

CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION IN STRING MUSIC: A STUDY ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF HEZE STRING MUSIC

Integração cultural e inovação na música de cordas: Um estudo sobre a transformação da música de cordas de heze

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to scrutinize the reasons and factors for the transformation and evolution of Heze String Music. Changes in the practice of Heze String Music as observed by both cultural bearers and the younger generation of Heze string players can significantly contribute to sculpting the future trajectory of Heze String Music. The article's analysis can inform cultural policy and heritage conservation efforts. Recognizing the factors driving changes in Heze String Music may guide policies to support the continued vitality of this tradition, including education initiatives, funding support, and other cultural sustainability measures. This qualitative study employs methodologies including participant observations and interviews. The research is further enriched by the compilation and collection of audio and video recordings, historical records, concert programs, news articles, musical scores, images of musical instruments, and other significant print materials. This article reveals that the transformation and evolution of Heze String Music have been significantly influenced by sociocultural transformations, cross-genre interactions, education, economic, and technological advancements.

Keywords: Heze String Music; Transformation; Evolution

RESUMO

Este artigo procura examinar as razões e fatores para a transformação e evolução da Música de Cordas de Heze. Mudanças na prática da Música de Cordas Heze, observadas tanto por portadores culturais quanto pela geração mais jovem de tocadores de cordas de Heze, podem contribuir significativamente para esculpir a trajetória futura da Música de Cordas Heze. A análise do artigo pode informar a política cultural e os esforços de conservação do patrimônio. Reconhecer os fatores que impulsionam as mudanças na Heze String Music pode orientar políticas para apoiar a vitalidade contínua dessa tradição, incluindo iniciativas de educação, apoio financeiro e outras medidas de sustentabilidade cultural. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo que utiliza metodologias que incluem observação participante e entrevistas. A pesquisa é ainda enriquecida pela compilação e coleção de gravações de áudio e vídeo, registros históricos, programas de concertos, artigos de notícias, partituras musicais, imagens de instrumentos musicais e outros materiais impressos significativos. Este artigo revela que a transformação e evolução da Música de Cordas de Heze foram significativamente influenciadas por transformações socioculturais, interações entre gêneros, educação, avanços econômicos e tecnológicos.

Keywords: Música de Cordas Heze; Transformação; Evolução

1. INTRODUCTION

String music is a genre of Chinese traditional music with a long history, encompassing an ensemble of various plucked and string instruments (Qi, 2019). This genre is widely popular in the northern, southern, and central regions of China, where it is known by different names, such as the Sixian and Xianyu ensemble. Heze String Music, also referred to as Peng Baban in the Shandong Province, represents one of the styles of northern Chinese string music (Sun, 2020). According to the relevant records in the local chronicles of Shanxian County and Cao County in Heze during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) Dynasties, this genre of string music was founded by a group of elderly artists who gathered one day, and decided to play different pieces on their individual instruments simultaneously (Yuan, 1999; Qi, 2019). The melody that emerged from the cacophony of sounds exhibited great musicality, marking the moment Heze String Music began to flourish. This music is renowned for its elegant style and is often referred to as ancient music due to its long history (Duan, 2018).

In 2006, the Chinese State Council initiated the selection of the first batch of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage to safeguard traditional music, handicrafts, and performing arts that hold historical and cultural significance. In 2007, the Heze Municipal Bureau of Culture submitted an application for Heze String Music to be included on the

2. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HEZE STRING MUSIC

History

Heze String Music, a traditional Chinese musical genre, has a rich history that spans over two centuries. This musical style first emerged during the Jiaqing period (1796-1820) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) and is predominantly found in Juancheng County and Yuncheng County of Heze City, Shandong Province (Chen & Liu, 2013; Cao, 2017; Wang, 2000). Renowned for its elegant and soft melody, color-rich harmonic texture, simple style, and distinctive local color, Heze String Music is a highly representative facet of Chinese traditional music.

list of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage (Heze Municipal Bureau of Culture, 2007). In 2011, Heze String Music was successfully selected as part of the third group of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage List, confirming its high artistic and cultural value (Cao, 2017). As China attaches great importance to the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, studying Heze String Music holds practical significance.

