

## A Study on Change of the Aesthetics of Timbre of Chinese Pop Music

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**Keywords:** Chinese pop music, musical aesthetics, timbre view, change

**Abstract:** Timbre is the soul of vocal music sound, is a kind of characteristic that the singer displays in the vocal sound, is the important aspect of singing, and even today when the mixed sound is attached great importance, the timbre is still the most important factor in the music aesthetic. Since the development of Chinese pop music, great changes have taken place in the aesthetics of its timbre. The aesthetic understanding of the timbre of Chinese pop music is based on the traditional timbre view of Chinese music aesthetics, from the "air sound" singing method at the beginning of development, to the "rock and roll style" in the mid-80's and the "northwest wind" in the late 1980s. To contemporary pop songs, such as "pluralistic mixing" and other styles have shown people's understanding of the aesthetic of timbre in different periods. These changes express people's pursuit of the spiritual world, as well as the resonance between people to "beauty".

### 1. Introduction

Throughout more than a century of ideological contention, all kinds of cultural ideas and concepts have always been accompanied by the transformation and development of Chinese society in different fields, but also change with the changes in society and economic life. The western literary thoughts and musical thoughts absorbed and accepted under the open cultural mentality of more than two decades are colorful. Pop music in China began to rise in the early 20th century. With the accelerated pace of reform and opening-up, a series of modernist thoughts and methods in the West were introduced to China one by one. This leads to an unprecedented breakthrough and change in the field of musical thought and aesthetic concept. Vocal music works of art are not independent from subject what exists, its value lies in its unique form of perceptual existence calling and, to a certain extent, guiding the free creation of the subject's aesthetics.

In pop music singing, from the point of view of aesthetics, the distinct personality color, the personality difference of aesthetic feeling, the variety of taste and hobby, can be the objective factors of pop music aesthetics. While timbre occupies an important position in music aesthetics, modern appreciators have different views on the definition of timbre beauty.

This article will study the aesthetic of timbre change of Chinese pop music, introduce the traditional timbre view in Chinese music aesthetic, and discuss every change of Chinese pop music development so far and the change of timbre aesthetic in Chinese pop music. This paper analyzes the value characteristics behind the change of Chinese pop music timbre aesthetic, and makes contribution to better understanding of Chinese pop music and the change of timbre aesthetic in the course of its development.

### 2. Traditional phonological views in Chinese Music Aesthetics

Among the many formal elements of music, the timbre is the best carrier which can reflect the basic characteristics of the material in the material form, and is recognized as the most important element in the form of music. [1] The range between the two sounds at the same time determines the nature of the artistic tone, and the timbre feeling of the different and the range is shown in Table 1 below. In Chinese folk music and people's aesthetic psychology of music, the aesthetic concept of timbre is a very complicated problem, even after pop music, the "foreign", entered China. It is still influenced by the aesthetics of Chinese traditional timbre. On the whole, we generally think that The Chinese people's timbre has the tendency of "near-human voice", "It's natural, diversified and

individual." and "high-frequency, clear, bright, transparent, sweet, crisp and round".

Table 1 timbre sensation of different and vocal intervals

tone colour	pitch interval
Net color	Same degree, eight degrees, four degrees, five degrees.
Heterodyne: secondary light	Three degrees, six degrees.
Achromatic colors: dark	3-degree, 6-degree small
Variant colors: turbid bright	Two-degree, seven-degree
Ambiguity: Dark and dark	7-degree small
Heterodyne: turbid	Increment and subtraction range
Heterodyne: heavy turbid	Small second degree

## 2.1 Near-human voice

As early as the pre-Qin Dynasty and the Han Dynasty, The concept of "human voice is best" has first appeared in the timbre aesthetic psychology of Chinese". The human voice is the most beautiful, and the sound of the instrument is at the back of the human voice, human voice is still the most valuable voice." On the other hand, the famous aesthetic proposition, "Silk is not as good as bamboo; bamboo is not as good as person's voice." which further explains the Chinese people's timbre aesthetic tendency of "human voice is the most beautiful." It was first seen in Tao Qian's biography of Mr. Meng, the deceased of General of Jin Dynasty, and Liu Yiqing's biography Meng Jia in New language of the World. It is a dialogue recording the Jin people Huan Wen ask Meng Jia (Tao Qian's great-grandfather): "Wen asked: 'What's good about wine? Why do you like drinking so much?' Jia said, 'Is that you don't feel the pleasure of drinking.' He also asked: 'When you listen to music, you think that Silk is not as good as bamboo, bamboo is not as good as person's voice. Why?' answer: 'approaching nature.' ". "Silk is not as good as bamboo, bamboo is not as good as person's voice," is the most direct reflection of the Chinese people's aesthetic concept of timbre is that the tone of "silk" is not as good as that of "bamboo" (a wind-blowing instrument that sends out a hyphenated sound), and that the tone of "silk" is not as good as that of "bamboo". That is, bamboo air-singing instrument with its long tone, than to produce granular sound to play the instrument closer to the human voice; And the sound of "bamboo" is not as charming as direct "voice" sound from one's own voice. [2]Here, the progressive sequence of silk-bamboo-voice reflects exactly an aesthetic comparison between the directness and naturalness of these three in expressing the inner feelings of the Chinese people, and reflects the aesthetic tendency of the Chinese people's view of sound, that is to say, close to the voice of the people. Near nature is the highest interest, is the "asymptotic nature".

