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The Characteristics of the Instrumental Repertoires of *Guangxi Wenchang* in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China

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Abstract:
This article project entitled "The Characteristics of the Instrumental Repertoires of Guangxi Wenchang in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China" aimed to 1) understand the accompany instruments of Guangxi Wenchang; 2) study the instrumental repertoires of Guangxi Wenchang; The study employed the qualitative research methodology, documentary studies and field studies in Guilin city Guangxi province to collect the data of the Guangxi Wenchang. The Guangxi Wenchang also known as "Wenchang". It is a local traditional opera in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. This research has a certain guiding significance to understand and study the music of Guangxi Wenchang.

Key words:
Instrumental Repertoires; Guangxi Wenchang; Guilin City

Introduction

As an important intangible cultural heritage of China, Guangxi Wenchang is an organic part of traditional culture of China, especially Guangxi, which has great historical and practical value. *Guangxi Wenchang* is one of the important traditional performance forms of Guilin traditional music culture, it belongs to the category of "Quyi (Chinese folk art forms)". "Quyi is a Singing and Speaking art combining literature, music and singing." (Li Zhong, 2012) As an important intangible cultural heritage of China, *Guangxi Wenchang* is an important part of traditional aesthetic culture in China, especially in Guangxi, and has important historical and cultural value. "On June, 2008, it was listed in The second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list published by the State Council of China (Serial number and project name: V-87 *Guangxi Wenchang*)." (Li Chilian, 2021). Liang Nai's article mentioned that, "From the Daoguang period of Qing Dynasty, the "*Guangxi Wenchang*" began to appear the transmission relationship of master and apprentice. ". (Liang Nai, 2022)

This research has a certain guiding significance to understand and study the music of *Guangxi Wenchang*. And is conducive to the promotion of the knowledge of *Guangxi Wenchang*.

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Objectives

1. To understand the accompany instruments of Guangxi Wenchang.

2. To study the instrumental repertoires of Guangxi Wenchang.

Research Methodology

This qualitative research study employed the data collected from documents, field studies, surveys, observations and interviews.

Research Procedure

1. Collect data from related documents. Such as articles, books and historical documents related to the introduction of Guangxi Wenchang.

2. Conduct field studies by collecting data based on interviews with one key informant, three casual informants and one general informants who know about Guangxi Wenchang in Guilin city, Guangxi province, China.

Key Informant:

Mrs. He Hongyu was born in 1941 in Lipu County, Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. She started study Guangxi Wenchang in 1959.

Casual Informant:

Mr. Su Junmin was born in 1967 in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. He started study Guangxi Wenchang in 1972.

Mr. Pang Jianning was born in 1975 in Pingle county, Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. He started study Guangxi Wenchang in 1991.

Mr. Gong Yi was born in 1946 in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. He started study Guangxi Wenchang in 1961.

General Informant:

Mrs. Li Meimei was born in 1945 in Guilin City, Guangxi Province, China. She started study Guangxi Wenchang in 2006.

Research Results

Guangxi Wenchang belongs to "*Lian Qu Ti*". Most of the singing and playing music in traditional Chinese opera belongs to the "*Lian Qu Ti*". The so-called "*Lian Qu Ti* (*Lian* refers to connect, *Qu* means melody, refers to form)" is to connect all kinds of individual pieces of tunes and songs selectively and skillfully, and to filling the lyrics, and then to sing and perform.

The mode composition of *Guangxi Wenchang* belongs to the pentatonic mode of traditional Chinese music.

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Pentatonic mode, or pentatonic scale, is the scale of Chinese music. The five notes are named as: " 宫 (Gong)", " 商 (Shang)", " 角 (Jue)", " 徵 (Zhi)", " 羽 (*Yu*)". They are roughly equivalent to the roll-calls of Western music: "do", "re", "mi", "sol", "la".

Move the five notes into an octave in high and low order, and the names of the five notes are as follows:

do re mi sol la

宫 商 角 徵 羽

On the basis of pentatonic scale, the fourth and seventh level notes similar to western music major scale occasionally appear in music, which are generally in an unimportant position or belong to passing notes.

