

Research Article

Studies on Musical Characteristics of Puxian Opera

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Abstract

This article provides to describe the musical characteristics in Puxian Opera, containing the historical and cultural factors, as well as all the musical and theatrical impression under the situation of live performance. As one of the oldest Chinese traditional drama art forms, Puxian Opera reflects the path of how the local culture developed. This study begins with history of Puxian Opera, which shows the origin of its musical form and dramatic expression. Then the study focuses on its basic music material: vocal tones and Qupai. A traditional drama vocal tone is inevitably connected to the regional dialect, while the use of Qupai illustrates the succession of traditional music style. After that the study analyzes more compositional factors, including music structure, performance, and ritual expression. The irregular rhythmic element is one of the biggest features in this music, it reflects in both vocal and instrumental aspects. The last section focuses on the topic of entertainment and enlightenment, which embodies the text in dialect and essential idea of script.

Keywords: Puxian opera; music characteristics; artistic value

Introduction

Puxian Opera (also named Hinghwa opera¹) appeared as a common folk drama in many areas of Fujian Province, China. In some other districts of Southeast Asia one can also find the trace of it. Nowadays there is a relatively large number of collections existing: more than 5000 traditional repertoires, 8000 scripts and 900 Qupai². The current oldest script is *Zhangxie Zhuangyuan*, more than 700 years old already.

The music of Puxian Opera originated since Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.). One music institution named Jiaofang was directly managed by the imperial court, where folk musicians and artists gathered and practiced for formal performance under unified arrangement. Mostly they were responsible for entertaining music rather than ceremonial situation. This certain

¹ Hinghwa is the ancient name of Putian district, where this art form originated.

² Qupai is the Chinese traditional term to define a certain tune. In ancient China, musicians chose existing poems as lyric to compose music; later many excellent and fabulous tunes have been renewed for different drama or performance, while the lyrics could be re-written totally with original rhyme, only the certain tune and poetic name remains.

music type was called Daqu, accompaniment for large group dancing performance. Daqu was consisting of three parts with quite restricted structure and played by mostly wind instruments. This was the initial musical form of Puxian Opera.

The essential and basic dramatic form was founded during Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.). First the concept of Qupai established. Instead of the previous Daqu with larger structure, Qupai was to define a certain tune or song. Individual Qupai was technically named after certain poem; even later musicians would write different version of lyrics, the music and name itself remained. Qupai is considered as the basic musical material of Chinese traditional drama. Due to the popularity of folk theatre, another major variation reflected on the way of performance by combining drama, singing, puppet show, and ritual ceremony. Theatrical drama became not the imperial monopoly but open to ordinary people as well. In such style of performance, music was played as the role of embodying the story line, and actors emphasised on the expressive and ambient acting; also, to make it widespread and easily understandable, the lyric and script were written in more simple and unsophisticated way. The comprehensive performing act has been considered as the fundamental form of Chinese drama, containing singing, acting, recitation and acrobatics³.

The basic musical arrangement also was founded at this period. Normally the Puxian Opera band owns the LuoGuChui which means gong, drum, and wind instrument. Percussive instruments are significant in live performance. In terms of actors, there were seven main characters as default in the drama, each of them had specialized performing and conventional program. Sheng stands for main male character; Dan is the name of main lady character, usually very young and brave; Tie is the second primary character, usually he/she is bit childish but super warmhearted, being a supportive maiden; Liangzhuang is more responsible for aggressive or vicious or acrobatic characters; Lao stands for noble, respectful old character; Mo means other supportive and minor roles; Chou is the certain character showing hilarious behavior as a buffoon. Each character has its own identical movement, the basic acting body language. Those programs gave an impression of individual identity and personality. In a word, the complete embryonic of Puxian Opera was set up⁴.Significance Of The Study

Puxian Opera tends to combine entertainment and enlightenment, for a local drama has been always an ideal way to increase the regional connection and somehow reinforce ethical concepts. Nowadays most traditional dramas have been considered valuable but vulnerable. Puxian Opera might benefit from nowadays' development and popularization of modern technique, for instance the sound engineering and light application on stage; but still people may find it not enjoyable due to the traditional context being lack of amusement, comparing to other entertainment. To understand the inner artistic value of Puxian Opera, it provides more possibilities towards developing protection and optimization.