Heze String Music has undergone various transformations and evolution in its development, a process intertwined with countless factors. The constant changes in economic development, cultural exchange, technological advancement, and educational exchange have undoubtedly left a mark on Heze String Music. Our understanding of these influencing factors cannot be detached from those who interact most closely with this musical genre - the cultural bearers and the younger generation of Heze string players. The bearers of Heze String Music culture have a profound understanding of the historical and cultural roots of Heze String Music, providing a valuable source for understanding the changes in this musical tradition. The perspectives of the younger generation are also critically important as they represent the future audience, learners, and possibly, practitioners of Heze String Music. Hence it is crucial to study in greater detail the roles that these two groups of people bring to the future of Heze String Music, since they are the ones actively interpreting and responding to change.

The Chinese character 'Xian' (string) was first used in the accompaniment of Zhugong Diao during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) and Jin Dynasty (1115-1234). As Duan (2018) noted, the term 'Heze String Music' was also applied to a specific type of traditional Quyi during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) Dynasties, such as Mu Lan Man, Suo Nan Zhi, Shan Po Yang, Zhu Yun Fei, and Shua Hai Er. Many folk songs employed string music for accompaniment, known as Xian (string) Diao, indicating the historical role of Xian Diao as accompaniment in Chinese music.

Heze String Music, originating from Chinese folk art of talking and singing, has evolved into an independent art form. After separating from traditional Quyi, it transformed into a folk string instrument ensemble, primarily

featuring the guzheng. The diversity and flexibility of the instruments used in Heze String Music are reminiscent of traditional Eastern symphonies. These musicians typically specialize in two or three traditional Chinese instruments, such as the erhu, pipa, or guzheng, but they can also adapt to other instruments as needed (Cao, 2017).

Heze String Music serves as a form of personal expression and entertainment for folk artists (Duan, 2018). It is often performed in temples, family compounds, and during cultural festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festivals, underlining its deep-rooted significance in traditional Chinese culture (Qi, 2019).

Policy Support

The essence of culture represents the collective experiences of human groups within distinct environmental contexts, encapsulating the inter generational accumulation of life experiences and serving as a nexus between the past and the present. As culture persists in individuals' everyday lives through an intangible modality within self-sustaining ecological environments, it frequently undergoes subtle transformations or even vanishes in tandem with the alterations in its carriers, specifically seen in their lifestyles (Yu, 2017). The Chinese government has implemented policies to protect and preserve its intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which refers to cultural traditions, history, literature, art, and scientific that are passed down from generation to generation within a community. In 2006, China established the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which includes 1,557 items as of 2023 (China Intangible Cultural Heritage List, 2023). These items are designated by the government as important to the country's cultural heritage and are protected by law. The government provides funding and support to preserve and promote these traditions, through education, research, and documentation.

Since 1978, four sets of string music and 30 pieces of various instrumental music have been excavated and sorted out, with three sets of string music included in the National Art Research Key Project Integration of Folk Instrumental Music in China - Shandong Volume (Heze Municipal Bureau of culture, 2007). Since 1980, prominent ethnomusicologists such as Zhao Yuzhai,

Gao Zicheng, and Zhao Dengshan have been invited to Heze to deliver lectures and impart skills, with Zhao Dengshan making frequent visits to promote and instruct traditional Heze String Music. In an effort to promote the performance form of traditional Heze String Music and provide incentives, a Heze folk music festival or competition has been held biennially since 2000. Moreover, the Heze Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center was established in 2005 to undertake the excavation, rescue, survey, protection, and sorting work of the city's folk traditional culture, with Heze String Music being one of the significant protection projects (Heze Municipal Bureau of culture, 2007). Most recently, in 2019, Jinan University held the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) project titled "Talent cultivation for Heze String Music ensemble performance" aimed at cultivating an outstanding group of young performers for the Heze String Music ensemble (Qi, 2019). Since the beginning of this century, the government of Shandong Province and Heze City have provided financial support protect this ancient traditional art. They invest 30,000 to 50,000 RMB annually, specifically for the excavation, compilation of materials, video recording, music scores printing, performances, and inviting domestic and foreign experts, scholars, and art groups to come to Heze for exchange programmes and performance activities (Heze Municipal Bureau of culture, 2007). Despite many challenges, Heze String Music has remained a vibrant and dynamic musical genre that continues to evolve and adapt to contemporary contexts.

