

Analysis of Cultural Mentality in Researches on History of Western Music

WANG Tao^{[a],*}

^[a]Academy of Music, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, China.
*Corresponding author.

Received 8 March 2017; accepted 4 May 2017
Published online 26 May 2017

Abstract

The history of western music is studied in quantity currently. Its research plays a significant role for all-round development of music culture and art. But it is necessary to note that it is difficult to study the history of western music. So, researchers need to keep good cultural mentality, accept the differences between Chinese and western music culture with open, tolerant, positive, understanding and balanced mentality and adopt favorable methods to improve the research achievements on the history of western music and offer conditions for current music development. This paper mainly starts from the research status of history of western music, analyzes and describes the cultural mentality in the process of studying the history of western music in an all-round and detailed manner.

Key words: Western music history; Research methods; Cultural psychology; Understanding and balance

Wang, T. (2017). Analysis of Cultural Mentality in Researches on History of Western Music. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 13(5), 42-45. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/9688> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/9688>

INTRODUCTION

The development of history of western music has positive significance and function for music development in the present stage. Comprehensive research and analysis of history of western music can offer favorable preconditions for propagating modern musical art. Under existing objective conditions, there are many limitations during

studying the history of western music. These limitations hinder the research progress and affect the propaganda of musical art. The history of western music is an important course in musicology and has positive significance and function for college teaching work. Besides, it is a common course in numerous conservatories of music. Positive, rational and scientific cultural mentality is required during studying the history of western music so as to improve the research achievements and really find the connotation and meaning in the history of western music. It is necessary to note that culture default problem exists in the research on the history of western music, which affects the research achievements. Thus, understanding and balanced mentality are required to enhance the research effect.

1. RESEARCH STATUS OF HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

1.1 Difficulties in the Research on the History of Western Music

There are some difficulties in studying the history of western music. Firstly, there are a few original works in China's libraries. Researchers can rarely touch some foreign music works. This increases the research difficulty. Secondly, there are very few opportunities for Chinese researches to study the history of western music at abroad. Thus, they cannot analyze original works (i.e. the contents of music manuscripts in the history of western music) in a comprehensive and detailed way. Thirdly, the foreign language level of scholars and students who study the history of western music can neither translate by themselves nor read original works fluently. So, certain deviation may occur during studying the contents about the history of western music. Fourthly, there is badly lack of translated works about the history of western music. For example, the number of works is less than other

subjects, and translation quality and level are insufficient. As well, there are obvious errors.

1.2 Research History of History of Western Music

The history of western music has gone through a long development period, and the works are also numerous. But the research time is short, and the development speed of western music is fast. Besides, the good integration of multiple methods, diversified research modes, the combination of music and multiple subjects and interdisciplinary research mode have positive significance and function for revealing the development of music art. The history of western music mainly experiences the following periods in the continuous research process in China.

1.2.1 The Period Before the New Culture Movement

Before the New Culture Movement, Chinese people did not fully understand the history of western music and mostly harbored the attitude of curiosity. After the New Culture Movement, democracy and science were advocated. More intellectuals realized the significance of the history of western music and began to translate some works, spread and introduce music knowledge.

1.2.2 The Periods After the Establishment of the People's Republic of China

In this period, political influence was dominated. From the perspective of international politics, the history of western music was mostly influenced by the Soviet Union. Academic exchange between China and the Soviet Union was frequent, so the research on the history of western music achieved a good effect. From the perspective of Chinese politics, class struggle affected the research on the history of western all the time. As a result, cultural research work suffered bad guidance of politics.

1.2.3 The Period of "the Cultural Revolution" and the Period of the Reform and Opening-Up Policy

In 1966-1976, the Great Cultural Revolution movement started, which led to profound influence on the research of history of western music. In academic research process, politicalization situation was very obvious. However, as the reform and opening-up policy was gradually implemented, the research work on the history of western music gained a good cultural environment. Translated works appeared in quantity, and the research work also achieved a great result.

1.2.4 Development Period in Recent 10 Years

The research work on the history of western music gained a good result as many western musical associations were set up, and the opinions changed a lot. Many scholars proposed many unique views, which provided a favorable development precondition for the research work on the history of western music.

1.3 Research Status of History of Western Music

Seeing from the research status of history of western music, the research work has gained a good result in the

continuous development process. The research purposes, objects and perspectives have been enriched and expanded continuously, and the research could be well integrated with many subjects. The professional, rigorous, pragmatic and earnest academic attitude of Chinese scholars will be able to effectively promote the research work on the history of western music. But what can not be ignored is that the living soil of history of western music and Chinese music art is different, so more efforts are required to study and explore it.

2. CULTURAL MENTALITY IN STUDYING THE HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC

During studying the history of western music, scientific and reasonable cultural mentality is required to really guarantee the research work and gain good achievements. Cultural mentality refers to the psychological state during studying cultural subjects, and it is researchers' psychological factor. It has positive significance for the research work. In the open social environment, Chinese scholars hold more advanced and rational cultural mentality during studying the history of western music.

2.1 Open and Tolerant Cultural Mentality

Open and tolerant cultural mentality are required in the research work on the history of western music. Chinese nation owns very broad spirit of tolerance and mind, so Chinese people are very open and tolerant for foreign culture. Meanwhile, Chinese culture has developed for several thousand of years and owns huge culture centripetal force and self-confidence for national culture. Continuous and healthy growth of market economy, continuous renewal and progress of network technology generate large impacts on culture and ideology. In the face of current cultural environment, it is still necessary to maintain open and tolerant mentality, seek common points and reserve differences and better accept foreign culture during studying the history of western music. From the last century to the beginning of the 21st century, "conspiracy view" often existed. Those holding this view considered that western culture would erode Chinese culture and go against the development of Chinese traditional culture. In this period, many difficulties existed in the research work on the history of western music. But under current international background of economic globalization, scholars realize the importance of open and tolerant mentality during studying the history of western music. Moreover, China pays attention to the development of spiritual culture, so many policies are issued to support the research on the history of western music. These policies offer a favorable precondition for the smooth implementation of research work.