## 2.2 Natural, diverse and personalized

In the view of nature and philosophy of Chinese traditional culture, we should respect and comply with nature. What man and nature pursue is a harmonious and harmonious affinity relationship between man and nature. Therefore, in the material selection of musical instrument making, it is different from that of western musical instrument making, which tends to adopt artificial and standardized material. When making national musical instruments, the Chinese pay more attention to the natural materials such as bamboo, wood, Reed, gourd and so on, which grow in the back of the front house next to them. [3]According to the materials made in the Western Zhou Dynasty, in addition to "gold" in the classification of musical instruments, there are other "stone, earth, leather, silk, wood" in the classification of musical instruments. "The use of natural materials means respect for natural attributes and reservations, and nature itself means diversity and uniqueness." The wood, the purple sandalwood, the coconut shell, the bamboo, etc., the part of the body of the body is the variety of python skin, the small snake skin, the wood board and the like, and the selection of these different materials will completely determine the distinctive and different timbre difference between the musical instruments.

The pursuit of timbre diversity in Chinese music is not only reflected in musical instruments, but

also the pursuit of diversified timbre in Chinese traditional vocal music art. [4] In Western operas, there are only flowers (female), drama, lyric high, middle and low (no female low), which are mainly based on the phonological region, and the basic division of the phonological range is different. Chinese opera, such as Beijing Opera, is more based on the strict timbre definition of life, Dan, net, end, ugliness of the different types of roles should be divided. And, depending on the timbre of different characters, the five lines can also be subdivided: the birth of the elderly, Xiao Sheng, Wu Sheng, Old and penniless, Wu Laosheng, Xiaosheng penniless, Wu Xiaosheng and poor Xiaosheng; Danfen Zhengdan, Lao Dan, Hua Dan, color Dan; net big flower face, second flower face, white face; ugliness also includes text, Wu ugliness and clown. In view of these specific roles, in the actual singing, the tone also has meticulous and rich requirements. "For example, Lin Chong, Wu Song and Yan Qing in the Shuihu Opera are all Wu Sheng, and the singing notes of the three people are different in the treatment of the timbre: Lin Chong's tone is relatively soft and dim, emphasizing the characteristics of his 'A tasteful martial arts player', and Wu Song's singing notes are exciting. Robust, embodies the personality of "martial arts with ruthlessness", the tone color of Yanqing Then is 'bright', 'transparent', show the character of 'show in martial arts'. "[5]

### **2.3 High-frequency clear, light and transparent**

In Chinese national vocal music (including operas), there are only a few middle-bass parts, and the treble part is also higher than the corresponding part in the west, and the whole sound area is on the high side. In national instruments, most of them are high musicals, with few midtones and almost no bass instruments. Therefore, from the Chinese national music pitch dimension, in the sound, instrumental music in the obvious high-pitched, high-frequency trend. Under the direct influence of this trend, the timbre also shows a clear, bright, penetrating aesthetic tendency. In Chinese music, especially high-pitched music, folk songs and other kinds of music, opera in the elderly, Xiao Sheng, Qingyi The pursuit of timbre has a clear, bright and transparent psychological bias, and also produces a sound method of high position, heavy-head sound and heavy false sound. Therefore, there will be a "The Chinese opera's phonograph, one to the Western music scholar's ear, is just a "call", as if the cross street started a fire." in the exchange of Chinese and western cultures in the modern times

The formation of this aesthetic bias is influenced by many factors, such as national language and singing method: because of the high position of tongue and the distance between tongue and jaw when the main vowels of Chinese language are pronounced. Chinese vowels have a large distribution frequency, and high vowels account for half of the total vowel incidence. All of these results in the characteristics of "shallow vocal channel" in the singing of national vocal music: even when singing, the vocal tongue position is higher, the vocal channel is shorter, and the vocal channel is shorter. The cross-sectional area of the vocal tract is smaller. [6] In the western canto, we pay attention to the sTable lowering of the throat, the lifting of the soft palate, the opening of the pharyngeal cavity, the low position of the tongue, and the increase in the opening of the oral cavity. The change of the channel increases the low and medium-frequency amplitude, so that the vowel is strong and the volume output is increased, and the timbre of the high-tone area is ensured to be both natural and bright and penetrating. Therefore, the tongue body is connected to the throat chamber, the lingual surface, the epiglottis and the throat-76-chamber to form the inner wall of the sound channel elbow through the tongue bone, and the rise of the tongue position under the influence of the shallow channel can cause the increase of the throat head and the volume of the pharyngeal cavity to be small, the channel is shortened and the cross-sectional area is reduced, the characteristics of the high-frequency of the channel are enhanced, The output is such that the vowel sound is turned on (but thinner), resulting in a subjective feeling of the sound position. [7] It is precisely because the resonance point of the sound depends on the oral cavity, the "triangle" is formed with the head cavity and the chest cavity, and a vertical channel is not formed, so that the resonance is not sufficient, and the overtone is less and the single thin is displayed.