Observation on Heze String Ensemble

To understand and examine the traditional ensemble, a significant amount of time was spent with Heze string ensembles, including listening, taking notes, conversing with cultural bearers, and occasionally recording or photographing. Other than that, participation in one ensemble performance was involved. From a Western music perspective, the researcher was a participatory observer, while most Heze String Musicians considered the researcher an apprentice. Everything that the performers and audience members said and did in the Heze string ensembles fell within the scope of the researcher's observation, and these were documented faithfully. During the

observation process, no event or detail was considered unimportant or irrelevant, even if the performers themselves regarded it as natural. The researcher observed how musicians communicated with one another during the performance, including their visual and auditory cues, as well as any improvisational elements.

Preserving intangible cultural heritage is largely about safeguarding traditional ways of life and collective consciousness that have existed throughout human history, as manifested through cultural diversity. Consequently, those who are most advantageously positioned to engage in research and preservation of intangible cultural heritage are the insiders who live within these indigenous cultures and possess an in-depth understanding of their nuances (Yu, 2017). The cultural bearers regard themselves as custodians of an important aspect of the local cultural heritage and have a responsibility to preserve this music for future generations. Many bearers have learned Heze String Music from family members or masters, and see their role as continuing family and community traditions.

Villages in Heze City's Yuncheng and Juancheng counties were visited and several Heze string folk ensembles were interviewed. Some ensembles, with strictly limited membership, rehearsed together almost daily, particularly after dinner, often entertaining themselves in their own family yards. These ensembles performed together at village wedding ceremonies and festivals, and they also participated in competitions, winning awards. Conversely, other ensembles had no strict restrictions on the number of people

who could join a performance. Most of the regular folk artists in these ensembles knew each other well, and they cherished this long-established connection. This type of performance is informal, and any folk artists can be added or removed in the middle of the performance. Any folk artist can also propose the piece to play, but most of the time the decision is made by the most highly skilled performer or the head of the band. As the music progresses, oftentimes to allow for consistency in pulse, yangqin players would nod their hands to indicate a change in speed, or stamp their feet to signal pulse. This body language is clearly understood by all other players. After playing two pieces of music, these folk artists usually take a break or pick up other instruments. Folk artists participate in the performance in chronological order based on their arrival time at the performance venue, ensuring that each individual has an equal opportunity to participate.

Many of the older and more famous bearers were once amateur "folk artists." There is no hierarchy among the members of the ensemble; they all participate voluntarily and share a common interest. Most of the musicians active in Heze String Music are retired people who like to get together in their spare time to play. In Yuncheng County, the youngest folk artist, Zhu Quanyou, is 54 years old (he is blind). He found that it is difficult to pass on Heze String Music in the countryside because most young people have left for urban life. Whenever scholars visit the village to observe folk artists performances or interview them, they cooperate positively and proudly display precious concert photos and hand-copied scores they have at home (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - The folk artists of Yuncheng County performed in villages, showcasing their unique artistic skills to local audiences (photograph by Zhao Tingting, 2023)



Most of the older culture bearers can play several instruments and can also sing. However, only a few can play all the instruments in the ensemble. The cultural bearers state that their scores are not fixed or restricted. They can adapt notes, rhythmic patterns, and playing techniques according to their preferences, as long as the basic melody remains the same. The evolution and transformation of Heze String Music are generally considered positive by the cultural bearers. They believe that new forms of expression and innovation can be allowed while preserving the traditions of Heze String Music. Many bearers are actively involved in promoting and teaching Heze String Music to the younger generation, and they are willing to incorporate new elements into their performances and compositions. At the same time, they recognize the importance of maintaining the basic characteristics and unique styles of Heze String Music. Therefore, Heze String Music cultural bearers view the evolution and development of their art form as a dynamic and ongoing process that requires preservation and innovation to remain relevant and meaningful.

Evolving interests amongst the youth

Young people grow up in a rapidly changing cultural environment and have a variety of entertainment and leisure choices. Many young people in Yuncheng and Juancheng counties belong to Generation Y (born between the early 1980s and early 2000s). This millennial generation grew up in the age of digital technology, where mass media, computers, cell phones, the internet, and social media are their primary mediums of learning and communication (Clare, 2017). In rural areas, traditional cultural practices, such as Heze String Music, are being replaced by mass media entertainment, television, and modern live music bands. Young people living in villages show a growing interest in

popular culture and music. As a result, many Heze cultural traditions are on the declined, and young people are leaving their villages to move into larger cities for better job opportunities and higher income.

Individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly among the younger generation, exhibit varying perspectives concerning the evolution of Heze String Music. The Qinzhen Qingqu Ancient Music Society comprises of numerous cultural bearers ranging from their twenties to their forties. Many of these younger cultural bearers, working predominantly as freelancers with hectic schedules, maintain regular communication during rehearsals and performances. Kong Lushun, an emerging cultural bearer, views the ensemble as an extended family in which experienced masters guide younger apprentices through rehearsal and performance. He acknowledges the challenges associated with the evolution of Heze String Music, particularly the scarcity of younger enthusiasts. He remains committed to promoting and transmitting this traditional art form to subsequent generations.

In contrast, students from Heze University express divergent views. While they may exhibit interest and passion for this traditional culture, post-graduation pressures and the need for financial stability may deter them from pursuing careers related to Heze String Music. Young people's attitudes toward Heze String Music are inevitably shaped by their economic circumstances and daily stressors. As a result, the preservation and perpetuation of this cultural heritage should be entrusted to individuals who are deeply passionate and dedicated to the art form. It is imperative to cultivate greater interest in Heze String Music among the younger population to ensure the sustained growth and preservation of this rich traditional culture.

3. THE INTERPLAY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, CULTURAL EXCHANGE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Economic development

Traditional Chinese music and performing arts have significant market demand in the tourism industry. Many tourists visit China to watch traditional music performances and

concerts. In April 2018, the National Culture and Tourism Department issued the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of Comprehensive Tourism," emphasizing the promotion of the integrated development of tourism with technology, education, and culture, and enhancing the cultural content of tourism products (State Council, 2018). In April 2019, the first domestic document to promote the development of tourism

performance was issued. It pointed out that promoting the transformation and upgrading of tourism performance is the primary task, encouraging various market entities to seize the opportunity of the arrival of the mass tourism era and the integration of culture and tourism development, and actively participate in the development of tourism performance. By 2025, the goal is to target the touristic performance market will be prosperous and orderly, with a more optimized development layout, and a number of tourism performance

brands with demonstration value will emerge. The completion of the tourism performance industry chain and the establishment of a robust management service system are anticipated (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2020). The issuance of these national documents and policies signifies the emergence of cultural tourism as a new phenomenon in the era of mass tourism, highlighting the trend of integrating culture and tourism development through tourism performances (Zhang, 2020).

Figure 2 - The Qinzheng Qingqu Ancient Music Society performed at the Heze International Peony Culture and Tourism Festival (photograph by Heze Municipal Tourism Bureau, 2023)



With the increasing government awareness of cultural protection, Heze String Music has received more attention and protection. The interviewees stated that during the International Peony Culture Tourism Festival of Heze [The International Peony Culture Tourism Festival of Heze: The festival is a celebration of the peony flower, which is the city flower of Heze and is known as the "king of flowers" in China. During the festival, visitors can enjoy a variety of cultural activities, including traditional music performances, art exhibitions, and cultural tours.] each year, many activities related to Heze String Music take place, and the Peony Garden has set up an activity area for Heze String Music, equipped with a stage and

audience seats. Moreover, the exhibition halls of the Heze Cultural Center and Wanda Plaza have also dedicated areas for displaying Heze String Music. Tourism development has increased interaction and communication among people, promoting cultural exchanges and dissemination among different regions. The support of the government and social forces provide opportunities for more people to understand and recognize Heze String Music.

Cultural exchange

Globalization is not only a process of economic integration but also global political and cultural integration and competition (Wang, 2009). As China becomes more integrated into the global economy, people

¹The International Peony Culture Tourism Festival of Heze: The festival is a celebration of the peony flower, which is the city flower of Heze and is known as the "king of flowers" in China. During the festival, visitors can enjoy a variety of cultural activities, including traditional music performances, art exhibitions, and cultural tours.

are increasingly exposed to other musical styles and cultural traditions from around the world. As stated by the cultural bearer, Bi Mei, the advent of globalization has facilitated the participation of Heze String Music in notable music festivals and cultural events, both domestically and internationally, thereby appealing to a broader audience. Furthermore, the proliferation of the internet and other emergent media platforms has expedited the global dissemination and promotion of Heze String Music, enabling a greater demographic to comprehend this traditional culture.

