ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE TO CHINESE ART SONG: DICTION, STYLE, AND A SELECTED SURVEY

Liangjun Shi, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2023

Dissertation directed by: Professor Delores Ziegler, School of Music

A unique hybrid of poetry and music, art song has been a constant art form attracting musicians to examine, study, and research as a serious genre. Since the 1920s, Chinese composers have been exploring this combination of Chinese poetry and music in various ways. This dissertation aims to provide a pedagogical guide for the study and performance of Chinese art song.

The first chapter examines the lyric diction of Standard Chinese. The vowels and consonants in Standard Chinese are categorized into two major groups in 汉语拼音 (hànyǔ pīnyīn,

Chinese Phonetic Alphabet): 声母 (shēngmǔ, initial) and 韵母 (yùnmǔ, final). At most, a syllable in Chinese can contain an initial, a medial, a main vowel, a final consonant, and a tone. This chapter presents a new diction alphabetic system based on traditional Chinese vocal practices and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, to achieve authentic pronunciation in vocal practices.

Chapter Two is a survey of treatises on traditional Chinese voice pedagogy. It examines vocal aesthetics and practical concepts from these scholarships, providing pedagogical explanations and approaches. 字正腔圆 (zìzhèng qiāngyuán), the most important vocal principle, is achieved through the system of "head, belly, and tail" of a character. This chapter offers a detailed discussion on the pedagogy for each part of the articulation of a character and the practice of tones, supported by scholarship on these treatises. The important phenomenon 倒字 (dǎo zì) is illustrated with musical examples.

Titled "From Poetry to Song", Chapter Three traces the development of Chinese poetry and introduces the basic characteristics of each genre. With the exception of Shī-Poetry, which is to be chanted, most traditional poetic forms in Chinese literature are meant to be associated with singing and musical accompaniment, which may be considered a precursor to Chinese art song. This chapter traces the pioneers of Chinese art song and discusses their stylistic features through functional harmony, texture, compositional devices, linguistic inflection techniques, and other elements. It also examines the development of "authentic Chinese flavors" in the art song genre by discussing the tremor of the voice, traditional musical vocabulary, and the reformation of orchestral instrumentation.

The final chapter focuses on performance practices and provides an example of the Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA). It discusses vibrato choices, vowel color, glides, or-

namentation, and the use of glottal sound. Additionally, the vocal practices for the pronunciation of certain characters are mentioned.

Overall, this dissertation provides a scholarly and comprehensive guide for the study and performance of Chinese art song, encompassing aspects of lyric diction, pedagogy, poetry, musical style, and performance practices.

A PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE TO CHINESE ART SONG: DICTION, STYLE, AND A SELECTED SURVEY

by

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Dedication

To my beloved parents,

Mr. 石光旭 (Shí Guāngxù, b. 1963) and Mrs. 何燕 (Hé Yàn, b. 1966).

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude goes to my mentor, teacher, and advisor, Professor Delores Ziegler, for her caring tutelage, patience, challenge, and encouragement—thank you for being a great mentor who "could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts." I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the esteemed members of my Doctor of Musical Arts Committee. I am ever grateful for Professor Gran Wilson, Professor J. Lawrence Witzleben, Professor William Idsardi, Dr. Lester Green, and Dr. Lori Şen. Your expertise and inspiration have been invaluable in shaping this dissertation. I am truly grateful for your unwavering support and guidance.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish to express the sincerest love to my lifelong mentor Professor Carmen Balthrop (1948–2021). I performed the song you wanted to learn in my dissertation lecture recital, and I knew that you were listening to my "Mercedes-like" voice and "smiling down at my success." I have been following your legacy and passing along your brilliance and wisdom to the world, you lovely lady.

My dear mentor Dr. Scott McCoy at Ohio State once told me, "Maybe you are the one to make Americans realize the beauty of Chinese songs." It encouraged my study and research of this marvelous musical treasure. Thank you, dear doc – I have been carrying on your "parental love" and astonishing scholarship to do things that "really provide service to the voice community."

I wish to thank my loving and supportive friends both near and far– Dr. 张仕鹏 (Zhāng Shìpéng), Dr. 张泽树 (Zhāng Zéshù), Dr. Caroline Bergan, Dr. 邓予昕 (Yu-Hsin Teng), Dr. 乔何鑫 (Qiáo Héxīn), Ms. 朱茜 (Zhū Qiàn), Mr. 刘煦尧 (Liú Xùyáo), Ms. Courtney Kalbacker, Mr. VaShawn Savoy McIlwain-Lightfoot, Ms. Jessica Harika, and Ms. Kerry Holahan, for their unwavering support and encouragement. I extend my sincere appreciation to my collaborative

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Finally, I would not be able to finish the years of training and studying without my loving, selflessly supportive, and beautiful family. My grandmothers, 杜秀花 (Dù Xiùhuā, 1941–2018) and 段秀珍 (Duàn Xiùzhēn), and my grandfather 石明友 (Shí Míngyǒu, 1937–2023) have significantly influenced my positive views of life, world, and values. Most importantly, I dedicate this terminal document to my beloved parents, whose selfless upbringing, love, and encouragement has been the biggest fortune in my life: I love you more than anything!

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Introduction

Words make you think a thought.
Music makes you feel a feeling.
A song makes you feel a thought.

–Edgar Yipsel Harburg (1896–1981)

Art song, a unique hybrid of poetry and music[1], has been a constant art form attracting performers and scholars to study, examine, and research as a serious genre. The definition of the term "art song" is still not clearly agreed upon through a singular lens, but most agree that it contains the following essential elements:

1. Text drawn from poetry or prose.
2. Sung by the human voice.
3. An accompanying instrument (in Western music, it is usually the piano, a chamber ensemble, or a Western orchestra).
4. Artistic interactions between text and music through compositional devices and harmonic language, such as text-painting and mood-painting techniques.

Before discussing the term "Chinese art song", this dissertation follows the above criteria, with the exception that the accompanying instrument can be the piano, Western orchestra, Chinese folk orchestra, or a hybrid orchestra of both.

In the United States and other English-speaking countries, the major body of song literature education has generally focused on four languages: German, French, English, and Italian, with occasional explorations in Spanish. With the impact of globalization, dissertations and publica-

[1] Kimball, *Art Song: Linking Poetry to Music*, 15.

tions on Scandinavian and Slavic art songs are more frequently observed. However, art songs in Asian languages are seldom introduced in academia, mainly because of the lack of experts in these languages, for example, Mandarin Chinese.

This dissertation aims to provide a pedagogical guide for English speakers and non-native Chinese speakers to access Mandarin Chinese art songs. It contains four major sections: Standard Chinese diction and its pedagogical approach, theories of Chinese Voice Pedagogy, Chinese song literature, and performance practices and their examples.

All 汉语拼音 (hànyǔ pīnyīn, Chinese Phonetic Alphabet) in this dissertation follow the *Basic Rules of the Orthography* published by The State Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision of The People's Republic of China in 2012. This dissertation follows the following formats for terminology and phonetic alphabets:

1. For hànyǔ pīnyīn (pīnyīn) and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): pīnyīn alphabets [IPA], such as: ā [á], fāng [fáŋ], etc.
2. For original terminology in Chinese: Chinese characters (pīnyīn, English explanation). After the first appearance of this term, it will appear as pīnyīn alphabets (English explanation); in the case this term is the beginning word of a sentence, it will appear as pīnyīn alphabets (English explanation) with the first letter capitalized. For example, 颤音 (chànyīn, tremor of the voice), chànyīn (tremor of the voice), Chànyīn (tremor of the voice).
3. For publication and song titles in Chinese: 《Chinese Name》 (meaning groups in pīnyīn alphabets, English title). After the first appearance of each publication, only the English title will be used. Exceptions may occur.

4. For the first appearance of names in Chinese in: Family Name First Name (pīnyīn, dates), e.g., 周有光 (Zhōu Yǒuguāng, 1906–2017); in the case where the name was used before the pīnyīn system, it will appear as Family Name First Name (pīnyīn alphabets/original alphabets, dates), such as 赵元任 (Zhào Yuánrèn/Yuen Ren Chao, 1892–1982), etc. After the first appearance, all names will appear as Family Name First Name in pīnyīn alphabets, e.g., Zhōu Yǒuguāng, Zhào Yuánrèn, etc.
5. For Chinese characters or words: Chinese character (pīnyīn alphabets, word meaning).
6. All dynasties in Chinese history will appear as Name Dynasty (dates), such as Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–9 C.E., 25–220 C.E.), Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.), etc.

Chapter 1: Standard Chinese Lyric Diction and Pedagogical Approaches

The origin of the Chinese language can be traced back to around 1300 B.C.E or even earlier.[2] As an ancient language, it has maintained its unbroken linguistic lineage and has served as the crucial vehicle of Chinese culture until now. The development of Chinese language experienced four principal periods: Old (around B.C.E. 11–3 C.E.), Middle (around 7–10 C.E.), Modern (around 10–20 C.E.), and Contemporary (20 C.E.–present). Contemporary Chinese is classified as the Chinese language since the Republic of China era (1912–1949). It contains two categories of definition: in the broad sense, it refers to the common language of the contemporary Han tribe and all dialects in the Chinese language; in the narrow sense, it only refers to the common language of contemporary Han tribe — 普通话 (pǔtōnghuà, Standard Chinese).[3]

There are several other ways of referring to the Chinese language: in mainland China, it is called 中文 (zhōngwén, the language of China), 汉语 (hànyǔ, the language of Han tribe), or 普通话 (pǔtōnghuà, Standard Chinese, common language, or Mandarin Chinese); in Singapore, Mandarin Chinese is called 华语 (huáyǔ, the language of Huá[4]);[5] in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and

[2] Wang, 1.
[3] Ibid., 2.
[4] Note: Huá is another term for Chinese people, but often refers to those overseas.
[5] Chu and Petrus, 3.

Macao, it is called 国语 (guóyǔ, the national language).[6] According to rough estimates, there are more than 1.4 billion people using Chinese worldwide.

In order to create a system to phoneticize Standard Chinese, the system of 汉语拼音 (hànyǔ pīnyīn, scheme for Chinese phonetic alphabet) was invented by 周有光 (Zhōu Yǒuguāng, 1906–2017) in the 1950s. It is also known as the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, utilizing the Roman alphabet to transcribe Chinese pronunciation. Hànyǔ pīnyīn (pīnyīn) was officially adopted by the Chinese government in 1958, and subsequently adopted as the international standard by the International Organization for Standardization in 1982.[7]

In 1955, the Chinese Academy of Sciences defined Standard Chinese as the common language of the contemporary Han tribe, with three features:[8]

1. Phonology of the Beijing accent as standard phonology.
2. The Northern dialect as the basic dialect.
3. The grammar of canonical contemporary vernacular Chinese as standard grammar.

In 1973, the United Nations listed Chinese as one of the six official languages; the other five are Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.[9] In 2021, The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China published *A review of achievements in the development of Chinese*

[6] Wang, 4.
[7] Ibid., 21.
[8] Ibid., 4.
[9] Ibid., 3.

language (2012 – 2021): the report found that 80.72 percent of China's population uses pǔtōnghuà, the Standard Chinese.[10]

To access the genre of Chinese art song, it is necessary to study and understand the hànyǔ pīnyīn system for Chinese diction. This dissertation will examine this system and suggest an original lyric diction methodology based on traditional Chinese voice pedagogy, in hopes of creating a more accurate and efficient way to access the practice of singing.

Contemporary Chinese Language contains four general characteristics:[11]

1. Preponderance of vowels: out of ten single vowels, eight of them can form a single syllable; all thirteen compound vowels can form a single syllable; consonants do not form a syllable, with the exception that consonants "m" & "n" and "hm" & "hng" can form a syllable.
2. There is no consonant cluster: in syllables like "shuang", the "sh" and "ng" is represented by two letters to form a phone[12] in the syllable, rather than a consonant cluster.
3. Tones can differentiate the meaning of word: with the same syllable "shuang", "shuāng" and "shuǎng" possess different meanings.
4. There are only five voiced consonants: "m, n, l, r" can appear in initials; "ng" can only appear as a part of finals.

[10] "Standard Chinese," Ministry of Education of The People's Republic of China, accessed March 26, http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202210/t20221022_671530.html.

[11] Wang, 6.

[12] Note: In phonetics and linguistics, a phone is any distinct speech sound or gesture, regardless of whether the exact sound is critical to the meanings of words.

Vowels

A vowel is one of a class of speech sounds in the articulation of which the oral part of the breath channel is not blocked and is not constricted enough to cause audible friction; broadly, it is the most prominent sound in a syllable.[13] This dissertation will examine the features of each vowel in Standard Chinese and suggest their pedagogical approaches.

For the purpose of singing, there are ten vowels in Standard Chinese (vowel e [ê] can only appear in light pronunciation, and thus will not be discussed in this dissertation). Based on tongue position, they are classified into three categories:

1. Apical vowel: i [ɿ], i [ʅ]
2. Dorsal vowel: a [a], o [o], e [ɤ][14], e [e], i [i], u [u], ü [y]
3. Retroflex vowel: er [ɚ]

Scott McCoy, a renowned pedagogue, discusses a vowel as a specific timbre or spectral envelope – an acoustic signature.[15] All acoustic events are closely related to physiological mechanisms. Current Standard Chinese phonology examines Chinese vowels through three aspects: tongue height, tongue position, and lip rounding. The openness of the mouth is directly related to the height of the tongue: a smaller opening of the mouth results in a larger distance between the palate and the tongue, and thus the tongue height is tall; and vice versa. The tongue height is classified into five degrees: tall, half-tall, middle, half-low, and low. The openness of the mouth is classified into four degrees: closed, closed-mid, open-mid, and open. The tongue position is

[13] "Vowel," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vowel.

[14] Note: the phonetic symbol of [ɤ] for "e" is often seen as [ə] in other publications. This dissertation uses both phonetic symbols for the examination of vowels, and will use [ə] in later parts for clear illustration.

[15] McCoy, 67.

directly determined by the front placement and the back placement of the tongue; when the tongue is placed in the lower mouth and close to lower teeth, it is considered front position, and vice versa. Tongue position is classified into three degrees: front, central, and back.[16]

Vowels in Standard Chinese are plotted into the following vowel diagram:

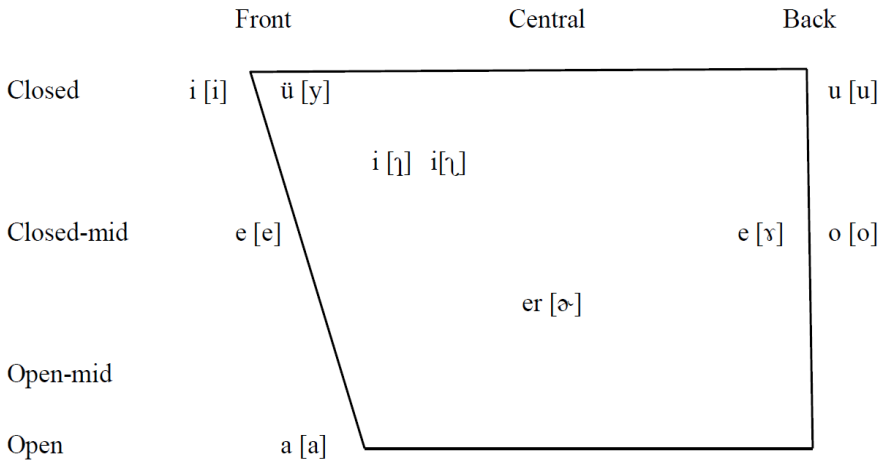


Figure 1. 1 Vowel Diagram in Standard Chinese

The following chart illustrates the physiological mechanisms, discusses pedagogical approaches, and suggests a related singing vowel of each Chinese vowel for non-native singers. Please note that the pedagogical approaches are generalized descriptions, as each person has an individual vocal instrument – follow the instructions wisely and find your optimal vowel sound in speech. In the practice of vocal art, vowels do not have an absolute shape; the formant tuning (vowel modification) technique still applies to Chinese singing. Phonetic symbols in the columns of pedagogical approach and notes generally follow the symbolic system in *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers* and *Diction for Singers* by Joan Wall.

[16] Zhu, 22.

For dorsal vowels, at all times, the tip of the tongue should not be raised up. The determining factors are mouth opening, tongue height, tongue position, and lip rounding.

Table 1. 1 Standard Chinese Dorsal Vowel Chart

	Pīnyīn/ IPA	Tongue height	Tongue position	Lip rounding	Pedagogical approach	Notes
Dorsal vowels	**a [a]**	low	front	no	Relatively large mouth opening, place the lingual surface to the low height, place the tongue to the front position, but do not round lips.	Similar to bright [a] in Italian.
	o [o]	half-tall	back	yes	Relatively moderate mouth opening, place the back of the lingual surface to the half-tall height, place the tongue to the back position, and round lips.	Similar to open [ɔ] in German and closed [o] in Italian.
	e [ɤ]	half-tall	back	no	Relatively moderate mouth opening, place the back of the lingual surface to the half-tall height, place the tongue to the back position, but do not round lips.	Similar to English [ə], with more lip spreading and back tongue position.
	i [i]	tall	front	no	Relatively small mouth opening, place the front of the lingual surface close to the hard palate, create a narrow air path in mouth with no fricative, but do not round lips.	Similar to English [i], with difference in lingual surface shape.

	u [u]	tall	back	yes	Relatively small mouth opening, place the tongue to the back position, place the back of the lingual surface close to the soft palate, create a narrow air path in mouth with no fricative, and round lips.	German closed [u]
	ü [y]	tall	front	yes	Relatively small mouth opening, place the front of the lingual surface close to the hard palate, create a narrow air path in mouth with no fricative, and round lips.	French mixed vowel [y]

Apical vowels in standard Chinese are generally new to non-native singers. The determining factors are the positions of the tip and sides of the tongue.

Table 1. 2 Standard Chinese Apical Vowel Chart

	Pīnyīn/ IPA	Tongue tip	Tongue sides	Lip rounding	Pedagogical approach
Apical vowels	**i [ɿ]**	front	In touch with upper and lower back teeth	no	Place the tongue tip to lower back of front teeth, place the sides of the tongue in touch with upper and lower back teeth, create a narrow air path with no fricative, do not round lips.
	i [ʅ]	back and up	In touch with upper and lower back teeth	no	Place the tongue tip up and back towards the middle part of the hard palate, place the tongue sides in touch with upper and lower back teeth, create a narrow air path with no fricative, do not round lips.

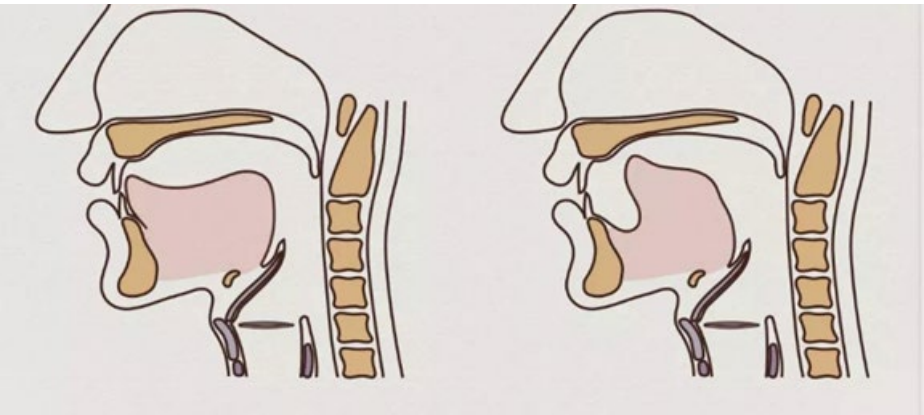


Figure 1. 2 Tongue Position for Apical Vowel i [ɿ] and i [ʅ][17]

Retroflex vowels are similar to English [ɝ], with a wider mouth opening at the onset of sound and a gradual progress to a smaller mouth opening at the offset. The determining factors for this vowel are mouth opening, tongue tip, tongue height, and tongue position.

Table 1. 3 Standard Chinese Retroflex Vowel Chart

	Pīnyīn /IPA	Tongue tip	Tongue height	Tongue position	Lip rounding	Pedagogical approach	Note
Retroflex vowel	**er [ɚ]**	curl	middle	middle	no	Open the mouth to half, place the lingual surface to middle height, curl the tongue tip towards the hard palate, do not round lip.	Similar to the English retroflex vowel [ɚ], but the mouth will gradually close during phonation.

[17] Xu Yinglun 徐英伦, "gei ni ge she wei tu 给你个舌位图" [Here is a vowel diagram], last modified April 20, 2017, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/NiF8x4xcrTMWZl6dPFQHIw. (accessed April 4, 2023)

Consonants

The consonant is a class of speech sounds characterized by constriction or closure at one or more points in the breath channel.[18] There are twenty-two consonants in Standard Chinese, with the major articulators being the lips, teeth, and tongue. Depending on the articulators and mechanisms, most consonants in Standard Chinese can be plotted into the following chart (the consonant "ng [ŋ]" is included):[19]

Table 1. 4 Standard Chinese Consonant Chart

Articulator		Articulation Manner		Pīnyīn/IPA	Pedagogical Approach
Labial	Bilabial	Plosive, voiceless	Unaspirated	**b [p]**	Similar to "b [b]" in English word "bye", but voiceless
			Aspirated	**p [pʰ]**	Same as "p [p]" in English word "pie"
		Nasal, voiced		**m [m]**	Same as "m [m]" in English word "my"
	Labiodental	Fricative, voiceless		**f [f]**	Same as "f [f]" in English word "for"
Apical	Apical-alveolar	Affricate, voiceless	Unaspirated	**z [ts]**	Same as "ds [dz]" in English word "words"
			Aspirated	**c [tsʰ]**	Same as "ts [ts]" in English word "eats"
		Fricative, voiceless		**s [s]**	Same as "s [s]" in English word "sigh"
		Plosive,	Unaspirated	**d [t]**	Similar to "d [d]" in English word "die", but voiceless

[18] "Consonant," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consonant.

[19] Zhu, 20.

	Blade-alveolar	voiceless	Aspirated	**t [tʰ]**	Same as “t [t]” in English word “tie”
		Nasal, voiced		**n [n]**	Same as “n [n]” in English word “nine”
		Lateral, voiced		**l [l]**	Same as “l [l]” in English word “lie”
	Apical postalveolar	Affricate, voiceless	Unaspirated	**zh [tʂ]**	Tongue tip touches the front hard palate, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth, air flow barely travel through.
			Aspirated	**ch [tʂʰ]**	Tongue tip touches the front hard palate, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth, air flow travel through.
		Fricative	Voiceless	**sh [ʂ]**	Tongue tip curls up but does not touch the front hard palate, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth, air flow travel through, do not vibrate vocal folds.
			Voiced	**r [ʐ]**	Tongue tip curls up but does not touch the front hard palate, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth, air flow travel through, vibrate vocal folds.
	Alveolar palatal	Affricate, voiceless	Unaspirated	**j [tɕ]**	The front part of the tongue touches the front part of the hard palate, tongue tip touches lower teeth, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth touch the alveolar region, air flow is blocked.

Dorsal			Aspirated	**q [tɕʰ]**	The front part of the tongue touches the front part of the hard palate, tongue tip touches lower teeth, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth touch the alveolar region, air flow is not blocked.
		Fricative, voiceless		**x [ɕ]**	The front part of the tongue touches the front part of the hard palate, tongue tip touches lower teeth, both sides of the tongue touch upper and lower teeth press against alveolar region, air flow is not blocked.
	Dorsal-velar	Plosive, voiceless	Unaspirated	**g [k]**	Similar as “g [g]” in English word “go”, but voiceless
			Aspirated	**k [kʰ]**	Same as “k [k]” in English word “key”
		Fricative, voiceless		**h [h]**	Same as “h [h]” in English word “hi”

The following examples illustrates the physiological manners of consonants zh [tʂ], ch [tʂʰ], sh [ʂ], r [ʐ], j [tɕ], q [tɕʰ], and x [ɕ], which may be new to non-native singers of Standard Chinese:

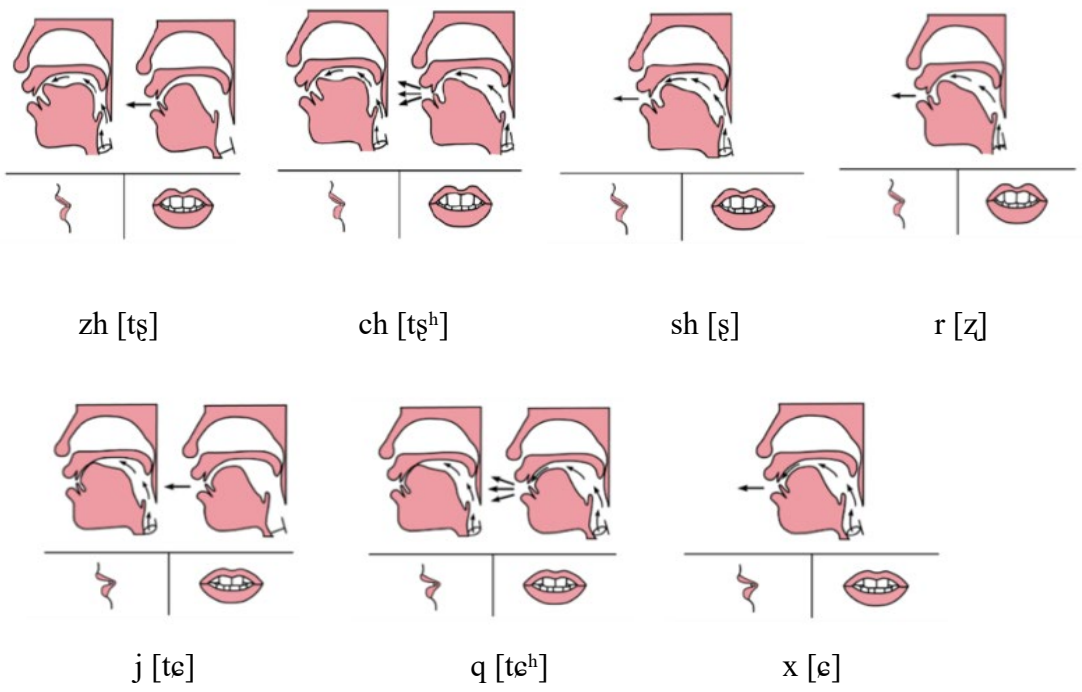


Figure 1. 3 Articulation Manners of Consonants zh [tʂ], ch [tʂʰ], sh [ʂ], r [ʐ], j [tɕ], q [tɕʰ], and x [ɕ][20]

[20] Putonghua xuexi [普通话学习] (Study Mandarin), "Fayin 发音 [Articulation]", Apple Application, April 3, 2023.

