

The Image Transmission and Cultural Heritage of Chinese Musical Instruments

Zhiguo Wu

School of Art, Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, 312000, China
20221028@zyufl.edu.cn

Abstract: The documentary "Chinese Musical Instruments" was jointly planned and recorded by Shanghai Radio and Television Art and Humanities Channel and Shanghai Ethnic Musical Instrument Factory. The film showcases the past and present of traditional Chinese instruments such as the guzheng, pipa, erhu, flute, and guqin through rich and vivid audio-visual language. This article takes the film as the research object, analyzes the text content and visual presentation form, explores the historical evolution, humanistic sentiment, and production process of traditional Chinese musical instruments. This article is divided into three parts: selection of materials and exploration of music culture, presentation of images and recognition of music culture, dissemination of images and inheritance of music culture. These three parts closely link the audio-visual language of the film with traditional Chinese music culture, exploring and analyzing the role and significance of audio-visual language in the dissemination and inheritance of traditional culture.

Keywords: musical instrument; Traditional culture; Imaging; Spread; inherit

1. Introduction

The inheritance of civilization is not only the lifeline of cultural prosperity, but also the cornerstone of national prosperity and national strength. How to use a variety of artistic forms to express the beneficial ideas, artistic values, and contemporary characteristics of excellent traditional Chinese culture in contemporary times is a continuous issue being explored by the academic community. The documentary "Chinese Musical Instruments",^[1] jointly planned and recorded by Shanghai Radio and Television Art and Humanities Channel and Shanghai Ethnic Musical Instrument Factory, focuses on the themes of guzheng, pipa, erhu, flute, and guqin, showcasing the "past and present" of traditional Chinese musical instruments to the audience through rich and vivid audio-visual language. They showcase the simplicity and naturalness of Eastern aesthetics with their simple and beautiful postures; With exquisite craftsmanship, it embodies the inheritance of Chinese craftsmanship; By using deep and poignant, clear and graceful tones, it portrays the national character and spirit of the Chinese people. Not only has the historical evolution, humanistic sentiment, and production process of traditional Chinese musical instruments evolved into dynamic images that can be heard, observed, and felt, but it has also sorted out the historical development of Chinese musical instruments from the perspective of image dissemination. In today's world where visual culture has become the mainstream trend of cultural development, this expression of audio-visual language has awakened people's cultural memory of Chinese musical instruments, inherited the spirit of craftsmanship in the production of Chinese national instrumental music, and provided a learning path for the dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

2. Selection of Materials and Deep Exploration of Culture

Since the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, music has played a crucial role in traditional Chinese culture. According to the Book of Rites and Music Records, "music is deeply emotional and civilized, vigorous and spiritual, harmonious and accumulated, and outstanding. Only music cannot be false." In order to eliminate falsehood and preserve truth, the film team visited dozens of places in Jiangsu, Sichuan, Henan and other provinces, interviewing dozens of conductors, performers, composers, and music theorists. During this period, a large number of materials were shot, summarizing the origin, development, and current situation of traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the guzheng, pipa, erhu, flute, and guqin. The materials were detailed and rich in content. During the process of

material selection, the director team also hired experts to excavate and screen the materials, and ultimately completed a re examination of traditional Chinese musical instruments in terms of content and form with unique images.

2.1 Selection of musical instruments

The film provides a detailed introduction to the production process of musical instruments, unveiling the mystery of traditional instrument production. *Chinese Musical Instruments* selects guzheng, pipa, erhu, flute, and guqin as the objects of expression from numerous ethnic instruments, which is a re understanding and reasonable positioning of traditional instruments. As is well known, there are many types of traditional Chinese musical instruments, including bells, drums, chimes, xiao, sheng, xun, etc., in addition to the objects portrayed in the film. Compared to these instruments, the instruments selected in the film are more representative of China's traditional culture and production techniques. Their material selection and production techniques inherit the philosophical idea of the unity of heaven and man, and the Dao follows nature; Their arrangement and performance embody the creative concept of "human heart feels in things".