Globalization brings many opportunities and challenges, one of which is the pressure of cultural impact and integration. This pressure also poses challenges and impacts traditional music culture. As Yu (2017) noted, the revolution in information technology has facilitated the infiltration of Western culture, religious entertainment, and lifestyle into every corner of the globe. Under the guise of modernization, this phenomenon increasingly threatens the survival and continuity of vulnerable indigenous cultures and behavioral patterns. For example, Heze String Music faces competition and influence from international music culture, which has intensified the divergent attitudes of young people towards traditional music culture. Some young people are more inclined to embrace Western music culture, while others are more supportive of traditional Chinese culture. However, the demand for multiculturalism has promoted the integration and exchange between different cultures, bringing new opportunities for the development of Heze String Music. Some modern elements and innovative thinking have also been incorporated into Heze String Music, driving its transformation and evolution.

Technological advancements

Since the 21st century, the internet and digital technology have erased or weakened national, regional, and temporal boundaries in the real world of music consumption. The speed and scale of its distribution, and its user-friendly interface with on-demand, collection, download, and interactive features

have made it a major distribution and consumption channel for a new generation of music lovers worldwide. Traditional music distribution channels, such as concerts and mediums like CDs, radio, and TV, are being severely impacted and squeezed by internet channels. A global trend has shifted musical events from offline to online (Yu, 2017). Cultural communication in the internet information age shows unique features that differ from other previous eras, and this is an unprecedented new form in the history of human communication (Zhang, 2018).

While the impact of the internet on the music industry as a whole is well known, its specific influence on the development of Heze String Music has been more nuanced. On one hand, the internet has made Heze String Music more accessible and appreciated by music lovers worldwide. Through platforms such as Tiktok, Crypto, and WeChat, cultural bearers can share their music with fans around the world without relying on traditional record labels or physical distribution channels. This has opened up new opportunities for Heze String Music to reach a wider fan base and develop their careers. Moreover, the internet has made it easier for musicians to collaborate across geographic and cultural boundaries. Heze String Music musicians can collaborate with musicians from other regions of China and even other countries to create new music.

Heze String Music ensemble constantly invites news media to record and photograph each of their performances. This strategy is primarily aimed at leveraging media outreach to broaden understanding and appreciation of the distinctive allure of Heze String Music. Concurrently, the content generated through on-site recording and photography serves as a valuable resource for future promotional endeavors, thereby enhancing the ensemble's visibility. Upon the conclusion of each performance, the ensemble issues a press release with the intent of promoting Heze String Music. This press release not only presents a comprehensive account of the performance's highlights but also accentuates the ensemble's artistic contributions and the inherent value of preserving traditional culture. Consequently,

this approach contributes significantly to bolstering the societal impact of Heze String Music.

According to Kong Lushun, a young cultural bearer of Heze String Music, the current internet age is of great significance in promoting Heze String Music. He believes that not only do young people like to go online, but older people do too, which can increase the audience of Heze String Music. Nowadays, many young people who go to university have not heard of Heze String Music when they were growing up, and this is one of the reasons why few young people

like this traditional music. However, when they have the opportunity to encounter Heze String Music and learn about the background of its story, they often show great interest. For this reason, The Heze String Music ensemble has established dedicated public profiles on social media platforms to promote Heze String Music online. Qian Peng, a young instructor at Heze University who is committed to promoting Heze String Music online, contends that it is incumbent upon the younger generation to safeguard the enduring prosperity of the Heze String Music ensemble in the digital age.

Figure 3 - The rehearsal room for Heze String Music (photograph by Zhao Tingting, 2023)



Figure 4 - The exhibition hall and for Heze String Music (photograph by Zhao Tingting, 2023)



4. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

An ethnomusicologist in Cambodia regards young people as cultural beings capable of making informed choices (Tan, 2008). Education is one means of equipping young

people with the knowledge necessary to shape these choices. According to Tan (2008), education plays a crucial role in revitalizing and rekindling young people's interest in traditional music. The researcher approached music departments and faculties

that offered Heze String Music courses. Heze university has previously hosted numerous performances of Heze String Music. The university has offered Heze String Music courses since 2015. To further understand the possibility of propagation of Heze String Music, the researcher interviewed Heze university students on their opinions, thoughts and sentiments towards this musical genre.