Four Tones

As discussed before, Standard Chinese is tonal. The tones are essential for the differentiation of words' meaning. There are four tones in Standard Chinese: the first (high level, [55]), the second (mid-rising, [35]), the third (low-falling-rising [214]), and the fourth tone (high-falling [51]). The descriptions in the brackets represent the inflectional trend and the relative tone value change; for example, the fourth tone (high-falling [51]) signifies that the trend in the tone is from high to low and the relative tone value change is from the fifth degree to the first degree. Linguist and scholar 赵元任 (Zhào Yuánrèn, 1892–1982) invented the Five Letter Tone System to illustrate the contours of four tones in Chinese, as demonstrated below:

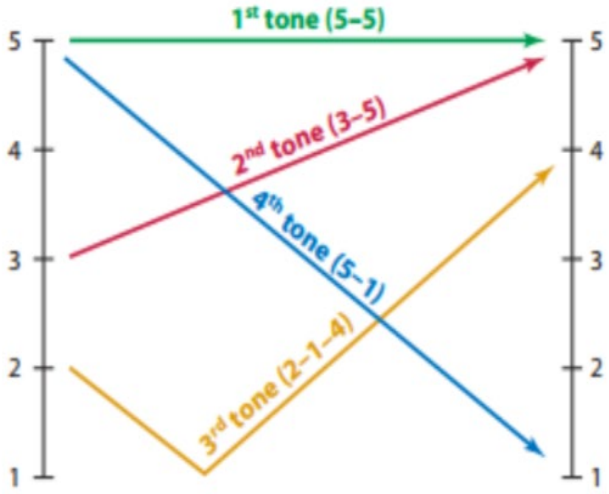


Figure 1. 4 Five Letter Tone System[21]

[21]" Praat Manuel: What is tone," Corpus-based Mandarin Pronunciation Learning System, accessed April 12, 2023, https://corpus.eduhk.hk/mandarin_pronunciation/?page_id=659.

The most important thing in the practice of these tones is not to change the vowel in any way during the tonal trajectory.

In the Pīnyīn system, four tones are represented through marks above the main vowel, as illustrated below:

Table 1. 5 Example of Four Tones in Standard Chinese

Pīnyīn	[ā]	[á]	[ǎ]	[à]
IPA	[á]	[ǎ]	[à]	[â]
Tone Value	High Level [55]	Mid-Rising [35]	Low-Falling-Rising [214]	High-Falling [51]

The phenomenon of Tonal Sandhi exists in Standard Chinese. It is defined as tonal alternations when certain characters are connected together in Standard Chinese.[22] Because two-character words are used most frequently, the following component will only discuss Tonal Sandhi for them. For other situations, please refer to the bibliography of this dissertation for further study.

Tonal Sandhi in Standard Chinese occurs most frequently on the third tone:[23]

1. "Third tone [214] + third tone [214]" will change to "second tone [35] + third tone [214]. For example, 雨水 (yǔ [214] shuǐ [214], n. rain) will change to (yú [35] shuǐ [214]), etc.

[22] Zhu, 27.
[23] Ibid., 27.

2. “Third tone [214] + non-third tones [55, 35, 51]” will change to “semi third tone [211] + original non-third tone [55, 35, 51]”. For example, 北京 (běi [214] jīng [55], Beijing) will change to (běi [211] jīng [55]), etc.

Structure of a Syllable

In Standard Chinese, a character generally contains one syllable. The basic structure of a syllable consists of three major parts: 声母 (shēngmǔ, initial), 韵母 (yùnmǔ, final), and a tone. Yùnmǔ (final) can be divided into smaller units of 韵头 (yùntóu, medial), 韵腹 (yùnfù, main vowel), and 韵尾 (yùnwěi, syllable coda). Yùnfù (main vowel) and the tone are the necessary parts to form a syllable; other parts are not.

The following diagram illustrates the structure of a syllable in Standard Chinese:

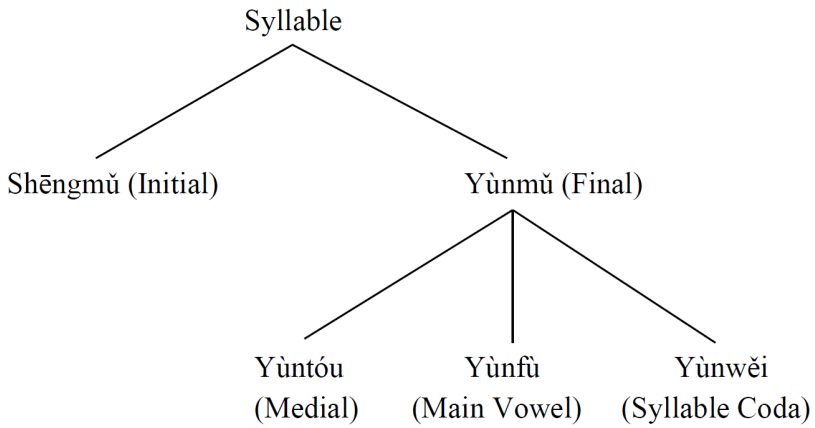


Figure 1. 5 Structure of Syllable in Standard Chinese

Shēngmǔ (Initials)

Shēngmǔ (Initials) is defined as the initial consonant before the final of a syllable. Except the “ng [ŋ]”, all consonants can function as shēngmǔ in Standard Chinese. For example, the “f [f]” in syllable “fáng [fɑ́ŋ]” is a shēngmǔ, etc.

Yùnmǔ (Finals)

Yùnmǔ (finals) is defined as the parts in a syllable after a shēngmǔ. It may be a vowel, a diphthong, or a cluster of a vowel and a consonant. Vowels in Standard Chinese have variations of pronunciation in yùnmǔ, as illustrated below. The following chart lists all yùnmǔ in Standard Chinese:[24]

Table 1. 6 Yùnmǔ (Finals) in Standard Chinese

Categories		Yùnmǔ (Finals) and IPA
Single Yùnmǔ		a [a], o [o], e [ɤ], i [i], u [u], ü [y], i [ɿ], i [ʅ], er [ɚ]
Compound Yùnmǔ	Front stressed	ai [ai], ei [ei], ao [ɑɯ], ou [oɯ]
	Middle stressed	iao [iɑu], iou [iou], uai [uai], uei [uei]
	Back stressed	ia [ia], ie [iɛ], ua [ua], uo [uo], üe [yɛ]
Nasal Yùnmǔ	With "-n"	an [an], ian [iɛn], uan [uan], üan [yɛn], en [ən], uen [uən], in [in], ün [yn]
	With "-ng"	ang [ɑŋ], iang [iɑŋ], uang [uɑŋ] eng [əŋ], ueng [uəŋ] ong [oŋ], iong [ioŋ] ing [iŋ]

[24] Zhu, 25.

Allophones of Standard Chinese Vowels

An allophone is defined as one of two or more variants of the same phoneme.[25] In Standard Chinese some vowels have allophones:[26]

1. Vowel a [a] will be pronounced as:

   [A] when appear with following vowel or consonants, e.g., ma [mA].

   [a] when appear before [i] and [n], e.g., ai [ai], an [an].

   [ɑ] when appear before [u] and [ŋ], e.g., ao [ɑu] and ang [ɑŋ].

   [ɛ] when appear between [i-n] and [y-n], e.g., ian [iɛn] and üan [yɛn].

2. Vowel o [o] will be pronounced as:

   [o] when appear after b [p] and p [p^h] or in nasal yùnmǔ (final), e.g., bo [po], po [p^ho], long [loŋ].

   [o^c] when appear as the yùnfù (main vowel) in a compound yùnmǔ (final), e.g., shuo [ʂuo^c], hou [xo^cɯ].

3. Vowel e [ɤ] will be pronounced as:

   [ɤ] when appear as single yùnmǔ (final), e.g., ke [kɤ].

   [ə] when appear as nasal yùnmǔ (final) or in a syllable with light pronunciation, e.g., heng [xəŋ], de [tə].

4. Vowel e [e] will be pronounced as:

   [e] when appear in yùnwěi (syllable coda) “ei”, e.g., fei [fei].

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[25] “Allophone,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed April 13, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allophone.

[26] Wang, 45-46.

[ɛ] when appear as yùnfù (main vowel), e.g., jie [tɕjɛ]

5. Vowel u [u] will be pronounced as:

   [w] (w-glide) when appear in yùntóu (medial), e.g., wa [wA], wan [wAn].

   [u] when appear in yùnfù (main vowel), e.g., ku [ku].

   [ɯ] (close back unrounded vowel) when appear in yùnwěi (syllable coda), e.g., hao [xɑɯ].

6. Vowel ü [y] will be pronounced as:

   [y] when appear as yùnfù (main vowel), e.g., lü [ly].

   [ɥ] (ɥ-glide) when appear as yùntóu (medial), e.g., yue [ɥɛ], yuan [ɥɛn], juan [tɕɥɛn].

7. Vowel er [ɚ] will be pronounced as:

   [ɚ] when appear in a syllable with the second tone or the third tone, e.g., er [ɚ^{35}], er [ɚ^{214}].

   [ɐr] when appear in a syllable with fourth tone, e.g., er [ɐr^{51}].

Diction and Spelling Rules

1. Yùnmǔ “i” will be pronounced as [ʅ] after shēngmǔ “zh, ch, sh, r”; it will be pronounced as [ɿ] after shēngmǔ “z, c and s.”
2. Yùnmǔ “ü” will be pronounced as [y] after shēngmǔ “j, q, x, y.” In spelling, the two dots are omitted, e.g., 雨 (yǔ, n. rain); it will be written as “ü” after the shēngmǔ “n” and “l”, e.g., 女 (nǚ, n. female).
3. Yùnmǔ [iou], [uei] and [uen] will be written as [iu], [ui] and [un] when preceded by shēngmǔ, e.g., 村 (cūn, n. village) will be written as “cūn”, instead of “cuēn.”

4. When a syllable beginning with yùnmǔ “a, o, and e” following another syllable, the syllable-dividing mark (’) will be used to separate them. For example, 皮袄 (pí’ǎo, n. fur-lined jacket) should be written as “pí’ǎo”, instead of “píǎo.”
5. When not preceded by a shēngmǔ, those yùnmǔ beginning with “i” and “u”, the “i” will be written as “y” and “u” will be written as “w”, e.g., 鸭 (yā, n. duck) will be written as “yā”, instead of “iā”; 挖 (wā, v. to dig) will be written as “wā”, instead of “uā.”
6. When not preceded by a shēngmǔ, the yùnmǔ “ü” will be written as “yu”, e.g., 云 (yún, n. cloud) will be written as “yún”, instead of “yűn.”
7. The tone mark will always be on the stressed vowel. For the exceptions of yùnmǔ “ui, iu, un” (they are simplified from “uei, iou, uen”), the tone mark will be written as “uī, iū, ūn.”

Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA)

Based on the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn system, the International Phonetic Alphabet system, and the pedagogical concepts taken from traditional Chinese singing, this dissertation proposes a new phonetic system for non-native singers to access the diction of Chinese art song – Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA).

Before introducing the new alphabet system, phonetic alphabet symbols in this dissertation will appear below:

For vowel a [a], this dissertation will use [a] (bright), [ɑ] (dark), and [ɛ].

For vowel o [o], this dissertation will use [o] (closed).

For vowel e [ɤ], this dissertation will use [ə].

For vowel e [e], this dissertation will use [e] (closed) and [ɛ] (open).

For vowels i [i], i [ɿ], i[ʅ], this dissertation will use [i], [ɿ], i [ʅ].

For vowel u [u], this dissertation will use u [u]; for the allophone of u [w], this dissertation will use [w] (glide).

For vowel ü [y], this dissertation will use ü [y]; for the allophone of ü [ɥ], this dissertation will use [ɥ] (glide and vowel).

For er [ɚ], this dissertation will use [ɚ] and [ɐr].

All phonetic symbols for consonants are: b [b], p [p], m [m], f [f], z [dz], c [ts], s [s], d [d], t [t], n [n], l [l], zh [tʂ], ch [tʂʰ], sh [ʂ], r [ʐ], j [tɕ], q [tɕʰ], x [ɕ], g [g], k [k], h [h].

For those compound and nasal yùnmǔ (final) beginning with "i", their singing phonetic alphabets will be "ia [ⁱ̯ja], ie [ⁱ̯jɛ], iao [ⁱ̯jɑu], iou [ⁱ̯jou], ian [ⁱ̯jɛn], iang [ⁱ̯jɑŋ], iong [ⁱ̯joŋ]." The symbol "ⁱ̯j" phoneticizes the yùntóu (medial) of the yùnmǔ (final), where the "ⁱ" represents to the onset of medial, the "j" represents the glide from the onset of medial to the singing vowel, and the symbol "‿" represents a smooth transition of the sound from [i] to j-glide, and eventually to the actual singing vowel. In linguistic publications, readers may see phonetic symbols indicating the same meaning, e.g., [i͡j], [ij͡], and others.[27]

For those compound and nasal yùnmǔ (final) beginning with "u", their singing phonetic alphabets will be "ua [ᵘ̯wa], uo [ᵘ̯wo], uai [ᵘ̯wai], uei [ᵘ̯wei], uan [ᵘ̯wan], uang [ᵘ̯wɑŋ], ueng [ᵘ̯wəŋ]". The symbol "ᵘ̯w" refers to the yùntóu (medial) of the yùnmǔ (final), where the "ᵘ" represents to the onset of medial, the "w" represents the glide from the onset of medial to the sing-

[27] This dissertation uses the symbols [ⁱ̯j], [ᵘ̯w], and [ᵢ̯ɥ] to illustrate and emphasize that the part of [i] represents the short onset and the part of [j] represents the major phonation process.

ing vowel, and the symbol "‿" represents a smooth transition of the sound from [u] to w-glide, and eventually to the actual singing vowel. In linguistic publications, readers may see phonetic symbols indicating the same meaning, e.g., [u͡w], [u‿w], and others.

For those compound and nasal yùnmǔ (final) beginning with "ü", their singing phonetic alphabets will be "ü [ʲ˪ɥ], ün [ʲ˪ɥn], üe [ʲ˪ɥɛ], üan [ʲ˪ɥɛn]." The symbol "ʲ˪ɥ" refers to the Yùntóu (medial) of the yùnmǔ (final), where the [ʲ] represents to the onset of medial, the [ɥ] represents the glide from the onset of medial to the singing vowel, and the symbol [‿] represents a smooth transition of the sound from [i] to ɥ-glide, and eventually to the actual singing vowel. For "ü [ʲ˪ɥ], ün [ʲ˪ɥn]", the actual singing vowel is [ɥ]. In linguistic publications, readers may see phonetic symbols indicating the same meaning, e.g., [i͡ɥ], [i‿ɥ], and others.

Based on their articulative manners, all yùnmǔ (finals) are classified into four categories as below:

Table 1. 7 Four Categories of Yùnmǔ (Finals) in Standard Chinese

A: 开口呼 (kāikǒu hū, open-mouth finals) Yùnmǔ (finals) without Yùntóu (medial)	a [a], o [o], e [ə], i [ɿ], i [ʅ], er [ɚ]/[ɐr], ai [ai], ei [ei], ao [ɑu], ou [ou], an [an], en [ən], ang [ɑŋ], eng [əŋ]
B: 齐齿呼 (qíchǐ hū, close-teeth finals) Yùnmǔ (finals) with Yùntóu (medial) [i]	i [i], ia [ʲ˪ja], ie [ʲ˪jɛ], iao [ʲ˪jɑu], iou [ʲ˪jou], ian [ʲ˪jɛn], iang [ʲ˪jɑŋ], iong [ʲ˪joŋ]
C: 合口呼 (hékǒu hū, close-mouth finals) Yùnmǔ (finals) with Yùntóu (medial) [u]	u [u], ua [ᵘ˪wa], uo [ᵘ˪wo], uai [ᵘ˪wai], uei [ᵘ˪wei], uan [ᵘ˪wan], uang [ᵘ˪wɑŋ], ueng [ᵘ˪wəŋ]
D: 撮口呼 (cuōkǒu hū, tense-lip finals) Yùnmǔ (finals) with Yùntóu (medial) [y]	ü [ʲ˪ɥ], ün [ʲ˪ɥn], üe [ʲ˪ɥɛ], üan [ʲ˪ɥɛn]

The following chart lists all combinations of initials and finals in Chinese lyric diction:

Table 1. 8 Consonants and Four Categories of Yùnmǔ (Finals) in Standard Chinese

Shēngmǔ (Initial)	**Yùnmǔ (Final)**
b [b], p [p], m [m]	Category A, Category B, and u [u].
f [f]	Category A, and u [u]
d [d], t [t]	Category A, Category B, Category C
n [n], l [l]	Category A, Category B, Category C, Category D
g [g], k [k], h [h]	Category A, Category C
j [tɕ], q [tɕʰ], x [ɕ]	Category B, Category D
zh [tʂ], ch [tʂʰ], sh [ʂ], r [ʐ]	Category A, Category C
z [dz], c [ts], s [s]	Category A, Category C

Finally, all tones will be marked on the main singing vowel. For example, within Category A, “lai [lai]” will be marked with four tones as “[lāi], [lái], [lǎi], [lài]”, and so on; in Category B, “jiang [tɕʲjɑŋ]” will be marked with four tones as “[tɕʲjɑ̄ŋ] [tɕʲjɑ́ŋ] [tɕʲjɑ̌ŋ] [tɕʲjɑ̀ŋ]”, and so on; in Category C, “shuang [ʂᵘwɑŋ]” will be marked with four tones as “[ʂᵘwɑ̄ŋ] [ʂᵘwɑ́ŋ] [ʂᵘwɑ̌ŋ] [ʂᵘwɑ̀ŋ]”, and so on; in Category D, “xun [ɕʲ˕ɥn]” (the two dots of ü are omitted) will be marked as “[ɕʲ˕ɥ̄n] [ɕʲ˕ɥ́n] [ɕʲ˕ɥ̌n] [ɕʲ˕ɥ̀n]”, and so on (in this case, the [ɥ] functions as both a glide and a vowel).

In this way, singers will be able to accurately identify the initial, medial, main vowel, and syllable coda, which can contribute to a more efficient diction approach for authentic singing in Standard Chinese.

Further Consideration: Complexity in Diction

Chinese is a hierographic and tonal language. The pattern, pronunciation, and tone function together to determine the meaning of a character. This leads to a few complexities in lyric diction. Fortunately, most of the time, Standard Chinese is monosyllabic – syllabification is no longer a process. The following situation illustrates one of the complexities: with the same character pattern, a character may have different tones and different meanings:

Table 1. 9 Same Character with Different Tones in Standard Chinese

Word	好	好
Pīnyīn	[hǎo]	[hào]
Singing PA	[hǎu]	[hàu]
Meaning	adj., good	n., hobby

The best solution is to study the language. Non-native singers are encouraged to consult with the dictionary and with native speakers to identify the correct pronunciation.

Chapter 2: Theories and Approaches in Traditional Chinese Voice Pedagogy

The Origin

The original form of traditional Chinese vocal music was an organic combination of singing, dance, and instrumental music. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770–481/403 B.C.E) and the Warring States Period (475/403–221 B.C.E.), significant changes gradually occurred in the two major categories of Chinese music – 雅乐 (yǎyuè, court music) and 俗乐 (súyuè, folk music): court music declined, while folk music prospered.

Along with the ever-growing prosperity of Chinese folk music since the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Chinese vocal music evolved into various genres. Between the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.–9 C.E., 25–220 C.E.) and the Tang Dynasty (618– 907 C.E.), the genres of Chinese vocal music developed into diversified categories, such as 歌 (gē, song), 徒歌 (túgē, acapella song), 琴歌 (qíngē, song with the Qín), 乐府 (yuèfǔ, folk song based on a poem), 大曲 (dàqǔ, singing and dancing music in large form with traditional folk orchestra), 相和歌 (xiānghègē, singing and dancing music based on folk music), and 歌舞戏 (gēwǔxì, singing and dancing drama).[28] Most writings on singing performance practice and critique were documented in scattered publications and poems.

[28] Zhu, "A Tentative Research on the Scientific Elements of China Bel Canto", chapter 2, 2.

With continual developments in folk music, Chinese theatrical music started to reach its peak in the Song Dynasty (960–1276 C.E.) and the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.). More mature and popular forms of vocal music arose, such as 曲子 (qǔzi, tune with fixed melodic and rhythmic patterns before the insertion of poetic lyrics), 唱赚 (chàngzhuàn, vocal music with materials from folk music and traditional music), and 说唱艺术 (shuōchàng, musical narrative art), and others.

Publications on Traditional Chinese Voice Pedagogy

During these periods, publications on systematic singing pedagogy and performance practices appeared.《唱论》(Chàng Lùn, *A Treatise on Vocal Music*) by 燕南芝庵 (Yānnánzhī'ān[29], before 1341) is thought to be the earliest existing publication on Chinese voice pedagogy and singing practices.[30] It contains systematic and comprehensive information on aesthetic choices, performance practices, voice pedagogy (articulation, timbre choices, phrasing, basic physiology and vocal mechanism, etc.), and style concerns. Another pioneering publication《中原音韵》(Zhōngyuán Yīnyùn, *Phonology of the Central Plains*) by 周德清 (Zhōu Déqīng, Yuan Dynasty, 1277–1365) is considered the foundation of phonological studies of the central plains region of China. This publication contributed to the summarization of the current phonology of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.), and traced the transition and development of Chinese phonology

[29] Note: Yānnánzhī'ān is a pseudonym. The real name of the author is unknown.
[30] Zhu, chapter 2, 2.

from Middle Chinese to Modern Chinese.[31] Additionally, the fine literary scholarship in this book has been appreciated among scholars and thus passed along through generations.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.) and Qing Dynasty (1636–1912 C.E.), musicians and scholars extensively collected folk songs; traditional Chinese opera flourished in the lives of the court and the people. Drawing elements from folk songs, performance practices in traditional Chinese opera merged into a comprehensive and organic unity, especially in the aspects of articulation, phrasing, and timbre preference. As a result, traditional Chinese opera developed into two major categories: the 雅部 (yǎbù, the Authentic Opera)—昆曲 (kūnqǔ, the Kūnqǔ Opera), and the 花部 (huābù, the Folk Opera).[32] Along with the robustness of singing practices in traditional Chinese vocal music, literature on theories of singing practices reached an unprecedented peak in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Important scholarship on vocal music and techniques includes the following examples:

- 《曲律》(Qǔ Lǜ, *Of Operas*) by 魏良辅 (Wèi Liángfǔ, Ming Dynasty, 1489–1566)
- 《乐府传声》(Yuèfǔ Chuánshēng, *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama*) by 徐大椿 (Xú Dàchūn, Qing Dynasty, 1693–1771)
- 《弦索辩讹》(Xiánsuǒ Biàn'É, *Pronunciations and Mouth Methods for Operatic Singers with a Stringed Instrument Accompaniment*) and《曲度须知》(Qǔdù Xūzhī, *An Essential Guidebook to Operatic Music*) by 沈宠绥 (Shěn Chǒngsuí, Ming Dynasty, ? –1645?)

[31] "Phonology of the Central Plains," Encyclopedia of China, accessed Feb. 16, 2023, https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=42252&Type=bkzyb&SubID=61303.

[32] Zhu, "A Tentative Research on the Scientific Elements of China Bel Canto", 2.

- 《顾误录》(Gù Wù Lù, *Discussions on Music of Ancient Drama*) by 王德晖 (Wáng Déhuī, Qing Dynasty, unknown) and 徐沅澄 (Xú Yuánchéng, Qing Dynasty, unknown)
- 《闲情偶寄》(Xiánqíng Ǒujì, *Occasional Notes with Leisure Motions*) by 李渔 (Lǐ Yú, late Ming to early Qing Dynasty, 1611–1680).[33]

Major Aesthetics in Traditional Chinese Vocal Art

The extensive writings on theories and practices of traditional Chinese vocal music from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties shaped the foundational aesthetics of Chinese singing, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Emphases on articulation ("行腔咬字"), vocal timbre ("音色"), and style and atmosphere ("风格氛围") in the delivery of vocal art.[34]
2. Emphases on legato phrasing, consistent vocal styles, and variations during the completion of a vocal piece. ("曲情、曲趣整体上的连贯和连贯中的变化"[35]).
3. Particular attention to the details and tastes in the delivery of vocal arts ("音乐细节之品味"[36]).

Reasonably, the essential element of these aesthetics in Chinese vocal art is the Chinese language. Just as crucial as the thorough understanding of poetry in Western art songs, e.g., German

[33] Ibid., 2.
[34] Ibid., 7.
[35] Ibid., 7.
[36] Ibid., 7.

poetry to Lied, French poetry to Mélodie, etc., an in-depth comprehension of Chinese poetry contributes to the authentic flavors and styles for the accomplishment of a Chinese art song.

Throughout the nearly seven-hundred years of exploration, most writings on traditional Chinese vocal art mention the term: 腔 (qiāng). It is possibly extracted from the term 字正腔圆 (zìzhèng qiāngyuán, translation: a clear and authentic articulation with a mellow and full vocal tone[37]). This is a comprehensive concept with multiple aspects. The first part of this term 字正 (zìzhèng) refers to a clear and authentic articulation and delivery of the text, and its definition has been generally agreed upon. However, the second part 腔圆 (qiāngyuán) has not yet been defined. The translation "a mellow and full vocal tone" describes it with two adjectives — "mellow" and "full", which are relatively subjective perceptions and may vary depending on the listening aesthetics and cultural differences. Based on context, the term 腔 (qiāng) generally contains two layers of meanings:

1. Pronunciation and intonation ("语音语调"[38])
2. Melody in the music, which naturally contains variations of pitch and rhythm ("音乐旋律，旋律自然包括了音之高低变化和节奏之徐疾变化"[39]).

Therefore, in the context of singing, we may reason that the concept of qiāngyuán refers to comprehensive aspects in vocal timbre, intonation, nuances in the singing sound, and the fulfillment of the pronunciation of a character, a word, and a phrase.

