

The historical principle requires performers to thoroughly study different versions of the score (paying attention to Debussy's frequent revisions), understand contemporary performance practices (such as Debussy's instructions on tempo and precise markings of pedal use), and grasp the core characteristics of the Impressionist style (such as avoiding excessive romantic emotional expression and pursuing delicate layering control). The interpretation of ornaments requires particular caution; performers must determine, based on the context of the score, whether an ornament serves as stylistic embellishment or an important expressive element. Overly adhering to the imitation of the soft volume or singular timbre of early pianos may lose its expressiveness in a modern concert hall setting, but completely ignoring its historical context will lead to stylistic distortion [3].

The principle of contemporaneity: Performers are permitted and encouraged to creatively interpret a work by combining the technical advantages of the modern piano with contemporary aesthetics, based on a deep understanding of its essence. This includes: more fully exploring the tonal potential of the modern piano to enrich the Impressionist "palette"; incorporating personal perceptions of musical fluidity into the flexible handling of tempo and dynamics (while avoiding excessive romanticization); and even, given a deep understanding of the work's cultural connotations (such as Eastern elements), integrating a broader cross-cultural perspective, as exemplified by Tan Dun's works that blend East and West, and the modern translation of traditional elements in "Qin Terracotta Warriors." Crucially, this "personalized" expression must serve the music's inherent logic and spiritual essence, rather than being merely a superficial display of technique or a pursuit of novelty.

**Conclusion.** Therefore, the performance and interpretation of Debussy's piano works is not a simple choice between "retro" and "innovation," but a complex process of "dialectical interpretation." It requires the performer to be like a "scholar and artist," possessing both a solid foundation in historical musicology, capable of penetrating the musical notation to understand its historical code, and a keen artistic intuition and superb performance skills, able to imbue the work with vibrant life in a modern context. Gadamer's theory reminds us that the meaning of music is not fixed, but is constantly generated and enriched in each specific, historical performance event. A successful interpretation of Debussy must be a dynamic and creative unity achieved through "fusion of perspectives" – between historical and contemporary viewpoints, the composer's intentions and the performer's understanding, and the musical indications and sonic realization. This lays a solid theoretical foundation for the next section's in-depth analysis of the specific elements of his musical language (texture, harmony, timbre) and its interpretive path.

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## SICHUAN OPERA AS LIVING HERITAGE: VOCAL INTEGRATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

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**Keywords.** Sichuan opera, musical tradition, heritage, vocal Integration, technological transformation.

Sichuan Opera, as the most representative local opera form in Southwest China, profoundly demonstrates the inclusiveness and innovation of Bashu culture through the formation and development of its musical system. Over its more than 600-year history, Sichuan Opera music

has undergone a complete developmental trajectory, from the initial integration of diverse vocal styles to the gradual establishment of a systematic framework, and finally to its innovative transformation in the contemporary context. This evolution reflects both the inherent laws of artistic development and the inevitable result of the evolution of the social and cultural ecology. This article will systematically review and explain the foundations of Sichuan Opera music during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the process of its formation in modern times, and the characteristics of its evolution in contemporary inheritance practices, thereby revealing the inherent developmental logic inherent in its status as a living cultural heritage.

**Material and Methods.** The study employs methods such as literature review, data analysis, field investigation, and analysis of historical context and cultural context, supported by historical materials from the Ming and Qing dynasties, archives of the Sichuan Opera Troupe, traditional musical scores, academic literature, and digitalized data on the inheritance of cultural heritage.

**Results and their discussion.** The Ming and Qing dynasties were the key period for the formation of Sichuan Opera music genes. Its essential feature is the integration and reconstruction of a diverse vocal system. This integration is not a simple superposition of musical elements, but a cultural symbiosis phenomenon formed under specific historical conditions. The migration wave of "Huguang Filling Sichuan" at the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing dynasties prompted the large-scale introduction of vocal arts such as Gaoqiang and Kunqiang from the middle reaches of the Yangtze River into the Sichuan Basin. Foreign vocal styles interacted deeply with the local lantern opera music, Taoist music and folk tunes in Sichuan, eventually forming a unique pattern of "five vocal styles in harmony" [1].

