the lyrics of the works is good for our own creation. Chinese-style songs are indeed a unique musical language of Chinese people.

Although there is a dance rhythm in "The Bright Moon", the national tone of the Chinese style is still the skeleton of the melody, and this Chinese style combined with electronic music is actually popular at present. In the teaching of creation, students can be guided to create more popular songs with Chinese style, which is also inheriting traditional Chinese national culture.

Let students dabble in different styles as much as possible

In fact, every songwriter may have some styles that he is good at, and it is not ruled out that there are many composers or lyricists who can control the styles. Whether it is words or songs, the author believes that it is necessary to try to break through the previous self. Can not be fixed in a certain style. Because it's easy to shut yourself down.

Sometimes the success of a project doesn't necessarily mean that a song will go viral later on.

In the teaching, we must pay attention to the students who stop moving on one style, although it may be very pleasant for a short time, but when they meet the demand of other styles of songs, they may be dumbstruck. Dabbling in different styles and practicing writing different styles of melodies is good for students' development.

For example, in a certain period, students may write more rhythm and blues style melodies, and there may be a lot of inflections in the melody. In the next training period, let the student practice rock songs. Even in rock, there are many different genres. For example, heavy metal and ballad rock are completely different styles, although there is a homogeneity between them. In general, it allows students to dabble in many different styles and learn different composition, arrangement, lyricism and production techniques so that students can master song writing more comprehensively. Instead, they can only create one or several styles (Xu, 2009: 108-114).

Learn to summarize melodic styles

Although there are many styles of melody, we can also try to summarize and summarize some melody types.

For example, the melody of Chinese style belongs to a big category, but the lyrical melody of Chinese style like "Red Dust Inn" and "Red Dust Inn" are different.

Rob the East Wall with electronic drum version of the melody is completely two styles. For example, "Want to be Free" and "The Actor" are both love songs, but it seems that "The Actor" has a more rhythmic "frustration" feeling. Want to Be Free, on the other hand, seems to have a longer line. For example, "Hero" and "Coming on Schedule" both have a rock feeling, but the guitar of "Coming on Schedule" has a wow effect, and the auditory sense is not so distorted, while "Hero" has a stronger rock feeling, because the style of their melody is completely different, so the instruments will also make a corresponding melody when arranging, and the Hero also has rap. And there are more melodic paragraphs than "As Promised". It's mostly lyrical rock melodies.

After summarizing different melodies, we can ask students to create different styles of melodies during the creation, and then score them, so that we can tap students' strengths and see which melodies they are good at. On the contrary, we can also see that some students are not good at writing certain melodies.

In the search of Chinese literature, the author has learned a number of articles on the music content related to the creation of Chinese pop songs. The following is the author's own summary of these literatures.

By reading Cao Zhixian's (2017:217), *Art Characteristics of Pop Songs and Their Influence on Music Education*, I have learned some new educational ideas, and also have a deeper understanding of the advantages of pop songs in music education due to their popular and easy communication. In Yang Fang's (2016:134) article "Inspiration of Contemporary Pop Songs to School Music Education", the author mentioned the positive and negative aspects of pop songs. Through studying this article, the author also had new thoughts on the role of pop songs in music education. In the study of Xu Yuanyong's (2009: 108-114) "On Pop Songs and Their Singing art rules and cultural connotation -- Taking the specific Music Analysis and singing practice guidance of three works as an example", I learned some singing knowledge, which is helpful for the author to write this paper on the direction of music creation teaching.

In Lv Xiaoli's (2011) paper "Research on Problems and Countermeasures of College Students' Pop Music Education", the author analyzes pop music education from the theoretical interpretation of pop music and pop music education, and the value of pop music to contemporary college students' music education, which is of great help to the author. Shanghai Conservatory of Music master's degree thesis Wang Haobo (2020) "China's pop music arrangement of professional development problems and countermeasures research" the first chapter of the second section, pop music arrangement of the artistic characteristics to understand some of the unique perspective of the arrangement, the author also agrees with the point of view in the article, the author to write this paper to provide and valuable reference. In the study of Liu's (2015) master's degree thesis "Chinese pop music" "Chinese style" phenomenon research "in the second chapter of" Chinese style pop song characteristics analysis "in the study of many Chinese style pop song characteristics.

Conclusion

This academic article has delved into the various teaching methods employed for composing Chinese pop songs. The exploration of these methodologies has shed light on the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the Chinese pop music genre. Through an extensive review of literature and analysis of contemporary pedagogical practices, this study has highlighted several key findings and implications. Firstly, it is evident that traditional Chinese music theory and composition techniques continue to play a crucial role in shaping the foundation of Chinese pop songwriting. However, as the genre evolves and embraces modern influences, there is a growing demand for innovative approaches that blend traditional elements with contemporary trends. Secondly, the integration of technology and digital tools in the teaching process has emerged as a significant catalyst for creativity and efficiency. Digital audio workstations, music production software, and online collaboration platforms have empowered aspiring composers to explore their artistic visions while fostering a sense of community and knowledge exchange among practitioners. Moreover, the article emphasizes the importance of nurturing students' creativity and encouraging experimentation in their songwriting endeavors. Creating an environment that fosters risk-taking and self-expression is essential for nurturing the next generation of Chinese pop music composers. Furthermore, cross-disciplinary approaches that incorporate elements of poetry, storytelling, and cultural significance have proven to enrich the lyrical content and emotional depth of Chinese pop songs. By exploring connections with other forms of art, aspiring songwriters can tap into new sources of inspiration and develop a unique artistic voice. This article underscores the significance of dynamic and adaptable teaching methods in the context of Chinese pop song composition. It advocates for a student-centered approach that integrates tradition and modernity, empowers creativity through technology, and fosters an appreciation for cultural heritage. As the Chinese pop music genre continues to captivate global audiences, equipping aspiring composers with innovative and comprehensive pedagogical tools is vital in shaping the future of this vibrant and ever-evolving musical landscape.

References

- Cao, Z. (2017). Artistic Characteristics of pop songs and their influence on music education. *Northern Music*, (07), 217.
- Liu, Q. (2015). *Research on the phenomenon of "Chinese Style" in Chinese Pop Music*. Guangxi University.
- Lv, X. (2011). *Research on Problems and Countermeasures of College Students' Pop Music Education*. Northeast Normal University.
- Wang, H. (2020). *Research on Professional development Problems and Countermeasures of pop music arrangement in China*. Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
- Xu, Y. (2009). On the artistic law and cultural connotation of Pop Songs and their singing -- Taking the specific music analysis and singing practice guidance of three works as an example. *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts (Music and Performance Edition)*, (04), 108-114.
- Yang, F. (2016). Inspiration of Contemporary Pop Songs to School Music Education. *Northern Music*, (14), 134.