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A Study of the Path to Universalization of the Yellow River Cantata

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Abstract: *The Yellow River Cantata was born in Yan'an in 1939 as a musical work by composer Xian Xinghai and lyricist Guang Wei Ran. From its inception to its arrival in China, it has witnessed the independence, liberation and rise of the Chinese nation, and while it has spread throughout China, it has also been repeatedly sung overseas, becoming an emotional link between overseas Chinese and their motherland, bringing spiritual comfort to them and inspiring foreign friends. The essay explores the path of internationalisation of the Yellow River Cantata from three perspectives: the formation of its cosmopolitan character, its dissemination path and its aesthetic value. The study of the road to the worldisation of the Yellow River Cantata will help to explore the course and path of the worldisation of the Yellow River Cantata and enable us to remember history, cherish peace, create the future and promote the construction of a strong socialist cultural nation with Chinese characteristics.*

Keywords: *The Yellow River Cantata; the road to cosmopolitanism; aesthetic value*

Introduction

In recent years, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made several visits to the Yellow River, on the basis of which he proposed to "promote the high-quality development of the Yellow River basin and create a good chorus of the Yellow River in the new era". The Yellow River, the mother river of China, has not only nourished the body of the Chinese people, but also impressed its vast and profound cultural energy into the hearts of every Chinese. Since its birth, the Yellow River Cantata, with its high level of artistic achievement and unique musical charm, has been sung in China and overseas where the sons of the Yellow River gather, and has gradually embarked on a path of globalisation, leaving a strong mark in the history of world literature and art.

Review of the research on the path to the cosmopolitanization of the Yellow River Cantata

The question of the "Road to Universalization" of the Yellow River Cantata has been researched by scholars since 1984, but not in depth so far. Now, along with the need for the development of China's cultural power strategy, this issue has become particularly important and valuable, and there is a need for further research.

Review of foreign studies

Vol.3 No.2 2022
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The literature was mainly searched by using "the Yellow River Cantata" and "the Yellow River Chorus" as keywords through the web of science and Google Scholar. The search was carried out through web of science and Google Scholar, and 16 relevant articles were retrieved, including Shan Bai (2008) and HuJing Hua (2015). Among them, articles on the Yellow River Piano Concerto, a musical work derived from the Yellow River Cantata, accounted for a large proportion of the research articles.

Review of domestic research

By searching the keywords of "Yellow River Cantata" in the database of Zhiwang, we found 343 related articles, including 123 core journals. The research results of Zheng Xia Bing (2003), Zhang Ji (2008), Su Mei (2013) and He Yuanyuan (2014) on the Yellow River Cantata were summarized, and it was found that most of them were about the creation, dissemination, emotional expression and aesthetic characteristics of the Yellow River Cantata, but there was a lack of research on the world of the Yellow River Cantata.

The value of the study of the worldisation of the Yellow River Cantata

1. It helps to promote the process of the "Road to Worldisation" of the Yellow River Cantata and reveal the aesthetic and cultural context behind the road to worldisation of the Yellow River Cantata.

2. It helps to summarize the path of the internationalization of the Yellow River Cantata, providing a theoretical basis, aesthetic model and practical reference for today's music creation to go out of the country and into the world, which has important humanistic value and aesthetic significance.

3. It helps to disseminate the aesthetic value of the Yellow River Cantata. The new aesthetic thought embodied in The Yellow River Cantata is a new aesthetic thought full of fighting spirit, stirring national pride and self-confidence, which has a strong sense of the times and lyricism, making today's audience feel the infinite artistic charm.

A Study of the Road to Universalization of the Yellow River Cantata

The Yellow River Cantata is national as well as global. It has successfully overcome the barriers of language and culture and completed the change of communication space to the world. At present, the Yellow River Cantata is becoming more and more cosmopolitan and has made an important impact in the world. After more than 80 years, it still shines as a classic repertoire on the art stage at home and abroad.

(1) The formation of the Yellow River Cantata's cosmopolitan character

The formation of the cosmopolitan character of the Yellow River Cantata is divided into three periods: the incipient period, the development period and the mature period.

The incipient period of the cosmopolitan character is characterised by the persistence of the national charac-

ter. Xi Jinping pointed out that "the people are the source of living water for creation, and only by being rooted in the people can creation gain an inexhaustible source." The Yellow River Cantata has been sung by generations of Chinese sons and daughters for more than 80 years and has been passed down to this day precisely because its creation is based on the broadest number of people and expresses the voice of the people. In 1938, Guang Weiran saw a scene in which boatmen on the Yellow River were shouting their trumpets in the face of the wind and waves, battling the gale in unity. Deeply moved, he used the Yellow River as his imagery and composed The Yellow River Chant to celebrate the indomitable spirit of the Chinese people, which strengthened people's will and heightened their enthusiasm for resistance to Japan.

The period of cosmopolitan character development is characterised by the insistence on the fusion of East and West. The genre of the Yellow River Cantata is a Western vocal suite, but Xian Xinghai perfectly combines Western techniques with Chinese folk music to create such an exemplary combination of East and West, which also represents a direction of development in Chinese literature and art. Xian Xinghai believed that the national can also become the worldwide. We must take the initiative to learn from advanced foreign techniques and theories, and constantly absorb new ideas to form a unique sound, which is the sound of the world.

