



A Study of the Differences between Chinese and Western Saxophone Playing Styles

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Abstract. After nearly 200 years of development, the saxophone has become an important part of the Western musical instruments. In the 1940s, the saxophone was officially introduced to China, and in the process of integration with Chinese music, a unique style of playing was formed. Compared with the Western saxophone, which emphasizes composer's experience, rhythmic changes and drama, the Eastern saxophone has a more national style of playing, with more emphasis on harmony and lyricism. In this paper, we study the development history of saxophone in China and the West and the differences of playing styles. In the future, we should maintain the cultural confidence of the oriental saxophone playing style, but also integrate Chinese music culture with the western orchestral art organically, and continuously promote the overall development of Chinese music career.

Keywords: Saxophone; Chinese and Western Performance Style Differences; Music Field

1 Introduction

The saxophone is the saint of Chinese instruments, the soul of modern jazz, and is known as "the unparalleled wind instrument". It has the loudness of brass and the softness of woodwinds. French musician Berlioz said: "The main characteristic of the saxophone is the beautiful variation of sound, the calmness of intensity, the passionate abundance, the gentle sadness, as if it were an echo of an echo. When there is silence and no sound, there is no music that can produce this marvelous sound." This article will focus on the history of the development of the saxophone in China and abroad and the differences in playing styles for saxophone lovers.

2 The Development of the Saxophone in Western Countries

The saxophone was invented in 1840 by the Belgian Adolphe Sachs. Sax was invented in 1840. On June 29, 1846, the saxophone was authorized to operate in France, and in 1853, French military bands began experimenting with it, combining the advantages of woodwind and brass instruments, and the saxophone gradually became a

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C. Shen et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Language, Art and Cultural Exchange (ICLACE 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 855,

https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-265-1_38

substitute for the oboe and horn. In 1928 French classical saxophonist Marcel Mule founded the first saxophone quartet, and after 1910 the saxophone played an integral role in the popularity of jazz music.

The saxophone is a single reed wind instrument with a woodwind body made of metal. The saxophone has a special feature that allows it to bridge the gap between woodwind and brass instruments. The saxophone has both the colorfulfulness of a woodwind instrument and the strength of a brass instrument, and it can imitate the singing of the human voice and the lyricism of an orchestra. Saxophone music is very expressive, the tone is emotional, deep and calm, bright and soft, very artistic and infectious. The saxophone can be used in all kinds of music from classical to popular, including light bands, electric bands, jazz bands, rock bands, marching bands and symphony bands[1].

The saxophone has not developed in exactly the same direction in Western countries. The culture, music and customs of each country are different, and each country has developed its own distinctive style of saxophone. The "German" saxophone has a full and dark tone, the "French" saxophone has a clear and bright tone, and the "English" saxophone has a wide and loose tone. As the United States is a multi-ethnic immigrant country, the "American" saxophone combines the sound characteristics of western countries, forming a unique sound "wide, loose, soft, thick and bright"[2].

3 The Development of Saxophone in China

3.1 Officially Introduced to China in the 1940s

In 1935, the government of the Republic of China sent a group of Chinese students to study in Western countries, including Hong Pan, who later became known as the "father of Chinese wind music". From this time on, the saxophone was introduced to China in a real sense[3]. Of course, from 1941 to 1949, our country was at war and the development of saxophone and other cultural arts almost came to a halt. From 1949 to 1978, China's cultural career has made great progress, but still has not fully absorbed the musical elements of Western countries, saxophone did not get attention. The saxophone really developed in China after the reform and opening up.

3.2 Saxophone Became Increasingly Popular After The Reform And Opening Up

After the reform and opening up, with the reform of China's social system, the improvement of people's material and cultural level and the high liberation of ideology, the cultural and artistic exchange activities between China and abroad have been increasing, and the saxophone has appeared more and more in the field of performance, dance hall and other entertainment places. Especially the famous American saxophonist Kenny King's saxophone song "Going Home" became popular all over the world, the saxophone also started to make to be known and sought after by the nation at an amazing speed. Musicians also began to use the saxophone to play our music and songs, and our military bands also began to introduce the saxophone[4]. Nowadays, in

the development of many music colleges in China, saxophone majors have also been established, which makes the teaching and promotion of this instrument more systematic and professional.