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[37] Zhang, "Exploring Chinese Vocal Art Through the Lens of an Academician: A Guide to Performing Modern Chinese Art Songs". *Journal of Singing* 79 no.3 (January/February 2023): 328.

[38] Zhu, 8.

[39] Ibid., 8.

Scholarships on traditional Chinese voice pedagogy persistently address the cruciality of authentic articulation of Chinese language. For example, Yānnánzhī'ān (before 1341) points out that "precise deliveries of text and phrasing rely on the authentic articulation" ("字真，句笃，依腔"[40]) in *A Treatise on Vocal Music*. In *Of Opera*, Wèi Liángfǔ (1489–1566) states that "there are three key elements in a vocal piece: clear articulation is the first, pure singing tone is the second, precise rhythm is the third" ("曲有三绝，字清为一绝，腔纯为二绝，板正为三绝"[41]). In *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama*, Xú Dàchūn (1693–1771) further argues that "it is said in classics that '…if the singing sound cannot be distinguished, how can it be possible to accompany the singer with other instruments?'" ("人声不可辩，虽吕律何以和之?"[42]). In *Occasional Notes with Leisure Motions*, Lǐ Yú (1611–1680) even satirized the unclear delivery of text:

> "Those who study the craft of singing, no matter smart or clumsy, one only need to see if this person has a mouth or not; those who listen to the art of operas, before discussing the nuances in singing, one must distinguish if this person can clearly articulate the text or not. The text is from the singer's mouth, thus if there are words, there is a mouth. If the singer's words are not clear, that means this person only has a mouth for talking, not a mouth for singing. What's the difference between this singer and a dumb person?"
>
> "学唱之人，无论巧拙，只看有口无口；听曲之人，慢讲粗细，先问有字无字。字从口出，有字就有口。如出口不分明，是说话有口，唱曲无口，与哑人何异哉?"[43]

[40] Chinese National Academy of Arts additional board 中国戏曲研究院编, zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng 中国古典戏曲论著集成 [Collections of Treatises on Traditional Chinese Operas] (Beijing: China Theatre Press, 1959), book 1, 159.

[41] Ibid., book 5, 7.

[42] Ibid., book 5, 153.

[43] Ibid., book 4, 101.

Here, all treatises are emphasizing the most important aesthetics in Chinese singing: 字正腔圆 (zìzhèng qiāngyuán). It is the responsibility of the singer and pedagogue to understand this crucial concept while accessing Chinese art song.

Concepts in Traditional Chinese Vocal Arts and Pedagogical Approach

Articulation: Zìzhèng Qiāngyuán via Zìtóu, Zìfù, and Zìwěi

To achieve the concept of zìzhèng (clear and authentic articulation and delivery of the text), two concepts are extensively discussed in *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama* by Xú Dàchūn: 五音 (wǔyīn, five categories of initials) and 四呼 (sìhū, four categories of finals). Both are the ancestors of shēngmǔ and yùnmǔ, which are extensively discussed in the previous chapter. The major articulators of wǔyīn (five categories of initials) are the larynx, tongue, back teeth, front teeth, and lips; the sìhū (four categories of finals) are the open (without medial), with medial [i], with medial [u], and with medial [y]. To emphasize the cruciality of both concepts, Xú Dàchūn writes:

> "If one wants to have authentic initials, but fail to use the throat, back teeth, front teeth, or lips with the right manners, his articulations must be inaccurate; if one wants to have authentic finals without studying the four categories of them, his vowels and other final parts must be unclear."
>
> "欲正五音，而不于喉舌齿牙唇处着力，则其音必不真；欲准四呼，而不习开齐撮合之势，则其呼必不清。"[44]

[44] Ibid., book 7, 170-71.

Succeeding the concept of zìzhèng, Xú Dàchūn (1693–1771) continues to introduce the pedagogical system to achieve authentic diction: the head, belly, and tail of the pronunciation for a character:

> "The pronunciation of a character must contain the head, belly, and the tail. One must complete each part and then move on to another character, thus, every word will be clear."
>
> "一字之音，必有首腹尾，必首腹尾音已尽，然后再出一字，则字字清楚。"[45]

Before Xú Dàchūn, Shěn Chǒngsuí (? –1645?) also discusses on this approach in *An Essential Guidebook to Operatic Music*:

> "A character must be completed through the accurate pronunciation of the head, belly, and tail of the sound."
>
> "字则头腹尾音之必均。"[46]

The concept of the "head, belly, and tail" of a character is an analogical system to divide the pronunciation of a character into three major parts: 字头 (zìtóu, the head of the character or syllable onset), 字腹 (zìfù, the belly of the character or syllable nucleus), and 字尾 (zìwěi, the tail of the character or syllable ending). In other words, zìtóu (syllable onset) consists of all phonemes before the main vowel, zìfù (syllable nucleus) is the main vowel, and zìwěi (syllable ending) refers to the phoneme after the main vowel. As discussed before, the main vowel and the tone are the necessary parts to form a syllable, therefore, zìfù (syllable nucleus) and the tone are the necessary parts of the "head-belly-tail" system.

[45] Ibid., book 7, 159.
[46] Ibid., book 5, 198.

The following diagraph illustrates this system:

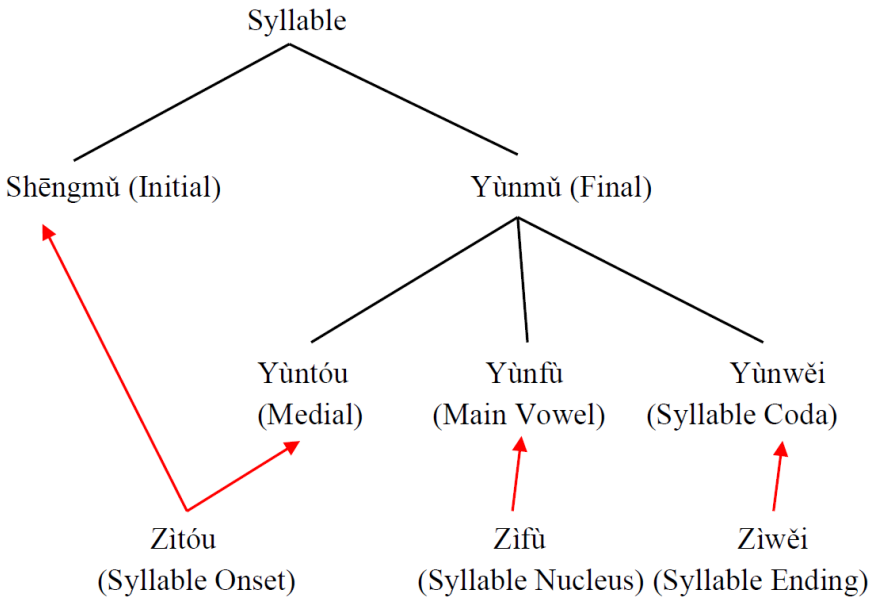


Figure 2. 1 Structure of Zìtóu, Zìfù, and Zìfù

One may find that, in a syllable, the zìtóu (syllable onset) can be the initial consonant, or a combination of the initial consonant and the medial. Zìfù (syllable nucleus) is always the yùnfù (main vowel). Zìwěi (syllable ending) can be the final consonant or the unstressed vowel in a diphthong, which is the same concept as yùnwěi (syllable coda). In each syllable, the tone should be reflected through the yùntóu (medial) part of zìtóu (syllable onset), zìfù (syllable nucleus) and zìwěi (syllable ending), when all appear.

Approaches to Zìtóu, Zìfù, and Zìwěi

To achieve the goal of authentic articulation in singing, zìtóu (syllable onset) must be clear and accurate, zìfù (syllable nucleus) must be elongated and stressed, zìwěi (syllable ending) should always be shorter and lighter than zìfù (syllable nucleus) but relatively longer than zìtóu (syllable onset). This dissertation proposes a pedagogical proportion for each part for practice: out of the full duration of a character, its zìtóu (syllable onset) possesses about 20/100, zìfù (syllable nucleus) possesses about 50/100, and zìwěi (syllable ending) possesses about 30/100. One may argue why they cannot be 15/100, 50/100, and 35/100 – there is no answer to this question, however, the best way is to try each method out, and find the individual optimal ratio. However, the general principle should be followed, unless the articulation manner is an artistic choice.

In the foreword of *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama*, Xú Dàchūn (1693–1771) summarizes the singing approaches for each part of a syllable as:[47]

- for zìtóu (syllable onset): 出声 (chūshēng, sound beginning).
- for zìfù (syllable nucleus): 转声 (zhuǎnshēng, sound transition) and 归韵 (guīyùn, vowel clarification).
- for zìwěi (syllable ending): 收声 (shōushēng, sound finishing).

The technique for chūshēng (sound beginning) is phoneticized in Chapter One with four categories of zìtóu to pay attention (syllable onset) to: without medial, with medial [ʲj], with medial [ʷw], and with medial [ˡq]. To further summarize, they can be classified into two larger categories: with medial and without medial.

[47] Zhu, chapter 2, 4-5.

A syllable must contain zìfù (syllable nucleus); zìtóu (syllable onset) and zìwěi (syllable ending) may or may not exist. For syllables without medial, the zìtóu (syllable onset) can be the initial consonant, when it appears. For syllables with medial, the zìtóu (syllable onset) can be the combination of the initial consonant and the medial; in the case where a syllable does not contain an initial consonant, zìtóu (syllable onset) will be the medial.

The approach for clear chūshēng (sound beginning) is to start with the vowel of the medial onset and slide into the main vowel with the correct glide sound; in the case where there is only an initial consonant, chūshēng (sound beginning) should begin the consonant with an accurate and quick manner (similar to Western singing technique: the consonant is in the shape of the following vowel). Three categories of zìtóu are illustrated below with examples:

Table 2. 1 Three Categories of Zìtóu (Syllable Onset)

Categories of zìtóu (Syllable Onset)	Example
Initial Consonant	**sh**ā [**ʂ**ā]
Initial Medial	**y**a [**ʲ**jā]
Initial Consonant + Medial	**xi**a [**ɕʲ**jā]

When approaching the zìfù (main vowel), there are two major techniques: zhuǎnshēng (sound transition) and guīyùn (vowel clarification). Sound transition is a natural process from the zìtóu (syllable onset) to the zìfù (main vowel), and this technique is related to the linguistic inflections in the syllable. The tone in a syllable starts when the yùnmǔ (final) appears. If there is a

yùntóu (medial), the tone starts on it; if there is no medial, the tone starts on the yùnfù (main vowel).

Most pedagogues in traditional Chinese voice pedagogy agree that the foremost concept is guīyùn (vowel clarification). The theoretical evidence is solid—Shěn Chǒngsuí (? –1645?) writes in *An Essential Guidebook to Operatic Music*:

> "The bright and clear singing timbre fully relies on the sound of zìfù (main vowel) … Thus, the zìfù (main vowel) shall not be abandoned!"
>
> "声调爽朗，全系腹音…是字腹诚不可废也！"[48]

In *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama*, Xú Dàchūn (1693–1771) further extended with an analogy:

> "With the enunciation of four categories of yùnmǔ (finals) and tone, the face of the word appeared clearly. However, for those who do not know the approach to vowel clarification, with the elongation of their sound, it still sounds like a woodwind instrument. Therefore, vowel clarification is the foremost."
>
> "四声四呼清，则出口之字面已正，而不知归韵之法，则引长之字面，仍与箫管同，故尤以归韵为第一。"[49]

Hence, the main vowel in Chinese singing is the most important component when accessing the lyric diction system from this dissertation. The general technique is similar to the approach from Western voice pedagogy: sing on the vowel with necessary formant tuning (vowel modification) to achieve the individual's optimal sound. However, one difference ought to be addressed

[48] Ibid., book 5, 222.
[49] Ibid., book 7, 169.

for those nasal yùnmǔ with “ng”, e.g., “zhong [tʂōŋ]. The approach from *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama* instructs:

> “Syllables such as ‘dong’ or ‘zhong’, one should produce the sound from the throat, and let the air travel through the soft palate into the nasal cavity, in order to resonate the sound half in the nose and half in the mouth. In this way, the guīyùn (vowel clarification) will be done authentically.”
>
> “如东钟字，则使其声出喉中，气从上颚鼻窍中过，令其声半入鼻中，半出口外，则东钟归韵矣。”[50]

This approach may be compared to the French nasal vowel [õ] with a following [ŋ] sound, but the nasality in French is much more obvious than in Standard Chinese.

The technique of guīyùn (vowel clarification) is associated with the contour of the tones in Standard Chinese. As discussed, the tone starts with the appearance of the yùntóu (medial), and the process of guīyùn (vowel clarification) should also reflect the tonal trajectory while singing towards the most resonant vowel shape. This is usually taken into consideration by the composer through the melodic contour. In the case where the tonal contour is composed against the linguistic features, especially the tonal trajectory, the phenomenon 倒字 (dǎo zì) appears, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

At last, Xú Dàchūn (1693–1771) expands on the principle for guīyùn (vowel clarification):

> “… the center vowel remains unified at all times, so the audience can immediately identify the word after the onset of syllable.”
>
> “…本音始终一线，听者即从出字之后，骤聆其音，亦凿凿然知为某字也。”[51]

[50] Ibid., book 7, 169.
[51] Ibid., book 7, 169.

This principle directly relates to the most important concept, zìzhèng qiāngyuán. Because Standard Chinese is generally monosyllabic, if the singer modifies the vowel to a certain degree that the audience cannot identify which vowel the sound is going to, the words will be distorted. As a result, the singing is not considered authentic.

The technique for zìwěi (syllable ending) is shōushēng (sound finishing), which is required for all syllables. Zìwěi (syllable ending) is the same concept as yùnwěi (syllable coda). A syllable may or may not contain zìwěi (syllable ending); when zìwěi exists, it can be the final consonant or the unstressed vowel in a diphthong. In the case that zìwěi exists, the process of shōushēng (sound finishing) is suggested to occupy about 30/100 of the total duration of pronunciation of a syllable with a lighter texture than the zìfù (main vowel); in the case that zìwěi (syllable ending) does not exist, the release of the main vowel should reflect the process of shōushēng (sound finishing) – a gradual release of the vowel sound may be a good solution. This is partially the reason why the "shadow vowel" (hard release of a consonant sound) is seldom explored in Chinese singing, as it adds an extra vowel sound to the syllable, and it breaks the unity of the enunciation of a character.

Discussions on Music of Ancient Drama examined two common mistakes of shōushēng (sound finishing) in Chinese singing: wrong sound and disappearance of sound.[52]

> "It has been frequently observed that singers would sing with accurate zìtóu (syllable onset), however, when comes to the zìfù (main vowel), they would show off the resonant sound with no control to a certain degree where they could not return to the zìwěi (syllable ending) precisely. As a result, the process of shōushēng (sound finishing) becomes loose, and the zìwěi (syllable ending) becomes unrecognizable. This is the biggest problem in singing…"

[52] Zhu, chapter 2, 2.

"常有出字不舛误，及至行腔，自恃喉音清亮，纵情使去，遂至莫往返，收音时信口所之，不知念成何字。此为曲中第一大病…"[53]

"If the singer only sings a syllable without an ending, or sings a syllable with an open mouth that does not finish the sound, when it comes to the audiences, isn't it a disaster?"

"如出而不收，张而不闭，欲其入听，不亦难乎？"[54]

In conclusion, an authentic fulfillment of a syllable in Chinese singing should contain three major processes: chūshēng (sound beginning) for zìtóu (syllable onset), zhuǎnshēng (sound transition) and guīyùn (vowel clarification) for zìfù (syllable nucleus), and shōushēng (sound finishing) for zìwěi (syllable ending). Except for the technique of chūshēng (sound beginning), others are associated with the tonal trajectory of a syllable. For singing in Standard Chinese, it is encouraged to enunciate syllables with these techniques until all of them become a unity where all sounds transition smoothly. The terminal goal is to achieve the "legato" of Chinese "Bel Canto."

Tonal Reflection and the Phenomenon of Dǎozì

As previously introduced, Chinese is a tonal language. In Standard Chinese, most of the time, the essential parts of a syllable are the main vowel and the tone. Traditional Chinese operas and songs are composed based on the linguistic tonal trajectory of the form of poetry or prose. Therefore, the melodic contour in traditional Chinese operas and songs generally do not move against the linguistic tones.

Discussions on Music of Ancient Drama and *A Book on the Singing Techniques of Chinese Drama* illustrated the pedagogical singing methods for four tones, as summarized below:[55]

[53]Chinese National Academy of Arts additional board 中国戏曲研究院编, zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng 中国古典戏曲论著集成 [Collections of Treatises on Traditional Chinese Operas] (Beijing: China Theatre Press, 1959)., book 9, 57.

[54] Ibid., book 9, 57.

1. For the first tone, the singing sound must be steady and even. (“阴平必须平唱、直唱”[56])
2. For the second tone, the singing sound should start from slightly below the first tone and go up to finish the sound. (“阳平由低转高，阴出阳收”[57])
3. For the third tone, during the mouth opening process, the sound should be approached similarly to the first tone, when it comes to the halfway through the zìtóu (syllable onset), the tone should go up. (“方开口时，须略似平声，字头半吐，即向上一挑”[58])
4. For the fourth tone, the singing sound should start from a high pitch and fall down to a low pitch. (“去声宜高唱”[59])

These singing approaches can be illustrated with an example of the syllable “xiang” with four different tones, please note that they are different from speech pronunciation –

- [ɕʲjɑ̄ŋ]: the first tone [55] steadily and evenly starts on the [ʲi] and passes through the glide [j], sustains the main vowel [ɑ], and finishes with the consonant [ŋ] without pitch change.
- [ɕʲjɑ́ŋ]: the second tone [35] starts on the [ʲi], then passes through the glide [j] and the main vowel [ɑ] with a quick pitch raising, and finishes with the consonant [ŋ] with the sliding to the highest point.

55 Zhu, “A Tentative Study,” 6.

56 Chinese National Academy of Arts additional board 中国戏曲研究院编, zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng 中国古典戏曲论著集成 [Collections of Treatises on Traditional Chinese Operas] (Beijing: China Theatre Press, 1959), book 9, 37.

57 Ibid., book 9, 37.

58 Ibid., book 7, 165.

59 Ibid., book 9, 37.

- [ɛ^{i}j̆ɑ̆ŋ]: the third tone [214] steadily starts on the [^{i}], the pitch drops at the glide [j], and it raises at the halfway of glide [j] through main vowel [ɑ], and finishes with the consonant [ŋ].
- [ɛ^{i}j̀ɑ̀ŋ]: the fourth tone [51] starts at a high pitch at [^{i}], and quicky drop through glide [j], main vowel [ɑ], and final consonant [ŋ].
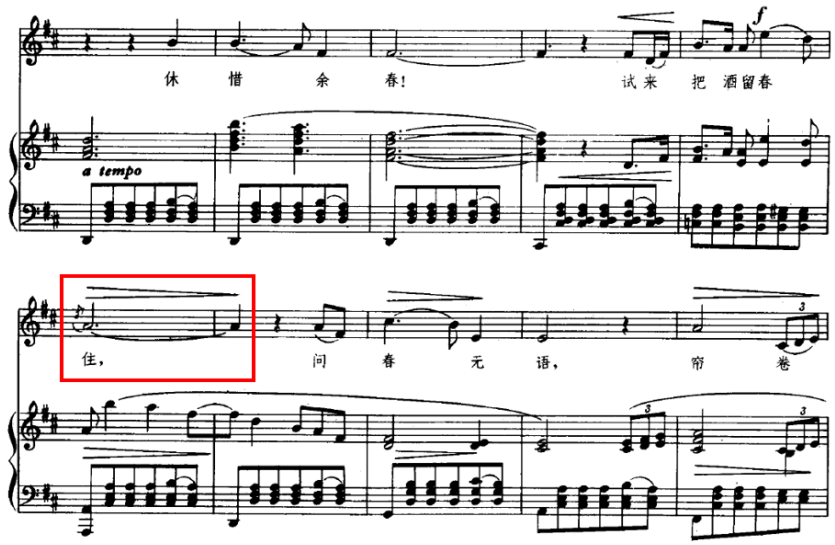
Usually, in a fine vocal composition, the melodic contour will match the trajectory of linguistic inflections. When the melodic contour does not match the general trend of linguistic tones, and causes trouble for accurate vocal delivery of the text, it is called 倒字 (dǎozì).[60] This dissertation suggests that, in those cases where the text can be understood through context, the singer is not expected to change the melody, unless as an artistic choice; in those cases where the text will be severely misunderstood with the original melody, it is the singer's responsibility to solve this problem. Unfortunately, there is no "L'elixir da Dǎozì." One must understand the Chinese language and identify this phenomenon on a case-by-case basis. The general principle to solve dǎozì is to change the melodic contour at the syllable. This dissertation suggests some tools for the treatment of dǎozì:

1. When dǎozì happens on a syllable with the second tone, add a grace note a major or minor second below and glide into the written note, depending on the chord.
2. When dǎozì happens on a syllable with the third tone, add a mordent or a note sequence to the written note. The original melodic contour will determine which kind of mordent or note sequence is to be used.

[60] Zhu, "A Tentative Study," 28.

3. When dǎozì happens on a syllable with the fourth tone, there may be three tools for rectification: 1) add an appoggiatura a major or minor second above the written note; 2) use the previous note as an appoggiatura if it is higher than the note which generates dǎozì; 3) articulate the syllable with an emphasized zìtóu (when it appears) or re-articulate the main vowel with the downward vocal trend.
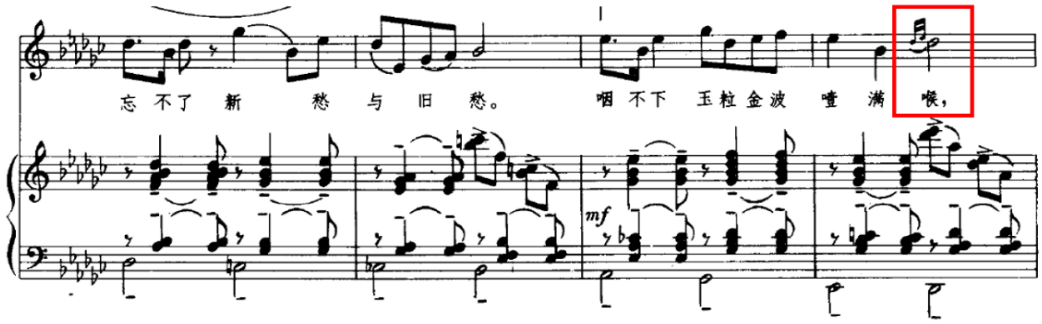
The following excerpt from《点绛唇·赋登楼》 (*Ascending the Tower-To the Tune of Rouged Lips*) by 黄自 (Huáng Zì/Huang Tzu, 1904–1938) illustrates a treatment of dǎozì. The character "驻 (zhù, v. to stay)" is with the fourth tone, and in the context of the music, the melodic contour cannot match the trend of pitch change in the tone. To solve this problem, Huáng Zì notated an appoggiatura with the same previous note:



Excerpt 2. 1《点绛唇・赋登楼》(*Ascending the Tower-To the Tune of Rouged Lips*) by Huáng Zì

Another example is the graces at the character "喉 (hóu, n. throat)", where the group of characters in this measure are "噎满喉 (yē mǎn hóu, stuck in throat)." The linguistic tonal trajec-

tory is moving from the first tone, passing through the third tone, and eventually sustains on the second tone, where the melodic contour (♭E-♭B-♭D) does not totally clarify the meaning of the three characters. As a solution, the composer 刘雪庵 (Liú Xuě'ān, 1905–1985) adds a group of grace notes to reflect the linguistic tonal trajectory at the character "喉 (hóu, n. throat)."



Excerpt 2. 2《红豆词》(*Ode to the Red Bean*) by Liú Xuě'ān

Pedagogical Concerns for Chinese Art Song

The genre of art song is an imported concept to Chinese culture, and the Western classical singing technique is the commonly used technique in the vocal delivery of this genre. On the other hand, Chinese language and musical aesthetics are rooted in the marvelous Chinese culture. Thus, the Western vocal techniques need to be slightly adjusted when approaching the authentic delivery of Chinese art song.

To access Chinese art song, this dissertation suggests using the Western classical technique, but respecting the original vocal color and nuances in the language. Depending on the texture of each piece, the approaches may vary slightly, but all vocal delivery ought to be healthy and stylistically accurate.

As the most important concept for Chinese singing, zìzhèng qiāngyuán is built upon a thorough understanding of each part of a syllable, and practical approaches to lyric diction. From the consonant and vowel to shēngmǔ (initial) and yùnmǔ (final), Chapter One examined the Standard Chinese phonetic system and offered a detailed pedagogical guide to each sound. Based on the system of zìtóu (syllable onset), zìfù (syllable nucleus), and zìwěi (syllable ending), this chapter introduced a new system of lyric diction to non-native speakers, which efficiently illustrates all parts in a syllable: initial, medial, main vowel, syllable ending, and the tone.

The pedagogical approaches from traditional Chinese vocal scholarship remain essential to the study and teaching of Chinese singing. To achieve an authentic delivery of Chinese art song, concepts such as zìzhèng qiāngyuán, the "Head-Belly-Tail" system for singing and its practice, tonal reflections in music, amongst others, are great tools for accessing this genre.

The next chapter in this dissertation partially examines the exploration and development from poetry to art song, tracing a feasible path to achieve authenticity in "Chinese musical flavor."

Chapter 3: From Poetry to Song

From ancient *Book of Songs* to the modern Báihuà Shī (plain, oral, spoken, and colloquial poetry), Chinese poetry has gone through developments in meters, rhymes, tones, character groupings of words, rhetoric devices, and other features. These developments are closely associated with the evolution of the Chinese language. For example, in early Chinese poetry, such as *Book of Songs*, each character or a group of two characters generally function as a word, while in later/modern poetic genres, such as the Báihuà Shī, a word may contain one, two, three, or even more characters. The most influential factor to this observation lies in the development of the Chinese language from four general eras: Old (around B.C.E. 11–3 C.E.), Middle (around 7–10 C.E.), Modern (around 10–20 C.E.), and Contemporary (20 C.E.–present).