The music types of *Guangxi Wenchang* consists of singing repertoires and instrumental repertoires. The singing repertoires of *Guangxi Wenchang* can be divided into two categories: "*Da Diao* (*Da* means big, *Diao* means melody)" and "*Xiao Diao* (*Xiao* means little/small, *Diao* means melody)". This article focuses on the instrumental repertoires of *Guangxi wenchang* as the main research object to explore the musical characteristics of *Guangxi wenchang*.

1. The Accompaniment Band of *Guangxi Wenchang*

Mr. Su Junmin he said that, "At the beginning, *Guangxi wenchang* were performed by blind people, who mostly played and sang by themselves. Later, the scale gradually expanded. The accompaniment instruments of *Guangxi Wenchang* are *Yangqin* (dulcimer, the main instrument of *Guangxi Wenchang*), Pipa(Lute), *San Xian* (*San* means three, *Xian* means string), *Erhu* (urheen) and bamboo flute, which are called '*Wu Jian Tou* (refers to five instruments)' (as shown in Figure 1). Later, *Gaohu* (high pitched *Erhu*) and Cello were added, and then *Zhongruan* was used instead of *Yueqin* and *Qinqin*. The percussion rhythm instruments include drum, *Ban* (board), *Diezi* (dish) and *Jiu Zhong* (wine cup)." It can be seen that the accompaniment instruments in Guangxi wenchang have changed according to the different times and the updating of artistic needs.

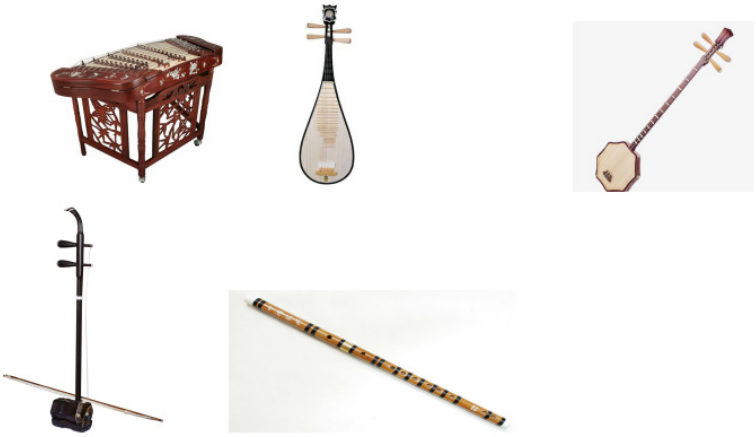


Figure 1: Music instrument of Guangxi Wenchang

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There are four performance forms of *Guangxi Wenchang*: "*Zuo Chang* (*Zuo* means sitting, *Chang* means singing)", "*Li Chang* (*Li* means standing, *Chang* means singing)", "*Zou Chang* (*Zou* means walking, *Chang* means singing)" and "*Wenchang Xi* (means *Wenchang* Opera, also called *Wenchang Gua Yi*)". "No matter it is '*Zuo Chang*', '*Li Chang*', '*Zou Chang*' or '*Wenchang Gua Yi* (*Gua* means hanging; *Yi* means clothing/costumes, here the meaning is wear costume to perform)', it is inseparable from 'singing'." (Ning Hongxia, 2018) *Guangxi Wenchang* is a kind of folk music art with high requirements for actors. It requires actors not only to have superb singing skills, but also know play at least one musical instrument, and have basic physical coordination.

Due to the rich performance forms of *Guangxi Wenchang*, and the actors often sing and play musical instruments at the same time, so the accompaniment band sometimes placed on the backstage or actors accompany by themselves directly (as shown in Figure 2), and sometimes directly behind the singers (as shown in Figure 3).



Figure 2. Mr. Pang Jianning was performing Guangxi Wenchang. Shooting time: June 8, 2023. Shooting location: "LiJiang Waterfall Hotel", Shanhu North Road No.1, Xiufeng District, Guilin City



Figure 3. The performance of Guangxi Wenchang. (Mrs. He Hongyu provided the photo)

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2. The Characteristics of Instrumental Repertoires in Guangxi Wenchang

The melodies of instrumental repertoires of *Guangxi Wenchang* are euphemistic, touching, exquisite, and have strong artistic appeal. Instrumental repertoires has many functions. There are more than 20 instrumental repertoires of *Guangxi Wenchang*, which can be used as stage music, quiet music, prelude, character appearance music, interlude, dance music, solo music, accompaniment music, performance music, etc.