³ A study on the communication between Puxian Opera and other opera- focusing on traditional plays, Zhang Lijuan, 2019

⁴ The original name was Hinghwa Zaju, which means poetic drama set to music in Hinghwa district.

Review Of Related Studies

History of Puxian Opera is a two chaptered monograph authored by Zheng Shangxian, Wang Pingzhang, published in 2006. It provides huge amount data including theoretical research, historical information, composers, and composition. *Cultural Ecology of Puxian Theatre* by Ye Mingsheng, published in 2007. In this monograph it illustrated primarily studies based on cultural and social aspects in Puxian districts, including folk culture, ancient puppet drama, ritual and ceremonial arts. Besides there are other essays analyzing more specific aspects of Puxian Opera, such as performance, instruments, the vocal tones, and composition.

Objectives Of The Study

- Historical and cultural influence
- Basic music material: vocal tones and Qupai
- Composition, construction of ritual and theatrical scenes
- Rhythm
- Accompaniment
- Entertainment and enlightenment

Method

- 1- To consult literature. This is main data approaching method in this study, including specific research or essays of Puxian Opera, Chinese drama, folk drama, and folk culture.
- 2- To collect multimedia materials and music scores.

Findings

Historical and cultural influence

Deriving from music, Puxian Opera developed and established its basic form by combining multiple artistic performance including singing, acting, dancing, puppet drama, ritual ceremony, recitation, and storytelling. The prominent characteristics feature in varied aspects: the traditional and period aesthetic value, dramatic and theatrical composition, impression of folk and regional culture. For instance, dance in Puxian Opera is usually variation of historical dance. It shows dominantly the classical and graceful gestures on the topic of local culture or regional ceremony.

Folk drama usually is situated when there are seasonal or calendrical events, when people are gathering for religious or celebratory productions. As a reflexive fact of local culture and politics, the theme of folk drama is primarily about traditional story or legendary tales.

Additionally traditional storytelling tends to convey information about moral standards in simple and plain way. On the other hand, the common sense of identity upon those local cultural features can be achieved among people through traditional storytelling.

Basic material: vocal tones and Qupai

Hinghwa Qiang is the most distinctive and featured vocal tone in Puxian Opera. It's basically formed by Chinese pentatonic scale. In Puxian Opera the Gong (1 or C) and Yu (6 or A) mode were used on most occasions. Hinghwa Qiang originated from ancient poetic music of Tang and Song Dynasty, then developed through the dramatic performance in Song and Yuan Dynasty; the result also reflects features of Hinghwa regional dialect and other regional folk song as well.

The use of natural voice and original tune of dialect are the essential factors in this vocal tone. The regional dialect consists of 8 tones, which creates a particular and sophisticated ambience. It keeps many characteristics of antique Chinese language, while modern Mandarin simplified into 4 tones. In

traditional drama performance, chanting is equally important as singing. Dialect also features music itself. Typical way of ornamenting Hinghwa Qiang melody is to use glissando for smooth melodic contour. Disjunct motions are used often on the structural point. The leap varies from different intervals, from fourth to eleventh. In live situation singers are allowed to improvise on details of individual melody, which depends on the character, symbol, and tone. The transposition between phrases frequently processes towards to the descending fourth or fifth.

Besides the local dialect and folk songs, there were plenty of different folk tones from other districts being merged into Hinghwa Qiang. Many folk songs from Suzhou, Hubei were contributing as well. Those are mostly illustrating rather gentle and lyrical music language.

Another feature is the rich inheritance of ancient Qupai. In traditional Chinese drama music, Qupai is the most significant material. Huge amounts of Qupai from Song and Yuan Dynasty still play fundamental roles. Those historical ones are giving an impression of simplicity and exquisiteness, illustrating the archaic beauty through simple but delicate melody. Qupai were initially named after specific poems, subsequently also named via district or unique musical character. Every Qupai has its own musical characteristic, relying on different modes or rhythmic patterns.

According to the difference of music character, there are two categories of Qupai. Dati is the one for lyrical expression, while it has more melodic notes than text, with multiple rhythmic elements and regular beat. Xiaoti is in the use of narrative recitation, while there is usually faster and more text in one music phrase, with rubato or senza misura but usually unified rhythm.