Heze University has undertaken significant pedagogical efforts to develop Heze String Music, including the establishment of a string ensemble, inviting cultural bearers and scholars to give lectures, and actively participating in artistic practices to promote string education and train string teachers. While Heze String Music has been preserved and passed down in classroom teaching, there are still some shortcomings. For example, there is a need for government intervention to ensure the better development of Heze String Music and the integration of string music into primary and secondary school classrooms (Duan, 2018).

Cultural advocate Su Bendong identified a crucial requirement for younger generations to engage with and comprehend traditional arts, particularly Heze String Music. In a strategic endeavor to foster such engagement, Su initiated performances at middle and high schools throughout the city. These performances functioned as an interactive platform for students, acquainting them with the distinct subtleties of Heze String Music and emphasizing its cultural

relevance. Stimulated by these performances, Su proposed the next pivotal measure - the integration of Heze String Music into the standard school curriculum. This proposition was aimed at developing school-based courses specifically tailored to this form of music. By integrating Heze String Music into formal education, Su aimed to endow students with a deeper and more systematic understanding of this musical tradition. It was further anticipated that these courses would guarantee consistent involvement and ongoing learning, thereby ensuring the effective transmission of this valued musical tradition to succeeding generations.

Numerous cultural bearers and folk artists from Huozhuang Village exhibit a favorable disposition towards educating young individuals about Heze String Music, refraining from imposing any fees on the students. However, the conventional pedagogical approach of orally transmitting Heze String Music is ill-suited for instructing contemporary youth, as the majority of musical skills now necessitate specialized teaching methodologies (Sun, 2020). Consequently, cultural bearers transcribe scores from memory to accommodate the learning needs of young individuals. They maintain that solely relying on written scores results in mechanical performances devoid of emotion and rhythm. To address this issue, cultural bearers amalgamate oral instruction with written teaching to complement aspects of the score that cannot be adequately captured in writing.

Figure 5 - Culture bearer Su Bendong rehearsing the newly adapted composition "Haili Hua" of Heze String Music with students at the Heze University (photograph by Qian Peng, 2022)

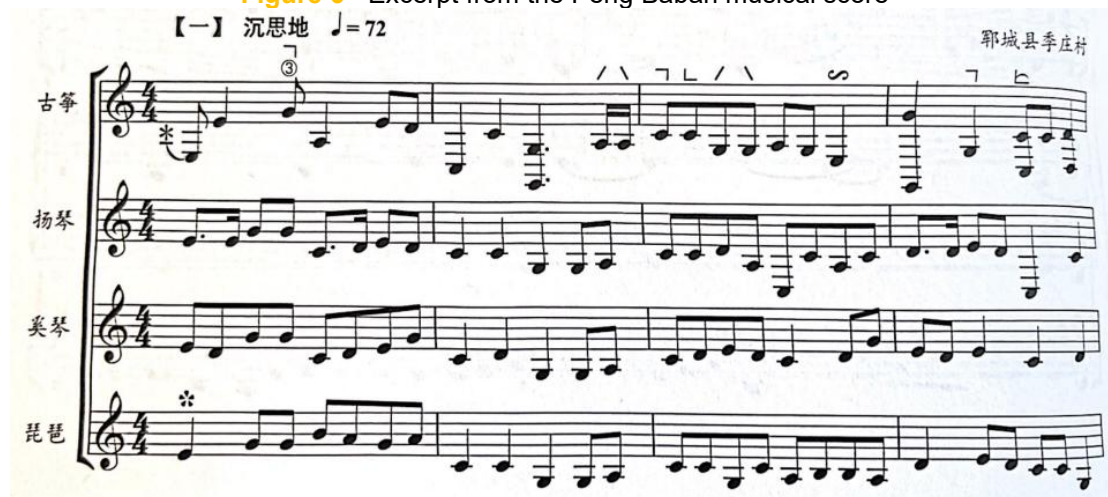


The transition from traditional repertoire to newly arranged compositions

The musical composition Peng Baban is a classic traditional suite of Heze String Music. The composition features the lead performance of the guzheng, and each voice

part plays a musical piece of the same length with an eight-section structure. The melodic collisions and overlapping variations that occur among the various instruments during the performance give rise to a dynamic and melodious polyphonic music with dramatic ups and downs.

