

The Role of Piano Accompaniment in Emotional Expression of Art Songs

Enyun Du

Music College of Yancheng Teachers University, Yancheng, 224002, China

Abstract: Artistic songs are an important form of vocal music art, which are written by a professional composer for serious artistic purposes. Through the literature of art songs and the content of music, this paper explores the aesthetic characteristics of piano accompaniment of art song.

Keywords: Poetry; Melody; Piano accompaniment

1. Introduction

As a complete art form, art song consists of three independent and complementary parts. The first is poetry, which often takes artistic and dramatic poetry as its literary theme; the second is the freshness and elegance of the singing melody close to the content of the poem; the third is the perfect combination with vocal singing, and also the function of landscape and lyric piano accompaniment, "the role of the piano part is not only a simple accompaniment, it needs to be in line with the artistic law of interpretation like the solo part." [1] In art songs, the lyrics are just like the bones of the human body, and the singing melody is just like the plump muscles, and the piano accompaniment is a very fit and elegant coat, when they are combined, it will perfectly show their unique artistic charm.

2. The Rhythmic Beauty of the Lyrics

Art songs are the singing literature and art, and it is also the music art sung by lang. In the songs, music expands the connotation of literary images and enriches their specificity of hearing; while the lyrics explain the image of music and define people's understanding of music within a certain range. Lyrics are not only the stipulation of music image, but also one of the means of expression of songs. Therefore, people require the lyrics to be suitable for the performance of music, easy to coordinate with music, and the intonation of the lyrics to be music.

Bai Juyi, who was poet and musician in Tang dynasty, said about the poetry that rhythm harmony makes language smooth, and smooth language makes voice touching; when classified clearly, emotions can be expressed and thus emotions can be easily touched. This is the artistic rule and aesthetic feature of Chinese traditional poetry creation, and the writing of lyrics exactly follows this aesthetic concept. This is the artistic rule and aesthetic feature of Chinese traditional poetry creation, and the writing of lyrics exactly follows this aesthetic concept. The music beauty of the lyrics comes from the tonal

beauty of the language, namely, it is based on the four elements including pitch, length, volume and timbre in reading. Long sound have carefree, quiet, leisure and high-spirited and other temperament and interest; Short sound have a hurried, excite, fidgety, wicked and other temperament and interests. The four elements are organized according to a certain rule (plot and content, chapter and paragraph, artistic and language, paragraph emotion), and the music structure of the poem can be presented. Specifically speaking, the lyrics of music structure are through rhythm-- the paragraph structure of lyrics, the cadence of reading intonation, sentences with the same number of words advance and pause regularly. Rhythm-- Four tones of syntactic words, and the harmony and unity of rhyme. Image--the description of things attaches importance to the integration of language meaning and sound, making the lyrics clear in reading and the intonation of lyric appeal. For example, the poem in Chinese "xiong guan man dao zhen ru tie, er jin mai bu cong tou yue" the reading rhythm is as follows: xiong guan man dao zhen ru tie, er jin mai bu cong tou yue. In tone and intonation, this rhythm highlight heroic and firm, thus it shows a strong faith, indomitable and fearless spirits. When you read the poem the mighty river flows eastward of Su Shi who was the poet in Song dynasty in China, the passionate tone and pause and transition in rhythm revealed in the words, the rhythm of music melody can be felt. Lyrics can accurately and truly reflect life and express people's joy, anger, sadness and happiness through specific description and emotional connotation of voice, at this point, the expression of literature is more complete and concrete than all non-literary artistic images.

For example, Zhang Hanhui wrote Along the Songhua River. After the September 18 event in 1931, the three northeast provinces have controlled by the Japanese and hundreds of thousands of northeast refugees and officers and soldiers of the northeast army were forced to exile inside Shanghaiguan, and they cannot go back to home, and their hatred cannot be revenged, at that time, Zhang

Hanhui, who was teaching in Xi' an city, wrote this touching poem with tears in his eyes:

My home is along the northeast Songhua River,
There are forests and coal mines,
And the fields of soybean sorghum everywhere,
My home is along the northeast Songhua River,
My brothers and sisters are there,
And also my aging parents,
"September, 18th", "September, 18th",
From that tragic time.