Part One: Poetry

The Origin: *Book of Songs*

As a genre that has been present throughout five thousand years of Chinese culture, the song has always been an art form associated with poetry, attracting Chinese poets and musicians to illustrate images and experiences alongside the development of Chinese culture. The oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry《诗经》 (*Book of Songs/Book of Poetry/Book of Odes*) was compiled from around the 10th to 5th centuries B.C.E.[61], with three major different categories of poetry to be sung: 风 (fēng, folk songs), 雅 (yǎ, festal songs sung at the court ceremonies), and

[61] Qian, Niansun 钱念孙. *Zhong Guo Shi Ge* 中国诗歌 [Chinese Poetry] (Hefei: Anhui Education Publishing House, 2003), 2.

颂 (sòng, hymns and eulogies to heroes and ancestral spirits of the royal house sung at sacrifices).[62]

The original title of this collection was《诗》(*Poetry/Odes*), with a total of three hundred and five poems; its current name was officially adopted in the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) when Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) and Confucianism were officially announced as the only authentic philosopher and philosophy by the court. Because Confucius considered the art of poetry to be one of the essential virtues of himself and his pupils, editing the《诗》(*Poetry/Odes*) by himself, this collection was seen as one of the 经典 (jīngdiǎn, Classics) and received the title《诗经》 (*Book of Songs/Book of Poetry/Book of Odes*), which has been adopted until today.[63] In fact, Confucius expressed his perspectives on poetry/song/ode and the *Book of Songs*, which were later compiled and documented in《论语》(*The Analects*):

> “《诗》可以兴、可以观、可以群、可以怨。迩之事父，远之事君；多识于鸟、兽、草、木之名。”
>
> “*The Book of Songs* stimulates the mind, inspires contemplation, enables one to understand society, exchange feelings and thoughts with others, and express resentment. The book guides one on how to support and wait on one’s parents at home and how to serve one’s sovereign in public life. One can also learn about birds, beasts, and plants from the book.”[64]
>
> “兴于诗，立于礼，成于乐。”
>
> “It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the finish is received.”[65]

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[62] Wikipedia, “Four Books and Five Classics”.

[63] Qian, 11.

[64] “Stimulation, Contemplation, Communication, and Criticism,” Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture, accessed February 22, 2023, https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu_show.aspx?shuyu_id=2195.

[65] “泰伯 – Taibo, English translation: James Legge,” Chinese Text Project, accessed February 23, 2023, https://ctext.org/analects/tai-bo/ens.

The Chinese language contains two major features: single character pattern[66] (one character pattern per word) and monosyllabic[67] with a tone. Scholar 钱念孙 (Qián Niànsūn, b.1953) points out that the first nature of the Chinese language contributes to the extensive use of the rhetorical device *antithesis* in poetry; the second nature formed its systematic prosody.[68]

In general, the major poetic form in the *Book of Songs* is the Four-Character Verse, with occasional appearances of verse forms from Two-Character to Eight-Character. For example, the first verse from the first poem《关雎》 (*Cooing and Wooing*) in the *Book of Songs* illustrates the rhetorical device of antithesis, with the English version by distinguished translator 许渊冲 (Xǔ Yuānchōng, 1921 – 2021):

关关雎鸠，	By riverside are cooing
在河之洲。	A pair of turtledoves;
窈窕淑女，	A good young man is wooing
君子好逑。	A fair maiden he loves.[69]

Despite the simplicity and neatness of the Four-Character Verse form, after the *Book of Songs*, Chinese poets started to expand poetic forms and prosody, which allowed the composition of poetry to be relatively more flexible and expressive.

Sāo-Style Poetry

Born in the Kingdom of Chu, 屈原 (Qū Yuán, 340/339–278? B.C.E.) pioneered the exploration of poetic composition during the Warring States Period. Qū Yuán was known for his patriot-

66 Qian, 4.
67 Ibid., 4.
68 Ibid., 4.
69 Yuanchong Xu, *Book of Poetry* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2012), 1.

ism and contribution to poetry and verse. He was considered the initiator of 骚体诗 (sāotǐ shī, Sāo-Style Poetry), which was named after his well-known lyrical poem 《离骚》 (*Sorrow after Departure*[70]). Most of Qū Yuán's Sao-Style poems were compiled in《楚辞》 (Chǔ Cí, *The Songs of Chu*). Compared with poems in the *Book of Songs*, Sāo-Style poems usually feature more flexible sentences and longer lengths; additionally, the use of the modal particle "兮 (xī, oh)" is one of the most distinguishable characteristics. They allow the Sao-Style Verse to be singable among folk people, which was true to its folk origin – the folk songs in the Kingdom of Chu. For example, a verse in *Sorrow after Departure* illustrates:

日月忽其不淹**兮**，	The sun and the moon will not stay, **oh**!
春于秋其代序。	I fear time and tide wait for none.
惟草木之零落**兮**，	Grass will wither and trees decay, **oh**!
恐美人之迟暮。	I fear that beauty will grow old.[71]

Yuèfǔ Poetry

As a result of the development of Sao-Style Poetry, Chinese poems started to show a tendency toward the functions and characters of prose.[72] This induced the birth of 乐府诗 (yuèfǔ shī, Yuèfǔ Poetry) in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 C.E.). Originally, Yuèfǔ was the official government office that was established to train musicians, collect folk songs and ballads, and

[70] Yuanchong Xu, *Poetry of the South* (Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1994), 3.
[71] Ibid., 3.
[72] Qian, 3.

compose court music in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 C.E.).[73] Qián niànsūn indicates that, generally classified, there may be two categories of Yuèfǔ Poetry[74]:

1. The broad concept of Yuèfǔ Poetry may include all yuèfǔ-style poems composed by poets in the dynasties of Western Han (206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.), Eastern Han (25–220 C.E.), and the fast-changing dynasties (220–589 C.E.) of Wei, Jin, the Southern, and the Northern.
2. The narrow concept may only refer to poems and folk songs that were collected by the official bureau of Yuèfǔ in the Han Dynasty.

No matter which classification of Yuèfǔ Poetry is preferred, both of them share a general stylistic feature – the mixed prosody with a flexible manner, in which the forms of Five-Character and Seven-Character were frequently seen. The appearance of Yuèfǔ Poetry completely broke the previous formalities of the *Book of Songs* and Sao-Style Poetry, resulting in the formation of Five-Character Poetry and Seven-Character Poetry, both of which profoundly impacted Chinese poetry and literature for more than one thousand and five hundred years. Additionally, the composition of a poem written in modern vernacular Chinese by Dr.胡适 (Hú Shì/Hu Shih, 1891–1962) in 1916 marked the final curtain for Five-Character and Seven-Character poetry forms.[75]

One of the synonyms for the word "interpretation" is "understanding."[76] In general, the poetry of an art song exists before the composition of the song. However, in traditional Chinese song

[73] "Yuefu Poetry," Key Concepts in Chinese Thoughts and Culture, accessed February 24, 2023, https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu_show.aspx?shuyu_id=3969.

[74] Qian, 3.

[75] Qian, 207.

[76] Carol Kimball, *Art Song: Linking Poetry and Music* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2013), 23.

literature, it is the reversed order because of the form of 牌 (pái, a generic traditional Chinese musical term in which the fixed melody existed before the poetry). At some point, poetry in most languages shares similar elements: meter, rhyme, number of characters/words per line, and number of lines per poem; these elements determine the versification rules and standard practices.[77] Therefore, the following content will briefly examine a few essential stylistic features of the poetry from the dynasties of Tang (618–907 C.E.), Song (960–1279 C.E.), Yuan (1271–1368 C.E.), Ming (1368–1644 C.E.), Qing (1636 –1912 C.E.), and Contemporary China (1840–), with the hope to contribute to a deeper understanding and more authentic interpretation of Chinese art songs.

Shī Poetry

As previously discussed, in general, Chinese poetry developed from the Four-Character Verse from the *Book of Songs*, Sao-Style Poetry from *The Songs of Chu,* Yuèfǔ Poetry, to Five-Character Poetry and Seven-Character Poetry.

The origin of Five-Character Poetry has not yet been agreed upon, but most believe it developed out of the folk songs from the Western Han (206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.) and Eastern Han (25–220 C.E.) dynasties, and from the genre of Yuèfǔ Poetry.

The origin of Seven-Character Poetry may be from Yuèfǔ Poetry. Current literature suggests that the earliest appearance of a complete seven-character poetry is the《燕歌行》 (*Song from*

[77] Katherine Chu and Juliet Petrus, Singing in Mandarin: A Guide to Chinese Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 78.

Yan[78]) by 曹丕 (Cáo Pī, 187–226 C.E.).[79] However, not until about two hundred years after Cáo Pī's composition of this poem, the genre of Seven-Character Poetry had not been treated seriously by established poets.[80]

Both Five-Character and Seven-Character Poetries were developed into two structural types: 律诗 (lǜshī, regulated verse[81]) and 绝句 (juéjù, quatrain[82]). The regulated verse requires multiple strict rules for its composition:

1. Each line must contain an equal number of characters.[83]
2. Generally, a regulated verse should contain eight paired lines (or four poetry couplets), with occasional exceptions that contain ten lines or more.[84]
3. The second and third couplets must be composed with the device of antithesis; the first couplet may be composed with antithesis, and the fourth couplet generally should avoid the use of antithesis.[85]
4. The second, fourth, sixth, and eighth lines must follow the exact same rhyme scheme; the first line may follow the same rhyme scheme.[86]

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[78] "Song of Yan," Encyclopedia of China, accessed February 26, 2023, https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=198280&Type=bkzyb&SubID=44265.

[79] Qian, 3-4.

[80] Ibid., 4.

[81] Chu and Petrus, 78.

[82] Ibid., 78.

[83] Qian, 5.

[84] Ibid., 5.

[85] Ye, Fei, and Wang, 333.

[86] Ibid., 333.

5. Generally, in each couplet, the first line and the second line contain the opposite tonal pattern of level and oblique tones[87]. (There are numerous variations of this rule, and this results in different modes for the composition.)
6. The pattern of 孤平 (gūpíng, solo level tone: one level tone between two oblique tones) is strictly prohibited.

The term 绝句 (juéjù, quatrain) originated from the Southern Dynasties (420–589 C.E.). Historically, there are two types of quatrains in Chinese poetry. The ones composed in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) follow the exact same rules with two exceptions: the number of lines is half of a regulated verse, and the device of antithesis is not required. However, the ones composed before the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) do not follow these rules and are composed in relatively loose forms. For the purpose of differentiation, these are classified as 古绝句 (gǔ juéjù, classical quatrain[88]).[89]

Therefore, a total of four major categories of poetic structures can be listed:

- 五言律诗 (wǔyán lǜshī, Five-Character Regulated Verse): 4 couplets (8 lines) with 5 characters per line
- 五言绝句 (wǔyán juéjù, Five-Character Quatrain): 2 couplets (4 lines) with 5 characters per line

[87] Qian, 5.

[88] "Classical Quatrain," Encyclopedia of China, accessed February 27, 2023, https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=121930&Type=bkzyb.

[89] Qian, 5.

- 七言律诗 (qīyán lǜshī, Seven-Character Regulated Verse): 4 couplets (8 lines) with 7 characters per line
- 七言绝句 (qīyán juéjù, Seven-Character Quatrain): 2 couplets (4 lines) with 7 characters per line

The composition of regulated verse and quatrain in the Five-Character and Seven-Character styles reached its peak in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) – the total number of documented poems exceeds fifty thousand,[90] with a great portion of them considered masterpieces. Because of their nearly perfect artistry and long-lasting impact on later poetic forms, the poems from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) received the term 唐诗 (tang shī, Tang Shi-Poems), highlighting the significance of their accomplishments. One of the most acclaimed Tang Shi-Poems is the 《登高》 (*On the Height*[91]) by 杜甫 (Dù Fǔ, 712–770 C.E.), who is considered to be one of the greatest Chinese poets of all times:

《登高》
风急天高猿啸哀，渚清沙白鸟飞回。
无边落木萧萧下，不尽长江滚滚来。
万里悲秋常作客，百年多病独登台。
艰难苦恨繁霜鬓，潦倒新停浊酒杯。

On the Height
The wind so swift, the sky so wide, apes wail and cry;
Water so clear and beach so white, birds wheel and fly.
The boundless forest sheds its leaves shower by shower;
The endless river rolls its waves hour after hour.
A thousand miles from home, I'm grieved at autumn's plight;
I'll now and then for years, alone I'm on this height.
Living in times so hard, at frosted hair I pine;

[90] Ibid., 5.
[91] Yuanchong Xu, *300 Tang Poems: Classified by Theme*, 359.

Cast down by poverty, I have to give up wine.[92]

This poem is composed in the Seven-Character Regulated Verse form, with an additional rule – all lines are composed with the device of antithesis and follow the strict patterns for rhymes and tones.

Generally, in the genre of Shī (regulated verse or quatrain), the character grouping per line follows the pattern 2+3 or 2+2+3; the primary stress of each group falls on the first character. However, in the group of 3 characters, there is a secondary stress which falls on the third character.[93] For example, the character group and stress of the previous poem 《登高》 (*On the Height*) can be illustrated as follows:

- Vertical lines demonstrate the character groupings.
- Characters in bold font represent the primary stress in each group.
- Characters with underlines show the secondary stress in the group with three characters.

风急|**天**高|**猿**啸哀，**渚**清|**沙**白|**鸟**飞回。
无边|**落**木|**萧**萧下，**不**尽|**长**江|**滚**滚来。
万里|**悲**秋|**常**作客，**百**年|**多**病|**独**登台。
艰难|**苦**恨|**繁**霜鬓，**潦**倒|**新**停|**浊**酒杯。

Scholar 王国维 (Wáng Guówéi/Wang Kuo-wei, 1877–1927) observed the development of Chinese poetry in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) and commented:

“豪杰之士难于其中自出新意，故顿做他体。”[94]
“The great poets could not invent new ideas in these forms, thus they looked into new genres.”

[92] Ibid., 359.
[93] Chu and Petrus, 78-79.
[94] Qian, 5.

Cí Poetry

As a result, Chinese poetry evolved into two major forms of 词 (cí, a type of lyric poetry in Chinese Classical poetry associated with folk traditions) and 散曲 (sǎnqǔ, a fixed-rhythm form of Chinese Classical poetry, also known as the literary song). Qián niànsūn identifies that both Cí and Sǎnqǔ are considered the branches and variations of the Shī[95]; Yè argues that Cí existed before the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) and has always been associated with music, and thus, Cí is not a branch from the genre of Shī[96]. No matter in which opinion, the agreement is that the form of Shī is associated with the vocal technique of 吟咏 (yínyǒng, chanting or reciting poetry without music), while Cí and Sǎnqǔ correlate to the technique of singing with the music.[97]

After the genre of Shī reached its summit, the composition of Cí as a serious poetic genre is observed to have grown more popular in the late Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) and reached its artistic peak in the Song Dynasty (960–1276 C.E.). Therefore, Cí composed in the Song Dynasty (960–1276 C.E.) is often referred to as 宋词 (sòng cí, Song Ci-Poem). In general, Cí can be described as a "lyric with a melody" and "long and short verses."[98] This reveals the transition from Shī to Cí as a poetic genre:

1. Cí is composed with the purpose to be sung with music.
2. Cí does not follow general compositional rules for regulated verse and quatrain from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.); instead, it contains various line lengths in couplets.

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[95] Ibid., 5-6.

[96] Ye, Fei, and Wang, 501.

[97] Ibid. 6.

[98] "Ci (lyric)," Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture, accessed March 1, 2023, https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu_show.aspx?shuyu_id=3440.

3. As a genre of poetry, Cí follows certain patterns for rhyme scheme, level and oblique tones, and the number of characters.

Additionally, a major change in the composition of Shī to Cí is the pre-existing fixed pattern of poetic meter, vocal melody, and character number, as well as the level and oblique tones. The fixed pattern is usually associated with a particular title, called 词牌 (cí pái). It is documented that throughout the history of Chinese poetry, the total amount of Cí Pái exceeds one thousand.[99] Unfortunately, the majority of the notated documents of Cí Pái were lost after the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.), thus Cí gradually evolved into a single poetic genre, rather than a combination of poetry and music.

The stylistic features of Cí can be summarized as:[100]

1. Usually, a piece of Cí consists of two stanzas named 阕 (què) or 片 (piàn); occasional compositions can be seen with one, three, or four stanzas.
2. A fixed number of Chinese characters per composition, ranging from 16 to 240.
3. A fixed but adjustable pattern of level and oblique tones per composition.
4. Versatile patterns of line length in one composition, ranging from Two-Character to Eleven-Character line lengths.
5. Versatile patterns of rhyme scheme in one composition: every line, every other line, every two lines, every three lines, inter-line change, and many others.
6. Flexible use of antithesis.

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[99] "Ci-Poem," Encyclopedia of China, accessed March 1, 2023, https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=87638&Type=bkzyb&SubID=44444.

[100] Ibid.

Compared to the strict rules for the composition of Shī, especially the form of regulated verse, the genre of Cí requires flexible patterns for character numbers, level and oblique tones, rhyme schemes, and line lengths. The compositional device of *antithesis* becomes less strict and allows flexible artistic adjustments. Additionally, the nature of Cí as an integrated art form of poetry and music contributed to its astonishing popularity among most social strata in the Song Dynasty (960–1276 C.E.).[101] Two major styles of Cí are classified as 'graceful and restrained' versus 'bold and unrestrained'. A great number of accomplished poets dedicated themselves to the composition of Cí as a serious artistic genre, and this led to a perfect unity of form and content of Cí in the Song Dynasty (960–1276 C.E.). Later scholars agree that the achievements of Song Ci-Poems are equally important as Tang Shī-Poems.[102]

A great example of a Song Cí-Poem is the《念奴娇·赤壁怀古》 (*Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff – To the Tune of Nian Nu Jiao*[103]), composed by the preeminent 苏轼 (Sū Shì, 1037–1101):

《念奴娇 · 赤壁怀古》
大江东去，浪淘尽，千古风流人物。故垒西边，人道是，三国周郎赤壁。乱石崩云，惊涛拍岸，卷起千堆雪。江山如画，一时多少豪杰。

遥想公瑾当年，小乔初嫁了，雄姿英发。羽扇纶巾，谈笑间，樯橹灰飞烟灭。故国神游，多情应笑我，早生华发。人生如梦，一尊还酹江月。

Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff – To the Tune of Nian Nu Jiao

The great river eastward flows. With its billows are gone all those ancient heroes. West of the old fortress stands, People say, the Red Cliffs where General Zhou Yu won his early fame.

[101] Qian, 6.
[102] Ibid., 6.
[103] Liao and Höll, 60.

Jagged rocks pierce the clouds, swashing waves of snowy foam, churning up drifts of snow.
What a glorious land! How many heroes once emerged on a stage so grand!

My thoughts drift to Zhou's heroic days: with his new bride Xiao Qiao, the lady fair, he appeared so dashing and debonair. Wearing a silk cap, waving a feather fan, over a casual chat, he had the enemy fleet burned to ashes. As my mind wanders to that bygone age, what a sentimental fool you may call me, for my hair turned grey too early! Life is but a dream passing soon. Let's drink a toast to the river moon.[104]

This Cí is composed in the 'bold and unrestrained' style, one of pioneering creations of Sū Shì. Through the marvelous portrayal of the landscape, Sū Shì expresses his perspectives on the historical events and laments of his life. The year of its composition was 1082. More than eight hundred years later, in the year of 1920, a Chinese composer set it to music in the style of German Lied, which inspired a century of Chinese art song.

Sǎnqǔ

The poetic genre of Cí gradually declined during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279 C.E.). Along with the import of music from the Northern Ethnic Minorities, poets in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.) examined and developed the literary genres of drama and poetry/song from previous dynasties, and redeveloped them into two fresh genres: 杂剧 (zájù, a form of Chinese opera) and 散曲 (sǎnqǔ, a form of poetry/song).

Zájù Opera is an art form associated with recitations of prose and poetry, dance, singing, and mime, with a particular emphasis on comedy or happy endings.[105]

As previously introduced, Sǎnqǔ is a genre of poetry and song that may be considered a branch and variation of the style of Shī (poetry associated with chanting). Compared to the poetic

[104] Ibid., 60.
[105] "Zaju," Wikipedia, accessed March 4, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaju.

genres of Shī and Cí, the major differences between Sǎnqǔ and these previous genres lie in three aspects:

1. Extensive adoption of dialects and slang.[106]
2. Appreciation of filler words – additional words inserted outside the melodic form in a poem, in order to allow a more complete delivery of the composition.[107]
3. Systematic rules for rhyme scheme and flexible adjustments for tonal patterns, in order to allow the extensive adoptions of dialects and slang[108], and to help with a better alignment between melodic contour and linguistic inflections.

In the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.), the genre of Sǎnqǔ received serious treatment and great acclaim from society, and it developed into two major categories: 小令 (xiǎolìng, miscellaneous song) and 套数 (tàoshù, song cycle). The form of the miscellaneous song is rather flexible, and usually is associated with one pái (a pre-existing fixed pattern for poetic meter, vocal melody, and character number, as well as the level and oblique tones) [109]; the form of a song cycle of sǎnqǔ must be composed under one tonic key mode but can be in different modes, and must follow the same rhyme scheme[110], which is almost equivalent to the form of a song cycle in the European tradition.

The continuous development of the theory and practice of poetry/song in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.) stimulated the study and research of singing techniques and pedagogy. The

[106] Ye, Fei, and Wang, 537.
[107] Qian, 6.
[108] Ye, Fei, and Wang, 537.
[109] Ibid., 536.
[110] Ibid., 537.

very first treatise on Chinese voice pedagogy《唱论》 (*A Treatise on Vocal Music*) was written by 燕南芝庵 (Yānnánzhī'ān [111], before 1341) in this dynasty. A great amount of excellent scholarship on traditional Chinese voice pedagogy was observed from the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.) to the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912 C.E.). Please refer to Chapter Two on Chinese Voice Pedagogy for a detailed survey on this topic.

The Sănqŭ was treated as the leading genre of poetry in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.), and reached the summit of its artistic achievements. For this reason, the Sănqŭ that were composed in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 C.E.) received the term 元曲 (yuán qŭ, Sănqŭ from the Yuan Dynasty).

A greatly influential example of Xiăolìng (miscellaneous song) is the《天净沙·秋思》by 马致远 (Mă Zhìyuăn, 1250/1255–1321):

《天净沙·秋思》
枯藤老树昏鸦，
小桥流水人家，
古道西风瘦马，
夕阳西下，
断肠人在天涯。

Tune: Sunny Sand
Autumn Thoughts
Over old trees wreathed with rotten vines fly evening crows；
Under a small bridge near a cottage a stream flows；
On ancient road in the west wind a lean horse goes.
Westward declines the sun；
Far, far from home is the heartbroken one.[112]

[111] A pseudonym of the author. The author's real name and dates are unknown.
[112] "Autumn Thoughts," Zhihu, accessed March 10, https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/452803215.

This Xiǎolìng was composed with the fixed tune of 天净沙 (tiānjìngshā, Sunny Sand) on the topic of nostalgia. The well-thought-out structure of this poem is astonishing: the first three lines are all composed with carefully selected nouns, creating images of the movie-like scenery which is observed by the character; not until the last two lines is homesickness expressed, revealed by the only verb 下 (xià, v. decline), lamenting for the sadness of departing far from home.

Chinese Operas

The genres of poetry in the dynasties of Ming (1368–1644 C.E.) and Qing (1636–1912 C.E.) continued to receive popularity – compositions in the genres of Shī (Regulated Verse and Quatrain), Cí, and Qǔ were seen in large quantities with numerous schools. However, the general quality of these compositions did not surpass those in the dynasties of Tang (618–907 C.E.), Song (960–1279 C.E.), and Yuan (1271–1368 C.E.).[113]

On the other hand, new genres of fiction, drama, and opera gradually developed into their mature forms. For example, in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.), the genre of Zájù Opera from the Yuan (1271–1368 C.E.) Dynasty declined and gradually lost its audiences. The genre of 传奇 (chuánqí, Chuánqí Opera) drew elements from dramatic forms in Southern China and developed into its complete form. It later evolved into one of the two most significant genres of traditional Chinese opera – 昆剧 (kūnjù, Kūn Opera).[114] Kūn Opera was treated as a serious artistic form from the 1670s to 1720s, and prospered as the dominant Chinese opera from then un-

[113] Qian, 7.
[114] Ye, Fei, and Wang, 629-31.

til the middle of the 19th century.[115] Another significant form of opera is the 京剧 (jīngjù, Peking Opera), which was a further exploration based on Kūn Opera and other local operatic styles. This brand-new operatic genre was first seen in 1790 and grew into its mature form between the 1840s to 1860s.[116] With the continuous development of great artists since then, Peking Opera came to its golden era from 1917 to 1938.[117] According to current records, there are about two thousand and five hundred documented scripts of Kūn Opera[118]; the total number of Peking Opera scripts exceeds five thousand[119].

The following excerpt is selected from one of the most influential Chuánqí Opera《牡丹亭》 (*Dreams in Peony Pavilion*) composed by the great master 汤显祖 (Tāng Xiǎnzǔ, 1550 – 1616) in the year of 1598, a contemporary of William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616).

（旦）不到园林，怎知春色如许！
【皂罗袍】
原来姹紫嫣红开遍，
似这般都付与断井颓垣。
良辰美景奈何天
赏心乐事谁家院！
恁般景致，
我老爷和奶奶再不提起。
（合）朝飞暮卷，
云霞翠轩；
雨丝风片，
烟波画船——
锦屏人忒看得这韶光贱!

[115] Ibid., 632-33.
[116] Ibid., 634.
[117] Ibid., 636.
[118] Ibid., 630-631.
[119] Ibid., 636.

Belle: If I did not come to the garden, how could I know spring's splendor?
(Singing to the tune of **Silk Robe**):
A riot of deep purple and bright red,
What pity on the ruins they overspread!
Why does Heaven give us brilliant day and dazzling sight?
Whose house could boast of a sweeter delight?
What beautiful scenery!
Why have my parents never mentioned it to me?
Together: At dawn on high
Rainbow clouds fly;
At dusk the green
Pavilion is seen.
In misty waves mingle the threads of rain,
The wind swells sails of painted boast in vain.
For those behind the screen
Make light of vernal scene.[120]

The history of human beings has always been astonishingly similar: the genre of Opera in Europe evolved from literary texts and fine music, and thus contains the nature of a hybrid art form.[121] One can also identify that the stunning beauty of Chinese poetry still shines in this form of Chinese opera, adopting previous poetic forms. Thus, an interesting difference may be observed as: the lyrics of Western operatic arias are often drawn from librettos, but the lyrics from traditional Chinese operas generally remain in the style of poetry, with fixed patterns (pái) of melody, rhythm, thyme, tones, and character numbers.