There are certain ways to use Qupai, mostly artists tend to maintain its original structure. In the term of variation, there are additional methods. For a single Qupai, it's possible to make variation depending on the feature of music and story. For instance, the beginning and ending part could be repeated if it's needed. Musicians are also allowed to modify some rhythm or melodic fragment, to suit the story or performance in better way. Occasionally they also combine 2 Qupai together then result a new piece. For the use of multiple Qupai, it's also possible to merge them into a new one.

Composition, construction of ritual and theatrical scenes

A complete music structure of Puxian Opera consists of three dominant parts: Yinzi (intro), Guoqu (main part), Weisheng (coda). In the beginning and ending part, music primarily contains rubato sections rather than specific Qupai. The main part is organized by multiple Qupai, with their original version or variation.

Despite the methods of variation mentioned in previous chapter, it is also very common to arrange music and performance in fixed way. As mentioned before, each dramatic character has its own basic body language; what's more, there are many corresponding patterns to match character and emotion. Such as there is specific way of pathing if the Dan is showing how panic or shocked; or the rather aggressive opening gesture for a Liangzhuang to behave powerful and masculine. Those acting patterns may look exaggerated nowadays, but it's quite understandable considering the influential aspects of puppet drama. Also, as the point of audience, it would be nice if the dramatic appearance can directly delivery as much information as possible, that helps audience to feel connected with the story and characters. Therefore it's convenient and convincing to maintain those performing acts.

Besides the characters, what's most important for a drama is story itself. The essential motive to complete a drama is how the story processes. So it's significant to confirm the main storyline, which must have the major core to be attractive enough. In most traditional Puxian Opera's designing, story tends to be in restricted structure, with touching and educating factors in a simple and plain way. Of course later on people tend to write more dramatic, legendary and bizarre story to not bore audience.

Fundamentally there are common basic rules: being entertaining is essential because audience treat the drama as part of festival, they are always expecting something relaxing and exciting lively; to design the process in reasonably conflicted way, otherwise people may get bored with continuous single and monotonous mood; the dancing and acrobatic scenes must be bustling, they are literally breath-taking elements.

With consideration of those facts, composer or composing team would have much clear clues about music composition. There are similar methods as well, such as to choose certain Qupai for specific character's corresponding performance. This is the basic way to connect story and scene, also to maintain being traditional-on many occasions it's the similarity to being understood and considerate original drama in proper way. The essential parts also include to arrange dancing and acrobatic scenes in splendid and glorious way.

Percussions play such an important role in most acrobatic performance. Gong in Puxian Opera is normally the one originated from ancient army, Shaluo, with around 330mm diameters. With its unique veins and different mallets, musician can achieve quite variable sounds. Drum named Dagu, is mostly big bass drum made of camphor wood. One deliciated stone made lion gives the colorful tone when it's been put on the drum, besides it can be used to adjust drum's volume as well. Another common drum Huayugu, is smaller one with round shape, it has relatively smaller volume and higher pitch.

With structured and artistic music, dramatic costume and makeup, dance and performance within context, the dramatic and theatrical ambience has been naturally established. Audiences are led into an immersive background to devote themselves totally into the story and holistic experience. Folk drama offers possibilities of expressive forms which other things cannot offer. It particularly invokes an alternate world, where people can feel the real society with alternate views, to speak about the real one in highly aesthetical ways, also to understand the real one and themselves in such innovated ways. The drama both describe and transform the real world into theatrical scenes in its own way. Drama is "a play activity...it calls for the establishment of a play world that is recognizably removed from the real world and yet in many ways similar to it."⁵ In modern Chinese society the ritual activities have become less important in daily life. But the original of traditional drama stood the same: it was always connected to ritual, religious functions. No matter how the story and music composition changed, the historical essential core of folk drama stays.

Rhythm

Irregular rhythmic pattern is one of the most significant features. It is due to the development of poetic rhyme. In Chinese poem writing, it usually occurred words with odd number such as 3, 5, 7⁶; a phrase consisted of 7 words is considered "long phrase", while others with 3 or 5 called "short phrase". Original Qupai were usually made of multiple length phrase with 5 or 7 words, which resulted in combination of rhythmic elements. In succeeding composition, artists wrote new lyrics for old Qupai according to its musical rhyme.