The mature stage of cosmopolitan character is characterised by persistent development and innovation. Xian Xinghai completed the original manuscript of the Yellow River Cantata in 1939, after which it was revised in various versions, with five versions: the Yan'an version, the Moscow version, the Central Orchestra version, the piano-accompanied version and the Shanghai Orchestra version. Over the past 80 years, these versions have evolved and innovated through natural and multimedia communication, and have gone further and further along the path of worldisation.

Analysis of the path to the globalisation of the Yellow River Cantata

The path of the internationalisation of the Yellow River Cantata is the process from official promotion to the spontaneous appreciation and participation of people all over the world, a process in which the nationality of Chinese literature and art is gradually recognised in the world, and a process in which the text is gradually integrated with the literature and art of various nationalities in the world, leading to innovation, a "model example of national creativity united by music".

Path 1: Overseas public performances. The Yellow River Cantata was first performed overseas in 1941 at a university in New York, where it began its journey towards internationalisation. It has not only been widely disseminated in mainland China, but has also been increasingly performed abroad. The Yellow River Cantata has been sung in the Soviet Union, Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries.

Path 2: Chinese and foreign cultural exchange activities. In order to further explore the artistic value of the Yellow River Cantata and to carry forward the inherent spirit of the Yellow River Cantata, many cultural exchange activities and international seminars have been held at home and abroad. For example, the 2004 Overseas Chinese Choral Arts Festival was held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2004; the Sino-Russian Cultural and Artistic Exchange Week was held in China in 2019; the International Symposium on the Yellow River Cantata was held in Lanzhou in 2021, etc.

Vol.3 No.2 2022
https://doi.org/10.37420/j.cer.2021.020

Pathway 3: Public performances for important commemorative events. In addition to overseas public performances and cultural exchange activities, the Yellow River Cantata is often featured in the programmes of public performances of important commemorative events. The Yellow River Cantata is sung at various events to express patriotic enthusiasm, promote the idea of peace and commemorate the great musician Xian Xinghai. For example, the Yellow River Cantata was performed by national choirs as part of the public performances of important commemorative events such as the 60th anniversary of the victory in the War of Resistance and the 70th anniversary of the victory in the Anti-Fascist War.

The aesthetic value of the Yellow River Cantata on the road to worldisation

The Yellow River Cantata is an artistic classic of the Chinese nation, and the study of its internationalisation has important humanistic and aesthetic significance.

Firstly, it helps to disseminate the image of the Chinese voice to the outside world. The so-called "Chinese voice image" should be the part of the "voice" that best represents the professional standard and artistic characteristics of China. The Yellow River Cantata is a typical example of the "Chinese voice" of that era. The Yellow River Cantata is a testimony to the suffering of the Chinese nation and a symbol of the strength of the Chinese nation, which helps to spread the image of China's voice to the outside world.

Secondly, it helps to spread the aesthetic image of the Chinese nation to the outside world. The Yellow River Cantata is a typical representative of modern choral art and a glorious milestone in the history of modern choral art creation. Despite its decades of history, it has lost none of its charm, uniting the deep feelings of its authors, carrying the resilient national spirit of the Chinese nation, and presenting the voice of the Chinese people to the world. The aesthetic image of the Chinese nation portrayed in The Yellow River Cantata helps to present to the outside world an image of China that is at once tragic and full of conviction, resolute and resilient, spontaneously awakening while resisting.

Finally, it represents the Chinese nation's vision of going global. The Yellow River Cantata is a voice of unity, a voice of nationhood, a voice of friendship. Throughout the centuries of history, the Yellow River Cantata has been performed time and again at home and abroad, arousing the national pride of Chinese children, strengthening national self-confidence, uniting national creativity, and expressing the attachment of Chinese children at home and abroad to the culture of the Yellow River. It is a shining example of a cosmopolitan vision of peace.

In summary, the article explores the cosmopolitanisation of the Yellow River Cantata from three perspectives: the formation of its cosmopolitan character, its dissemination path and its aesthetic value. The first chapter summarises the formation of the cosmopolitan character of the Yellow River Cantata into three periods: the incipient period, the development period and the mature period. Chapter 2 describes and summarises the cosmopolitanisation of the text from three perspectives: overseas performances, cultural exchange activities between China and abroad, and performances of important commemorative events. The third chapter explores the aesthetic value of the path to the cosmopolitanisation of the Yellow River Cantata, which helps to spread the image of China's voice to the outside world, helps to present the aesthetic image of China to the outside world, and characterises the vision of the cosmopolitanisation of Chinese society: unity and friendship. The

study of the path to the cosmopolitanisation of the Yellow River Cantata will help to explore the journey and path to the cosmopolitanisation of the Yellow River Cantata, which in turn will enable us to remember history, cherish peace, create the future and promote the building of a strong socialist cultural nation with Chinese characteristics.

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