3.3 Webcasting and Teaching Accelerate the Popularity of Saxophone

As of December 2021, the user size of live concerts was 142 million, accounting for 13.8% of the overall Internet users, which is growing very rapidly. Saxophone live streaming and teaching are often online in platforms such as Tiktok, Kuaishou, Douyu and Bilibili, bringing wonderful music enjoyment to the audience[5]. In Tencent Classroom, the "Learn Saxophone from Scratch - QinYiXue Self-learning Introductory Course" developed by Chengdu QinYiXue Network Technology Co., Ltd. teaches many music lovers to master the common music theory knowledge of saxophone playing, and master the basic accent and breath use of saxophone playing. The teaching video "Saxophone Teaching Video: From Beginner to Master" explains in detail the fingering, embouchure, breath, and vocalization of each note, as well as the special techniques of advanced super soprano, double vocalization, flicking tongue, and throat tone, and selects good music to match, suitable for all saxophone lovers[6].

4 The Differences Between Chinese and Western Saxophone Playing Styles

In the West, saxophone performance is a major part of jazz, rock and pop music, with a more developed technical and compositional system and mature performance theory. In China and other Asian countries, on the other hand, saxophone performance is more integrated with traditional and classical music, and usually focuses more on musicianship and performance than on improvisation and personal style. These reasons contribute to the differences between Chinese and Western saxophone playing styles.

4.1 The East Has More National Characteristics, The West Emphasizes More on Composer Experience

Since the beginning of the 20th century, saxophone music has become rapidly popular in China. Our saxophonists have not only played Western saxophone music, but also produced a lot of Chinese saxophone music with our national characteristics, in order to "tell Chinese stories with Western instruments", which not only enriched our national music library, but also gradually improved the aesthetics of listeners[7]. Traditional Chinese folk music prefers to use changes in intensity, pitch, and timbre in the course of melody to suit the needs of national emotions. Therefore, in order to use saxophone to express the musical style of China's ethnic minorities in a painful way, it is necessary to use the traditional blowing methods of China's ethnic instruments, such as the throat tone of the pipe and the smearing tone of the erhu. This has greatly enriched the musical expression skills of Chinese saxophones and has led to the

emergence of original art forms of saxophone music with Chinese characteristics, which has a very positive significance for the development and popularization of Chinese ethnic music art. For example, "Silk Road Fantasia", "Yaoshan Love Song", "Yaozu Dance", "Jasmine Flower", "Song of the West".

And the most embodied the exchange of Chinese and Western art and cultural fusion, The Silk Road Fantasy Suite, composed by the famous Chinese musician Zhao Jiping in 2014, is based on a painting. The work is based on the historical background of the Tang Dynasty, and is divided into five movements: "Farewell to Chang'an", "Chant of the Ancient Road", "Music of Liangzhou", "Dream of Loulan" and "Dance of Guizi". It expresses the historical characteristics of the Silk Road in the mysterious western region of the Great Northwest. As if an old man walking on the ancient Silk Road, from the temporary farewell to Chang'an to the ancient road, from the music of Liangzhou to the dream of Loulan, and finally to the dance of Guzi, each chapter is rich in cultural flavor.

In 2014, Parisian French saxophonist Christian Wilt adapted the piece to saxophone and premiered it in Taiwan. A closer look at the work is a reflection of the highly integrated use of Western compositional techniques and the unique interpretation of Chinese musical elements[8]. First of all, in terms of the development of the main body, the first five parts are presented in a single structured main body, except for "Dream of Loulan", which is in a free, loose plate style with a long main body. In his interpretation, this richly folkloric piece is heartfelt and lyrical. Christian Wilt In addition to maintaining the sound quality and vocal characteristics of the original wind instrument, Christian Willett also imitates the folk style of the wind instrument, bringing out the bright and varied sound of the saxophone and its control over the tension.

Chinese instrumental music has been rooted in the fertile soil of national culture for thousands of years, always retaining the nature of heaven and earth and its natural regional characteristics, mainly in the requirements of the mood, the pursuit of the music, more emphasis on people-oriented, grasp the theme of the music, which is reflected in the performance of the saxophone, that is, more emphasis on the vivid image of the music ethereal and mood, in the national five-voice adjustment, six-voice adjustment, seven-voice adjustment The free combination of scale and melody is performed[9]. Scattered beats are often used, as in the case of "Chinese Rhapsody", where there are several sections of improvised flamboyance in ethnic tuning, and a large number of dazzling, free notes reflect the madness of the Chinese divine rhythm extraordinarily well.

The Western saxophone, on the other hand, emphasizes the understanding of the composer's experience and pays more attention to the counterpoint skills of music composition as well as highlighting the expressiveness of the solo instrument[10]. For example, in the Glazunov Concerto, the solo saxophone, accompanied by the full orchestra, still shows a beautiful tone, a wide range, and a flowing articulation of phrases and sections. The composer's lifelong belief in his love of music is expressed to the fullest.