A beautiful musical instrument is meticulously crafted and takes a long time. The filming team went deep into the first scene of instrument production and captured precious visual materials. The film adopts a method of extracting key information in visual expression, briefly introducing the production process in just a few minutes, so that these traditional instruments are no longer cultural symbols of high or low music, but an art form that is both refined and popular. The director often uses close-up shots to depict the processes of polishing, baking, bonding, carving, painting, assembly, and tuning of musical instruments, meticulously showcasing the exquisite craftsmanship of traditional instrument production. The commentary and interviews in the film serve to supplement the visual content, and the complex production techniques are explained through language to make it easier for the audience to understand and comprehend.

2.2 Behind the Master

The film fully showcases the spiritual qualities and musical sentiments of contemporary artists and skill inheritors. The film explores the most representative musical instrument production and performance masters of modern and contemporary China, and brings their story with the instrument to the screen. The first episode of "Guzheng" tells the story of Mr. Xu Zhengao, the only senior technician in China who made Guzheng, and his relationship with Guzheng. It realistically reproduces Mr. Xu's love for Guzheng making and his courage to break through conventional innovations. He developed 16 string and 18 string guzheng respectively, and eventually produced the S-shaped Yueshan 21 string guzheng. These innovations and improvements not only broaden the range of traditional Guzheng, but also, Moreover, Mr. Xu has improved the traditional shape of the "coffin board" of the guzheng, making him known as the "father of guzheng" in China. The second episode of "The Pipa" tells the story of musician Wei Zhongle's life of learning, performing, and defending folk music. At the same time, it also tells the life experience of the pipa master Gao Zhanchun, who diligently guarded and inherited the pipa skills. The third episode of "Erhu" explores the cultural heritage of the blind man Abing in his hometown of Wuxi. Through visits to the city's cultural heritage and some inheritors of intangible cultural heritage from other countries, the audience understands the cultural heritage of Erhu and vividly tells the background of the widely circulated Erhu classic song "Erquan Yinyue". It also helps the audience understand the legendary life of Abing, a folk artist. At the same time, the film "Erhu" also tells the story of Min Huifen and other erhu performers' dedication and enthusiasm to erhu education and popularization. The fourth episode of "The Flute" takes Tang Junqiao as the character clue, on the one hand, it tells the mission of the young generation of flute performers, and on the other hand, it explores the creative process of Zhou Linsheng and his disciples who rooted themselves in the bamboo sea and devoted themselves to making flutes. The film also interviewed Professor Tang Junqiao, the chief female wind instrument performer in China who has held hundreds of concerts in multiple countries around the world. She said, "As a disseminator of music, I feel that my own value is reflected not only in my ability to showcase our Chinese instruments on the most famous stage, but also in my ability to showcase and introduce Chinese culture to the world through our Chinese instrument, the bamboo flute.". The fifth episode "Guqin" showcases the Guqin making techniques of the Guqin master Xu Jin, and provides a detailed introduction to the production process of the Guqin, an ancient Chinese musical instrument. The production techniques of guqin have been passed down for nearly three thousand years, from the selection of wood to the shape of the guqin, and then to techniques such as

painting, emblem setting, and winding, all of which have condensed the hard work of digital guqin production masters. Through the detailed explanation in the film, the audience also understands the spirit of craftsmanship that has been passed down from ancient times to the present day. This meticulous spirit has enabled the inheritance and sublimation of traditional Chinese skills.

Through the accumulation of materials over a long period of time, interviews with over a hundred famous artists, hands-on displays by dozens of masters, and the presentation of images spanning ancient and modern times, "Chinese Musical Instruments" has been able to focus on the daily lives of the inheritors and performers of traditional musical instruments with plain and simple images, outlining the reality of the development of traditional music in China and showcasing the artist's sincere emotions towards musical instruments.^[2]

2.3 Excavation of historical materials

The film supplements with literature, illustrations, and poetry, delving deeply into the historical origins of traditional musical instruments. The earliest record of the Guzheng mentioned in the first episode can be found in Li Si's "Letter of Advising and Chasing Guests". The second episode tells the story of the creation of "Pipa Xing". 1200 years ago, after hearing about the exquisite performance and tragic background of a pipa woman, Bai Juyi burst into tears and wrote a timeless masterpiece. The jade like string sounds echo in the Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang, surround Han Xizai's dinner party, and are collected in Japan's Zhengcang Yard. The third episode sorted out the historical materials of the erhu, and its development was recorded in the "Book of Music" written by Chen Yang in the Song Dynasty and the "Plum in the Golden Vase" picture book in the Qing Dynasty. The fourth episode presents the bone flute unearthed from Hemudu in Yuyao, Zhejiang, the bone flute unearthed from Wuyang County, Henan, the bamboo flute unearthed from Mawangdui Tomb No. 3 in Changsha, Hunan, and the Tang Dynasty horizontal flute preserved in the Nara Shokura Academy in Japan. In the fifth episode, the narration recites classic passages from the Book of Songs, which serves as the opening and opening introduction to the Guqin.