There are 28 kinds of instrumental melodies in *Guangxi Wenchang* (He Hongyu, 2003):

"*Yi Zhi Hua* (refers to a flower)"

"*Da Ba Ban* (*Da* means big, *Ba* means eight, *Ban* means board)"

"*Ba Ban Tou* (*Ba* means eight, *Ban* means board, *Tou* means head)"

"*Jie Jie Gao* (refers to people's expectation of a better life)"

"*Liu Qing Niang* (refers to a geisha's name in the Tang Dynasty.)"

"*Lan ShuZhuang* (*Lan* means lazy, *Shuzhuang* means dress and make up)"

"*Yang Qi Ling* (refers to wave a flag to signal an order)"

"*Ye Xing Chuan* (*Ye* refers to night, *Xing* refers to boating, *Chuan* means boat)"

"*Lang Tao Sha* (refers to a phenomenon about waves beat the beach, and the sand roll ashore, and then the sand swept away by wave again.)"

"*Shui Long Yin* (*Shui* refers to water, *Long* means dragon, *Yin* refers to Chant)"

"*Wang Zhuang Tai* (refers to a dresser or the place where a woman lives)"

"*Qiluo Xiang* (*Qiluo* refers to exquisite silk fabrics or garments, *Xiang* refers to sweet or fragrant)"

"*Huan Huan Le* (refers to happy)"

"*Lianhuan Tao* (refers to rings are interwoven and inseparable, metaphors are connected with each other)"

"*Chuan Zhulian* (*Chuan* refers to string, *Zhulian* refers to beads)"

"*Yu Rener* (*Yu* refers to jade, *Rener* refers to people)"

"*Gao Shan Diao* (*Gao* refers to high, *Shan* refers to mountain, *Diao* refers to melody)"

"*Liushui Qu* (*Liushui* refers to water, *Qu* refers to tune or music)"

"*Man Tang Chun* (*Man* refers to full, *Tang* refers to hall, *Chun* means spring)"

"*San Ju Ban* (*San* means three, *Ju* means sentence, *Ban* means half)"

"*Nanjing Gong* (refers to a temple in Nanjing county, Zhangzhou city, Fujian Province)"

"*Shui Lvyin* (*Shui* refers to water, *Lvyin* refers to shade)"

"*Lianhua Lao* (*Lianhua* refers to lotus, *Lao* refers to fall)"

"*Xiao Yangchun* (refers to the tenth month of the lunar calendar)

"*Yin Feng Nong Yue* (*Yin* and *Nong* refers to chant, *Feng* refers to wind, *Yue* refers to moon.

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"*Ye Shenchen* (*Ye* means night, *Shenchen* refers to deep and dark)"

"*Xiao Taohong* (*Xiao* means little or small, *Taohong* refers to pink)"

"*Zui Ba Xian* (*Zui* refers to drunk, *Ba* means eight, *Xian* refers to immortal)

The following are the representative tunes of instrumental repertoires in *Guangxi Wenchang*:

2.1 "Ba Ban Tou (Ba means eight, Ban means board, Tou refers to head or beginning)"

"*Da Ba Ban*" is a melody to express happy mood. It is often played before formal singing, which plays the role of setting the pitch, calming the audience, brewing the performance mood of the actors and the watching mood of the audience. It often also be used as an "*Yinzi* (prelude)", and when used, its whole tune can be used. It's in C or D major. Its rhythm is 2/4. As shown in figure 4, from the first to the 16 bar is the melody of "*Ba Ban Tou*".