4.2 The East Pays More Attention to Harmony and Lyricism, While the West Emphasizes More on Rhythmic Changes

At the beginning of its introduction, the Chinese saxophone style was close to classical improvisation, using different national scales, using more single rhythms for free combinations, and without a complete theory of composition. The Western saxophone, on the other hand, is notated in pentatonic notation, and is very regular in terms of musical and harmonic counterpoint. The Chinese saxophone focuses on the classical quality of the sound, and the timbre is very smooth and uniform; while the classical saxophone in the West focuses more on the three-dimensional sound, and the strength of the strength, and by changing the timbre to form different genres, such as pop, jazz, classical, and colorful.

The Chinese saxophone is more harmonious and lyrical, while the Western saxophone is more rhythmical and dramatic. In terms of classical saxophone, most of the domestic works are adaptations of traditional instruments, such as erhu and suona, which are transposed to the saxophone, such as "The Shaman God in the Tree Fork". This is a free style of singing and dancing, and is an adaptation of shamanic culture. It depicts the reverence of the people for nature through rituals. The entire piece is divided into two parts, the song of the gods and the song of the leader. The first part uses the distinctive airflow sound of the saxophone and the piano accompaniment to depict a scene of devotion and prayer for heavenly blessing, while the second part is a question and answer session between the saxophone and the piano phrase, depicting a man and woman singing the song of the gods. This scene is full of artistic beauty, and the performance of this piece requires the player to add some more modern elements, such as tapping on the stave and stamping the feet, while to better reflect the characteristics of shamanic music, the player needs to be on stage, walking around singing in a very free style. The method of performance is simple and informative.

The "Claxton Sonata" is one of the first classical saxophone pieces played in China, and is also one of the pieces required to be played by saxophone students in various conservatories, and is a modern saxophone work. It completely breaks away from the traditional composition of homophonic counterpoint in the original repertoire, and only changes the accent in the structure of the piece, instead of strictly following the beat number accent arrangement of classical music. A more compact rhythm is used to drive the piece forward. The performer needs a lot of triplets, 16th notes, dotted notes and fast 32nd note clusters. Take for example the first movement, which is a sonata-like structure with 123 bars. The first part involves many temporary modulation notes, so it is very difficult, and the singer should pay attention to the use of tone and fingering in the blowing. First of all, when playing the presentation, the accent marks appear in bars 7 and 8, and the player must contrast the firmness and determination of the beginning of the piece with the lyricism of the middle. In bars 12 and 13, the tempo slows down and returns to the original speed, and attention should be paid to the coordination with the piano accompaniment. In bar 20, a waviness mark appears, and the interval between size and second should be paid more attention in the playing. The reed and mouth are slightly distanced from each other in order to adapt to the melody, which is gradually softening and moving downward. From bar 36

onwards, the opening section is a section of mourning as if no one understands the sorrow, and finally, with a change in intensity, the closing section returns to the theme, with the strongest intensity, to the coda.

The saxophone is not only perfect for classical music, but also for jazz, pop and light music, and plays an important role in wind ensembles, symphony orchestras and saxophone repertory ensembles. When we mention jazz music, the first form of music that comes to mind is the saxophone, and the most important feature of jazz music is improvisation, in playing the music is often inverted by the size of the beat, and the use of continuous syncopation, so that the melody of the piece is infinitely variable, and the tone is also dramatic, sometimes impassioned manic, sometimes calm and deep, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, and the construction of the saxophone, in the performance of The structure of the saxophone, in the performance of the characteristics of slide, trill, spit, super blow, etc., also meets the requirements of the main characteristics of improvisation in jazz music, so improvisation has become a major performance feature that the saxophonists advocate. Unlike traditional saxophone music in China, which emphasizes one-question-and-answer, Western saxophone music mostly focuses on drama, i.e. the tension and atmosphere flow in the music, strong direction and singing. It allows the performer to better understand the musical conditions of the composer's era and the composer's state of mind at the time of composition.

5 Conclusions

With the development of society, the cultural exchange between countries has become more diversified. "Seeking common ground while preserving differences, integration and development" is undoubtedly the main theme of cultural development in the world today. Although there are some differences between Chinese and Western saxophone playing styles, saxophone playing is always a very expressive and emotional form of music. We should neither deny our traditional culture nor resist the foreign culture, especially the ideology of music culture, on the one hand, we should be culturally confident, borrow the western music technology theory, and use the music language with Chinese characteristics, so that Chinese saxophone music can play an indispensable role in the process of cross-cultural communication and even in the diversified cultural pattern; on the other hand, we should integrate Chinese music culture with western orchestral music On the other hand, we should integrate Chinese music culture with Western orchestral art in order to promote the overall development of Chinese music.

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