The addition of literature, illustrations, poetry, and cultural relics undoubtedly enhances the film's weightiness and sense of history. Documentaries use musical instruments as clues to trace history, build a bridge between the past and present, and explore the spiritual connotations of traditional Chinese music culture through poetry, songs, and stories of cultural relics. For example, the background of a pipa woman in the film is even more poignant and touching when paired with pipa music, while the allusions of high mountains and flowing water, combined with guqin music, are even more touching. The film is not only about telling musical instruments, but also about exploring the stories behind them, blending historical allusions, archaeological discoveries, and celebrity anecdotes into the image, conveying rich cultural connotations through educational and entertainment.

3. The Presentation of Images and Cultural Cognition

"Chinese Musical Instruments" vividly tells the story of the Chinese nation's inheritance and development of Chinese musical instrument culture through the continuous history of the film's audio-visual language. Through the main storyline of "craftsmen, instruments, and emotions", it portrays the vastness and profoundness of Chinese music culture and provides viewers with a new way to understand traditional Chinese musical instruments and music culture.

3.1 Image presentation skills, music and cultural cognition

The performance techniques and production techniques of traditional Chinese musical instruments have undergone thousands of years of evolution, making a significant contribution to the history of world art development. Compared with Western musical instruments, Chinese instruments are more heavily handcrafted, and there are still many production techniques that machines cannot replace.

Firstly, in terms of material selection, different musical instruments have different requirements for the production materials. For example, the guzheng and pipa are best made of paulownia wood from Lankao, Henan. The paulownia wood is relatively loose, with straight wood grain and fast sound transmission. The film synchronizes sound and picture during the selection of materials, combining the scene of the master selecting materials and making the piano with the explanation of material selection principles and rough processing, making it clear to the audience. Although advanced production techniques cannot be comprehended through simple audio-visual language, the film plays a role in

science popularization and promotion, and provides a way for the general audience to understand and recognize instrument production.

Secondly, the production process is also an important cognitive content of the film, and each episode has paragraphs emphasizing the production process of the instrument. The flying sawdust, flickering flames, and scattered gold foil in the camera allow the audience to perceive the exquisite craftsmanship of the instrument in a beautiful scene. For example, the fifth episode provides a detailed introduction to the production steps of the guqin, in which the lacquer painting process is personally demonstrated by the lacquer artist Xu Jin. The pure natural lacquer mixed with kerosene, wrapped in hemp cloth, coated with deer antler frost, fixed emblem position, and then painted with red and blue lacquer are gradually displayed in the mirror head.

At the same time, the film also popularized performance genres and techniques to the audience. Artists such as Sun Wenyan, Hao Yifan, Min Huifen, and Tang Junqiao demonstrated their superb performance skills in the film. For example, in the fourth episode, when it comes to the flute, the Southern style is elegant and beautiful, while the Northern style is vigorous and rough. The film takes Tang Junqiao's visit as the main theme, taking the audience into the performance career of Master Lu Chunling, a renowned figure in the Southern School of Flute. Mr. Lu, who is nearly a hundred years old, showcases the performance of Bawu in the camera, with a steady playing atmosphere and smooth finger movements. This is thanks to Mr. Lu's 87 years of skill accumulation.