From "Lu Lin Xianghui" of traditional opera script "Jiang Jia Diao"
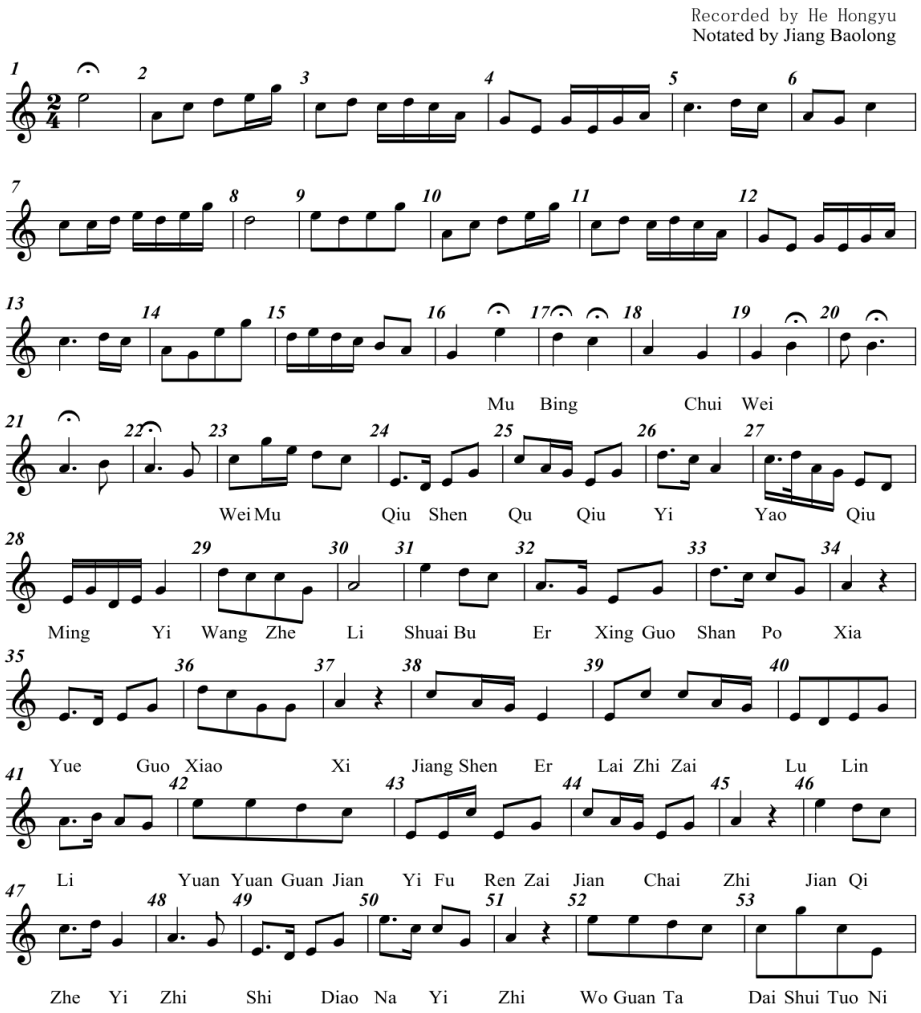


Figure 4. Music score example "Tan Huang Duozi" (He Hongyu, "The Melody Rhyming", 1995)

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2.2 "*Yang Qi Ling* (refers to wave a flag to signal an order)"

"*Yang Qi Ling*" is used for lively and festive scenes. For example, during weddings, birthdays, holidays, and so on, this melody is often used. "*Yang Qi Ling*" is in D major. Its rhythm is 4/4. (As shown in Figure 5)