Báihuà Shī

The comprehensive art forms of Chinese operas may be considered an inevitable event alongside the systematic development of Chinese poetry. The twentieth century in China was a century of war and reformation. The last Chinese feudal dynasty, Qing Dynasty (1636–1912

[120] Xianzu Tang, *Dreams in Peony Pavilion*, trans. Yuanchong Xu (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2018), 104-5.
[121] Roger Parker, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera*, xi.

C.E.), came to its end after the Revolution of 1911, led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen; this resulted in the founding of the Republic of China.[122] Shortly thereafter, the First World War (1914–1918) and the Second World War (1939–1945) significantly impacted the entire globe—one of the major battlefields was the land of China. Intertwined with the Second World War, the Chinese Civil War lasted from 1927 to 1949. The continuous transformation and turbulence in society stirred up opinions as to best methods to salvaging the nation of China from the subjugation it had endured.

A revolutionary reformation of Chinese poetry coincided with a movement beginning on the fourth of May in 1919.[123] This movement was launched by students from the leading Peking University, quickly spreading among other universities and institutions nationwide, and eventually leading to a national event. The May Fourth Movement quickly catapulted the whole nation into a tumultuous phase of reformation, sociopolitical, economic, and intellectual aspects.[124] A rising group of educated intellectuals expressed their demands with the goal of "saving the fragile government embattled by feuding warlords and turbulent society entrapped by the temptations of Western capitalism."[125] Democracy and science were the leading two concepts and themes during this movement.

As a crucial part of Chinese art and literature, poetry was impacted dramatically by the May Fourth Movement. Dr.胡适 (Hú Shì/Hu Shih, 1891–1962) was one of the pioneering scholars on the reformation of the Chinese language and poetry. In 1917, Hú Shì published a treatise titled *A*

[122] Chu and Petrus, 109.
[123] Qian, 206.
[124] Chu and Petrus, 109.
[125] Ibid., 109.

Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform, advocating his proposal for Chinese literary reformations:

> "I believe that literary reform at the present time must begin with these eight items: (1)Write with substance. (2) Do not imitate the ancients. (3) Emphasize grammar. (4) Reject melancholy. (5) Eliminate old clichés. (6) Do not use allusions. (7) Do not use couplets and parallelisms. And (8) Do not avoid popular expressions or popular forms of characters."[126]

In general, Hú Shì proposed a revolutionary idea – to use vernacular Chinese in literature, especially in poetry, and to abandon "literary Chinese" and its stylistic requirement. Following with this treatise, he published several systematic writings on the approaches to composing poetry in vernacular Chinese. The term 白话诗 (báihuà shī, plain, oral, spoken, and colloquial poetry[127]) was introduced alongside. In the same year of 1917, he published eight pieces of Shī and four pieces of Cí in vernacular Chinese in the journal 《新青年》 (*New Youth*, French: *La Jeunesse*). They are historically the first creations and publications of poetry in vernacular Chinese. Three years later, in 1920, Hú Shì published a collection of poetry in vernacular Chinese —《尝试集》 (*Experiments in Poetry*). This collection is the first of its kind in Chinese history.[128] The following poem from *Experiments in Poetry* illustrates Dr. Hú Shì's approaches to the new style of poetry:

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[126] Shi Hu, "A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 357-360.

[127] Chu and Petrus, 110.

[128] Qian, 208.

《梦与诗》
都是平常经验
都是平常影像
偶然涌到梦中来
变幻出多少新奇花样
都是平常情感
都是平常言语
偶然碰着个诗人
变幻出多少新奇诗句
醉过 才知酒浓
爱过 才知情重——
你不能做我的诗
正如 我不能做你的梦

Dreams and Poetry
It's all ordinary experience,
All ordinary images.
By chance they emerge in a dream,
Turning out infinite new patterns.
It's all ordinary feelings,
All ordinary words.
By chance they encounter a poet,
Turning out infinite new verses.
Once intoxicated, one learns the strength of wine,
Once smitten, one learns the power of love:
You cannot write my poems
Just as I cannot dream your dreams.[129]

The use of the vernacular language in this poem is almost the same as in daily communications. The strict rhyme scheme, tonal pattern, and parallelism in previous genres of poetry almost fully disappear. Instead, Dr. Hú Shì composed the poem with a "natural syllabic pattern" and "atmosphere of vernacular poetry."[130]

[129] "Poetry and Dream," Green Tea Doodles, accessed March 15, https://greenteadoodles.wordpress.com/2010/02/28/sunday-doodle/.
[130] Qian, 209.

The vernacular poetry abandons archaic wordage and welcomes a vernacular style for easy understanding, with a few poetic rhymes and tastes to maintain the musical pace of a poem. Dr. Hú Shì's revolutionary proposal received an immediate positive response from scholars and authors. Three years later, in 1920, the first collection of the new style of vernacular poems 《白话分类诗选》 (*A Collection of Baihua Poetry*) was published with approximately five hundred vernacular poems by around seventy poets.[131] From then on, the nationwide adoption of vernacular poetry quickly arose–the traditional forms of poetry came to their historical termination, and a whole new canon of poetry arrived.

[131] Ibid., 209.

Part Two: Chinese Art Song: A Selected Survey

The development of poetry from traditional forms to a more vernacular style directly influenced the emergence of Chinese art song.

School Song

Prior to the formation of art song in Chinese as a serious artistic genre, a unique type of song appeared from 1903 to the early 1910s[132] —学堂乐歌 (xuétáng yuègē, School Song)[133]. The genre of School Song originates from the political movement 百日维新 (bǎirì wéixīn, Hundred Days Reform) led by 康有为 (Kāng Yǒuwéi, 1858–1927), 梁启超 (Liáng Qǐchāo, 1873–1929), and other similarly-minded intellectuals, in the late Qing Dynasty (1636–1912 C.E.). The core request of the Hundred Day Reform movement was "to adapt Western educational systems and to open schools structured after Western models", which led to the earliest educational component in the teaching of singing in schools.[134] This initiated the proliferation of Western music education in China.[135] In 1903, a formula was developed by 沈心工 (Shěn Xīngōng, 1870–1947), which triggered a national movement on the formation of music education systems among the folk.[136] Since 1905, School Song has become a popular trend in social life[137], and this led to

[132] Chu and Petrus, 108.

[133] Fei Mingyi 费明仪, "zhonguo yishu gequ he minyao de fazhan ji yanchang" 中国艺术歌曲和民谣的发展及演唱 [The Development and Vocal Practices in Chinese Art Song and Folk Song], in *Zhongguo xinyinyue shilunji* 中国新音乐史论集 [History of New Music in China: Collected Essays], ed. Liu Ching-chih 刘靖之 (Hongkong: University of Hong Kong The Center of Asian Studies, 1986), 73-74.

[134] Chu and Petrus, 108.

[135] Fei, 73.

[136] Chu and Petrus, 108.

the adoption of music courses as a selective component in school curriculums in 1907 and 1910[138]. In January of 1912, music became a compulsory course in schools.[139]

The pioneers of the School Song Movement, such as Shěn Xīngōng and 李叔同 (Lǐ Shūtóng, 1880–1942), received education in European music in Japan. For this reason, the general stylistic characteristics of School Song are observed as: [140]

1. Existing melodic materials from Japanese songs with newly composed Chinese texts.
2. Existing melodic materials from foreign folk songs and Western music with newly composed Chinese texts.
3. Existing melodic materials from traditional Chinese music with newly composed Chinese texts.
4. Newly composed melody and lyrics as a unity.

The lack of complexity in musical components prevented School Song from further developing into a mature compositional genre; perhaps its historical significance lies in the importation of the Western music education system into China, and as the role of the precursor of Chinese art song.[141]

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[137] Fei, 74.
[138] Chu and Petrus, 108.
[139] Ibid. 108.
[140] Fei, 74.
[141] Chu and Petrus, 109.

The Pioneers

萧友梅 (Xiāo Yǒuméi/Hsiao You-mei, 1884–1940)

As a Western imported concept in Chinese culture since the 1920s, art song was first translated into Chinese as "艺术歌曲" (yìshù gēqǔ) from the German word "Kunstlied" by Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi, after his return to China from Leipzig, Germany.[142] Born in Guangdong Province, he experienced the fall of the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912 C.E.), the outburst of national movements on the reformation of poetry, and the lack of systematic music education. After studying in China and Japan, Xiāo Yǒuméi continued his education in Germany with dual matriculation at Leipzig University and Leipzig Music Academy, majoring in education and philosophy.[143] After obtaining his Ph.D. from Leipzig, under the impacts of World War I, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi could not return to China and would thus have to relocate to Berlin, where he spent another period of time engaged in multi-disciplinary studies ranging from psychology to aesthetics.[144] During his years in Germany, he came into contact with major musicians and artists, including composer Richard Strauss, music scholar Hugo Riemann, and others.[145] After his return to China in 1920, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi contributed his expertise to the establishment of the modern music education system, adopting German curriculums and methodology. In 1927, the National Conservatory of Music (Now: Shanghai Conservatory of Music) was founded under the leadership of Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi

[142] Zhao Jinghua 赵景华, "cong yishu gequ de jieding laikan zhongguo yishu gequ" 从"艺术歌曲"的界定来看中国艺术歌曲 [From the definition of "Art Song" to Chinese Art Song], in *Zhongguo Yishu Gequ Lun* 中国艺术歌曲论 [On Chinese Art Song], ed. 李曙明 Li Shuming (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2009), 37.

[143] Chu and Petrus, 118.

[144] Ibid., 118.

[145] Ibid., 118.

and other scholars.[146] From 1924 to 1931, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi frequently published textbooks on music theory, musicology, harmony, piano education, and violin education, collections of instrumental and vocal compositions (a total of around sixty solo songs[147]), as well as numerous essays on general and comparative studies of Chinese and Western music.[148] Historically, he is the first composer to publish collections of art songs in China. For his foundational and significant contribution to modern Chinese music, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi is regarded as the "Father of modern Chinese music."[149]

As a result of the influences of the May Fourth Movement, the reformation of poetry led by Dr. Hú Shì, and his study abroad, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi's art songs are composed with Western compositional techniques on various thematic groups, including patriotism, nostalgia, and love. Notably, the art songs of Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi are observed with significant differences from the School Song – there are no longer borrowed tunes from other cultures; instead, the musical ideas are original and organic with the texts. As Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi states:

> "Composers and artists should creatively develop and deploy the unique logic, aesthetics, idioms and expressions of the Chinese people to illustrate people's real life and sentiments, so that artistic creation would have the soul and character of people that give it the raison d'être."[150]

> "Vocal performance cannot be only of Western compositions. In finding the most authentic expression, Chinese people should use Chinese to sing the lyrics of their country."[151]

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[146] Zhao, 75.

[147] Ibid., 75.

[148] Yao, 51.

[149] Ibid., 81.

[150] Hsiao, *Xiao Youmei Quanji* 萧友梅全集 [The Collected Essays on Music by Hsiao You-mei], 599 - 614.

[151] Hsiao, *Music Criticism In Twentieth Century China* 二十世纪音乐批评导论 [Music Criticism in Twentieth Century China], ed. Ming Yan, 592.

In order to encourage and improve the new genre of vernacular poetry, Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi advised his contemporaries to consider the following suggestions for the composition of lyrics:[152]

1. It is better to compose songs with positive, happy, grand, and heroic themes, in order to improve the atmosphere among people. (宜多作愉快活泼沈雄豪壮之歌，以改造国民情调。)
2. It is better to model the poetic genre of Guófēng from *Book of Songs* as the standard for new songs; the lengths should be various (similar to Cí/long and short verses), single rhyme and overly long phrases should be avoided, to prevent difficulties in singing. (歌的形式，最好以《诗经》国风为标准；但句度最宜参差（即长短句），不可一律，亦不宜过长，免致难于歌唱。)
3. It is better to adopt the ternary and binary forms from foreign folk songs. (各国民歌之新形式，如上述两段式、三段式等，不妨尽量采用。)
4. Lyrics should be simple and easy to understand. In the case of unavoidable reference to ancient facts, please provide notes at the end of the composition, in order to efficiently deliver the purpose. (歌词以浅显易懂为主。如万不获已，须引用故实时，请于篇末附注说明，以期唱者一望而了然于其用意之所在。)
5. Attention should still be on prosody in the composition of lyrics, but it is unnecessary to follow the same prosody throughout all verses; convention of prosody may be practical; the method of general convention between four tones under the same rhyme may be feasible

[152] Yasuko, 148-49.

(such as “dōng, dǒng, sòng”, etc.). (歌词仍应注意韵律，但不必数章同一韵，即每章之内，换韵亦不妨，兼可采用四声通协之法，如“东、懂、送”之类。)

6. It is encouraged to use new nouns from contemporary society. Because the composition of new songs is for the contemporary people, we do not need to compose songs for the ancients. (各种新名词，均不妨采用。盖既作新歌，即应为现代人而作，不必专为唱与古人听也。)

Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi’s publications include《今乐初集》 (*First Collection of Modern Music*),《新歌初集》 (*First Collection of New Songs*), and three volumes of《歌集》 (*Collection of Songs*). Most of his vocal music compositions are set for music education in primary and secondary schools.[153] Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi’s pioneering scholarship inspired the following musicians and educators–a new era of Chinese music is coming.

廖尚果 (Liào Shàngguǒ, pseudonym: 青主 Qīng Zhǔ, 1893–1959)

In 1920, Liào Shàngguǒ, a twenty-seven-year-old Chinese student who was studying law at Berlin University, Germany, looked at the potential hybrid of Chinese poetry and Western compositional techniques, and set a Cí《念奴娇·赤壁怀古》 (*Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff – To the Tune of Nian Nu Jiao*) by Sū Shì (1037-1101) to music. The song was named《大江东去》 (*The River Flows Eastwards*) and is thought to be the first art song in Chinese.[154]

[153] Chu and Petrus, 119.
[154] Liao and Höll, 5.

Born in Guangdong Province, Liào Shàngguǒ received a fine education in his early years. Under the influence of a patriotic family of intellectuals, he was particularly interested in classical literature, music, and politics. After his enrollment at the Whampoa Military Academy in 1910 and subsequent participation in the Revolution of 1911, Liào Shàngguǒ pursued further education in Berlin, Germany, where his interest in music and literature bloomed. His extraordinary talents in philosophy, music, drama, and literature received further nourishment from the cultural robustness in Germany. During the ten years spent in Germany (1912–1922), Liào Shàngguǒ finished his Ph.D. in Law and honed his excellent mastery in composition, poetry, music theory, and various instruments. Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ married Ellinor Valesby, a talented German musician and teacher, who later influenced his perspectives on music.[155]

Impacted by the May Fourth Movement, in the year of 1922, Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ returned to China and served in the military in the government of Sun Yat-sen.[156] The failure of the Guangzhou Uprising in 1927, in which he participated, led to his beleaguered situation with false accusations along with multiple arrest warrants.[157] Not until 1929, under the assistance of his classmate Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi, who was at this time the director of the National Conservatory of Music, Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ finally ended his fugitive life and became the chief editor of the journals《乐艺》(*Art of Music*) and《音》(*Music*), under the pseudonyms of "黎青主" (Lí Qīngzhǔ) and "青主" (Qīngzhǔ).[158] Most of his publications on musical aesthetics were from this period. In

[155] Chu and Petrus, 122.
[156] Ibid., 122.
[157] Ibid., 122.
[158] Yao, 84-85.

1934, the government withdrew the accusations against Liao, and from then, he taught German at institutions in Shanghai and Nanjing. In 1959, Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ passed away in Suzhou.[159]

Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ is regarded as one of the earliest scholars on musical aesthetics in China and one of the pioneers in the composition of Chinese art song. His publications include《乐话》 (*Language of Music*), 《音乐通论》 (*General Theories of Music*), song collections《清歌集》 (*Songbook of Pure Tunes*) and《音境》 (*Realm of Music*), and more than sixty essays on musical issues.[160]

Scholars summarize the styles of Liao's song:

> "Of the thirty-two art songs, twenty-one songs were settings on classical Chinese poetry and can be divided into four types according to the subject matter: patriotism, social commentary, concept of liberation per Chuang Tzu's philosophy, and others including Romantic longing, nostalgic lyricism, or reminiscence."[161]

Others identify influences from Romantic German Lied composers, especially Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf.[162] In general, Liao's songs are composed with an almost full Western music vocabulary and texture.

[159] Ibid., 85.
[160] Chu and Petrus, 123.
[161] Xu, "A Study on Qing Zhu," 26-29.
[162] Yasuko, 162.

赵元任 (Zhào Yuánrèn/Yuen Ren Chao, 1892–1982)

A true Renaissance man, Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn's phenomenal achievements were nearly superhuman.[163] He is significantly recognized as the "Father of Modern Chinese Linguistics" and a "vanguard of modern Chinese music."[164]

Born to a family of scholars, Zhào Yuánrèn received excellent education in Chinese literature and traditional music in his youth; he also developed great interests in dialects, and started to distinguish the differences among them.[165] On a government fund, Zhào Yuánrèn continued his education by studying mathematics and physics at Cornell[166], and philosophy at Harvard, from where he obtained a Ph.D. degree. Before his retirement from the position of Agassiz Professor of Oriental Languages at UC Berkeley in 1962, he frequently traveled between China and the United States, and taught at the universities of Cornell, Tsinghua, Harvard, Hawaii, Yale, and UC Berkeley.[167] He taught courses in mathematics, physics, Chinese and general linguistics, modern Chinese dialects, Chinese traditional music theory, and Western music appreciation,[168] as well as psychology and philosophy. In 1945, he served as president of the Linguistic Society of America, and in 1966, a special issue of the society's journal *Language* was dedicated to him.[169] Additionally, Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn, as a polyglot, spoke more than seven non-Chinese lan-

[163] Chu and Petrus, 128.
[164] Minguo, 72-73.
[165] Yasuko, 152-153.
[166] Note: Zhào Yuánrèn and Hú Shì were classmates at Cornell University.
[167] Chu and Petrus, 128.
[168] Ibid., 128.
[169] Wikipedia, "Yuen Ren Chao," accessed March 22, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuen_Ren_Chao.

guages and more than thirty-three dialects; one of his foundational contributions was the formalization of the study of Chinese as a field of research.[170]

Along with the May Fourth Movement, Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn witnessed changes in Chinese poetry to the vernacular poetry created by Dr. Hú Shì, a classmate of his at Cornell. In support of this progressive movement in Chinese culture, he developed and promoted the Romanization of the Chinese language, and authored multiple textbooks on the study of the Chinese language, dialects, linguistics, amongst other fields. Most of his compositions are drawn from vernacular Chinese poems. He also edited Chinese dictionaries and was the first person to translate *Alice in Wonderland* into Chinese.[171]

Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn's music education started with the study of 笛 (dí, the Chinese bamboo flute) and singing in his childhood. While at Cornell, he began the study of the piano as an additional course; at Tsinghua, he started to compose art songs. His first song collection《新诗歌集》 (*Song of Contemporary Chinese Poems*) was published in 1928, with fourteen art songs.[172] Along with this song collection, Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn prefaced five essays to discuss his perspectives on the relationship between poetry and music, tenets of song composition, fundamental differences between Chinese and Western music, and national characters through harmonic treatments and performance practices.[173]

Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn analyzed the differences between chanting and singing of Chinese poetry, as introduced in this chapter; he further argued that the difference lies in the experience of listen-

[170] Chu and Petrus, 128.
[171] Ibid., 128.
[172] Ibid., 131.
[173] Ibid., 129.

ing to poetry. In his opinion, the new genre of vernacular poetry was meant to be spoken, thus, depending on the understanding of the natural rhythm of the Chinese language from the reciter, a poem may be interpreted with various linguistic paces and inflections. Despite some partial loss of the original poetic components, a song may create additional expressiveness beyond the poem, due to the nature of a song: music and singing.[174] Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn specifically pointed out that the melody must respect the rhythm and rhyme of the Chinese language; in order to do so, he created a systematic methodology of intervallic patterns, tonal contours, and practices to recite the poetry.[175] His comparative study revealed that in Western art songs, the most important rule was to match the stressed syllable of a word with a stressed beat; however, in Chinese art songs, matching the linguistic inflections with the tonal contour is even more crucial than the rule for stressed syllables.[176] He strongly encouraged the concept of linguistic embellishment in singing practices to achieve a "national character", such as mordents, portamenti, graces notes, and gliding; additionally, he offered vivid insights into the analysis of text and composition, as well as the methodology for performance practice, including speed of grace note, vibrato rate, phrasing, and rubato, etc.[177] His attempt to create the standard for Chinese lyric diction was the first of its kind.

In summarization, Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn's concept of "national character" was reflected in the following aspects:

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[174] Chao, *Songs of Contemporary Chinese Poems*, 5-8.
[175] Chu and Petrus, 130.
[176] Chao, 11-14.
[177] Chu and Petrus, 131.

1. Language: almost perfect treatments of linguistic features and inflections in Chinese; use of dialects in composition; use of chanting and reciting styles.
2. Musical vocabulary: pentatonic tonal contour, pentatonic and heptatonic functional harmonies, traditional compositional devices, materials from folk music; most of his songs are observed with strophic and strophic variation forms.
3. Performance practices: grace note, gliding, phrasing, rubato, vibrato, etc.

Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi highly praised Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn's contribution to the progress of Chinese music as comparable to the influence of Franz Schubert to Lied:

> "The song collection *Song of Contemporary Chinese Poems* by Mr. Zhào Yuánrèn is the most meaningful in the recent ten years…his composition of these Schubertian art songs opened a brand-new era in Chinese music, for which he deserves full respect. After the publication of Mr. Zhao's song collection, we shall regard him as the 'Chinese Schubert', because his compositional features are totally Schubertian."

> "这十年来出版的音乐作品里头，应该以赵元任先生所作的《新歌诗集》为最有价值。…作出这本舒伯特派的艺术歌出来，替我国音乐界开一个新纪元，更值得我们的崇敬。赵先生这本歌集出世之后，教我们不能不称呼他做 '中国的舒伯特'，因为他的歌曲作法，完全是舒伯特作的一路。"[178]

黃自 (Huáng Zì/Huang Tzu, 1904–1938)

Huáng Zì may be considered the first musician to compose art song as a serious genre, succeeding Drs. Xiāo Yǒuméi, Liào Shàngguǒ, and Zhào Yuánrèn. He is also recognized as the first professional composer, music educator, music theorist, and founder of mainstream academia in the formal study and research of music in modern China.[179]

[178] Yasuko, 157-158.
[179] Chu and Petrus, 141.

Born in Chuansha, Jiangsu (Now: Pudong District of Shanghai), Huáng Zì grew up in a family of intellectuals and received a comprehensive education in Chinese literature and music. His talents in music began to show up as a toddler. Huáng Zì's childhood music education was under the influence of School Song by Shěn Xīngōng.[180] In this regard, Huáng Zì can be considered part of the first generation to experience the new form of music education in China. In 1916, Huáng Zì was enrolled at Tsinghua University, where he further developed interests in music – he played the oboe, sang in the choir, and studied the piano. After his graduation from Tsinghua University in 1924, Huáng Zì pursued the study of psychology as a major and music as a minor at Oberlin College in Ohio. In 1926, Huáng Zì entered Oberlin Conservatory to major in theory and composition. Unfortunately, in 1927, Huáng Zì's first love Ms. 胡永馥 (Hú Yǒngfù) passed away from heart disease. This saddened Huáng Zì's heart deeply, and led to his decision to transfer to Yale School of Music. There he focused on music theory and composition under David Stanley Smith, a dear colleague and friend of Charles Ives. Two years later, Huáng Zì finished his Bachelor of Music degree with an orchestral overture entitled《怀旧》 (*In Memoriam*), in dedication to his first love. Historically, *In Memoriam,* is considered the first large-scale symphonic work composed by a Chinese composer and the first Chinese orchestral work publicly performed by Western orchestras (Yale School Orchestra and the New Haven Symphony[181]) in the United States[182].

[180] Yasuko, 167.
[181] Chu and Petrus, 142.
[182] Yao, 83.

Upon his graduation, Huáng Zì taught at the University of Shanghai in 1930, and at the National Conservatory of Music from 1930 to 1938, where he was recruited by Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi and appointed as the head of the composition department.[183] Huáng Zì dedicated most of his scholarship to music education and the composition of songs: he was the professor of almost all academic courses in composition and two public compulsory courses in music history and music appreciation, and was on the board of numerous journals and textbook committees.[184] In 1937, after the full outbreak of China's war against the Japanese invasion, Huáng Zì resigned from his full-time teaching positions and dedicated himself fully to the writing of the textbook, *History of Music* and *Harmony*.[185] In 1938, Huáng Zì passed away from typhoid fever in Shanghai, at the age of 34.[186]

Throughout his short life, Huáng Zì left a total of ninety-nine compositions in various genres, including choral music, chamber music, solo songs, and symphonic works, with major focus on vocal music. His composition of《长恨歌》(*Song of Eternal Regret*) is another "first" in Chinese history: the first composition of a large-scale work for orchestra and chorus.[187] In fact, Huáng Zì himself categorized his compositions: four songs from American period, twelve patriotic songs, thirty-five songs for primary and secondary school education, five songs for mass singing, twelve arrangements, one cantata, and twelve art songs.[188] Out of his significant art

[183] Ibid.,
[184] Yao, 83-84.
[185] Chu and Petrus, 143.
[186] Yao, 84.
[187] Chu and Petrus, 142.
[188] Ibid., 143.

songs, two major categories may be observed: those with classical poetry and those with contemporary poetry.[189] His frequently performed art songs may include:
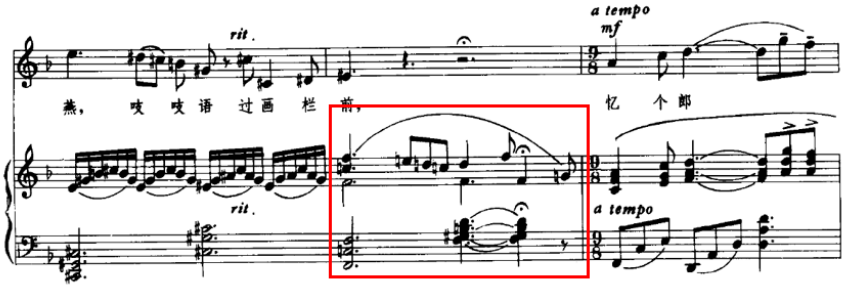
1. Set classical poetry: 《花非花》 (*Like a Flower*), 《点绛唇・赋登楼》(*Ascending the Tower – To the Tune of Rouged Lips*),《卜算子》(*Song of Divination*),《南乡子》(*Song of the Southern Country*), etc.
2. Set contemporary poetry: song collection《春思曲》 (*Spring Nostalgia*):《思乡》(*Longing for Home*),《春思曲》(*Spring Nostalgia*), and《玫瑰三愿》(*Three Wishes from a Rose*); 《踏雪寻梅》(*Stepping in the Snow Looking for Winter Plum Blossoms*), 《雨后西湖》 (*The West Lake After Rain*), etc.

