

Research on the Internationalization of Chinese Ethnic Music in the Context of the Internet Era

Xu yan min

Zhengzhou University of Science and Technology, School of Music and Dance, Zhengzhou, Henan, 456000.

Abstract: Chinese ethnic music, having evolved over thousands of years, embodies the spirit of traditional Chinese "poetic-musical culture" and incorporates unique music theories, compositional techniques, and performance skills, forming an artistic system that reflects Eastern aesthetic principles. In the new era, it is essential to draw inspiration from successful international cases of music dissemination through the internet. By creating outstanding works that showcase the beauty of Chinese culture and resonate with universal human values, and by adapting to the mainstream international online environment and communication models, Chinese ethnic music can be brilliantly presented on the global stage.

Keywords: Internet Era; Chinese Ethnic Music; Internationalization of Communication

DOI:10.69979/3041-0843.25.01.012

As we all know, China boasts a civilization with a history spanning 5,000 years. Throughout its long historical evolution, the gradual development and expansion of its social, political, economic, and cultural spheres have fostered the slow yet steady growth of national musical culture, giving rise to a vibrant and diverse artistic expression. Chinese national music has emerged from the labor and daily lives of early ancestors, embodying the richness of the "eight-tone classification system" and the rigorous norms set by the ritual and music system. It resonates through the impassioned folk ballads of The Book of Songs (Shijing) and is deeply embedded in The Music Bureau Collection (Yuefu Shiji), demonstrating the continuous lineage of "poetry and music culture." Having endured the trials of time, it has forged a unique cultural totem for the Chinese nation. Since the reform and opening-up era, the creation and performance of Chinese national music have continuously evolved with the times, distinguishing themselves in thematic content and artistic style, blending Eastern and Western aesthetic qualities. With the momentum of internet media, efforts should be made to expand the international communication channels and influence of Chinese national music. As part of the strategic initiative to promote Chinese culture globally, it is essential to establish an independent image of Eastern culture on the international stage through Chinese national music and take concrete actions to enhance China's cultural soft power.

1. The Value of Communication: The Significance of the International Dissemination of Chinese National Music in the Internet Era

Throughout the historical evolution of Chinese culture, countless widely celebrated musical and cultural relics have been left behind, fully demonstrating the wisdom and talents of ancient ancestors. The definition of "Chinese national music" not only represents a long-standing historical timeline but also highlights its diversity in musical genres. It encompasses traditional folk music, folk songs, ethnic and folk dances, as well as various forms of opera and quyi (narrative singing arts). Through continuous innovation, reflection, and practice, it has developed into a musical art form that aligns with the evolution of social and cultural development. In today's new era, the inheritance and development of Chinese national music undoubtedly require broader spaces for expansion, and the rapid advancement of internet media provides an excellent opportunity for this endeavor.

First and foremost, Chinese national music serves as an ideal medium to build a bridge for cultural exchange between China and the world. From the perspective of its own development, contemporary Chinese national music has always adhered to the aesthetic logic of Chinese musical culture and creation, even as it learns from and incorporates Western influences. Through a process of nationalized adaptation, it maintains a distinctive Eastern cultural essence, showcasing the strong inclusivity of Chinese music culture while also reflecting the remarkable achievements of modern Chinese music education and composition. Chinese national music embodies the characteristic of "harmony in diversity, and the beauty of

each culture.” It uses poetry as a medium to inherit the consistent meaning of Chinese culture. The “poetry and music culture” originated as early as the pre-Qin period and left rich imprints in Han Dynasty Qing Shang Music, Tang Dynasty song and dance performances, as well as Song lyrics and Yuan opera.

Secondly, in the internet era, the dissemination of Chinese national music provides a new pathway for the world to understand Chinese culture. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the internet has entered Chinese households, becoming a new channel for work, study, and entertainment. Over two decades of development, China's internet has significantly advanced from dial-up networks to broadband and has progressed through multiple stages, including multimedia, omnichannel, convergent media, and self-media. As we approach the 5G era, the internet has seamlessly connected China with the world, allowing for the sharing of information and cultural achievements. Chinese national music, which includes opera, folk songs, and traditional instrumental music, serves as an excellent medium for international communication. Particularly in contemporary adaptations and newly created works, historical reflection is embedded in the creative process. Ancient Chinese poetry, rich in the spirit of “poetry and music culture,” is seamlessly integrated with national musical elements such as mode, melody, and rhythm, highlighting the profound heritage of Chinese culture. This significantly enhances its communicative value, making it a powerful representation of Chinese music culture.