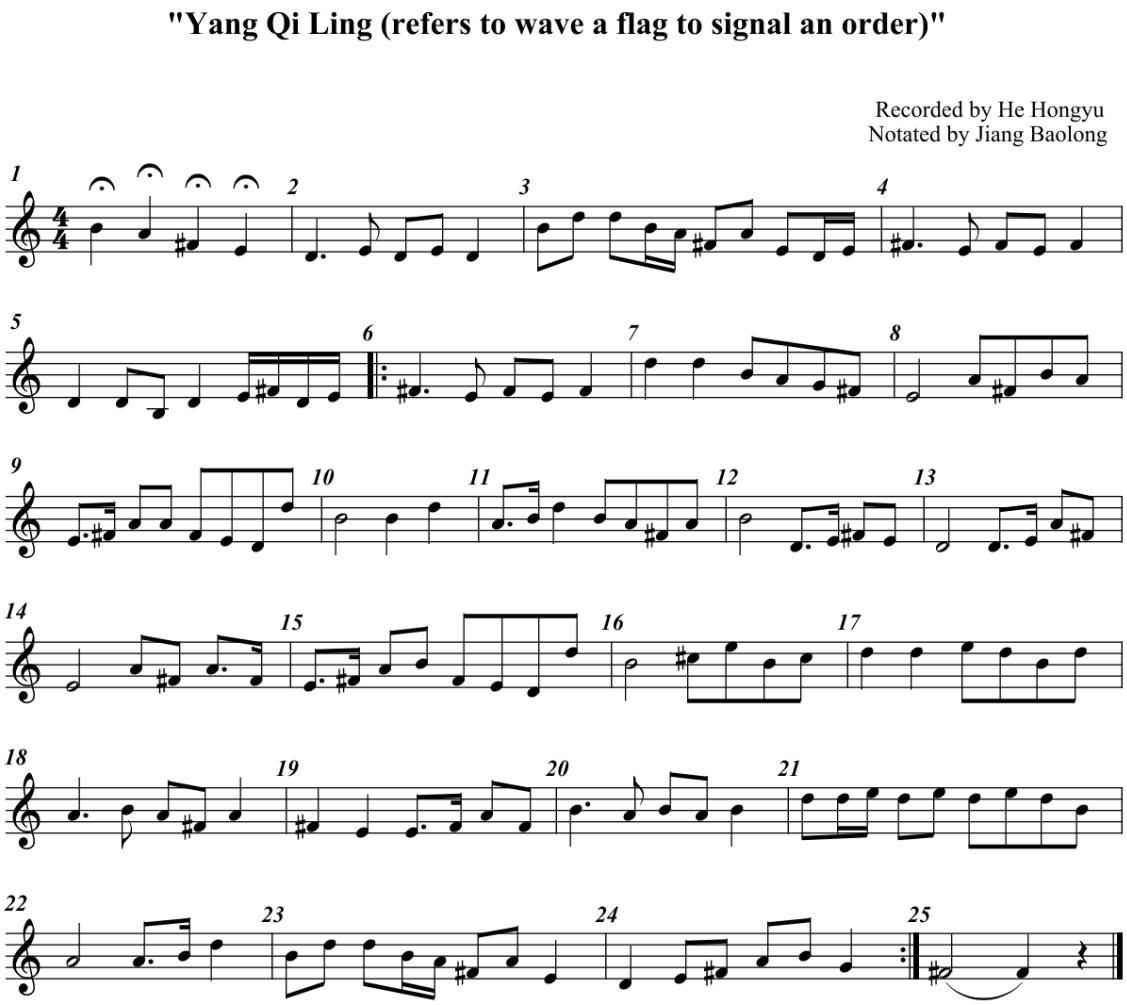


Figure 5. Music score example "Yang Qi Ling" (He Hongyu, "The Melody Rhyming", 1995)

2.3 "*Jie Jie Gao* (refers to people's expectation of a better life)"

The speed of "*Jie Jie Gao*" is mostly medium or fast. It has strong functionality and is very suitable for depicting character images. It is mostly used to show the situation of peeping, eavesdropping, drawing and writing. Its rhythm is 3/4. The melody also used in other traditional opera in Guilin, such as *Gui* opera and *Caidiao* opera. (As shown in Figure 6)