3.2 Image construction emotional music cultural cognition

The Book of Rites, Music Record, states: "Virtue is the essence of nature. Music is the essence of virtue. Gold, stone, silk, and bamboo are the tools of music. Poetry expresses one's aspirations, sings one's voice, and dances one's demeanor. The three are rooted in the heart, and then the music and energy follow it. Therefore, emotions are deep and civilized, and energy is strong and transforms into spirit. Harmony and harmony accumulate, and the beauty and beauty are outward. Only music cannot be false." This means that virtue is the expression of a person's positive nature. Through the performance of gold, stone, silk, and bamboo, music undoubtedly reveals human nature and virtue; Poetry expresses the connotation of music and elevates the artistic conception of music; Dance reflects the inspiration of music and expresses the soul of music. Only by accumulating harmonious emotions in the heart can beautiful music be produced as its external manifestation, and only music cannot be hypocritical.^[3]

The interviews of the characters in the film convey a profound humanistic sentiment from the perspective of the first person, showcasing the noble sentiments of artists who have been dedicating themselves to the people with exquisite products and leading the trend with wisdom for decades. The older generation of artists such as Xu Zhengao, Sun Wenyan, Gao Zhanchun, Min Huifen, and Lu Chunling devoted their entire lives to the study of musical instruments. Whether it is the qin they produce or the music they play, they are all expressions of sincere emotions. Musical instruments are their soulmate and spiritual sustenance. Artists have been persisting for decades from the bottom of their hearts, and only when such gentle emotions accumulate in their hearts can music be endowed with a wonderful soul.

The sublimation of emotions has evolved into a sense of responsibility and virtue, and the film reflects the excellent character of Chinese artists through the true stories of Wei Zhongle, Liu Tianhua, and others. Wei Zhongle donated the money from his performance to the country to support the purchase of weapons during the Anti Japanese War. Liu Tianhua founded the National Music Improvement Society, founded a music magazine, dedicated to national music education, and dedicated his life to the erhu performance industry. Young and beautiful Professor Tang Junqiao calls himself a "bamboo flute disseminator" and takes on the responsibility of promoting bamboo flutes. The film constructs the audience's emotional identity through simple and sincere audio-visual language, allowing the audience to truly experience the artist's feelings for traditional instruments and the infinite charm of Chinese traditional instrument culture.

3.3 Image shaping spiritual, musical, and cultural cognition

Through the passage of time and the vicissitudes of time, traditional Chinese musical instruments have always symbolized the spiritual symbol of China's reverence for nature, carrying the humanistic character of Chinese traditional instrument masters who are both firm and gentle. One piece of wood and one section of bamboo joint absorb the essence of heaven and earth; A strand of ponytail and a

piece of python skin, gathering the character traits of living beings; A guzheng and guqin, a pipa and erhu, a flute and bawu, gather the brilliant star river of Chinese civilization.

The production of traditional Chinese musical instruments is influenced by Chinese culture, emphasizing the complementarity of yin and yang and the combination of strength and softness. "The concept of yin and yang had already emerged in the early Western Zhou Dynasty. Initially, it referred to the direction of sunlight shining towards the back, where the sun was yang and the sun was yin. In the Book of Changes, yin and yang were regarded as the two opposing aspects of the two fundamental forces or things in the entire world. The " Analects "of the Book of Changes records that" one yin and one yang are the Dao ", which means that the opposition, complementarity, and interaction of yin and yang are the universal laws of the existence and change of the universe." The Shuogua also says, "The way to establish heaven is yin and yang, the way to establish earth is soft and hard, and the way to establish people is benevolence and righteousness." [4]

The ancient balance of yin and yang in Chinese culture is not only a basic way of thinking for ancient Chinese people, but also a principle commonly followed in modern instrument making. The production of the guqin has a "sunny side" and uses soft materials such as paulownia and cedar. The bottom of the qin has a "shady side" and uses relatively tight and delicate wood like catalpa. The combination of yin and yang, the interaction between softness and firmness, and the mutual penetration of pronunciation and reflection demonstrate the traditional selection of materials for guzheng, which emphasizes the combination of yin and yang and the combination of hardness and softness.