Be forced away from my hometown,
Throw away the endless treasure,
Vagrancy! Vagrancy!
Vagrancy inside Shanhaiguan Pass everyday,
Which year and which month can I return to my lovely hometown?
Which year and which month can I regain my endless treasure,
Oh, father and mother, oh, father and mother!
When can we gather together?

The first part of the poem expresses the inner feelings through the description of the scenery, highlighting the deep yearning for the beautiful and rich hometown. However, this is not happy and sweet memory, but painful memories with tears. The second part of poem focuses on the emotional vent, and it denounce the criminal act of Japanese aggressors who kill Chinese compatriots, occupy Chinese land, and rob Chinese treasure. The third part describes that the displaced refugees eager to return to their homeland as soon as possible, to recover the endless treasure. Finally, in the end of poem, it expresses that people burst out loud cries, "daddy and mommy! Daddy and mommy! When can we get together?"

The rhythm is sonorous and forceful and the sense of rhythm is rich. It has good singing ability. With singing melody and piano accompaniment, it deepens the emotional expression of the lyrics and deeply excavates the ideological connotation of the work.

3. The Emotional Beauty of Melody

"Music is composed of rows and forms of musical sounds, and these rows and forms of musical sounds have nothing but themselves" [2]. The biggest difference between music and language art is that it is impossible to directly express clear thoughts and describe specific plots of events. Music is the art of time, and it is good at expressing the changes of feelings, anger and sorrow, the ups and downs of melody, relaxation of rhythm, changes in chord, polyphony, tone, intensity and speed, can express the development of feelings tactfully and finely. It is unmatched by any language art. In terms of emotional expression, music is more profound than language. If the song of Along the Songhua River has no lyrics, but only tunes, people can never know as clearly as the lyrics suggest emotionally. However, the fluctuation of music mel-

ody, the downgoing melody lines after the theme tone appearing at the first sentence of the song give people a feeling of sadness and misery, then, through the conversion of tune, the top notes of the whole song are repeated for many times, accompanied by lyrics which are easy to understand, the song leave an indelible impression on people, thus achieving the expected artistic effect, which cannot be obtained when the lyrics or tunes appear alone. Therefore, the selection of music theme plays an extremely important role in the creation of song melody. Profound and personalized music motivation or theme is the soul of a song and it plays an extremely important role in the success of a song. For example, Little River Flows, the national five-tone melody is fresh and melodious, with strong local flavor and national color, and the scale structure of the melody has great features. The ascending and descending scale composed by la do le mi mi le do la process grading. the tone is natural and plain, and the use of syncreted rhythm in the melody is just right, coupled with the lyrics, it vividly presents the natural scenery, dramatic mountains, layers of terraced fields, and the night scenery of clear sky and moon of mountainous areas in Yunnan province in front of us, make people be personally on the scene and unforgettable. When the literary connotation and music images of lyrics combine seamlessly, they can integrate the scene to express the complete artistic image, so as to be more exciting emotionally.

In art songs, the melody follows the established image of lyrics, grasps the connotation of music in literature, and make vivid and persuasive rendering according to the unique way of music, so as to enrich the literary image in lyrics and deepen the artistic conception of literature. The music melody in the song must obey the established literary content and take the literary image as the dominant to express it and deepen it. While mastering the objective existence of text image, the composer must seek the expression of music under the restriction of language rules. Therefore, the composer must start from the specific life image provided by the lyrics and absorb rich life tones to refine and summarize. The language tone in the lyrics is the bridge between the melody and the lyrics, of all the archetypes of realistic acoustics in music, the tone of language is the most important. Human laughter, sigh, cry, cheer and other vivid voice and expression can be found similar performance in music. The four tones (Yin, Yang, Shang, Qu in Chinese) of intonation have a certain impact on the high-low of melody, slow and fast of rhythm, strong and weak of voice. Such as the song—that's me (written by Chen Xiaoguang).