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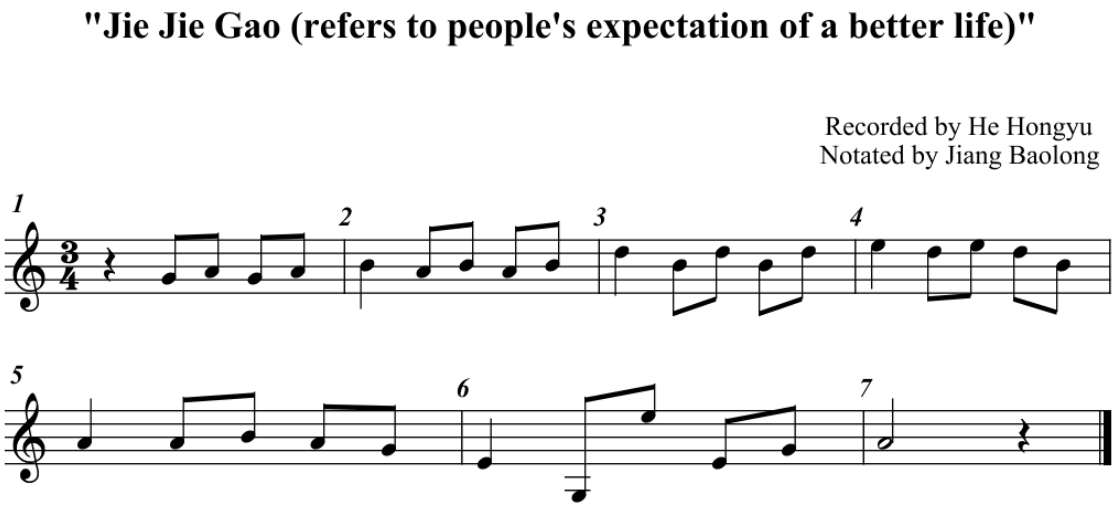


Figure 6. Music score example "Jie Jie Gao" (He Hongyu, "The Melody Rhyming", 1995)

The instrumental repertoires of *Guangxi Wenchang* have distinct characteristics and are widely used. They can vividly depict the psychology and actions of characters. These characteristics make it an indispensable part of *Guangxi Wenchang* music, so as to enhance the expressive function of *Guangxi Wenchang* music.

The music of *Guangxi Wenchang* includes lyric and exquisite "*Da Diao* ", gorgeous "*Xiao Diao*", colorful and flexible instrumental music playing tunes, plus lyric and rhyme text of *Guangxi Wenchang*. These elements show the charm of *Guangxi Wenchang* with delicate and beautiful characteristics.

3 Summary

All in all, the biggest characteristic of *Guangxi Wenchang* is that the actors wear long gown and the actresses wear cheongsam. Everyone held an instrument, and they sang as they played. The musical characteristics of *Guangxi Wenchang*： 1) The development of *Guangxi Wenchang* has absorbed rich materials of folk music and local opera, such as Ming and Qing songs, Jiangsu and Zhejiang folk songs. It combines with Guilin's local dialect and music, with unique aesthetic value and rich characteristics of repertoire. 3) There are many big jump intervals in music. In singing, the true and false voice are used together. 4) For a long time, Professional and amateur singers of *Guangxi Wenchang* have formed two perform styles. The former is gorgeous in tone, while the latter is simple and profound.

Qi Pin's paper "Guilin Feature in *Guangxi Wenchang* Art" introduces that most of the new works of *Guangxi Wenchang* are based on the landscape of Guilin, which is rich in Guilin cultural characteristics. The creators of *Guangxi Wenchang* are mostly local musicians, and their musical temperament exudes Guilin culture. "*Guangxi Wenchang*, with its tenacious vitality, has been influencing the cultural life of Guilin people. The reason is that its music style makes people feel its charm easily Because its melody is closely linked with Guilin dialect intonation, it is the representative of Guilin's unique music style." (Qi Pin, 2018)

The melodies and texts of *Guangxi Wenchang* depict the people's living conditions and attitudes in Guilin

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since Ming and Qing Dynasties from many angles and levels, and show the humanistic spirit of seeing the truth in common. Although the performers are mostly blind artists, their self-improvement attitude towards life shows their spiritual realm. Although for the professional blind artists, *Guangxi Wenchang* is mainly their means of making a living, but the cultural of *Guangxi Wenchang* has also been edifying them, making them have their own elegant demeanor and temperament. It can be said that artists transmit *Guangxi Wenchang*, and *Guangxi Wenchang* also made artists. For many years, professional and non professional performers of *Guangxi* Wenchang have jointly created a colorful cultural ecology of Guilin, and the rhythm of the inner humanistic spirit is everywhere between the texts and melodies.

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