In vocal parts of Puxian Opera, the combination of complex length phrase and rhythm gives an outstanding impression. The phrase consisted of long and short structure can neutralize the seriousness of performance with certain costume and make up, especially when the character is narrating a sentimental story, those irregular rhythm of vocal phrases could make the depiction more oral and with more emotion. As mentioned before, actors are also showing corresponding patterns of

⁵ Lisa Gabbert. (2018), Folk Drama, [Humanities]

⁶ In ancient poem there were mainly 4 words; until Tang Dynasty the preference changed, odd numbered phrase was considered better for chanting or singing.

identity and mood while they are singing. In Chinese traditional drama, the basic performance demands actor's concentration of eyes and hands, which can't be randomly putting or pointing, every movement must have a stable path and clear purpose. What's more, it reflects all emotion via holistic movements where embody mostly on actor's foot, hands, and shoulders under control of main body and core. With irregular combination of rhythm and lyrics, actor's body language also varies to suit all musical elements. As the result of live performance, audience would barely feel bored for the vocal sections are not quite foreseeable and meanwhile full of details and emotion.

It also offers various ways to enlarge the ending phrase in music section. Irregular rhythm functions the same as interrupted cadence. It's quite common that at the end of single Qupai, the last few notes would be repeated, or the last word would be prolonged with more measures fulfilled with ornamented melody. In traditional text writing, the last sentence is either literally the peak of expression, or important word to give concluding closure of the current situation, so emotionally it's natural to emphasis this part by repeating. Again, to avoid boredom and dullness, music normally extends with irregular rhythmic variation, to enlarge vocal phrase by changing rhythm, beats or accent.

In percussion, complex rhythmic structure and metric units play prominent role to create dynamic live scene. For traditional drama performance, it is not necessary that actors are always singing, but equally essential to perform via body movements and certain dramatic patterns. Character's moving and posing style was inspired by puppet drama, with antique impression, but to follow the variety of musical construction, human's performance is obviously showing more flexibilities. If a new character appears, it's significant to make an intriguing appearance by precisely designing the way of walking, waving, standing, halt and posing. For instance, for Liangzhuang the character should show his appearance with powerful and masculine gesture, that his path should process firmly but rather relatively slowly, usually his movements contain vigorous and forceful posing halt. But if a Chou character comes, his cunning and buffoonery might be shown through his frivolous way of walking, usually he skips and jumps rather than normally walks. On the other hand, what if a noble and beautiful Dan characters steps on the stage, she must show off her elegance in very restrained way, her steps are mild and soft, also requires small distance between each step. All of those need to be guided by percussive instruments. Percussion shows the tempo and dynamic, also to make performances lively rather than dull, percussion tends to use different rhythmic materials in every section. The internal idea is very similar to the combination of longer and shorter phrase in text, to combine faster trivial rhythm pattern and slower clear beat, also with different sound from drum and gong, percussion can create particular and individual ambience which is suitable for distinctive dramatic scenes. In real life we move with irregularity rather than simply robotic movements, to establish the appearance with reflexive behaviors is a balanced way to show audience both dramatic composition and empathic atmosphere.

Accompaniment

1- band

Initial form of Puxian Opera accompaniment is called *LuoGuChui*, only consisted of three musicians, each of them was responsible for one specific instrument: gong, drum, wind instrument. This was simple but fundamentally efficient enough, for the basic music structure was based on the percussive progress, actors were imitating lots of movements from puppet drama. By the accompaniment of drum, actors were able to follow a clear path of rhythm and tempo; with highlighted gong's playing on significant structural point, it was convenient for certain posing display. Earlier wind instruments were usually flute made of bamboo or wood. For the drama without a

vocalist, flute usually played very outstanding musical phrase for theme and transition; to accompany one's singing, flute tended to show rather simpler layer, not to disturb singing.

Since Song Dynasty, different music forms started to develop and later became influential upon Puxian Opera. Among them, Shifan and Bayue were the most important ones to have impacts. They were both beginning as ceremonial show for sacred and ritual events at first, later became popular among normal people's life, also concentrated on special situations such as wedding, funeral, or festival. Shifan literally meant "ten sounds of music", which originated with the idea of band made of ten instruments as ensemble. Bayue is another folk music form which based on Shifan, it had more characteristic instruments such as sorna and many other percussions. This brought totally new inspiration later for music of Puxian Opera. Later on, variety of instruments had been added into accompanying group. As a result, more musicians were required to join, the whole band became much bigger than its initial form.