I miss the river at home,
And the water mill that creaks and sings by the river,
Oh, mama, If a wave smiles upon you,
That's me, that's me, that's me (the following lyrics omits).

Lyrics, through homesick “I” and “mama” (hometown incarnate) two artistic images, express the wanderer’s sincere heart vividly. The lyrics are implicit and affectionate, giving people a deep impression. When composing the music, the composer almost completely uses the rhythm of reading aloud, singing with clear articulation, sincere and deep emotion, and it touches the heart, making it a perennial choice in solo concerts.

In order to explore the music feeling hidden in the lyrics, the composers transform the literary image of the lyrics into the music image and develop the concentrated music meaning, and the composers often abandon the tone and rhythm expressed by the pronunciation in a certain part completely, but achieving very good effects. As long as we recognize the contradiction between lyrics and tunes in terms of expression and image in creation, and can properly handle the relationship between the two, so that their contradictions are unified under certain conditions and mastered in practice, we can create beautiful and pleasant tunes that correctly express the meaning of words. Because of the language tone in the song, rhythm only provides a very rough outline for the progress of the tune. On the premise of ensuring the clear meaning of the lyrics, the writing of the tune has great room for both rhythm and melody. For example, the song-- I love you, China

The lark flew through the blue sky,

I love you, China (the following lyrics is omitted).

The composer was not completely faithful to the tone rhythm of reading aloud, but adopted a romantic approach in the arrangement of melody and rhythm, greatly exaggerated so as to achieve excellent singing effect and give full play to the meaning of words. The meaning in the lyrics which are not expressed show to all through music. The perfect expression of the content of the lyrics at the same time is the best representation of music itself, the music and tone, on the basis of contradiction and opposition, reach harmony and unity, so as to achieve a new level of beauty.

4. The Artistic Conception Beauty of Accompaniment

In the works of art songs, Due to the limitation of the physiological condition of human voice, the ornate degree of the change of timbre in singing, the limitation of specific timbre range and other reasons, it is difficult for a single vocal singing to meet the composer’s creative requirements and preconceived ideas of emotional expression, and to perfectly express the literary artistic conception and ideological content contained in the lyrics. Only through the accompaniment of musical instruments can the performance of the work be completed. The composer in his works makes full use of piano performance, such as the exaggerated volume contrast, rich timbre variations, to express sound types with different

characters, chord, rhythm, a contrast of tone or tonality, a flowery variation of a melodic tone and so on, so that the piano rhythm and a single voice singing complement each other. Using piano music to create scenes and help emotions, it plays an important supplementary role in supplement, rendering and expanding the expression of melody emotions.

I live in the upstream of Yangtze River is the works of Liao Shangguo who is a composer (his pen name is qingzhu), the song is wrote in the 1920s, and it is one of the most famous art songs in the early stage of China. The lyrics are from Busuanzi which is the representative works of Li Zhiyi, a poet in the northern Song dynasty. The composer composes a song with a fresh and long music theme, which reflects a woman’s deep emotion of missing her husband. The long melody is very close to the chanting of ancient poetry, but more passionate than chanting poetry. From the prelude, the piano accompaniment part adopts a writing technique that does not contain melody at all, and relies on the expressive function of harmonic and texture to foil the main melody. The use of fixed sound pattern to simulate the river flow brings us to a specific geographical and ecological environment, thus creating a landscape effect. This tone pattern goes through the whole song with a continuous feeling. The repetition of fixed rhythm of arpeggio tone pattern seems to be the undercurrent of surging, which further sublimates the deep emotion of love vow.