Huáng Zì considered the composition of art song a serious genre and developed his own personal style expanding existing schema. His songs usually contain pentatonic melodic material in the vocal part, and heptatonic functional harmony in the piano. Therefore, his songs are often perceived to have a mixed texture of both. His treatments of linguistic inflections in the Chinese language are precise and well-considered. Compositional devices in European art songs, such as text-painting and mood-painting, are extensively explored in Huáng Zì's songs.
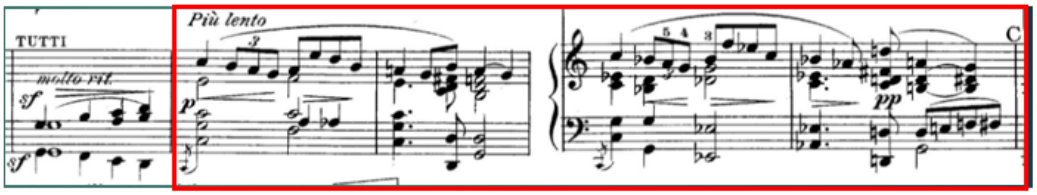
A unique feature of some of Huáng Zì's art songs is the organic borrowing of musical ideas from Western compositions, which exquisitely reflect the Chinese poem. For example, the interlude of the song *Spring Nostalgia* was inspired by the material from Edvard Grieg's *Piano Con-*

[189] Yao, 84.

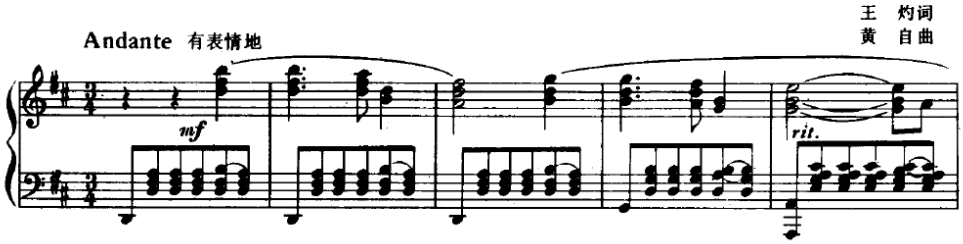
certo in A Minor, *Op. 16*. The piano part of *Ascending the Tower – To the Tune of Rouged Lips* was inspired from the second movement in Franz Schubert's *Piano Sonata in A Major, D664*.[190]
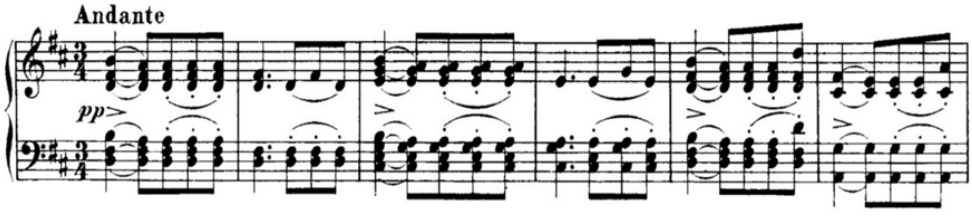


Excerpt 3. 1 Material from《春思曲》 (*Spring Nostalgia*) by Huáng Zì



Excerpt 3. 2 Material from *Piano* Concerto *in A Minor, Op. 16* by Edvard Grieg
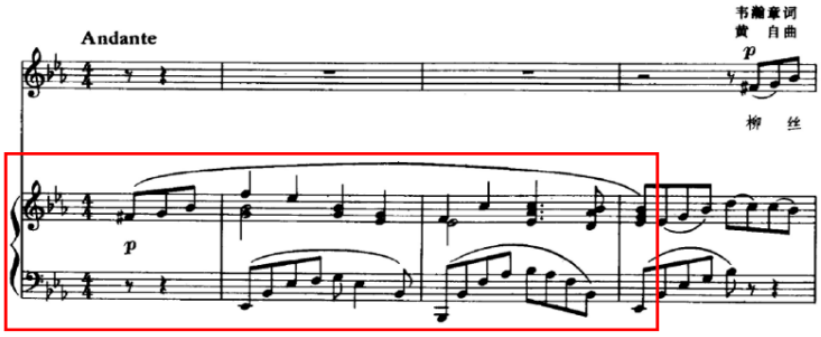


Excerpt 3. 3 Prelude of《点绛唇・赋登楼》(*Ascending the Tower – To the Tune of Rouged Lips*) by Huáng Zì



Excerpt 3. 4 Material from *Piano Sonata in A Major, D664* by Franz Schubert

[190] Note: both observations are made by Mr. Anthony Bock. Please refer to the recording of my dissertation lecture recital for further illustrations.

Huáng Zì expanded the genre of Chinese art song with his studies in tonality, form, chromaticism, and harmony; further, he elaborated on the role of the piano by duet-like interactions between the voice and the piano.



Excerpt 3. 5 Prelude of 《思乡》 (*Long for Home*) by Huáng Zì
(Example of text-painting of willow branches in the breeze)

Besides Huáng Zì's marvelous achievements in Chinese art song, his mentoring of the next generation of art song composers significantly impacted its development. Because of his pioneering and significant contributions to this genre, Huáng Zì is a monumental figure in Chinese art song and is frequently compared to Franz Schubert, the Father of Lied. For his expansion to the role of the piano, Huáng Zì may also be compared with the Lieder of Robert Schumann.

陈田鹤 (Chén Tiánhè, 1911–1955)

After Huáng Zì's return to China from the US, he taught at the University of Shanghai in 1930, and at the National Conservatory of Music from 1930 to 1938. Many of his pupils became major composers in different genres. 贺绿汀 (Hè lùtīng, 1903–1999), 刘雪庵 (Liú Xuě'ān, 1905–1985) , 陈田鹤 (Chén Tiánhè, 1911–1955), and 江定仙 (Jiāng Dìngxiān, 1912–2000) are generally regarded as the "Major Four Students of Huáng Zì", known predominantly for their art

song compositions.[191] They followed Huáng Zì's approach and developed their own personal styles. This dissertation will discuss Chén Tiánhè as a representative of Huáng Zì's students in art song. Readers are encouraged to consult the references at the end of this document to further explore other composers.

Born in Yongjia, Zhejiang Province, Chén Tiánhè's musical talents started to reveal themselves during his childhood. His musical skills were basically self-taught, along with his excellent linguistic skills in English and Japanese. Under the influences of Taoist chanting, Kūn Opera, Yuè Opera, street music, organ music, and School Song, Chen decided to study music as a profession, despite the objections from family.[192] Chén Tiánhè was enrolled at the National Conservatory of Music, studying composition under Huáng Zì from 1930 to 1936.[193] Throughout his student life, Chen also received musical instructions from Dr. Xiāo Yǒuméi, Dr. Liào Shàngguǒ, Ellinor Valesby, and other teachers. From 1932 to 1950, Chén Tiánhè taught at multiple institutions throughout China. From 1951 to 1955, he was hired as a professional composer for numerous organizations in Beijing. In 1955, Chén Tiánhè passed away from heart attack at the age of 43.

Chén Tiánhè's was a versatile composer in genres such as symphony, piano, choral works, dance music, movie music, opera, cantata, school song, patriotism song, folk song arrangements, Qin music arrangements, and art songs. He composed thirty-four art songs in two major categories based on selections of text - classical poetry and contemporary poetry. The frequently ob-

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191 Tianhe Chen, *Chen Tian He Yin Yue Wen Xuan* 陈田鹤音乐文选 [Selected Essays on Musical Issues by Chen Tianhe], ed. CHEN Hui 陈晖, and LUO Qin 洛秦 (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 2020), 144-55.

192 Chu and Petrus, 165.
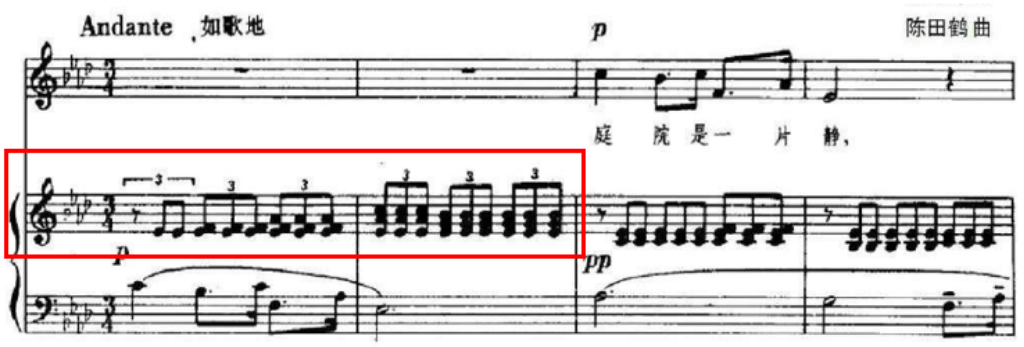
193 Ibid., 165 - 166.

served themes include solitude, love, nostalgia, and nature, with some explorations of patriotism.[194]
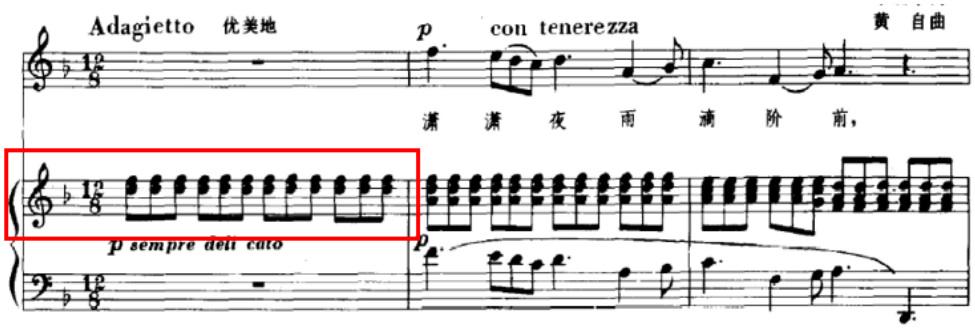
Chén Tiánhè was particular in his selections of poems for his art songs. Most of his art song compositions are set to the finest poems by great poets. For example, 《春归何处》 (*Whither Spring*) is set to a fine Cí-poem by the great scholar and poet 黄庭坚 (Huáng Tíngjiān, 1045 – 1105); 《山中》(*In the Mountains*) is set to a vernacular poem by the great contemporary poet 徐志摩 (Xú Zhìmó, 1897 – 1931).

Adopting previous explorations in art song, Chén Tiánhè's songs are observed to be sensitive and true to the poetic atmosphere, through exquisite text-painting and mood-painting techniques. The ideas of solitude and expectation in *Whither Spring* may be related to "Sehnsucht" (longing) in Romantic German song literature. An example of "Sehnsucht" is Ernst Schulze's poem *Im Frühling*, which was set to music by Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf. In Chen's song *In the Mountains*, the motif introduced in the prelude appears frequently as the leading theme. The repeated triplets and added layers reflect the quietness of the night, possibly inspired by the ideas in *Spring Nostalgia* by Huáng Zì and *Die Nacht*, *Op.10 No. 3* by Richard Strauss.
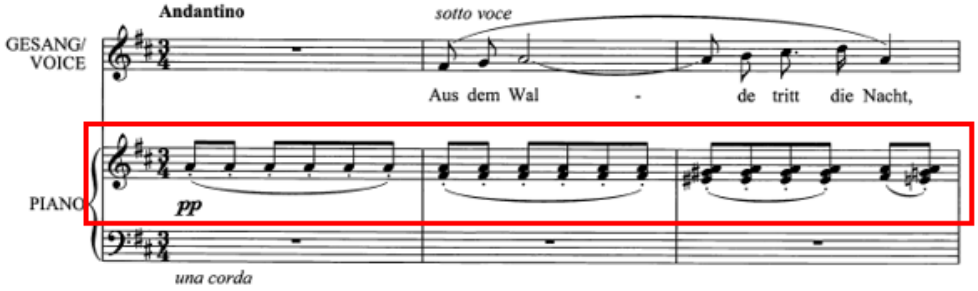
[194] Yu, "A Study on Chen Tianhe's Art Songs," 1.



Excerpt 3. 6 Prelude of《山中》(*In The Mountains*) by Chén Tiánhè
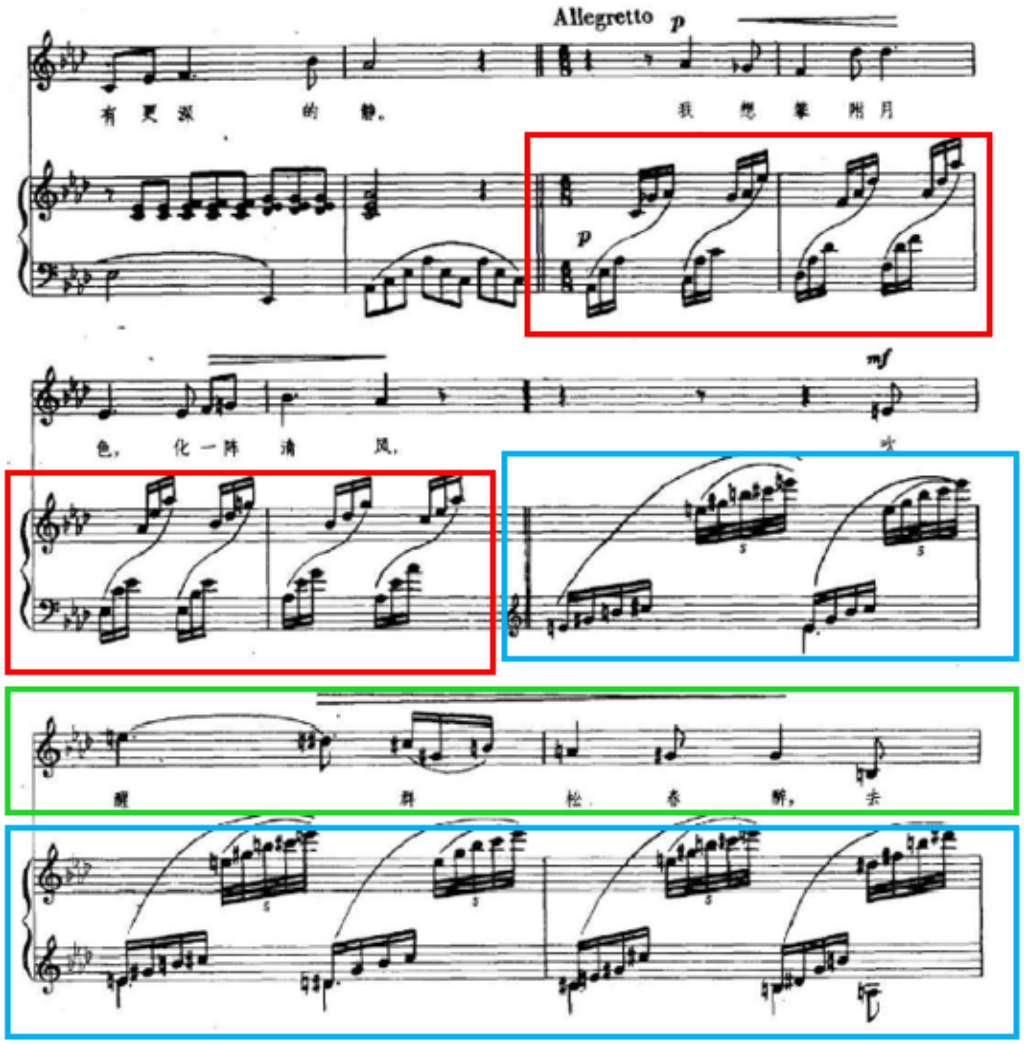


Excerpt 3. 7 Prelude of《春思曲》(*Spring Nostalgia*) by Huáng Zì



Excerpt 3. 8 Material from *Die Nacht, Op.10 No. 3* by Richard Strauss

Chén Tiánhè expanded the musical vocabulary of Huáng Zì. In the middle section of *In the Mountains*, the texture changes to arpeggiated gestures, text-painting the night breeze and the waving pine branches in the wind. The fast harmonic rhythm suggests the key of E major. However, materials in the piano always remain pentatonic while the vocal line changes to heptatonic.

This is adopted from Huáng Zì's compositional device of the hybrid texture of both, but Chen chose to use the voice as the vehicle for heptatonic scales, instead of the piano.



Excerpt 3. 9 Excerpt from《山中》 (*In the Mountains)* by Chén Tiánhè
[Examples of text-painting of "breeze" (pentatonic), "pine branches in the wind" (pentatonic with constantly changing tonal centers), and the voice as the leading vehicle for chromatic colors]

In general, Chén Tiánhè's art songs adopted Huáng Zì's hybrid texture of pentatonic and heptatonic musical vocabulary, with a more flexible approach to functional harmonies. Text-painting, mood-painting, linguistic tonal treatments, rhythmic variations (hemiola, etc.), and oth-

er devices are observed to be sensitive to the poetry. He expanded the approach to tonal color and explored frequent modulation within a section of a song. Chén Tiánhè's art songs are mostly composed within the Romantic lyrical idea of "Sehnsucht."

Many of Chén Tiánhè's art songs did not receive public attention or frequent performance during his lifetime; it was not until 1991, thirty-six years after his passing, that his song collection《陈田鹤艺术歌曲选集》(*The Art Songs of Chén Tiánhè*) was published by the People's Music Publishing House.[195]

Distinguished scholar, poet, and composer 廖辅叔 (Liào Fǔshū, 1907 – 2002) compared Chén Tiánhè with three masters of German Lied—Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf: Chén possessed Schubert's earnestness, Schumann's passion, and Wolf's melancholy.[196] Reputable musicologist and critic 汪毓和 (Wāng Yùhé, 1929 - 2013) comments on Chen in the postscript of *The Art Songs of Chén Tiánhè*:

> "As a composer, Mr. Chén Tiánhè left numerous compositions in various genres, including opera, cantata, choral works, solo songs, people's songs, children's songs, piano, and symphony…If we consider Huáng Zì as one of the most important pioneers in contemporary Chinese art song, Mr. Chén Tiánhè should be considered the well-deserved successor of Huáng Zì's art songs."
>
> "作为一位作曲家，陈田鹤先生曾留下一定数量的各种形式的创作，包括歌剧、清唱剧、合唱曲、独唱曲、群众歌曲、儿童歌曲、钢琴曲、管弦乐。（中略）如果说黄自是中国近代艺术歌曲的重要开拓者之一的话，那么陈田鹤无愧为黄自艺术歌曲传统的出色的继承者。"

[195] Chu and Petrus, 166.
[196] Ibid., 166.

Explorations of Authentic Chinese Flavors in Art Song

Chinese composers have been experimenting with possibilities of Chinese art song. The following components will briefly discuss the exploration with authentic Chinese flavors in art song, and are expected to serve as a method of the studying and teaching of current Chinese song literature.

Tremor of the Voice and Compositional Approach

Previous composers' approaches of borrowing musical ideas from Western music inspired later Chinese composers to probe the marvelous musical treasures of traditional Chinese music, and to look for elements that could generate an authentic Chinese flavor.

Two typical examples are《枫桥夜泊》 (*Mooring by Maple Bridge at Night*) by 黎英海 (Lí Yīnghǎi, 1927–2007) and《长相知》 (*The Pledge*) by 郭石夫 (Guō Shífū, 1929–2007). They both borrowed the vocal technique of 顫音 (chànyīn, tremor of the voice) from traditional Chinese operas. The accompanying instrument remained the piano. Both composers explored pentatonic functional harmonies.[197]

郭石夫 (Guō Shífū, 1929–2007)
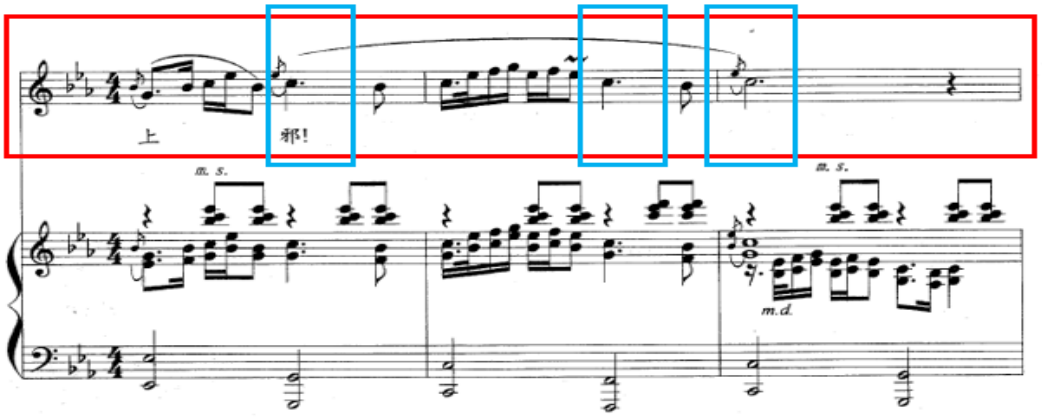
Born in Xiangtan, Hunan Province, Guō Shífū studied composition at the Hunan Vocational College of Art[198] under 杜鸣心 (Dù Míngxīn, b. 1928), a pupil of Hè lùtīng (one of the "Major Four Students of Huáng Zì"). Guō Shífū's compositions are observed in various genres, includ-

[197] Note: readers are encouraged to consult with my dissertation lecture recital for further illustrations.

[198] Note: the name of this institution underwent numerous changes, for the sake of accuracy, this dissertation will use its current name.

ing operas, dance music, symphonic poem, symphony, and more than four hundred songs in different styles. One of his significant contributions is the collection of more than a thousand folk songs from the Xinjiang Province.[199]

In《长相知》 (*The Pledge*), Guō Shífū set a Yuèfǔ poem[200] from Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–9 C.E., 25–220 C.E.) to music with one of the compositional devices in 一唱三叹 (yīchàng sāntàn, special rhythmic and intervallic patterns) from traditional Chinese operas. This song also explored traditional performance practices with intervallic leaps.



Excerpt 3. 10《长相知》(*The Pledge*) by Guō Shífū
(Example of yīchàng sāntàn and notation of tremor of the voice)

黎英海 (Lí Yīnghǎi, 1927–2007)

Born in Fushun, Sichuan Province, Lí Yīnghǎi was an influential composer, piano pedagogue, and theorist in Chinese music. He studied composition and theory at Central Conservato-

[199] "Guo Shifu," Sougou Baike, accessed March 24, 2023, https://baike.sogou.com/v9603792.htm.
[200] Note: the poet is anonymous.

ry of Music[201], under Chén Tiánhè and other professors. After graduation, He taught at multiple institutions, such as Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Central Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music, and others. Lí Yīnghǎi's compositions include symphonic works, piano works, film music, song, and others; his publications include numerous scholarly essays on piano pedagogy. His music theory book《汉族调式及其和声》(*Chinese Modalities and Their Harmonies*) is considered a milestone in the development of the Chinese polyphonic and multipart writing technique.[202] Lí Yīnghǎi's contributions have also included the creation of a fingering system for pentatonic scales, codification and analysis of Chinese music modes and scales, and the reapplication of Western harmony to the pentatonic harmony and voice leading, as well as an extensive collection and arrangement of Chinese folk songs.[203]
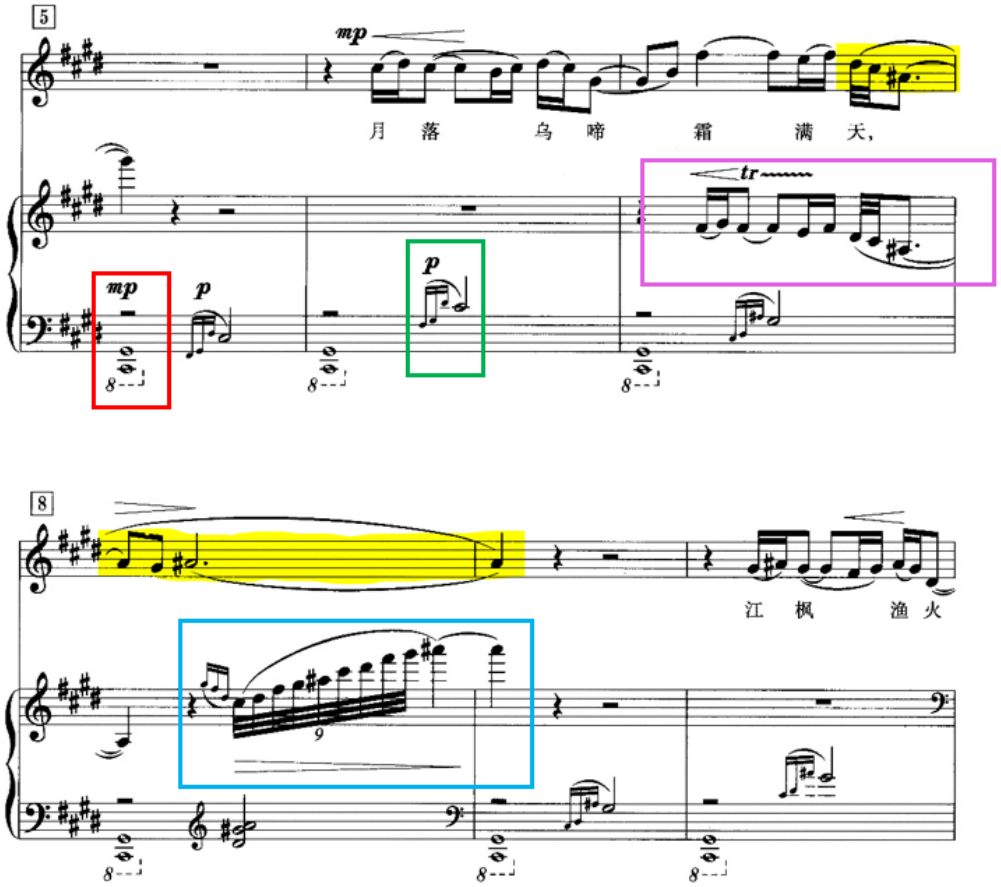
The second song in the song cycle《唐诗三首》 (*Three Tang Shi*), 《枫桥夜泊》 (*Mooring by Maple Bridge at Night)* is drawn from the poem by 张继 (Zhāng Jì, Tang Dynasty, around 753 C.E.). The prelude text-paints the crows at night, streams from the Cold Hills, and the bells from the temple. Different from Guō Shífū's approach, Lí Yīnghǎi did not directly notate the compositional devices from traditional Chinese operas, instead, he adopted the rhythmic gesture from the fingering for the instrument Qín and trusted the singer to understand his idea of chànyīn (tremor of the voice), allowing freedom for its interpretation. This may stem from the fact that Tang Shi-Poems are a poetic genre to be chanted, rather than sung with instruments. Additionally, Lí Yīnghǎi explored tonal center changes through chromatic notes, however, it re-

[201] Note: the name of this institution underwent numerous changes, for the sake of accuracy, this dissertation will use its current name.