2. Communication Media: Exploring Online Channels for the International Dissemination of Chinese National Music

From the theoretical perspective of communication studies, the elements that constitute the communication chain typically include the communicator, time of communication, content of communication, method of communication, and recipient. Among these elements, the attributes of the communication medium hold particular significance. Especially in today's media landscape, where traditional and new media operate simultaneously in multiple dimensions, there are significant differences in types and dissemination capabilities, even within the realm of internet media. However, from a macro perspective, the internet exhibits a “tree-like communication” effect when disseminating musical information. Without the constraints of physical media, it can accurately and comprehensively accommodate audio-text content while engaging in various processes such as restoration, deconstruction, and reconstruction, leading to the “secondary processing” of original musical texts. The method of presentation and the specific form of musical information largely depend on the mode of social dissemination required within an internet platform. Therefore, the international online dissemination of Chinese national music is far more than simply uploading musical resources onto the web. Instead, it requires an understanding of internet development trends and the selection of the most suitable and popular micro-level network channels for dissemination. Only with a clear strategic direction and an optimized approach can the best communication outcomes be achieved.

On the one hand, in-depth research and development of highly popular self-media channels on the internet should be prioritized. The internet today is no longer merely a tool for information publication and dissemination. It has become a globally co-created and co-utilized cultural platform, serving as both a medium for cultural expression and cultural production. For instance, YouTube, a globally renowned video-sharing website, is one of the most influential social media platforms worldwide. South Korean entertainment companies provide a valuable case study in this regard. JYP Entertainment's Wonder Girls and S.M Entertainment's Girls' Generation both gained international recognition through YouTube, while YG Entertainment's artist Psy achieved legendary status with Gangnam Style, which was uploaded to YouTube on December 21, 2012, and surpassed one billion views within five months. Chinese cultural enterprises should take inspiration from this model by leveraging official and commercial partnerships to establish dedicated Chinese national music sections on high-traffic international social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. By utilizing big data analytics to understand target audience preferences and the unique transmission characteristics of each platform, tailored musical resources can be created. Only by capitalizing on industrial advantages and precisely targeting content can a strong market response be achieved.

On the other hand, beyond self-media channels, it is also crucial to develop corresponding integration strategies based on mainstream international internet platforms used for work, study, and entertainment. By leveraging proprietary

intellectual property advantages and striving for expansion, additional implicit internet channels can be developed. For instance, exclusive Chinese-English music storage and playback software dedicated to Chinese national music should be actively developed. Efforts should be made to introduce multilingual versions of leading domestic music streaming services, such as QQ Music and NetEase Cloud Music, while simultaneously promoting them on international search engines and web portals. Additionally, digital initiatives such as cloud performances and cloud livestreaming can be used to broadcast Chinese national music concerts online. Collaborations with foreign digital media platforms can enable overseas audiences to enjoy live performances from across the globe without leaving their homes, serving as an effective promotional strategy.

3. Communication Content: Refining Ethnic Music Materials in the Online Environment

In the era of internet information, one of the key debates in the academic field revolves around whether "channels determine success" or "content is king." While having high-speed, efficient, and high-quality communication channels is undoubtedly important, internal factors often play a decisive role compared to external advantages. In the international online dissemination of Chinese national music, content should be organized and structured according to the characteristics of the chosen platform, with a targeted approach to optimizing the artistic form. Only by ensuring both internal quality and external accessibility can the expected results be achieved.

First, in the process of disseminating Chinese national music to overseas audiences, the fundamental content structure should maintain both independence and consensus. The so-called "independence" refers to preserving its unique cultural identity without blindly adapting to different dissemination environments. In recent years, many classic Western operas have been staged in China in their original versions, without any modifications to suit the local audience. Despite language barriers, the emotions conveyed through music and performance successfully bridge the gap, reflecting strong cultural confidence. Similarly, when the Sichuan opera *Sifan* premiered in the Netherlands, it retained its original artistic style and performance approach, receiving understanding and support from international audiences.