As the core vocal style of Sichuan Opera, Gaoqiang resonates naturally with the collective characteristics of Bashu work songs through its "one sings, many harmonize" singing style. Immigrant groups use Gaoqiang to express their homesickness, while local artists combine it with the "accompaniment singing" technique in Taoist rituals to create a unique "Sichuan-style Gaoqiang". While retaining the free rhythm characteristics of Yiyangqiang, this vocal style absorbs the tones and rhythms of Sichuan dialect, forming a musical language system of "few words, many melodies, and melodies following words" [1]. It should be noted that the localization process of Gaoqiang in Sichuan Opera is accompanied by the innovation of notation. Artists creatively use "circle and dot notation" to record the changes in melodic patterns, and use cinnabar marks in different positions to indicate the pitch direction. This visual symbol system effectively overcomes the ambiguity of oral transmission and lays the foundation for the standardization of vocal styles [1].

The introduction of Kunqu Opera brought with it the permeation of refined culture. During the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, the Suzhou Kunqu Opera Troupe performed in Sichuan, and its melodious and delicate "water-mill tune" profoundly influenced the expressive dimension of Sichuan Opera music. However, the spread of Kunqu Opera in the Sichuan-Chongqing region faced two major challenges: first, the local dialect's tonal system differed significantly from that of Wu dialect; second, the aesthetic preferences of the people of Sichuan-Chongqing tended to favor high-pitched and passionate performance styles. To this end, Sichuan Opera artists carried out creative transformations: while retaining the structure of Kunqu Opera tunes, they increased the singing speed by about 30% and added characteristic instruments such as bamboo flute and suona to the accompaniment, forming a unique treatment of "fast Kunqu, slow singing" [2]. This transformation enabled Kunqu Opera to maintain its elegant charm while meeting the regional aesthetic needs, demonstrating the ability of Sichuan-Chongqing culture to digest foreign art.

It should be emphasized that the formation of Sichuan Opera music during the Ming and Qing Dynasties was always accompanied by the construction of cultural identity. Different immigrant groups maintained their memories of their hometown through their familiar vocal styles, while local artists were committed to creating new musical languages that transcended regions. This tension was finally resolved in the forty-fourth year of Qianlong (1779) when Wei Changsheng, the founder of Sichuan Opera, performed in Beijing and was praised as "Wei San is known all overseas". His creation of "Qinqiang" (the predecessor of Huinqiang) marked the

establishment of the independent character of Sichuan Opera music [3]. At this point, Sichuan Opera music completed the transformation from a carrier of immigrant culture to a symbol of Bashu culture, paving the way for its modern systematic development.

The development of contemporary Sichuan Opera music exhibits a dual trajectory of traditional inheritance and modern innovation. Since the 1950s, theater system reforms, educational model transformations, and the introduction of digital technology have, while maintaining the inherent characteristics of the art form, also driven profound structural changes in Sichuan Opera music. This evolution is both an inevitable choice for art to adapt to the context of the times and a core challenge to the preservation of its cultural genes.

After the National Opera Festival in 1952, the performance space of Sichuan Opera was transformed from a tea garden-style stage to a proscenium stage. The transformation of the spatial form prompted the scientific transformation of the singing method: the traditional "shouting" (relying on natural vocal cord vibration) was replaced by systematic vocal training, and the resonance position was expanded from single oral resonance to the coordinated use of head cavity and chest cavity [1]. Acoustic measurements showed that the vocal range of professionally trained actors expanded by an average of about a perfect fifth, and the sound pressure level increased by about 15 decibels. However, scientific training led to the weakening of traditional charm – the attenuation of high-frequency overtones caused the "metallic texture" to be reduced, and the harmony between dialect tone and melody decreased by about 30% [2]. In order to coordinate the contradiction between technology and art, the industry created the "scientific embellishment" technique: on the basis of maintaining scientific vocal production, the "whistling" sound was simulated by the slight vibration of the throat muscles, and the "drill cavity" sound effect was reproduced by the rapid opening and closing of the soft palate. This compromise solution has achieved remarkable results in newly adapted plays such as "Bashan Xiucui" and "Dead Water Ripples" [1].

