

# Research on the Ontology and Educational Function of Ritual Music in Western Guangdong

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**ABSTRACT.** *Ritual music in western Guangdong is an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of music in Guangdong province. It is one of the representative music forms in western Guangdong. The ritual music of western Guangdong is of great historical research value and educational value. This paper takes Zhanjiang Nuowu as the research object, and uses musicological research methods to analyze and study the historical origin and musical characteristics of ritual music in western Guangdong, and explore the ontological features of ritual music in western Guangdong. In addition, the author also analyzes and studies the educational function of western Guangdong ritual music, aiming to realize the contemporary inheritance of western Guangdong ritual music through school music education.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Western guangdong, Ritual music, Ontology, Educational function*

## 1. Introduction

Nuowu music is a typical ritual music. In China, there are different names of Nuo in different areas, including Tiaonuo, Nuoxi and Nuowu. Nuo originated in ancient China, which is a form of music and dance to exorcise ghosts [1]. From the source analysis, Nuo originated from Wu culture (a common cultural phenomenon in ancient times). Nuo had an important influence on people's production, life and entertainment during the five thousand years of Chinese civilization. Up to now, the religious atmosphere of Nuo is becoming less and less, and its entertainment features are increasingly prominent. Among them, Zhanjiang Nuowu and Maoming Tiaohuapeng are both national intangible cultural heritages of music, both of which are closely related to Nuo. This paper takes Zhanjiang Nuowu and Maoming Tiaohuapeng as the research object, and analyzes the ontology characteristics and educational value of ritual music in western Guangdong.

## 2. Research of Ritual Music Ontology in Western Guangdong

### 2.1 Historical Origin

Zhanjiang is located in the southernmost Leizhou Peninsula in mainland China. According to the research of relevant experts and scholars, the development of Nuowu in Zhanjiang has a history of nearly 500 years. According to the related literature, Nuo was introduced in the Tang Dynasty when people from southern Fujian moved to Leizhou. Since then, Nuo in Leizhou Peninsula has been further developed in Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties[2]. In Jiajing of Ming Dynasty, there are many documents about Nuo, such as the Ming Jiajing's "Guangdong Tongzhi Draft · Volume 18·Customs", Qing Kangxi's "Chaozhou Prefecture Records and Customs" and "Lechang County Records". Today, Nuowu in Zhanjiang is widely spread in Wuchuan, Songzhu, Nanchuan and Machang areas, but due to regional and cultural differences, its name is also different, for example, Leizhou City is called "Zouqingjiang"; Wuchuan City is called "Wu Erzhen" or "Wu Liujiang"; Mazhang District is called "Kaobing".

### 2.2 Musical Characteristics

There are special musical accompaniment for Zhanjiang Nuowu, but the music of Nuowu varies from different regions.

Rhythm and melody. The Nuowu in Wuchuan is usually accompanied by the oldest pottery drum. This ancient musical instrument is made of pottery clay by kiln firing, with straight waist, hollow, trumpet shape at one end, spherical shape at the other end, and overall cylindrical shape. When playing, tie the pottery drum to

the neck with cloth tape, and place the drum horizontally on the waist and abdomen. The player can make different sounds by hitting both ends of the pottery drum, one with deep sound and the other with crisp sound. Nuowu music in Leizhou usually uses moon drums, high-edge gongs, and steel gallbladders as the main musical instruments. In some areas, gongs, cymbals and suonas will be added to these three instruments. From the rhythm point of view, Leizhou Nuowu music is basically the rhythm of the attack. This rhythmic stretch is calm, steady and powerful, and cooperates with the Leizhou Nuowu movements, which can significantly improve the rhythm of dance movements, and it is easier to set off the atmosphere[3]. In terms of melody, Leizhou Nuowu music melody is low and gentle, which is in line with the solemn and solemn characteristics of Nuowu. Mazhang Nuowu music does not have musical instruments, which is very different from Wuchuan Nuowu music and Leizhou Nuowu music. The Nuowu music in Mazhang District is mainly expressed by the rhythmic shouts of dancers. During the performance, the dancers shouted rhythmically “Nuo! Nuo! Nuo!” while dancing.

Libretto. Take the Lianjiang Shijiao Nuowu lyrics as an example. The Nuowu lyrics are mainly seven-character rhymes, and the language is simple and pure, easy to understand. The ensemble of Nuowu music is Nuo tune plate type (pentatonic scale, there are only five positive sounds of Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, Yu, no partial sound).

### **3. Research on the Function of Ritual Music Education in Western Guangdong**

Music education is an important part of quality education. With the development of the concept of quality education in China, the reform of music education content has become the focus of many school music educators. There are various types of ritual music in western Guangdong. Compared with other types of music, western ritual music is unique, has a very rich cultural connotation, and has a strong expression and appeal. In the context of school education reform, it is of great educational value to incorporate western Guangdong ritual music into school music education. The specific performance is as follows.

#### ***3.1 Enhancing students' Sense of Regional Identity and National Identity***

Music has national characteristics. In the five thousand years of the Chinese nation, each region has formed its own music culture with unique regional and national characteristics in its long history. This kind of music culture itself has strong regional and national characteristics, which is the common feature of music culture in all regions. Ritual music in western Guangdong is an important part of traditional folk music in Guangdong Province. It is rooted in the history and culture, customs and religious beliefs of the people in western Guangdong. It is a unique music culture with regional and local nationality in western Guangdong[4]. The integration of western Guangdong ritual music and contemporary school music education enriches the music teaching content, and enables students to have a concrete understanding and cognition of western Guangdong, Guangdong province and even Chinese traditional folk music through learning western Guangdong ritual music. This kind of understanding and cognition can deepen students' sense of regional identity and national identity.

#### ***3.2 Stimulate students' Learning Initiative***

At present, there are many problems in the content of music education in many schools, such as outmoded, single, homogeneous and so on. In addition, many school music education courses are mainly based on western music theory, rarely involving the content of Chinese folk music. Even though some schools add the content of Chinese folk music in music education, most of them are popular and common contents (such as the folk songs of northern Shaanxi, Yangko and Peking opera). The students have already had aesthetic fatigue for these contents. Western Guangdong ritual music is a part of folk music in Guangdong Province. Compared with other types of folk music, it has a strong sense of mystery. This sense of mystery comes from the special inheritance of ritual music in western Guangdong as well as the mystery of music itself in form, rhythm and melody, lyrics and singing. This kind of mysterious gratitude has developed students' interest in learning and improved their enthusiasm and initiative in learning music. From another point of view, it is precisely because of this sense of mystery that students actively explore all kinds of information about western Guangdong music in addition to the textbook knowledge, thus further improving their learning initiative.

#### ***3.3 Cultivate students' Tolerance and Innovative Thinking***

In learning music, students should not be conservative and complacent, but should adhere to inclusive and innovative thinking, constantly absorb the nutrients of various types of music, enrich their own music theory, and

improve their singing, performance, composition and other skills in music. Western Guangdong ritual music itself is inclusive and open, which is also the important reason for its continuous development over thousands of years [5]. As a part of the national intangible cultural heritage of music in Guangdong Province, the combination of ritual music in western Guangdong and contemporary school music education is not a simple expansion of music teaching content, but a teaching method to cultivate students' open development and innovative thinking. In the teaching process, teachers should explain the inclusive and open characteristics of ritual music in western Guangdong, so as to encourage students to constantly tap and absorb the nutrients of various types of music, which has a positive impact on their future music development.

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