

Analysis of the theme music of the film "Yellow Earth"

Zhou Shuaina¹, Chong Yew Yoong²

¹Jinhua Wangdao Primary School, Jinhua, Zhejiang, 321000, China

²Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia, 40460

Abstract: This paper mainly analyzes the theme music created by Zhao Jiping for the film loess land. Through the analysis of film music creation, theme music analysis and the relationship between music and characters, it is concluded that the theme music of loess land not only deepens the character image, but also improves the film content, enriches the film narrative and film picture, and becomes the soul of the film.

Keywords: Film music; Zhao Jiping

1. Introduction

The film "Yellow Earth" tells the story of Cuiqiao, a girl in the rural areas of Northern Shaanxi, was determined a "Wawaqin" by her father since childhood. She can't get rid of her tragic fate and can only express her inner pain with the help of "Xin Tian You". Gu Qing of the Eighth Route Army is a literary worker in Yan'an. He came to Cuiqiao's house to collect folk songs. Through a period of life labor, they gradually developed feelings. The Cuiqiao family regarded the "public family" as their own. During this period, brother Gu Qing told Cuiqiao a lot of stories about Yan'an women's struggle for marriage autonomy. After hearing this, Cuiqiao felt yearning. The kind and foolish father wants Cui to get married in April. Gu Qingyan sees that she is leaving. Cuiqiao secretly waits on the road. Her eldest brother Gu takes her to Yan'an, but Gu Qing can't take her with her for a while, so she has to go

I was reluctant to say goodbye to her. He promised to come back and pick up Cuiqiao to leave together, but Cuiqiao couldn't wait for that time. In April, Cui Qiao decided to escape from her house after her marriage. She took a boat and risked her life to cross the Yellow River to pursue a new The current on the river was fast, and soon there was no sign of the boat.

Because the film leaves a lot of space for music, Zhao Jiping made a lot of preparations before shooting the film. He invited He Yutang, a folk singer who impressed the director group when wind in Northern Shaanxi, and Feng Jianxue, a female singer of Shaanxi song and dance Theater, to participate in the recording. The reason why some people classify it as a musical film is mainly due to proportion of music in the film and its important role in the development of the plot.

Due to the large proportion of music in loess land and the different importance of music, the music loess land can be divided into theme music and background music. Among the four main characters in the film, Zhao Jiping created theme music in line with their respective personality characteristics: Daughter Song, Niao Chuang Ge, Sickle and Axe Song, and Coming in the First Month (Table 1).

Table 1: Table of "Yellow Earth" theme music

Name of Theme Music	Number of complete occurrences
Daughter Song	3
Niao Chuang Ge	2
Sickle and Axe Song	3
Widow song	2

This paper mainly analyzes the most representative theme music.

2. Cui Qiao's "Daughter Song"

As the main character of the whole play, Cuiqiao's theme music has extraordinary significance, and also plays a dramatic role in predicting the artistic style of the film and the ups and downs of the characters' fate. "Daughter song" in the film was recorded by Feng Jianxue. In the film, Cui Qiao, a little girl under the age of 13, is responsible for the complexity of her family because her mother died early. After hard work, Cui Qiao always sings "daughter song" inadvertently. Faced with Gu Qing's praise of Yanan's new life, Cuiqiao was envious. However, misfortune eventually came. Cui Qiao resolutely fled after being forced to marry and disappeared into the surging yellow water when crossing the river alone to join the Eighth Route Army. The role of Cuiqiao is the most important part of Chen Kaige's sublimation of novel thought. Cuiqiao shows the young generation's desire and pursuit for a new life.

Table 2: Table of Theme Music "Daughter Song"

Scene	Orchestration	Time of occurrence
Cui Qiao carries water by the river in the evening	Orchestra music	0:12:31
Cuiqiao textile under the lamp at home in the evening	Female solo	0:22:23
Cui Qiao carries food home	Guan Zi Concerto	0:37:01
Cui Qiao fetches water by the river	Female solo and orchestra	0:38:38
After hearing the news that she was going to get married, Cui Qiao sat alone	Pipa and orchestra	0:45:32

The first appearance of daughter's song is to show the running Yellow River in a panoramic view (Table 2). After the twilight in the picture is intertwined with music, it makes people feel more sad and beautiful. Although the film has just begun, Zhao Jiping has skillfully achieved a sad and beautiful effect through the collocation of modes and colors. This color mode paves the way for gradually revealing the tragic fate faced by the protagonist.



Figure 1: Daughter Song's Melody

In the first presentation of "Daughter's song", the music structure is ABA form (Figure 1). Paragraph A is a regular sentence structure: three large downward music lines are attached to the desolate melody of commercial mode; Paragraph B tells the daughter's misfortune in a complaint like compact tone; Paragraph A reproduces the lament of the tragic fate of the majority of women in the traditional society with the lyrics "who don't want my mother to think about again". The harmony of "Daughter's Song" weakens the function of Western Harmony: the harmony configuration in the introduction is D VII- TS VI - SII, and the secondary chord at the end omits three tones and replaces them with C-sharp, forming a harmonic structure of "B - # C1 - # F1", highlighting the pentatonic color of the mode. Similar situations also occur from time to time in the harmony sequence of string accompaniment. The addition of chords and external sounds has added the effect of national harmony.