The traditional "sitting singing" format requires a staff of more than 20 people (8 for the civil section and 12 for the military section), while modern theater performances are often reduced to a staff of 10. Quantitative studies have shown that the simplified format leads to three structural changes: first, the reduced texture thickness reduces the number of polyphonic sections by 65%; second, the timbre contrast decreases, weakening the stereo effect of "accompaniment, fighting, and singing" in Gaoqiang opera; and third, the compression of the improvisation space reduces the usage rate of traditional "embellishment" techniques by 40% [3]. To compensate for the loss of expressiveness, musicians have developed "virtual sound field" technology: using electronic synthesizers to simulate missing parts and using multi-track recording technology to reconstruct the sound space. In the "execution ground" scene of "Dust Settles", digital technology reproduces the acoustic effect of the traditional "nine heads" (nine percussion instruments playing together), and the measured low-frequency sound pressure level reaches 92% of the traditional format [4].

New media technology has formed three innovative paths: First, the "Music Visualization" project transforms the vocal waveform into dynamic images through spectrum analysis, so that the vocal characteristics of classic works such as "Autumn River" and "Rolling Lantern" can be visually represented [3]. Second, interactive inheritance platforms such as "Sichuan Opera Accompaniment Application" allow users to simulate accompaniment singing through mobile terminals, and the background AI system corrects the pitch in real time, improving the average pitch accuracy of users by 35%. Third, in cross-border integration creation, the Sichuan Opera-themed skin of "Honor of Kings" transforms the core tone of the erhu into an electronic music theme, with over 20 million downloads in the first week and a 50% increase in contact rate among young audiences [3]. Digital practices not only expand the channels of dissemination, but also reconstruct the acceptance paradigm – from immersive theater experience to fragmented interactive experience.

**Conclusion.** This article, by tracing the development of Sichuan Opera music through three stages—the Ming and Qing Dynasties, modern times, and contemporary times – reveals its interactive logic with the traditional Chinese musical context: the core characteristic of "five harmonies" has always been the foundation for Sichuan Opera music to adapt to different

historical and cultural environments; while adaptive changes based on regional culture, social transformation, and technological innovation have continuously expanded its expressive dimensions within the Chinese musical tradition. This development path of "preserving tradition while innovating" not only provides a theoretical basis for the contemporary inheritance of Sichuan Opera but also offers a typical case for exploring the living continuation mechanism of traditional Chinese music.

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## FROM FOLK ARIA TO NATIONAL HERITAGE: AN ART HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF HENAN OPERA

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Yu Opera (豫剧, Yùjù) is one of the leading national forms of traditional Chinese theater, alongside Peking Opera, Yue Opera, Huangmei Opera, and Pingu. Its origin is linked to Henan Province, whose one-character abbreviation 豫 (yù) became the basis for the official name of the genre after the founding of the People's Republic of China [1]. This article presents an art historical analysis of a specific branch of Henan Opera – Yu Opera – highlighting its musical language, dramaturgical features, and contemporary challenges related to its preservation as part of national heritage.

**Material and Methods.** The materials used for this study include works by Chinese scholars and encyclopedic sources. The methods applied are general scientific approaches and the historical-cultural method.

**Results and their discussion.** Yu Opera experienced rapid development in the basin of the Yellow and Huai Rivers, where it gained widespread popularity. According to statistical data, it held a leading position for an extended period in terms of the number of performers and opera troupes. Although outside China it is often referred to as "Henan Opera", within Henan Province it is considered only one of the three major local opera forms, alongside Quju (曲剧) and Yuediao (越调) [1].

Professional Yu Opera troupes are found not only in Henan but also in regions such as Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shandong, Hebei, Beijing, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and Xinjiang. Additionally, a troupe operates in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, indicating the genre's broad geographical reach.

The history of Yu Opera spans more than two centuries. Its golden age occurred during the late Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), and after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it received new momentum for development. By the mid-1980s, Yu Opera had surpassed over 300 other regional theatrical forms in terms of popularity and number of performances. In 2006, it was included in China's first national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, affirming its status as a vital element of the country's cultural identity.

Yu Opera emerged during the transitional period between the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. In its early stages, it primarily consisted of arias performed without stage makeup, which were popular among the common people and contributed to its rapid spread and growth.