The production of traditional Chinese musical instruments also reflects the Chinese culture's emphasis on the concept of "natural and natural principles" and "unity of heaven and humanity". Whether it's the guzheng, erhu, or flute, they all strive to conform to natural principles and create the most perfect musical instrument with the most suitable materials. During an interview with Qu Yun from Shaanxi Normal University, he mentioned the spirit of the Guzheng, which is "round on the top like the sky, flat on the bottom like the earth, hollow and quasi six in harmony, twelve string pillars, and quasi twelve. If it is set up, the four phenomena will exist, and the drum will produce five tones. The body will be in harmony with the Dharma, studying sorrow and music, and it is a tool of benevolence and wisdom." Master Wang Genxing mentioned that each snake skin has its own personality when he was grooming it. Master Dong Xuehua used color to judge the age of bamboo and texture to determine the roundness of bitter bamboo when selecting raw materials for flutes. Every musical instrument is a combination of nature, art and science. Craftsmen use their dexterous hands to absorb the essence of heaven and earth and reshape natural life, showing the endless charm of Chinese traditional musical instrument making techniques to the world.

4. The dissemination of images and the inheritance of traditional culture

Regis Debray discussed the relationship between inheritance and communication in his "Introduction to Media Studies". He believed that in order to inherit, there must be communication first. "Communication is the moment in a long-term process and the fragments in a wide collection. And this wide collection, we will call it transmission." [5] Film is a medium, and image, as a medium of memory, has created a precedent in the history of traditional Chinese music culture dissemination.

4.1 The Time and Space Dimension of Communication and Traditional Music Inheritance

Chinese Musical Instruments has the function of dissemination at the formal level and the function of inheritance at the content level. The first thing to consider is the categories of time and space. "Communication is the transmission of information in space, that is, within the same time and space. Inheritance refers to the transmission of information in time, more precisely, within different temporal and spatial categories. Communication belongs to the field of sociology, and it starts from psychological research between individuals (based on the basic experience formed by discourse behavior between information senders and receivers)." [6] Inheritance belongs to the category of history, which is based on technological performance (i.e. the use of media carriers). On the one hand, connect here and there to form a network (i.e. society); On the other hand, connecting the past and present forms continuity (i.e. cultural continuity) Communication and inheritance differ in the temporal and spatial dimensions, as well as in terms of objects, processes, and effects.

From a formal perspective, the time dimension of a film is a short-term image synthesis, and its dissemination focuses on simultaneity and speed. The dissemination space of films and related information is through media such as television, newspapers, radio, and video websites. In the integrated media environment, the broadcasting format of films can keep up with the times, not only on

major satellite TV stations, but also on online platforms such as CCTV Video, Bilibili website, iQiyi, and Youku. Chinese Musical Instruments provides an effective way for young people to recognize and learn about traditional Chinese music culture.

From the perspective of content, the skills, emotions, and culture in the film are all historical. Although the content is presented through media carriers, its value will not diminish with the change of media technology. On the one hand, the spatial domain of content dissemination is broader, connecting different regions in real life; On the other hand, connecting the past and present forms cultural continuity.

The purpose of human inheritance is to ensure that everything we create, experience, and believe in will not disappear with the passing of a generation. "From dissemination to inheritance, it changes the proportion of time and also changes the meaning of the term 'transportation' in 'information transportation'. Transportation is actually transformation. A series of cultural means and cultural expansion are achieved through long-distance circulation routes. Religion, art, and ideology are all playing a game of lengthening in order to be fixed for a long time. Film is a medium of information transportation." To achieve cultural expansion and continuation through the dissemination of film images. Chinese Musical Instruments, in the form of images, traces and recalls the music career of famous performers and educators, as well as the emotions of Chinese and foreign piano learners towards Chinese instruments, creating an indelible cultural memory that will forever remain in the field of traditional Chinese music culture.^[7]

4.2 The Communication and Inheritance of Music Culture in the Transformation of Media

The earliest Egyptian script began in 3100 BC, the script in the Indus River basin began in 2500 BC, the script in Crete began in 1900 BC, the script in China began in 1200 BC, and the script in Central America began in 600 BC (all around the time). About 8000 years ago, there was a bone flute made of crane bones in Wuyang County, Henan Province. About 8000 years ago, bone flutes made of bird and poultry limb bones also appeared in Hemudu, Yuyao, Zhejiang. The appearance of bone flutes predates the appearance of writing. In the era before the emergence of writing, in order to spread the playing skills of musical instruments, it was necessary to rely on imitation and practical learning through people's actions. At that time, musical instruments could not be considered as instruments with cultural connotations, but rather as a medium for information transmission and sacrificial ceremonies.