[202] Chu and Petrus, 203.

[203] Ibid., 203 - 204.

mains pentatonic in all sections.



Excerpt 3. 11 《枫桥夜泊》(*Mooring by Maple Bridge at Night*) by Lí Yīnghǎi
[Example of text-painting of the bell from the temple, crying crows (indicating a tonal center), streams from the Cold Hill (vehicle of tonal color change through pentatonic texture with different tonal centers), and wind from the frosty sky (echoing the voice); example of notation suggesting tremor of the voice]

A New Era: 赵季平 (Zhào Jìpíng b. 1945)

赵季平 (Zhào Jìpíng, b. 1945) is one of the most influential composers in the revival and exploration of the authentic Chinese flavors. Born to a family of intellectuals in Pingliang, Gansu Province, he received excellent education in traditional Chinese literature, painting, and operas, under the influence of his father 赵望云 (Zhào Wàngyún, 1906–1977), a nationally claimed painter and one of the founders of Chang'an School in Chinese painting. Zhao studied composition at the Xi'an Conservatory of Music under Guō Shífū and other professors, and pursued further education at the Central Conservatory of Music. His compositions include film music, television music, symphony, chamber music, art song, symphonic poem, dance music, and many others. Besides the massive number of national awards, Zhào Jìpíng's compositions have appeared in festivals in the United States, Japan, North Korea, Germany, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many other regions and countries. Remarkable solo musicians and orchestras have performed his works: Yo-yo Ma, the Berlin Philharmonic, the China National Symphony Orchestra, to name a few.[204]

Zhào Jìpíng's art songs are usually composed and published in a version with Chinese folk orchestral instrumentation, and later in a version with piano arrangements under his authorization. In his art songs, Zhào Jìpíng tends to step away from the Western harmonic language and texture, and extensively uses traditional Chinese musical vocabulary and performance practices. A unique feature of his art songs is the original musical ideas extracted from traditional Chinese

204 "Zhao Jiping," Encyclopedia of China, accessed March 24, 2023, https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=497343&Type=bkzyb&SubID=147635.

music, especially folk songs. One can barely identify the exact provenance from a musical event in his art songs, but will perceive the artistic aesthetics through the mastery of traditional musical vocabulary. This mastery comes most likely from the influence of his excellent family education; his constant field study of traditional Chinese music for more than six decades probably contributed to this monumental feature.

The two songs from《风雅颂之交响》(*The Symphony of Feng Ya Song*) are great examples of Zhào Jìpíng's explorations towards authentic Chinese flavors in his art songs.[205]

《关雎》(*Cooing and Wooing*) is the second movement of this symphony, written for tenor and orchestra.[206] The text is drawn from the first poem in *Book of Songs*, the earliest collection of poetry in China. *Cooing and Wooing* is composed with a ternary form and in the key of D-羽 (D-Yǔ): the note D functions as the tonal center in the fifth permutation of a pentatonic scale. The use of pentatonic functional harmony completely changes the functions of all chords as they were in a heptatonic vocabulary, and thus it generates an authentic Chinese flavor.
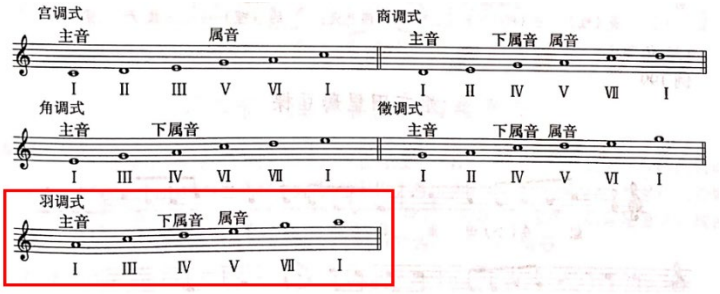


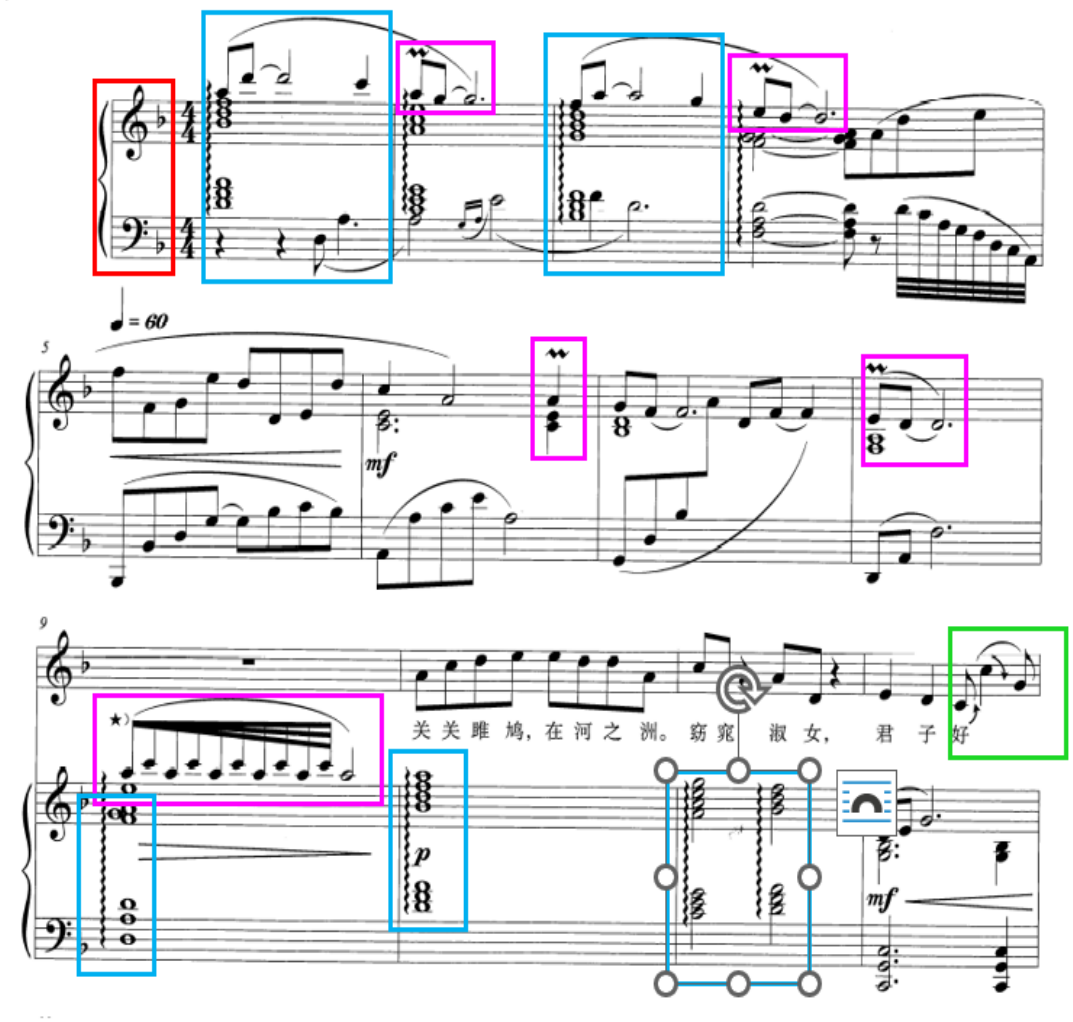
Figure 3. 1 Example of pentatonic scales and Yǔ-Mode

[205] Note: readers are encouraged to consult with my dissertation lecture recital for illustrations.

[206] YU Yafei 余亚飞, "Yong zhongguo yinyue de muyu he shijie duihua – fang zuoqujia zhao jiping" 用中国音乐的母语和世界对话——访作曲家赵季平 [Communicate with the world through the native language of Chinese music], China Literature and Art Criticism 10 (2019): 124.

Zhào Jìpíng also uses fine compositional devices. For example, in the prelude, the arpeggiated gesture from the piano text-paints the water; the mordents at the top notes and the gradual accelerando text-paint the sounds from the turtle doves. The whole prelude represents the scene in the first verse of this poem: "By riverside are cooing, a pair of turtledoves."[207] This may be considered as a compositional technique adopted from the literary device of 兴 (xìng, implied comparisons[208]) in *Book of Songs*. A singing articulation of the word "好" (hǎo, willing to) is composed with a syncopated rhythm and a leap to an octave. This is a linguistic reflection technique in Chinese songs, emphasizing specific words or ideas, which was also used in the song *In the Mountains* by Chén Tiánhè.[209]

[207] Xu, 1.
[208] Qian, 13 - 14.
[209] Note: readers are encouraged to consult with my dissertation lecture recital for more discussion.



Excerpt 3. 12 《关雎》(*Cooing and Wooing*) by Zhào Jìpíng
(Example of key of D-Yu; example of text-painting of water and cooing from the turtle doves; example of special articulation)

《幽兰操》(*Virtues of the Silent Orchid*), is the fourth movement of this symphony, written for soprano and orchestra. The poem is said to have been written by Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) and sung with a traditional instrument. The edition by Confucius is unfortunately lost. Current literature suggests that about twelve hundred years later, the great scholar 韩愈 (Hán Yù, 768-824 C.E.) composed another poem under the same title, contributing to the original work of the great Confucius. In Chinese literature, the orchid symbolizes the philosophical ide-

as of self-discipline and self-cultivation, which are seen as great virtues of a person.

Zhào Jìpíng's orchestration reflects significant changes in texture: the majority of melodic instruments are replaced with traditional Chinese instruments, such as the 二胡 (èrhú), 琵琶 (pípá), 扬琴 (yángqín), 笙 (shēng), etc. This allows the timbre, texture, and practices to be full of Chinese flavors.

Zhào Jìpíng declares his perspectives on composition in this interview:[210]

"…I firmly believe that composers should share the breath and destiny with our people and nation. In this way, the composition by our artists can be down to earth (appreciated by the people). On the other hand, I have another sentence: 'our compositions must contain academic values.' For example, the techniques of harmony, polyphony, and orchestration of *The Symphony of Feng Ya Song* can be analyzed academically. Our composition should not rigidly borrow from imported music, instead, we need to digest the information and convert it into our languages, and the use of them should be closely connected to life of the people…"

"…我始终认为，我们应该和老百姓同呼吸、共命运，跟我们的民族同呼吸、共命运。这样艺术家写出来的作品才能够接地气。当然，我还有一句话，就是'我们的作品一定要有学术价值'。像《风雅颂之交响》，它在技术上的和声，它的复调，它的配器等，这些都是可分析的。我们的创作不是把外来的东西生吞活剥，而是要吸收进来了以后，变成我们自己的语言，并且这些艺术语言的表达要和人民生活紧密相连…"

"…Only through the in-depth experience of folk life, can the compositions be down to earth (appreciated by the people). In music history, composers, such as Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, etc., all wrote unique melodic characters and national styles, which are built upon their in-depth experience of life. I disagree with the approach to simply imitate current Avant-garde music, or the composition of atonal or non-melodic music with no life experiences."

"…只有深入民间去体验生活，写出来的作品才能接地气。音乐史上的贝多芬、莫扎特、柴可夫斯基等作曲家，他们的作品都具有独特的旋律特点和民族风格，都是他们对生活的深刻体验之后的结晶。我不赞成在自己的创作中一味地追求模仿当下西方的先锋音乐，在没有任何生活体验的基础上，写无调性、无旋律化的作品…"

[210] YU Yafei 余亚飞, "Yong zhongguo yinyue de muyu he shijie duihua – fang zuoqujia zhao jiping" 用中国音乐的母语和世界对话——访作曲家赵季平 [Communicate with the world through the native language of Chinese music], China Literature and Art Criticism 10 (2019): 120.

Summary

This chapter traces explorations and developments in Chinese song literature, discussed a few compositional devices and approaches, analyzed some typical repertoires, and introduced the concept of tremor of the voice and traditional performance practices.

The study and teaching of Chinese art song must build upon the understanding of Chinese poetry and language — in fact, this applies to art songs in any language as well. This chapter aims to provide a general guide for non-native singers to access Chinese poetry, provide a partial trace of the development of Chinese art song, and to introduce the method of analyzing this genre.

Besides the techniques of text-painting, mood-painting, tonal color, harmonic grammar and languages, etc., the nature of Chinese as a hierographic and tonal language adds another layer for singers and pedagogues to consider - tonal contour and linguistic reflection of tones. A composer may achieve several compositional goals at a single musical event, as demonstrated by Huáng Zì and Zhào Jìpíng; or one may simply notate a grace note or appoggiatura in the melody to respect the character's tone, such as those seen in the compositions of Zhào Yuánrèn, Huáng Zì, and Guō Shífū.

The marvelousness of Chinese art song is far beyond this chapter's content. There are many other significant composers for further study and research. Please consult the bibliography in this dissertation for further references to other important composers.

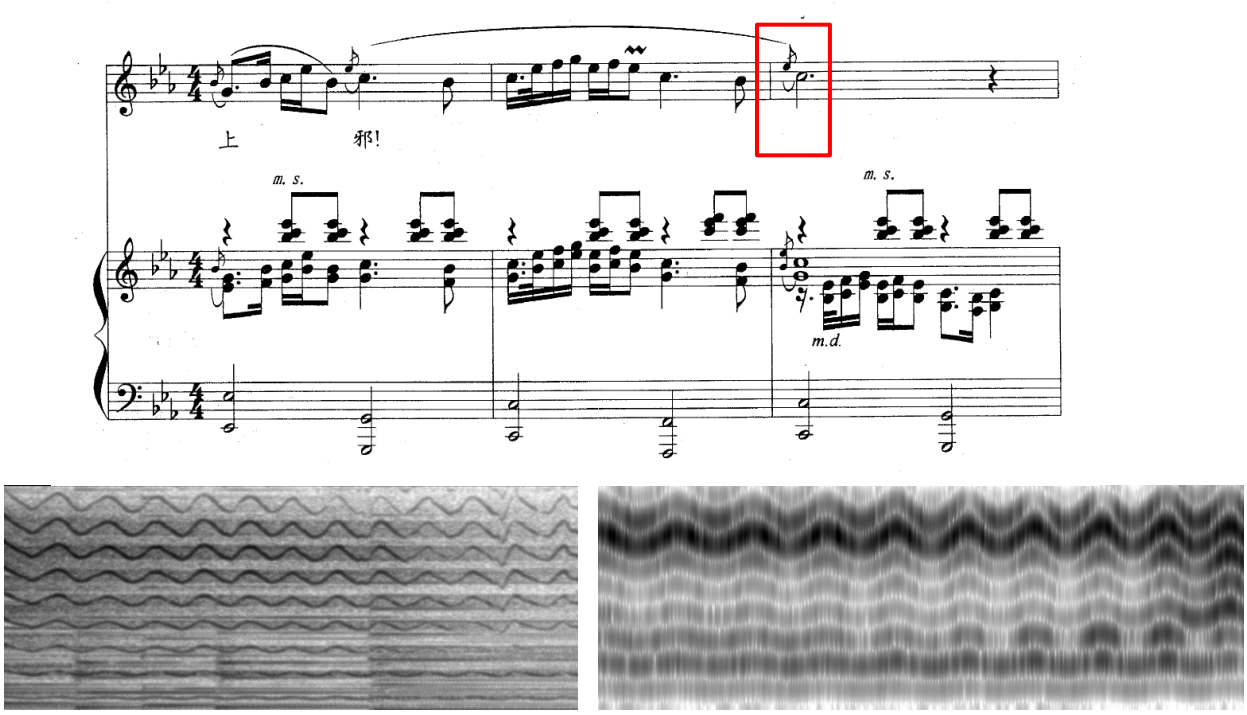
Chapter 4: Performance Practices and Example of Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA)

Vibrato Choices

The concept of vibrato in Western classical singing is defined as "an important stylistic feature of singing in the Western, classical model", which is supposed to remain "uniform and consistent at all times."[211] Scientifically, the origin of vibrato is not yet fully understood, however, some evidence from researchers starts to show that vibrato may be a stabilized physiological tremor in the laryngeal muscles, especially between the cricothyroid and thyroarytenoid muscles.[212] Generally, current scientific evidence indicates that vibrato is generated from the neural oscillator, which delivers the tremor spectrum (4-6 Hz) to the peripheral oscillator.[213] At the peripheral oscillator, the tremor frequencies are regulated to form a cultivated tremor among the laryngeal muscles, which produces the perceptual phenomenon known as "vibrato" in the singing world. [214]

[211] McCoy, 91.
[212] Titze, *Principles of Voice Production*, 322.
[213] Ibid. 322.
[214] Ibid. 322-23.

In traditional Chinese singing, chànyīn (tremor of the voice) is a similar concept to the Western definition of vocal tremor, but only to an extent: it is not perceived as an "even tremor", meaning that the extension of the tremor's variations above and below the center frequency, or the amplitude, is not the same. The following diagram from acoustic analysis in software Praat illustrates the uneven vibrato rate of chànyīn from Professor 吴碧霞 (Wú Bìxiá) when she is sustaining on the character "邪" (yé, ah) as indicated in the musical excerpt:



Excerpt 4. 1 《长相知》 (*The Pledge*) by Guō Shífū
[with illustrations of tremor of the voice (left) and Western vibrato (right) by Wú Bìxiá on similar cardinal/main vowel shape [e] on the same pitch from two different songs in one recital][215]

One may identify that the Western vibrato's shape tends to have relatively equal slopes from

[215] Note: Readers are encouraged to further explore this topic by observing the dissertation lecture recital, where both vibratos are presented.

the left and right sides, and the shape of tremor of the voice tends to tilt towards the left side of the sinusoidal wave's crest.

A study by Han and Zhang suggests that the rate of tremor of the voice from Peking Opera singing is significantly slower than Western vibrato, but the frequency range is not: the average vibrato rate of Peking Opera is 2–3 Hz, slower than that of Western music, but the mean vibrato extent displays no obvious differences between the two.[216] This leads to an essential pedagogical approach: for singers who are not familiar with this technique, induce the singer to produce a slow vibrato, and then regulate the vibrato to match the individual optimal tremor of voice rate.

The device of chànyīn (tremor of the voice) is an artistic choice in Chinese art song interpretation. There aren't unified rules for singers to adopt. However, it is the singer and teacher's responsibility to identify the style of the song, and what kind of vibrato the singer wishes to use in the actual piece, based on the understanding of poem, music, and personal taste. Proper utilizations of this device can further decorate the work and achieve a stylistic unification of both music and poem.

Straight tone may be used as an artistic choice in the interpretation of Chinese art song for certain emotional delivery or musical events. In total, this dissertation suggests at least three major categories of vocal tremor to be used as artistic tools: straight tone, even vibrato (as in Western classical singing), and chànyīn (tremor of the voice). Singers and pedagogues are encouraged to further explore these vocal devices and select them for personal delivery of text and music.

---

[216] Han and Zhang, "Acoustic Analysis of the Singing Vibrato in Traditional Peking Opera," *Journal of Voice*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 511.e1–511.e9.

Vowel Color

Chapter One of this dissertation examined the allophones of each vowel in Standard Chinese, and further proposed practical vowels for the purpose of singing:

For vowel a: [a] (bright), [ɑ] (dark), and [ɛ].

For vowel o: [o] (closed).

For vowel e: [ə].

For vowel e: [e] (closed) and [ɛ] (open).

For vowels i: [i], [ɿ], and i [ʅ].

For vowel u: [u].

For vowel ü: [y].

For er: [ɚ] and [ɐr].

One may identify that the native speech color of Mandarin Chinese is usually perceived as twang and bright, in comparison to European languages, such as German, French, etc. Singing color in Chinese art songs is constantly undergoing exploration in academia, and this is also partially a personal choice. For this reason, this dissertation encourages readers to consult with native speakers and draw their speech color into singing practice. This could help with the linguistic barrier from alphabetic language to hieroglyphic language such as, in this case, Standard Chinese. Through the proposed vowels, this dissertation hopes to help non-native speakers navigate and search for their optimal vowel soundings in singing.

The technique of vowel modification (formant tuning) applies to the vocal practices in Chinese art song. Vowel modification/formant tuning is a vocal technique explored by singers to

modify the singing vowel to "optimize timbre and sound output"[217]. A formant is a resonance of the vocal tract that can be understood as the potential ability to amplify or attenuate certain frequencies, "resulting in vowels and other changes in timbre"[218]. This process is supposed to happen during the guīyùn (vowel clarification). Singers and pedagogues should also pay attention to the most important concept, zìzhèng qiāngyuán, which prohibits the words from being distorted beyond a certain point. Therefore, this dissertation suggests that vowel modification should be explored within the pure/cardinal vowel shapes, such as [a], [e], [i], [o], and [u]. Singers and pedagogues should refrain from using vowel modification for [a] and [o] interchangeably, to avoid incorrect articulation of words.

There is a notable performance practice of the yùnmǔ "üan [ɥ̩ɥɛn]", such as in "卷 (juǎn [tɕɥ̩ɥɛ̌n], v. to roll up)", that needs to change the vowel from [ɛ] to [a] (bright) or [ɑ] (dark), depending on the *tessitura* and personal taste. The reason may be that the vowel [ɛ] does not easily align with other vowels for the purpose of achieving a unified singing timbre throughout. Because its second format (F2) is observed to be around 2000 to 3500 Hz, while for [a] (bright) and [ɑ] (dark), the second formant is significantly lower than 2000 Hz, and sits around 1000 to 1500 Hz. The first formant (F1) for these vowels is generally not as low a frequency. This means the vowel shape [ɛ] will not be kept easily as [a] (bright) and [ɑ] (dark) while the singing pitches ascend. Besides the factual reason of formants, this could also be an aesthetic performance practice from traditional Chinese operas, where singers use closed vowels to navigate through *passagi*.

[217] McCoy, 72-73.
[218] Ibid., 64-65.

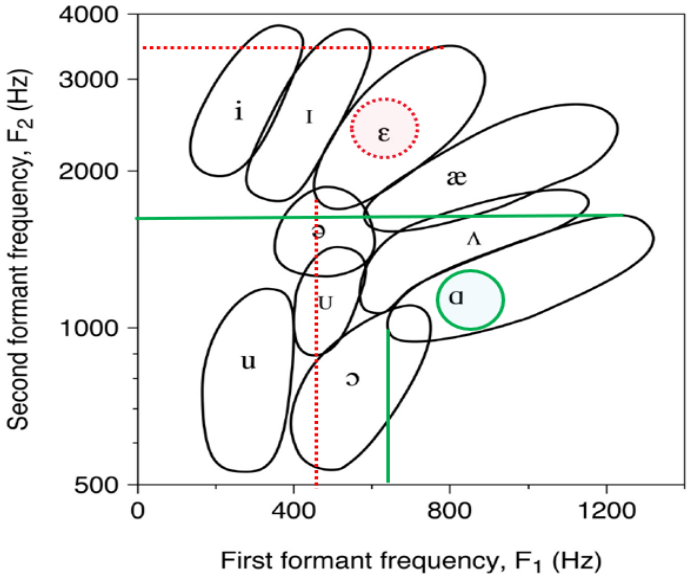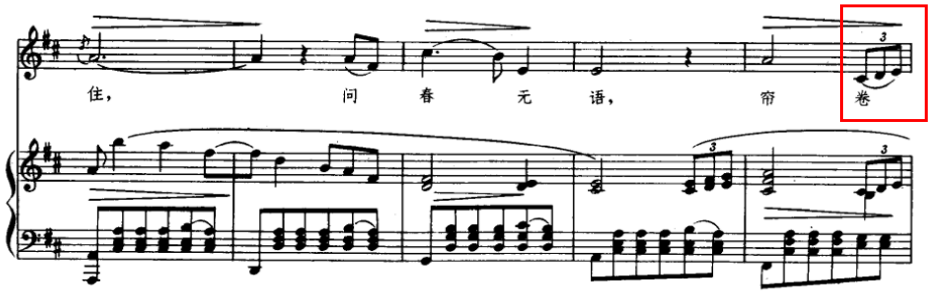


Figure 4. 1 Chart of vowels with frequency region for F1 and F2[219]

For example, in the song *Ascending the Tower-To the Tune of Rouged Lips* by Huáng Zì, the character "卷 (juǎn [tɕʲɥɛ̌n], v. to roll up)" will be sung as [tɕʲɥɑ̌n] (dark a) or [tɕʲɥǎn] (bright a) with the singing vowel to be classified into the vowel a[a] color.
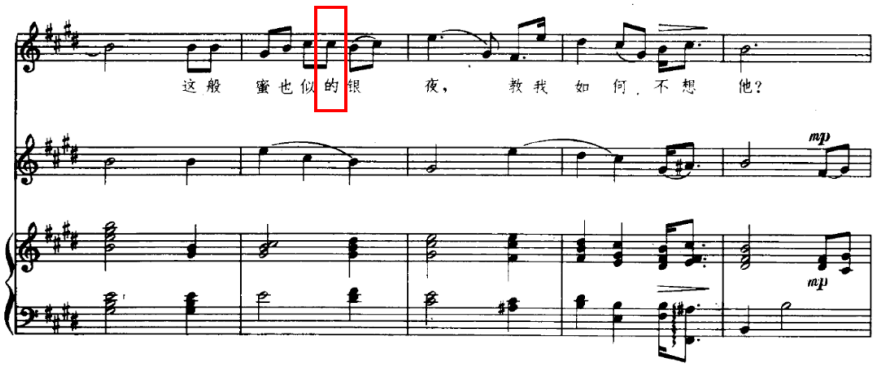


Excerpt 4. 2 Character "卷 (juǎn [tɕʲɥɛ̌n], to roll up)" in 《点绛唇・赋登楼》 (*Ascending the Tower-To the Tune of Rouged Lips)* by Huáng Zì

[219] Titze, 162.