### **3. Tone and Color Aesthetics of Chinese popular Music in different periods**

#### **3.1 Timbres in early pop music "air sound" singing**

Chinese pop songs began to rise at the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, Chinese pop music has established a new mechanism, created a new pattern, trained a large number of outstanding singers, and played an important role in the development of Chinese pop songs. Representative singer has the earliest Li Gu-Yi, Zheng Xulan, Wang Jieshi, Xie Lisi, Zhu Mingying, Su Xiaoming and so on. Among them, the singer Li Gu-Yi of the song country Love used the singing method of "Qi Sound", and the standard of singing with traditional vocal music was "back to rhyme". After the word sound was catalysed by breath, it was wrapped in the breath and uttered together, and the sound was not real. The timbre is soft and ethereal, making the song listen Get up more lyrical and move the hearts of the people. This kind of "air sound" was questioned in the music industry at that time, but it was warmly pursued among the people and swept all over the country. The unique tone in this singing style has captivated countless Chinese people. The boom of soft, ethereal songs became a remarkable phenomenon at this stage.

#### **3.2 The timbre of the Chinese pop song "Rock and Roll" in the mid-1980s**

The rise of rock and roll music in the mid-1980s is also an important phenomenon in the singing world. Cui Jian, it's most representative character is having nothing at all, first came to the fore with some characteristics of "northwest wind". Later, a piece of Red cloth was released one after another. Snow scattered a field, new long March Road rock and roll and other new works, make the face of rock and roll gradually became clear. His works have a strong anti-mainstream tendency and "alternative" characteristics, the style of music is manic and rough, its singing tone is dull, full of wild, often with deafening whole sound to create a strong auditory impact. Cui Jian's rock music appeared as a maverick, reflecting the emotional agitation, mental distress and rebellious character of some contemporary urban youth, so it was greatly welcomed and respected by some contemporary urban youth. His concerts in some of the biggest cities in the country have been a hit, and he has held concerts in some big cities in the country. The Chinese music world has triggered rock craze. Many folk bands have played the "rock and roll" banner.

#### **3.3 Timbres of Chinese pop songs in the late 1980s**

Around 1988, the popular music world blew up the "northwest wind", Xintianyu, Loess High Slope, wish, my hometown in love with me. A large number of popular songs based on the folk tones of the northwest region have sprung up like bamboo shoots, and spread across urban and rural areas of the country at an unprecedented speed. These songs are high-pitched in tone. Loud and full of deep sadness, with the folk songs of Shanxi, Gansu and other places as the basic music elements, will expand the field of vision to the motherland, the magnificent mountains and rivers, and the attention to the state of human existence, melodies are high. The singer's timbre style was bold and bold. TV series the songs also contributed to the "northwest wind". At that time, the movie world's sister, your bold move forward, the Wine Sacrifice (the movie red sorghum), daughter song (film yellow land), These songs spread all over the land of the motherland. These works have used the folk music tones of the north in the Northern Shanxi folk songs to a certain extent, and have the characteristics of the "to advocate for nature" in the Chinese traditional timbre and the rhythm of the pop music. The virility of the masculine, the bold character, the more intense feeling, the style contains the vitality and the harsh nature the fight. The "northwest wind" laid the foundation of Chinese popular music, and a large number of ethnic wind and excellent singers with ethnic-style songs emerged during this period: Liu Huan, Wei Wei, Fan Linlin, Hangzhou Tianqi, and so on. The "northwest wind" has profound thought meaning and far-reaching influence on China's popular music, whether it is created or sung. Until today, people can also feel the essence of the northwest wind from the successful pop songs and the singer's body. The works were the result of a distinctive timbre that won the audience.

### 3.4 "Diversification" timbres of contemporary Chinese popular songs

The rapid development of science and technology has promoted the development of vocal music appreciation from singleness to diversity. With the development of elector-acoustic technology and television technology, vocal music works of different regions, different styles and different singing methods have more and more audience, but popular songs are always popular. Like Figure 1 below.