The "Qin and Se" can be seen in many places in the text of the Book of Songs, the pipa can be seen in many places in the murals in the Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang, the zither can be seen in Li Si's "Book of Admonishment and Chasing Guests" in the Qin Dynasty, the pipa picture in "Han Xizai's Night Banquet Picture", the "Music Book" written by Chen Yang in the Song Dynasty, and the "Plum in the Golden Vase" picture book in the Qing Dynasty. These textual and pictorial media carry the function of musical instrument dissemination. The dissemination during this period was not just about instruments, rhythms, and music. It can better reflect the humanities, politics, economy, and education of the society at that time from the aspects of lyrics, music, and skills. Let's look at it from a different perspective, musical instruments and dance are not just content for dissemination, they themselves are also a medium of communication. After the introduction of the Hu qin, it was improved to become the erhu, and the dissemination of the pipa and guzheng to Korea and Japan all reflected the media and cross-cultural dissemination functions of the musical instruments.^[8]

Of course, in this era, music still carries a more significant "media" function. On the one hand, music is a medium of communication, serving as a bridge for cultural exchange between the East and the West. China's qin making techniques are renowned worldwide, and famous Chinese musicians have traveled around the world to hold large-scale concerts. Traditional music has become a symbol of Chinese culture, showcasing the vast, profound, and glorious civilization of China to people around the world. On the other hand, musical instruments are a medium of inheritance, carrying the content of intangible cultural heritage in the form of physical objects. The core technology of musical instrument production is the oral transmission and heart to heart instruction of masters, which is a large amount of practice poured on physical media. Chinese music culture is not empty or illusory, but is implemented in specific aspects such as instruments, techniques, and music.

4.3 The inheritance of traditional culture is not just about dissemination

As mentioned earlier, in order to inherit excellent traditional culture, it is necessary to first have dissemination. Communication and inheritance are not two parallel systems, but rather interconnected and interconnected. Communication is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient to fulfill the function of cultural inheritance. Because we know that the criteria for judging whether something is advanced or backward will develop with the development of society and change with the changes of

the times. Therefore, we can draw a conclusion that no culture is always advanced. Therefore, in order to maintain the progressiveness of culture, innovation must be carried out. Innovation can start from the relationship between communication and inheritance. The inheritance of a culture not only needs to consider the disseminator's interpretation of cultural connotations, but also the degree of recognition of the culture by the learners, and also depends on the depth and breadth of the communication medium. Communication not only has an impact on the inheritance of culture, but also has a profound impact on the integration, appreciation, accumulation, stratification, and transformation of culture.

Therefore, the inheritance of traditional culture is not only a means of dissemination, but also a form of influence effect of "advantage diffusion". In the competition of culture, there is also a characteristic of advantages conquering disadvantages. The so-called advantages usually refer to cultures with higher levels of civilization, while disadvantages manifest as ignorant and backward cultures. The principle of 'survival of the fittest' is manifested in cultural dissemination, forming the principle of advantage diffusion in cultural dissemination. In this principle, we can gain inspiration that developed, advanced, and highly civilized cultures exhibit strong dissemination and penetration power, and vice versa. The content of the film "Chinese Musical Instruments" represents China's "advantageous culture", which is transmitted to various parts of the world through images, demonstrating strong dissemination power and promoting the development of human art as a whole. It is easily accepted by other ethnic groups around the world because art knows no borders, and advanced culture can bring inspiration and change to human life.

5. Conclusions

The importance of cultural inheritance lies in both protection and innovation. The film "Chinese Musical Instruments" is such a "chemical element" that awakens the awareness of the general public to protect cultural heritage through audio-visual communication media, and also awakens the cultural memory behind traditional Chinese ethnic music.

In the era of new media development, how can industry scholars delve deeper into the roots of traditional culture and sort out its development context? How can artists continuously explore the combination of "steel and wood" and "East and West"? How can the media industry integrate with the art industry's "technology and art" to continuously create innovative development paths for the inheritance of traditional music culture. How to effectively solve the above problems is exactly what the new generation of artists and media professionals need to fully consider. How to find the development context behind cultural inheritance, and promote its development, inheritance, and international dissemination will be the necessary path for China to step onto the world stage with a proud attitude and achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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