Figure 6 - Excerpt from the Peng Baban musical score



In the context of contemporary innovation, in addition to performing traditional Heze String Music pieces, the music genre faces the challenge of limited repertoire, which calls for the expansion of musical compositions in order to promote the development of Heze String Music. Representative works in this regard include Xiang Yin He Ming, Dui Kai

Men and Su Di Yue. These compositions differ from traditional repertoire by deviating from the strict adherence to the eight-section structure. However, they incorporate elements of traditional musical forms and draw inspiration from other local art forms, creating new musical compositions in the present era.

Figure 7 - Excerpt from the Xiang Yin He Ming musical score, adapted in the year 2014



Heze, known as the City of Peonies and renowned worldwide, inspired the creation of the Heze String Music song Mudan Yin (Ode to Peonies). In this composition, traditional Heze String Music instrument performances are combined with orchestras, accompanied by contemporary electronic music elements. The aim is to achieve an effective

configuration of symphony and modern musical fashion, highlighting the stylistic characteristics of traditional Heze String Music, strengthening the artistic personality of the composition, enriching its expressive power, while also striving to align with the aesthetic perception of contemporary audiences.

Figure 8 - Excerpt from the Mudan Yin musical score, composed in the year 2022

5 5 6 13 | 2 - - - | 3 35 1 12 | 1 - - - | 6 12 3 5 | 2 31 6 - |

一品花中王， 一媚冠群芳， 国色羞西子，

6 12 3 1 | 65 5 - - |

天香愧王媚。

5 5 6 13	2 - - -	3 35 3 21	1 - - -
一品花中王，		一媚冠群芳，	
0 0 0 0	5 5 6 12	1 - - -	3 35 3 21
	一品花中王，		一媚冠群

5. DISCUSSION

The impact of globalization, societal changes, and the diversified development of the music market, have all influenced the development of Heze String Music. The interaction between Heze String Music musicians and tourists, the influence of mass media, and the aspirations of young people towards modern life have contributed to the absorption of global trends. As a traditional form of music, Heze String Music has already achieved certain accomplishments in its past development. Considering future prospects and synthesizing the information and insights derived from interviews, the subsequent recommendations are proffered:

Cross-cultural exchange: To foster cultural exchange and mutual influence among diverse cultures, it is imperative to actively promote music and cultural exchanges and collaborations with various regions and countries (Cao, 2017). This can be achieved through reciprocal visits and collaborations among artists and music groups, thereby facilitating a rich exchange of ideas and experiences. This process facilitates the introduction of foreign artistic elements and modes of expression, enriching the artistic essence of Heze String Music and inspiring new creative inspirations.

Innovation and adaptation: Su Bendong, the cultural custodian of Heze String Music, posited that to cater to the demands of modern society, Heze String Music should prioritize innovation while maintaining its

traditional foundations. This can be achieved by introducing new instruments, performance techniques, and musical styles, thereby enriching the diversity of Heze String Music and attracting a greater level of attention and participation from younger generations. It is also essential to emphasize the preservation and promotion of traditional performance techniques and repertoire, ensuring the uniqueness and historical value of Heze String Music.

Diversification of performance formats: In addition to conventional concert settings, exploring the integration of Heze String Music with other musical forms such as cross-genre collaborations, music theater, or stage performances can facilitate the creation of more diversified and aesthetically engaging performance formats (Qi, 2020). This approach would attract a broader audience and expand the possibilities for showcasing Heze String Music.

Market Expansion and Promotional Strategies: Kong Lushun, the culture bearer of Heze String Music, posited that bolstering the marketing and promotional endeavors for Heze String Music is imperative to augment its acknowledgment and impact. Hosting music festivals, competitions, and touring performances can serve as avenues to present Heze String Music on wider platforms. Additionally, cultivating collaborations and cultural interactions with different regions and nations can amplify performance opportunities and visibility for Heze String Music.

6. CONCLUSION

As Heze String Music is a unique cultural phenomenon that distinguishes itself from other music cultures worldwide. The advent of globalization has compressed time and space, prompting young people in China to embrace diverse music and singing traditions from across the globe. Despite these global influences, Heze String Music has witnessed

a revival, propelled by the government's emphasis on preserving traditional culture and the emergence of innovative musicians who integrate modern elements into their music. More young people are discovering and appreciating this music style as a result of technology and social media in recent years, ushering Heze String Music into a new era of innovation and development.

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