Second, efforts should be made to establish a cluster advantage in content design, creation, and distribution. The international online dissemination of Chinese national music should be supported by national cultural departments and operated by specialized enterprises and production teams to avoid fragmented and uncoordinated efforts. As a collective musical genre, Chinese national music cannot rely on the efforts of individuals alone to gain global recognition in the digital world. In the current trend of industrialization, the roles and responsibilities of communication entities should be clearly defined. Through careful planning and strategic arrangements, investments in human, material, and financial resources should be made to integrate and refine existing musical resources, identifying the most distinctive and competitive works for prioritized support and promotion. Only through planned and strategic operations can Chinese national music make a lasting impression, achieving a breakthrough that drives broader international recognition and expansion.

4. Communication Strategies: Multi-Perspective Extended Practices

The international dissemination of Chinese national music in the internet era carries multiple responsibilities. Beyond allowing the world to hear the sounds of the East, it also reflects China's strong cultural confidence and spirit of self-reliance in the new era. However, international dissemination through internet channels is not a simple, one-time effort. It is also met with challenges such as competition, resistance, and cultural barriers. Therefore, appropriate communication strategies should be employed based on the current global landscape to ensure high efficiency, high quality, and high engagement in international cultural dialogues.

On the one hand, from the perspective of cultural strategy, it is crucial to establish the most representative and culturally rich national music works as key intellectual property (IP) themes. China's long-standing cultural history and unique musical traditions have already made an impression on international art stages, and many foreign audiences have a strong interest in Chinese national culture and musical melodies. The most representative musical works should be carefully selected as entry points, integrating them with China's cultural identity. By presenting them through expressive and emotionally engaging digital formats on the internet, an authentic and unembellished image of Chinese music culture can be showcased. This approach helps international audiences form a perceptual understanding of Chinese culture, facilitating further expansion from an initial focal point to broader recognition.

On the other hand, from a technical perspective on using the internet for the international dissemination of national music, leveraging influential global events for themed cultural communication can yield highly effective results. Music culture dissemination through informal or grassroots channels often does not generate sufficient attention. However, major internationally recognized festivals and events serve as key opportunities for cultural promotion. For instance, during the Chinese Lunar New Year, Chinese communities worldwide hold various celebrations. As a festival deeply embedded in traditional Chinese customs, it carries profound cultural significance. Each year, internet discussions and content related to Chinese culture peak around this time, making it an ideal opportunity to showcase the achievements of national music culture.

5.Conclusion

As an art form with profound cultural heritage and a distinct style, Chinese national music integrates the traditional spirit of "poetry and music culture" with Confucian thought, cultural aesthetic psychology, and other essential elements. It serves as an excellent medium for the international dissemination of contemporary Chinese music. In a globally connected digital environment, virtual dissemination offers an efficient and convenient channel for cultural outreach. The international dissemination of Chinese national music requires a twofold approach. On the one hand, it must steadfastly maintain its unique musical and cultural identity, using the power of its content and spirit to attract and earn recognition from international audiences. On the other hand, it should embrace a humble and open-minded attitude, actively learning from and adapting to global trends. By aligning with the evolving landscape of international internet development, the content and presentation of Chinese national music should be strategically adapted and redefined to enhance its appeal. Through highlighting key strengths to drive broader development, Chinese national music can truly become a representative symbol of Chinese culture, resonating powerfully on the international stage.

References

- [1]Sun, Jinan, & Zhou, Zhuquan. A Concise History of Chinese Music [M]. Jinan: Shandong Education Press, 1933.
- [2]Qiu, Lingling. Research on the Enhancement of the International Influence of Chinese Culture in the New Era [D]. University of Science and Technology of China, 2016.
- [3]Guan, Shijie. Survey and Research on the International Influence of Chinese Culture [M]. Peking University Press, 2016.
- [4]Huang, Dongxia. Research on the Discourse Power of Network Ideology [D]. University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, 2017.
- [5]Chen, Yingshi. The Modernization and International Communication of Chinese National Music [M]. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2015.
- [6]Li, Meng. Research on the Communication Strategies of National Music in the New Media Environment. Art Research, 38(4), 112-120.
- [7]Wang, Lu, & Zhang, Wei. Analysis of the Communication Paths of National Music from a Cross-Cultural Perspective. Music Exploration, 2018, 56(2), 75-83.
- [8]Jenkins, H. Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York: New York University Press. 2006
- [9]Hosokawa, S. The Digitalization of Traditional Music and Its Global Influence. Journal of World Music Studies, 2019. 12(1), 45-60.

Xu Yanmin, male (born in 1981), Associate Professor. Research Area: Ethnomusicology. School of Music and Dance, Zhengzhou Institute of Science and Technology.