Character 的 and 了
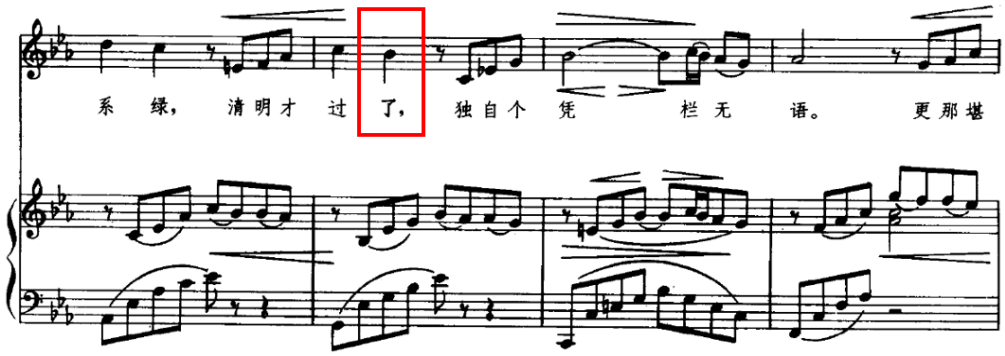
Character “的 (de [də])”, as in “蜜也似的 (mì yě shì de, honey-like)”, is a character with light pronunciation in speech. In cases when the character “的” appears in Chinese art songs, it will be sung as [di] with a changed vowel from [ə] to [i].



Excerpt 4. 3 Character “的 (de [də])” in 《教我如何不想他？》（*How Can I Not Miss Him?*[220]） by Zhào Yuánrèn

There are two pronunciations for character “了”: le [lə] and liǎo [lʲɥǎu], depending on the character’s grammatical function. For accessing art song, because the text is drawn from fine poetry or prose, this dissertation suggests using the pronunciation of liǎo [lʲɥǎu], to achieve a better alignment of legato, vowel color, and phrasing.

[220] Note: the original pronoun in this title was “她 (tā [tʰā], she/her)”, which was the first use of the feminine pronoun in Chinese history.



Excerpt 4. 4 Character "了 (liǎo [lj̱ǎu])" in 《思乡》 (*Longing for Home*) by Huáng Zì

Use of Glides

As discussed in previous chapters, glides are a natural component of the yùntóu (medial) in the Chinese language. Besides the linguistic nature, one treatment of dǎozì is to add a grace note and glide into the written note on the score. In the 1950s, several rounds of scholarly debates on the use of glides were observed among academia as 土洋之争 (tǔ yáng zhī zhēng, a battle between native and foreign tastes and methodology).[221] Supporters of the Western singing technique argued that the glides in articulation impact the beauty of *Bel Canto*[222]; advocates of authentic Chinese diction and approaches claimed that without glides, the authentic Chinese language loses the original tastes.
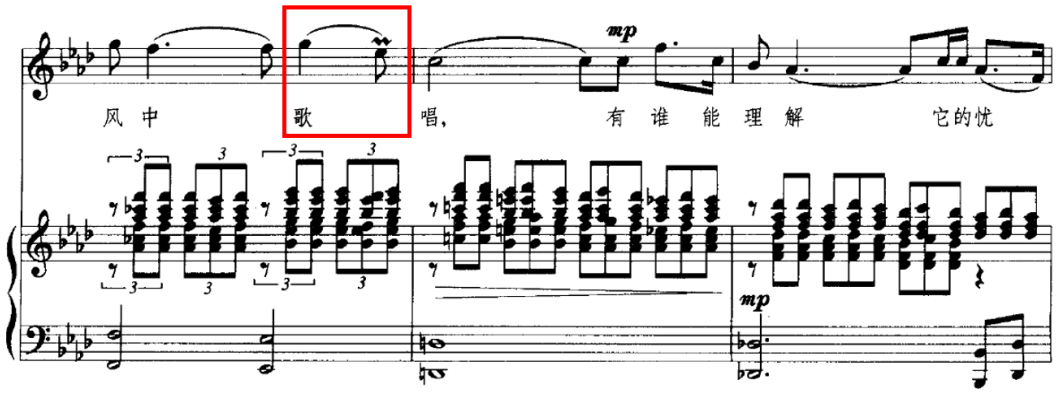
This dissertation proposes that the use of glides is encouraged, in the following circumstances: 1) as a treatment to dǎozì; 2) as a carefully considered artistic choice for melody; 3) to em-

[221] Chu and Petrus, 92.
[222] Ibid., 92.

phasize certain characters after careful examination of the text. Without examination of text or consideration of artistry, habitual use of glides should be prohibited.

Ornamentation

Ornamentation in Chinese art song may be frequently observed as grace notes and mordents, both of which can be the treatments to dǎozì. Dr. Zhào Yuánrèn identified the extensive use of both in Chinese folk music as the "gourmet" flavor of a region, or the inflection of a certain word.[223] Because art song is considered a serious genre in music, this dissertation suggests respecting the indication of the composer's intent and to not use ornamentation at random. Similar to the use of glides, intentional and well-considered use of ornamentation should be an artistic choice, a treatment to dǎozì, or used as an emphasis for a certain word in the text. Random use of ornamentation as a vocal habit ought to be prohibited.



Excerpt 4. 5 Mordent in《鸟儿在风中歌唱》(*The Birds Are Singing in the Wind*) by Liú Cōng

[223] Ibid., 94.

Glottal
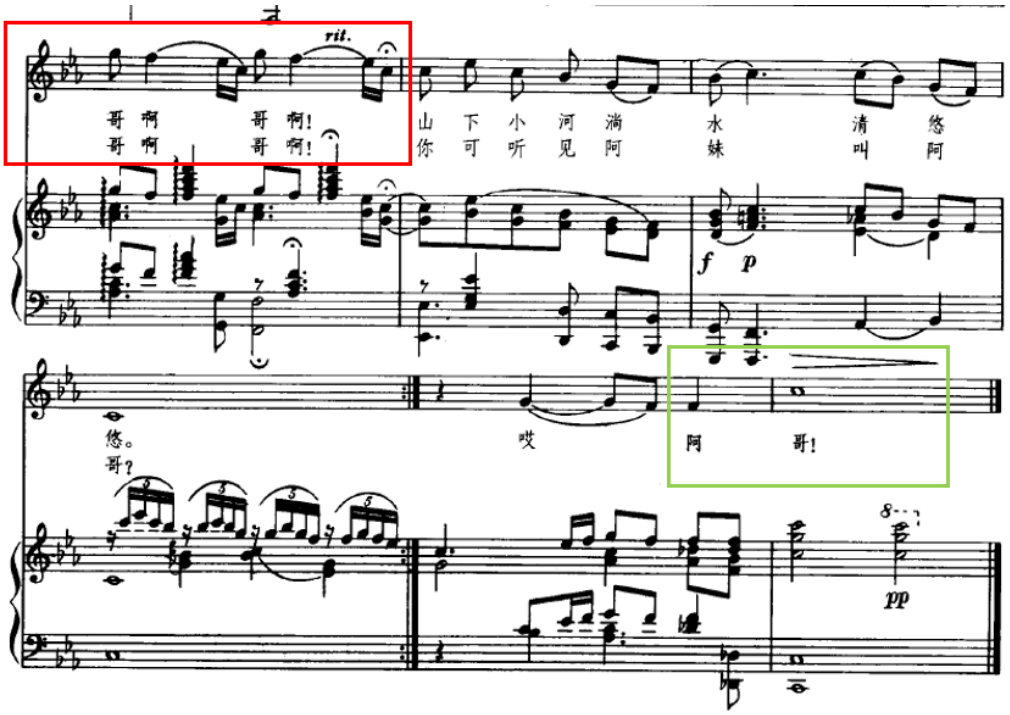
The glottal is used in spoken Chinese, for example in words "啊 (a [a], ah)"，"阿哥 (ā g [ā gə], brother), "长安 (Cháng'ān [tsʰáŋ ʔān], the city of Chang'an)", and "皮袄 (pí'ǎo [pʰí ʔǎu], fur-lined jacket)", etc. This begs an important question: do singers use glottal sounds in Chinese singing? The answer is: yes.

The use of glottal in Chinese art song may be compared to the similar practice in German Lied and English songs: singers approach it with a gentle lift in the sound, rather than a huge glottal stop, because it breaks the legato line and generates a disconnection of the airflow, neither of which are expected in singing. The grammatical structure of a word will determine the use of glottal. The general principle is to observe the symbol of the apostrophe in the pīnyīn system: when the apostrophe appears, the glottal sound ought to be used as a requirement. There are several other conditions for the use of glottal:

1. When a word begins with a vowel, e.g., 阿哥 (ā gē [ā gə], brother), 爱情 (ài qíng [ài tɕʰíŋ], love).
2. When a character in a word begins with yùnfù (main vowel), e.g., 长安 (Cháng'ān [tsʰáŋ ʔān], the city of Chang'an)", "皮袄 (pí'ǎo [pʰí ʔǎu], fur-lined jacket)", etc.

However, when a character functions as an interjection after a word that begins with a vowel, glottal is not required, e.g., "哥啊! (gē a [gə a], brother oh!", "妈啊! (mā a [mā a], mother oh!)", etc. Chu and Petrus observed a great example of this phenomenon:[224]

[224] Chu and Petrus, 89.



Excerpt 4. 6 Glottal appearance in “哥啊! (gē a [gə a], brother oh!” and disappearance in “阿哥 (ā gē [ā gə], n. brother)” in 《小河淌水》 (*The Murmuring Brook*), folk song arrangement by Lí Yīnghǎi

Example of Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA)

《枫桥夜泊》 (*Mooring by Maple Bridge at Night*)
by 黎英海 (Lí Yīnghǎi, 1927 – 2007)
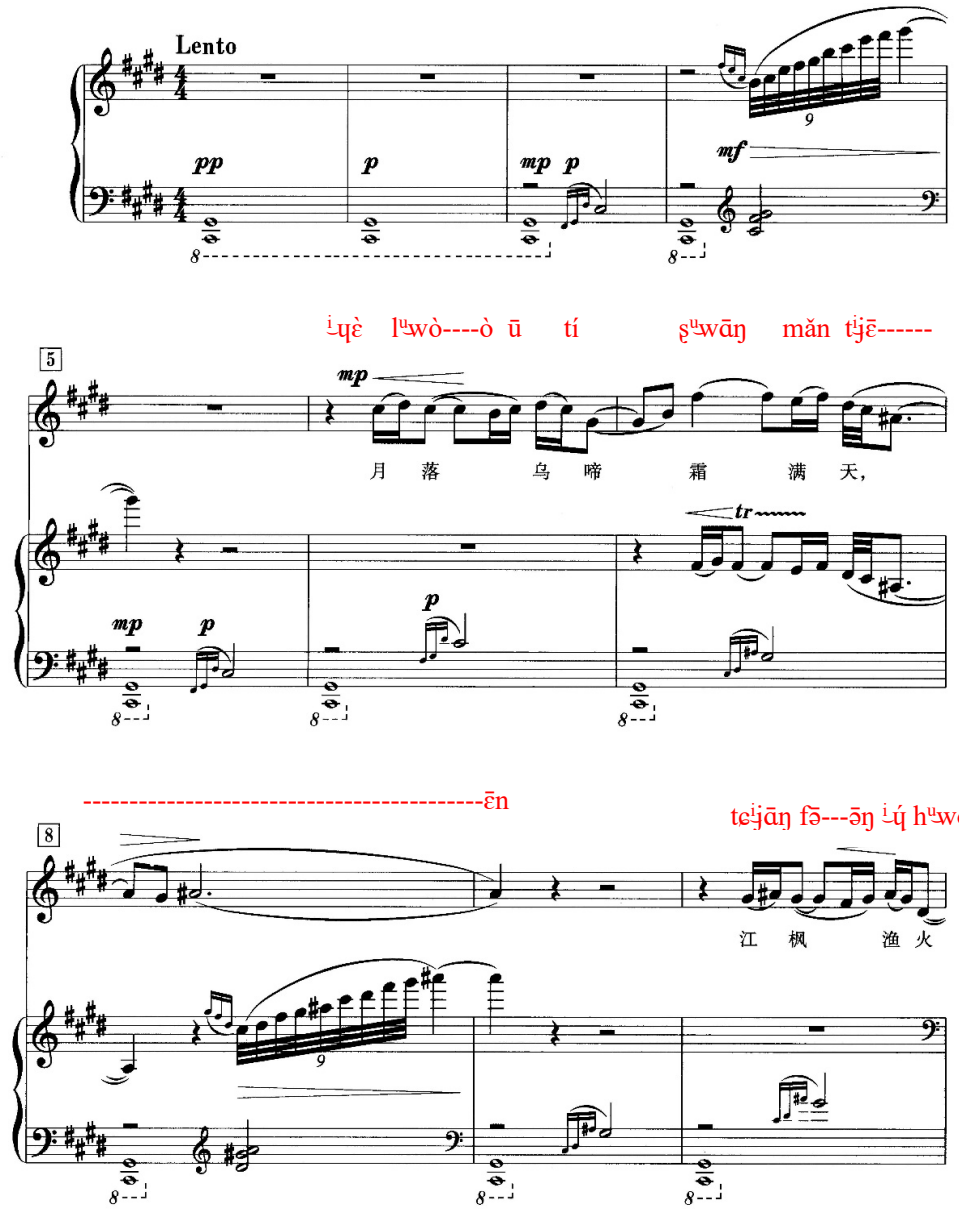
月	落	乌	啼	霜	满	天，
[ˈɻɥè	lʷʅwò	ū	tí	ʂʷʅwɑ̄ŋ	mǎn	tʲɻɛ̄n]
江	枫	渔	火	对	愁	眠。
[tɕʲɻɑ̄ŋ	fə̄ŋ	ˈɻú	hʷʅwǒ	dʷʅwèi	tʂʰóu	mˈɻɥén]
姑	苏	城	外	寒	山	寺，
[gū	sū	tʂʰə́ŋ	ʷʅwài	hán	ʂān	sʔ̀]
夜	半	钟	声	到	客	船。
[ˈɻɛ̀	bàn	zɥ̄ŋ	ʂə̄ŋ	dɑ̀u	kʰə̀	tsʰʷʅwán]

Mooring by Maple Bridge at Night
by Zhāng Jì (712-779/Tang Dynasty)
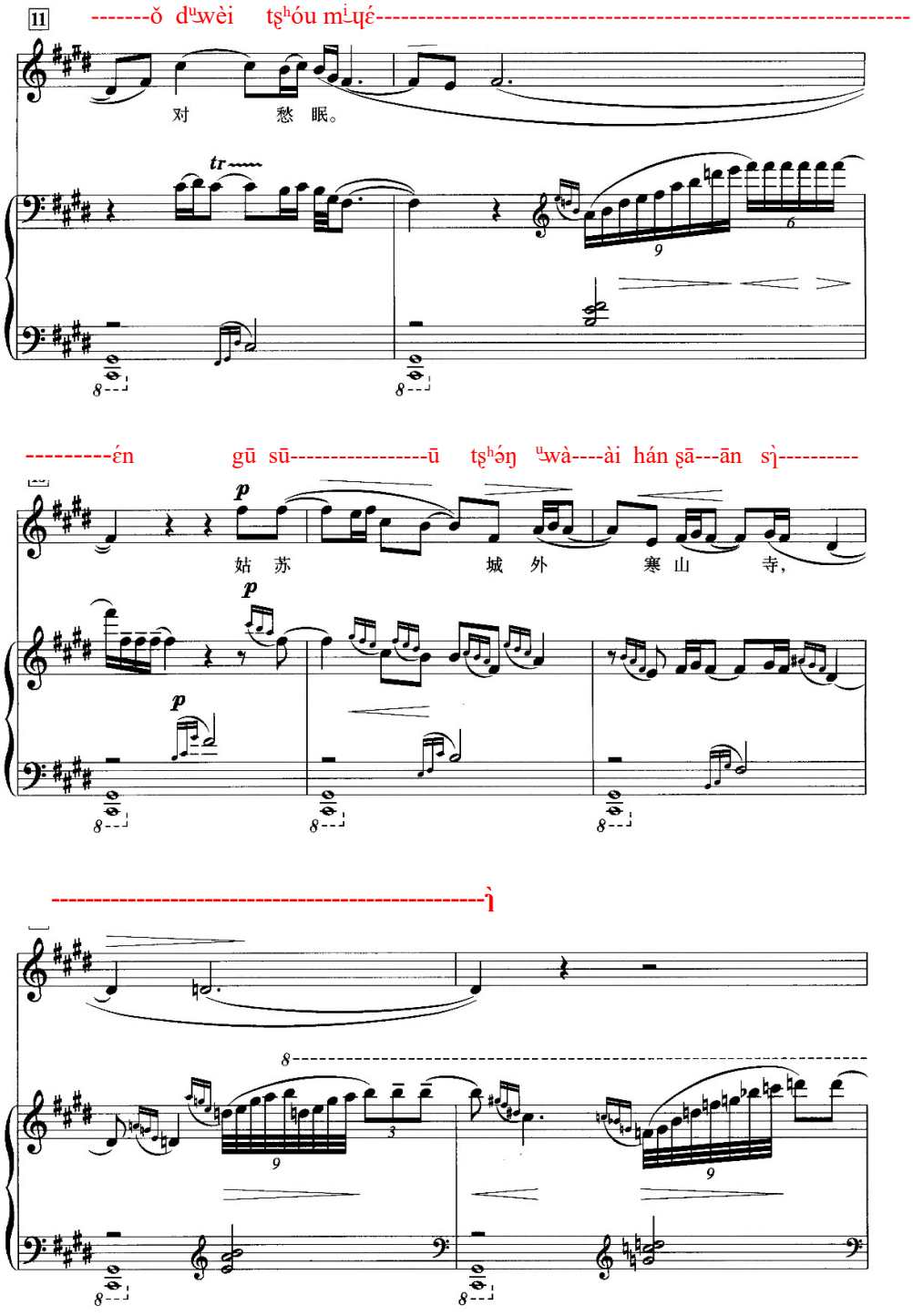
At moonset cry the crows, streaking the frosty sky,
Dimly lit fishing boats' neath maple's sadly lie.
Beyond the city walls, from Temple of Cold Hill.
Bells break the ship borne roamer's dream and midnight still.
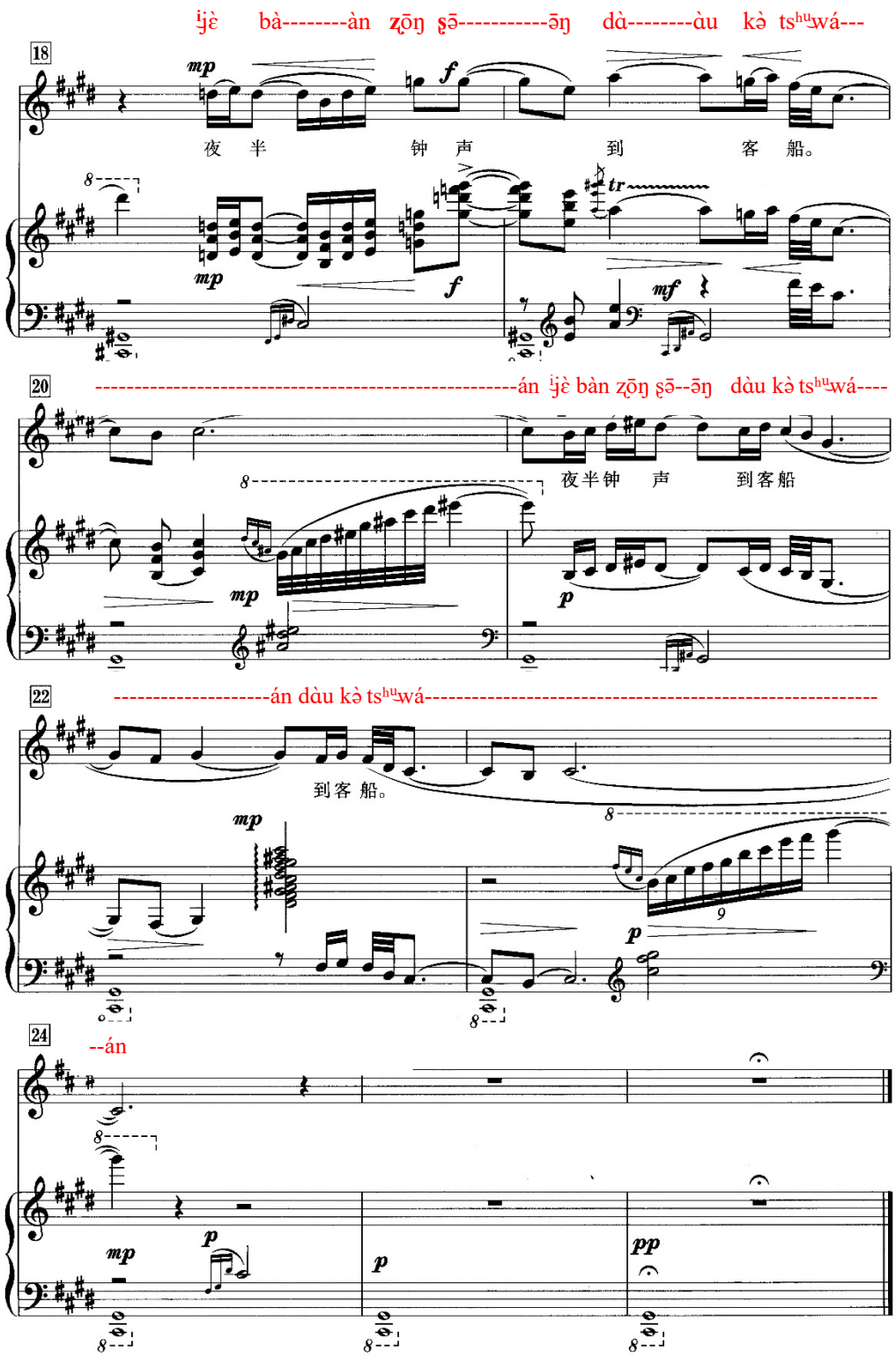
枫 桥 夜 泊

[唐] 张　继诗
黎英海曲



1/3


11
-------ǒ dᵘwèi tʂʰóu mⁱɥɛ́----------
对 愁 眠。
---------én gū sū----------ū tʂʰə́ŋ ʰwà----ài hán ʂā---ān sʅ̀----------
----------ì


ʲjè bà--------àn zo̱ŋ ʂə----------əŋ dà--------àu kà tsʰʷwá---
18
夜 半 钟 声 到 客 船。
20
----------án ʲjè bàn zo̱ŋ ʂə--əŋ dàu kà tsʰʷwá----
夜半钟 声 到客船
22
----------án dàu kà tsʰʷwá----------
到客 船。
24
--án

Conclusion

A combination of poetry and music, art song has been attracting musicians and scholars to study and research as a serious genre for centuries. Since the 1920s, Chinese composers have been exploring the integration of Chinese poetry and music in various ways. The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive guide for the study and performance of Chinese art song, encompassing aspects of lyric diction, voice pedagogy, poetry, musical style, and performance practices, in a scholarly and comprehensive manner.

The first chapter of this dissertation provides an analysis of the lyric diction of Standard Chinese, which categorizes vowels and consonants into two major groups, shēngmǔ (initial) and yùnmǔ (final). At most, a syllable in Chinese can contain an initial, a medial, a main vowel, a final consonant, and a tone. To achieve authentic pronunciation in vocal practices, an original lyric diction alphabetic system based on traditional Chinese vocal practices and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet is presented.

Chapter Two is a survey of treatises on traditional Chinese voice pedagogy. This chapter provides pedagogical explanations and approaches, examining vocal aesthetics and practical concepts from these scholarships. One of the most important vocal principles, zìzhèng qiāngyuán, is achieved through the system of "head, belly, and tail" of a character. This chapter offers a detailed discussion on the pedagogy for each part of the articulation of a character and the practice of tones, supported by scholarship on these treatises. The important phenomenon dǎozì is illustrated with musical examples.

Titled "From Poetry to Song," Chapter Three traces the development of Chinese poetry and introduces the basic characteristics of each genre. With the exception of Shī-Poetry, which is to

be chanted, most traditional poetic forms in Chinese literature are meant to be associated with singing and musical accompaniment, which may be considered one of the precursors to Chinese art song. This chapter traces the pioneers of Chinese art song and discusses their stylistic features through functional harmony, texture, compositional devices, linguistic inflection techniques, and other elements. It also examines the development of "authentic Chinese flavors" in the art song genre by discussing the tremor of the voice, traditional musical vocabulary, and the reformation of orchestral instrumentation.

The final chapter of this dissertation focuses on performance practices and provides an example of the Lyric Diction Phonetic Alphabet System (LPA). It discusses vibrato choices, vowel color, glides, ornamentation, and the use of glottal sound. Additionally, the vocal practices for the pronunciation of certain characters are mentioned. This chapter provides a valuable resource for performers looking to achieve authentic pronunciation and performance practices in Chinese art song.

In conclusion, this dissertation offers a scholarly and comprehensive guide for the study, teaching, and performance of Chinese art song. The combination of Chinese poetry and music in art song offers a unique perspective on the intersection of these two art forms and their cultural significance. With the guidance provided in this dissertation, performers can bring authenticity and nuance to their interpretations of Chinese art song. For future research, publication as articles and a book can expand on the specific aspects of this dissertation's findings, and further investigate the historical and cultural significance of Chinese art song. This dissertation provides practical use for musicians, educators, and researchers interested in the genre, contributing to the practice and instruction of Chinese art song in the voice community.

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