In wind instruments group, more types of flutes were made, which can fulfill and enlarge the whole musical register. Harmonic space became richer. Pluck instruments such as *Pipa* and *Sanxian* made amazing results in presenting the atmosphere of dramatic story. Thanks to the articulation, for instance rolling and arpeggios, pluck instruments can make a scene of glittering. Also, it's possible to play harmonic phrases on pluck instruments, mostly the intervals are fourth and fifth. The use of Chinese string instruments made a big difference as well. The string ones usually can make quite expressive sound with big volume, this can be interrupting for vocal, but on the other hand it gives astonishing effect while playing solo. Besides, when musicians used the string instruments to imitate vocalist, it unexpectedly creates wonderful, lyrical, and extremely dramatic results. This kind of imitation will be explained in the following section on the topic of "accompaniment for vocal".

Artists also tried different styles to magnify bands. Pitched percussion such as Yangqin is also sometimes added. But it worked more like additional color rather than fundamental setting. For in Chinese traditional instruments there has been always insufficiency of lower register. Nowadays many drama groups also have tried to add cello to gain proper bass layer. But people may have different opinions about the fusion. The tuning system is totally different, which can cause new problems. Another factor might be psychological reason that many people tend not to accept nonlocal or traditional elements in an old drama form.

Good accompaniment depends on efficient communication between the band and actors. Usually, they must settle certain Qupai relying on the storyline. For each section, Qupai can offer the basic musical style while script establishes basic story. From the side of musicians, they must be familiar with dynamic actions and preference of each actor, including singer. With this information, they can adjust Qupai in logic and reasonable way to suit individual actor smoothly. Such as the key for singer, tempo, and basic expression, how long the transition should last, how many accents there should be in one theme, what kind of musical process should be applied for character's posing. All above details must be settled during communication and rehearsals. They must work together to design and shape all performance, including rhythmic and dynamic features, the certain way of processing and resting. The complete performance relies on actor's understanding and specific acts, with the clue from music and story, led by accompaniment music, to characterize the process of whole story.

2-accompaniment for vocal

In the accompaniment for vocal, it's common to use both monophonic and polyphonic methods. The main melody of vocal is the basic element. There were several ways of accompanying the lyrical singing. It's often that pitched instruments such as flutes and strings play rhythmic or melodic pattern in unison, to create background for leading vocalist. This happens frequently when the main melody is

using Dati Qupai as the basic material, for the piece is a completed song. To construct the dramatic scene, accompaniment stays in the same key and mode of Qupai, with certain rhythmic patterns. Another way is to play unified melodic line to double and emphasize the vocal. This often occurs when the melody comes to a long sentence. In traditional Chinese drama, at the peak of emotion and expression, actors tend to prolong the musical phrase by extending one or few words (usually the last ones) into many measures with ornamented long melody. It's like what happens in opera's cadenza, just the actor is maintaining the one keyword with clear pronunciation, at the same time singing longer phrase with performance gesture, such as pathing, shaking head mildly, and pointing with certain finger gesture. In this kind of accompaniment, Chinese string Huqin plays quite important role.

There are several types of Huqin which indicates to different register and range separately. In general, the main character of Huqin is full of airy and expressive sound. This offers opportunity for the instrument to imitate vocal tones. On various occasions, musicians are using tremolo, special dynamics, long sustaining bowing to attach vocal melody. On the other hand, Puxian Opera uses only dialect as the text, the featured tunes are generating glissando naturally while speaking or singing. This impacts Huqin's performance as well: subtle, and gentle glissando are used widespread to fit and decorate the contour of vocal tunes.

When the main vocal melody is using Xiaoti Qupai as the basic element, accompaniment tends to be less rhythmic. In Xiaoti, there are relatively more texts than notes, the main goal is to narrative in oral style, such as informal conversation or trivial monologue. In this performance, the most important element is actor's personal expressive process, while band tends to play less simultaneously, usually band will only add fills between each phrase to highlight and make dramatic connection or play very simplified rhythmic patterns to lead tempo and dynamic roughly.