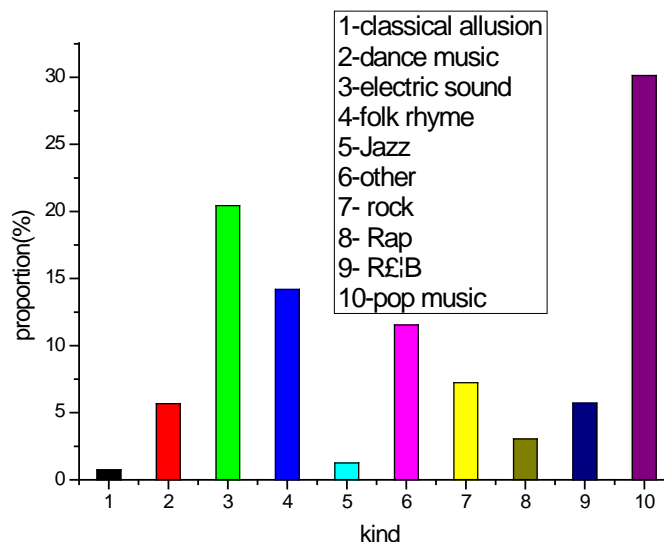


Fig. 1 Distribution of music style preference of Net-ease cloud music users in the first half of 2016

While the national vocal music is graceful and delicate, the number of spectators who enjoy the timbre is declining. Another sound that can not be ignored impacts all levels of the society, and the pluralistic pop music occupies a very large market. From the draft show, it is not difficult to see that now the popular love of timbre beauty, to a large extent pay attention to the personality, subversion of the previous music beauty appraisal of the single, here the singers a single voice sweet, Musical preference for loud and lively tunes, from the creation of music, the structure of music texture to singing methods are relatively simple. Now, however, there is an endless stream of voices with diverse personalities, such as The Voice of China the most representative personality student Wu Mo-worry, stage Wu Mo-worry, wild unruly with sensual simplicity, adjoining teeth hidden in stubborn and strong. It was named the new icon pole of the post-90s idol by many musicians, praising her as a rock devil and a musical leprechaun, showing the expression of evil spirit, publicizing the full and crazy youth, and destroying the so-called sweet sounds of nature. The reconstruction is full of hyperbole. She deviated from the traditional beauty of expression, but got countless supporters and the market.

### 4. The value characteristics behind the Aesthetic changes of Pop Music tone and Color in China

The value form of music beauty not only has the commonness of other art value forms, that is, it belongs to the spiritual value category. And includes the aesthetic value of beauty, but also includes non-aesthetic value. All values take aesthetic value as the core, permeate and interweave with aesthetic value, and should be based on comprehensive psychological activities such as feeling, emotional experience, imagination, comprehension and so on in the evaluation of value; On the other hand, it also has the individuality and particularity which is different from other artistic values. Singing art, with its unique charm, from aesthetic creation to spiritual pleasure, echoes in its vast sound world. The singer can only give himself all he has when he sings Emotions are poured into the works, through the form of singing to convey all aesthetic feelings to the audience. In the art of singing, sound is an important part of aesthetic characteristics. It is a music value entity composed of selective and organized sound movement, and its audio material is intuitive, active, penetrating

and direct. Act actively on a person's organs. As a kind of physical energy, the sound wave of music can directly produce physical and chemical effects on the physiological structure of human body. Music, therefore, excites human organs more than any other art. This "free movement of fast feelings" makes people happy and promotes health.

Music is not subject to the Abstractness of language and figurative limits, but also enables it to go deeper into the core of life to fully express its inner spirit, thus it can most reveal the rich inner world of human beings, show the free state of spiritual movement, and the soul of human beings. Spirituality is closely connected. The singer melts into the true emotion, sings out the true voice, the hot heart of the music can give the soul resonance, and the work will be artistic personalization, the popularization, the life to the greatest extent. So that the audience can more intuitively obtain vivid and accurate music impression and understanding. The rich value attribute in the same music works, in different aesthetic subject, different appreciative field, different trial In a beautiful state of mind, there are different ways to achieve it. Can be positive and negative conversion, but also can be transformed into primary and secondary functions, thus highlighting different value attributes.

## **5. Conclusion**

The aesthetic experience of timbre in Chinese pop music art has gone through a long historical evolution, each time has its own different sound, and each song has its inherent aesthetic, this article from different periods, different styles of song melodies, Touch the pulse of the years. Pop music has its own unique and wonderful aesthetic feelings. If the aesthetic value of music is lost, it will not be a musical beauty, it will become a means attached to other ideologies, and there will be no need to exist. The aesthetic changes of the timbre beauty in Chinese pop songs indicate that the development of singing art in China is wider and the pursuit of the artistic beauty of singing lies in the pursuit of the artistic beauty of singing. The proper range of aesthetic experience will be more colorful.

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