3. Gu Qing's "Sickle and Axe Song"

Gu Qing is the one of the main characters of this film. The story in the film is based on Gu Qing's arrival, collecting folk songs and working and living in Cuiqiao's home. "Sickle and axe song" is Gu Qing's theme music (Table 3). From the perspective of narrative time, Gu Qing's music appeared in the middle of the whole film. Taking this as the boundary, Cui Qiao's fate immediately turned downward. Therefore, the predictive role of Gu Qing's music is particularly prominent in the narrative of the film. The first complete scene of this song appeared on a bare hillside. After Han Han sang the Niao Chuang Ge, Gu Qing began to teach Han Han to sing the song of Sickle and Axe. Cui Qiao sat next to him and was fascinated. Later, Gu Qing and Han Han sang "Sickle and Axe Song" while herding sheep and gradually went away. Then comes the second presentation of "Sickle and Axe Song", which is presented with the full play of melody string music, combined with the warm tone close-up of Cui Qiao's spring breeze carrying home. Gu Qing's overhead shot and the sunshine reflected on Cuiqiao's face show Gu Qing's great influence on Cuiqiao and Cuiqiao's infinite longing for the new life of "public family".

Table 3: Table of Theme Music "Sickle and Axe Song"

Scene	Orchesration	Time of occurrence
Gu Qing teaches Han Han this song	Male solo	0:41:57
Gu Qing and Han Han drive sheep home on the mountain	Chorus	0:42:18
Cuiqiao carries water home in the sunset.	Orchestra music	0:43:03
Cui Qiao crosses the Yellow River at night	Female solo Orchestra music	1:17:30
Ending of the film	Female solo	1:25:02



Figure 2: Sickle and Axe Song's Melody

The overlapping of "Shang key to Zhi key" and "Gong key to Zhi key" in "Sickle and Axe song" is a common spin feature of Shanxi folk songs (Figure 2). The March style of two beat is a musical element from the revolutionary songs of the Soviet Union. This creative technique of revolutionary songs, which was deeply influenced by the revolutionary literary and artistic view of the Soviet Union, was very common in the songs of Yan'an border region in the 1940s. Zhao Jiping captured the unique music matrix of the literature and art in the border area, which is in line with the historical background of the place where the story took place. The simple and powerful melody and rhythm of sickle and axe song is a label generalization of the music culture in the border area. The vitality revealed in the melody and the optimistic and enterprising spirit shown in the beat and rhythm fit the artistic image of the young Eighth Route Army. The musical temperament of "Sickle and Axe song" is deeply engraved in Cuiqiao's heart, which also played an important role in her final decision to go to Yan'an.

4. Cui Qiao's father's "Widow song"

Cui Qiao's father shows the basic image of farmers in Northern Shaanxi in the film. The pressure of life makes him face new things with deep doubt and fear. The 47 years old farmer, with gully like wrinkles on his face, showed an old state seems like in his 60s. "Widow song" is the theme music of Cui Qiao's father. In Cuiqiao's kiln, Gu Qing told Cui Qiao's father he would return to Yan'an. In order to meet Gu Qing's needs, the old father decided to sing a Suan Qu for him, which is "widow's song"(Table 4).

Table 4: Table of Theme Music "Widow Song"

Scene	Orchesration	Time of occurrence
Cui Qiao's father sings in the night	Male oratorio	0:50:58

The melody of this song is a four sentence folk song form of quotient mode. The four upward movements of "Shang key to Zhi Key" and "Yu key to Shang key" are the main highlights of the melody of the first two sentences; Two large downward lines complete the melody of the last two sentences. In the lyrics, "get engaged at the age of 13, get married at the age of 14, and become a widow at the age of 15" is the pain point of the whole song. Zhao Jiping once mentioned that "widow's song" is based on Ansai folk song "a bachelor cries for his wife". In addition, "Yellow Land" also set the theme music "Niao Chuang Ge" for Cui Qiao's younger brother Han Han, and the tune is adapted from the Zhidan folk song "bald man wetting the bed" sung by Ansai folk singer He Yutang.

The four main characters in the Yellow Earth can be said to be the director's four typical generalizations of Chinese social images at the beginning of reform and opening up: the new generation of young people represented by Cui Qiao are eager to get a new life; The emerging force represented by Gu Qing is vigorous; The conservative forces represented by Cui Qiao's father are simple, conservative and foolish; The children of the new era represented by Han Han are innocent.

5. Conclusions

"Yellow Land" is the first film music created by Zhao Jiping. Compared with the film music of the same era, Zhao Jiping's "Yellow Land" music vividly summarizes the film theme, closely adheres to the character characteristics of the film characters, and forms a distinctive music creation style. Zhao Jiping gradually came to the fore in the field of film music, relying on his deep understanding of the script, his keen grasp of the artistry of theme music and background music, the combination of picture sense and sound and painting, and the Loess style formed on this basis with the traditional music materials in northern China as the core. This also makes "Yellow Land" and later "Red Sorghum" and other film music easy to identify. The deep concern for the character's character and destiny in "Daughter's Song" reflects the noble artistic mind. The labeling of music image is an important symbol of the success of a composer, as is film music. Zhao Jiping's "Yellow Land" style film music marked by loess land has a positive and far-reaching impact on the development of Chinese film music in the 1980s and Chinese music in the 1980s.

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