3-accompaniment for acting and acrobatic fighting scene

The acting and acrobatic fighting are most popular scenes in dramatic performance. Actors' body language derived from ancient puppet drama, which includes exaggerated movements and stage pose purposing. Percussions play significant role in accompaniment as well. In previous chapters it has mentioned different varieties of percussion including big drum Dagu, small drum Huayugu, specific gong Shaluo. There are also certain types of mallets, which made of different material and has identical shape. The most essential thing is the pattern of playing percussion, which can achieve specific result. For instance, the pattern named Yinyang Chui, it originates from the ancient Chinese yin-yang concept, which describes the elements in relatively opposite and interdependent. With this concept, this pattern requires musician to combine contrastive rhythm, dynamic and both drums to create a colorful path of percussion.

An excellent group of percussion illuminates the performance. For during the acting parts, it often requires actor to simulate daily scene without objects, such as open the door, or interreact with virtual figures. Mostly the fighting scenes are with full energy, the passionate and atmospheric percussion gives the main clue of tempo and dynamics. Also, there were plenty stories describing battles and heroes, it also required actors to perform fighting or indicating group fighting without real weapon and crowd. Audience would receive the accurate information via their gesture, performing pattern and context. Brilliant percussion performance offers the performing route, defines the tempo and dynamic in musical space, supports the whole story and completes the theatrical scene.

One percussive pattern concentrated on wooden mallets, which can create powerful and energetic sound. There are basically three variations of this pattern. One named Shuangchui, it means use wooden mallets to play Dagu with relatively loud and strong dynamic, usually this has been used in creating powerful and crowdly scenes. Second one named Zhantanggu, it is quite similar to

Shuangchui but requires playing on Huayugu only, usually this one is used for fighting scenes, very often filled with dynamic changes such as crescendo and decrescendo. Third one named Wentangu, it often gives an impression of dance or certain character's performance, by playing both Dagu and Huayugu, to create interesting atmosphere.

Entertainment and enlightenment

Intrinsically speaking, Puxian Opera functions like all other folk drama, to offer an immersive theatrical experience, to embody local cultural and traditional features. People also found it entertaining during festivals or celebrations. To reinforce the common sense of local identity, Puxian Opera keeps dialect text only. With local language, many local slangs can be delivered spontaneous, and regional pleasantries can be applied naturally for live performing effect. Dialect is not just different from mandarin in terms of pronunciation and intonation, but due to unique vocabulary, also differs in sense of cultural connotation and taste. Dialect often shows the feature of being simple and plain, straightforward in a lively way, also in regional and folk slang, the local wisdom appears ubiquitous.

In the lyrics of Puxian Opera, there are usually three traits by using dialect. First one connects with rhyme. Text writer usually choose wisely the rhyme at the end of phrase. For the rhythm is frequently irregular already, a smart rhyme can benefit for the structure of musical sentence. Second one can create amusement and comical result by using homophonic words at the end of sentence. Occasionally puns are used as well, but this might be too subtle. The use of homophony can create contractive humor unexpectedly, by using homophonic but quite opposite words to make comic misunderstanding in conversation, or in buffoonery's monologue. Usually, music must cooperate to enhance the dramatic feature. Last one reflects the use of folk and regional slangs. It's quite catchy and easy to remember. And it extends not only about the humor, but also to enlightenment.

Folk drama carries the role of enlightenment, by illustrating local music to succeed local culture, by telling old stories to extend ethical standard for in most ancient stories people were trying to promote goodness and punishing the evil. The choice of dialect works as a supportive role to help people accept these values.

Discussion

- Folk music and ancient culture have their particular charm. To develop folk drama in smart way is to protect it. For in old Puxian Opera the stage, old story, music, and instruments are not easy to draw young people's attention. Even though nowadays many groups are trying to create new drama, and to combine modern techniques with traditional drama, results may be not as satisfied as we expected. Such as when modern drama is performed in a proper theatre, the expression and atmosphere is totally different, also the light and acoustic.
- Dialect keeps the original style of local culture, but also lack of common understanding. Many theatres are trying to offer translation display during live performance. But the rhyme and homophony might be difficult or impossible to be translated. How to open a wider range of audience for this drama, it could also be a topic deserving all kinds of discussion.

Conclusion

Folk drama is valuable and deserves serious attention. Cultural ecology was not mentioned a lot in this study, but it somehow reflects and results in musical and dramatic scenes. Folklore activities are origin and souls of folk drama. Music and performance are the results of convention and local aesthetic preference. By studying and analyzing musical characteristics from various aspects, author sincerely wish that this essay can provide a rather clear path of understanding Puxian Opera.

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