Li Hanzhang is a famous Chinese lyricist since May 4th Movement, and he has profound attainments in the study of Ci poetry. The rhythm of his poetry is exquisite, featured by delicate emotion, far-reaching implication and elegant style, and it has typical literati color and artistic conception of Chinese Song poems, and it also has strong singability. In the 1930s, when he taught music in Shanghai national music school, he cooperated with Huang Zi, the composer, music and educator, to create the famous art song Spring Nostalgia, Huang Zi played the piano acoustic landscape characteristics on the application of piano accompaniment, according to the meaning of the poem, he created a real scene which is a cold spring midnight, with wind blowing and rain dropping. From the beginning of the prelude, the application of piano carries on continuously from minor triad to the major triad, then to the minor seventh chord in the right hand sound part, coupled with the crooning of the left hand sound part, simulate the real sound of rain falling drop by drop on the stone steps along the eaves, hitting the lonely heart of the protagonist one sound by one sound, and it drawn a picture that a woman was different to sleep because of missing her faraway husband in a wind and rain night, and the music was sad and touching. With the change of the content of the lyrics, music’s mood suddenly brightened, the piano uses ascending and descending of arpeggio to movement, and the singing

melody of the left hand bass and the melody of the singing form a comparative polyphonic structure intersperse and complement each other, make the person as if to see the blow of spring breeze, and the swaying willows in the wind. The song is promoted with the piano, and the woman's lonely, eager heart was portrayed incisively and vividly.

Jialing River is an artistic song with strong dramatic color, and the song has a poetic like prose. The introduction of piano accompaniment uses f1 - f2 octave of big jump layer with harmony minor composition of the tune straight down from the high-pitched area, creating a tragic, desolate atmosphere, in the accompaniment of rendering, only the main melody tone of the song is combined with the chord tone. The synthesized tone type has a sense of vagueness, which brings people into painful struggle. "The flowing river water is like blood in the heart". Finally, the piano uses a dense chord pattern. The strong tremolo in the bass part pushes the emotion of the song to a climax, which sets off the final cry of victory. If there is no piano accompaniment, the handling of climax during emotional development and the exploration of the connotation of the works will be greatly inferior. The prelude of a night in the desert created by Professor Shang Deyi played #C monophony repeated in high and low octaves in the high register, becoming form weaker to stronger, like a camel's bell echoing in the night sky. With the change of accompaniment and harmonic texture, the appearance of a full octave in the bass part of the left hand naturally brings people to the real scene of a group of camels coming slowly from the sand dunes at a steady pace in the night of the vast and silent sand sea.

To sum up, in the writing of art songs, the composer gives full play to the grand volume of the piano itself, the harmony features of multiple parts, and the changes of voice register, vocal range, timbre and sound pattern to show the changes of things and emotions. The piano accompaniment cooperates with the singing of human voice, supplements the deficiency of human voice, and blends and echoes with each other as a whole. The aesthetic pursuit of piano accompaniment in art songs forms its equal position with human voice in song performance.

5. Acknowledgment

Fund program: This paper is one of the phased achievements of 2018YCTUJGY064 funded by Yancheng normal university education and teaching reform project in 2018.

References

- [1] Michael K. Oxford Concise Music Dictionary, Translated by Wang J D, People's Music. 1991, P514.
- [2] Li Sa, Discussion on the Particularity of Music, People's Music.1980, P97.
- [3] Sen X. Shen Xiang's Vocal Music Teaching Art. People's Music. 2003.
- [4] Heinrich Neuhaus F. Piano Performance Art. People's Music. 1963, 63.
- [5] Geng Y Q. Zhao Xun's Music Education Thought in Normal Colleges, Music Research. 2006.3.
- [6] Han L S et al. Piano Basic Course, Trial Textbook for Normal Colleges.
- [7] Xu J Z. Lecture on Singing Art. People's Music, 2002.
- [8] Zhang Q. Musical Aesthetics Course. Shanghai Music Publishing House. 2002; 2.