To face the research work on the history of western music with open and tolerant mentality, firstly, researchers

should fully realize and admit the deficiency of research work in China. The history of western music is based on the foundation of western development. Hence, large differences in musical style, language expression, melody, scale and especially the content are common. Secondly, Chinese scholars should start from their own cultural horizon and the perspective of Chinese people and treat western music and culture comprehensively and correctly so as to reach a good research effect. Thirdly, for the research in the history of western music, Chinese scholars should positively handle the relationship between the essence and the dross. In the long-term development process of history of western music, both purified part and dross exist. Thus, it is required to learn from the strong points and avoid the weaknesses, fully absorb the essence and effectively get rid of the dross which is incompatible with Chinese culture.

2.2 Positive Learning Mentality

Positive learning mentality plays a positive role in studying the history of western music. At present, the research foundation for the history of western music is not profound enough, which is the major reason which affects the research result. Music expresses people's thought and emotion, so there are many subjective factors. From this level, many subjective factors exist in the history of western music. For a long time, people's researches of culture have focused on material and objective aspects, and the researches on subjective contents are short. Thus, it is required to attach importance to the spiritual content through effective means, which will be positive for the final research effect. Therefore, Chinese scholars should adopt positive and active learning mentality to study the subjective content of history of western music, and fully understand creators' thoughts and emotions in the western music works.

To learn the history of western music with positive mentality, firstly, the differences between Chinese and western musical cultures should be presented effectively. Besides, cultural fusion and reference activities should be carried out actively. There are many similarities between Chinese and western musical cultures. Scholars should well grasp these similarities. Secondly, Chinese scholars should continuously expand and enrich their research thoughts. For example, the contents about the relationship between form and content exist in the practical research process. In the long-term exploration process, scholars finally confirm the both have important relationship of interdependency and mutual development.

2.3 Understanding and Balanced Cultural Mentality

In this stage, a great imbalance exists in the research work on the history of western music. On the one hand, Chinese researchers on this aspect are few, and the research depth is insufficient. So, the research achievements are affected,

and the research foundation is very weak. On the other hand, ideological deviation exists in the research process, which also influences the research effect. The main reason is that backwardness of cultural education affects the development achievement of music education, which indirectly leads to insufficient researches on the history of western music. For such situation, Chinese scholars should adopt understanding and balanced cultural mentality. Firstly, it is required to fully realize the deficiencies in the aspect of studying the history of western music, actively enhance musical culture education, set up more majors about the history of western music, let students fully learn relevant courses, promote students to better learn the knowledge about the history of western music and improve their ideological cognition. Secondly, conservatories of music in China should actively create favorable culture and art atmosphere, actively set up corresponding research associations about the history of western music, improve the influence, let more students learn consciously and cultivate more follow-up talents.

2.4 Balance Between Theoretical Thinking and Art Inspiration

Certain unbalanced state exists between theoretical thinking and art inspiration during studying the history of western music. Such contradiction can effectively facilitate the research on the history of western music. Chinese scholars are good at starting from the surface of things and overall realizing the essence of things during studying the history of western music. Since poetic language is often used in Chinese culture, thinking logic is influenced invisibly. But in the culture and art research process, logical thinking can be used actively. Although such mode is used seldom, it can still play a good role. It is necessary to keep a good balance between theoretical thinking and art inspiration during studying the history of western music. About the content of ideology, researchers of history of western music should keep full understanding, clearly know the differences in Chinese and western ideology, and seek a good balance as far as possible. During studying the history of western music, high requirements are proposed for translators to well balance theoretical thinking and art inspiration. Translators need to start from western humanistic background, thinking mode, language habit and aesthetic orientation, associate Chinese counterparts and well translate musical works.

CONCLUSION

The difficulty in studying the history of western music influences the research effect. Through comprehensive analysis of the development of history of western music, we can find the research work has achieved a good result, but it is still necessary to adopt positive and rational cultural mentality. Researchers keep open and tolerant cultural mentality as well as positive learning mentality,

actively apply understanding and balanced cultural mentality, and achieve the balance between theoretical thinking and art inspiration. These are the main situations of cultural mentality in the research process. Good cultural mentality has positive significance and function for studying the history of western music the research on the history of western music involves multiple aspects. Favorable cultural mentality can effectively promote the research work and give play to the overall advantage of the work.

REFERENCES

- Beysenbekova, G. B., Kadina, Z. Z., & Sateeva, B. S. (2014). Taking into consideration cultural mentality of different nations in the cross-cultural communication. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 2(2), 203-206.
- Chen, Y. W. (2015). Cross and mutual integration—on the relationship between western music historiography and national musicology. *Music Creation*, (10), 140-141.
- Geng, Y. (2015). Evolution in ideology and culture after the opium wars and up to the westernization movement. *An introductory study on Chin's cultural transformation in recent times* (pp.29-78). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Lin, X. J. (2016). On the perfect dialogue between Paul Landormy and music history in the history of western music. *Northern Music*, (9), 27-27.
- Sun, J. Y. (2012). Reflections on the present situation of the study of western music history—Discussing the new possibility in the light of the problems existing in the study of music aesthetics. *Beauty and Times*, (7), 41-43.