

PROCEEDINGS ARTICLE

Research on the Relationship Between Musical Texts in the Chinese Red Theme Work "Melody of the Sea" in the Early Stage of New Music

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ABSTRACT

"Melody of the Sea" is a large-scale choral work composed by Zhao Yuanren for Xu Zhimo's poetry, which was first published in "New Poetry Collection". In this work, Zhao Yuanren emphasized the use of piano accompaniment to express the whole music and portray the characters, which is the indispensable content for the study of Chinese piano music in the early stage of Chinese new music. This paper takes Zhao Yuanren's choral work "Melody of the Sea" as the research object and explores the relationship between the text of "Melody of the Sea" and its piano accompaniment by analyzing, listening to and consulting related literature. Finally, it is concluded that the relationship between the piano accompaniment and the text of "Melody of the Sea" is a close combination and matching relationship. Its piano accompaniment can not only describe an independent musical image, but also can be combined with the text, echoing the meaning, melody and harmony colors expressed by the lyrics at different times, playing a role in setting off, contrasting, enriching the characters and rendering the artistic conception of music.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, the New Culture Movement was launched in China and the ideas of democracy and science had a huge impact on the Chinese at that time. After the May Fourth Movement, many musicians were influenced by the trend of democracy and freedom, and created new themes of music, many of which were red theme works. It was during this period that new music in China began to slowly take shape and develop. "Melody of the Sea" was created in 1927 and published in "New Poetry Collection" in 1928. It is a four-part mixed chorus led by a soprano and composed by Zhao Yuanren based on Xu Zhimo's new poetry of the same name, expressing their progressive stance and patriotic sentiments, which is full of the humanistic spirit of the May Fourth Movement. "Melody of the Sea" was born against the special historical background of the May Fourth Movement, which happened to be the early

stage of the development of Chinese new music. Coupled with the red theme of the work itself, it is endowed with epoch-making significance, and it is also a pioneering work that is widely circulated in the field of Chinese chorus.

2. MUSIC ANALYSIS OF "MELODY OF THE SEA"

"Melody of the Sea" belongs to the type of strophic song in terms of lyrics, but because the lyrics of each period are different, the melody, accompaniment and emotion also have corresponding changes. Therefore, it belongs to the type of 'durchkomponiert' song. From the perspective of musical structure, "Melody of the Sea" is a mixed chorus work of the large-scale multi-section juxtaposed free form structure [1].

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Prelude (piano) (1-14 bars)

The first period (14-44 bars) chorus a + solo a + chorus b + interlude a

15 24 30 37

The second period (45-75 bars) chorus a1 + solo a1 + chorus b1 + interlude b

45 55 61 68

The third period (76-106 bars) chorus a2 + solo a2 + chorus b2 + interlude c

76 86 92 99

The contrasting period (107-152 bars) chorus a3 + solo a3 + chorus b3 + interlude d

107 118 124 133

Epilogue (153-the end) chorus c + interlude e + chorus d + interlude f + chorus e + ending

153 160 164 168 172 191

The melody of the entire chorus is d minor. The overall color of the melody is also melancholy, gloomy and gray like the feeling of d minor. The emotional expression of each period is progressively developed.

The prelude is a piano solo in d minor. The melody part begins with an octave tremolo of piano dynamics, just like the sea surface before the storm comes, which seems dead calm, but there are turbulent waves hidden underneath.

The first sentence of the first period is introduced from the weak female chorus in d minor, and the rhythm is mostly dotted, which makes the music more propulsive and expresses the worry and anxiety about the young woman. The second sentence is a soprano solo, the tonality is changed to F major, and the tonal colors become brighter. Accompanied by the dialogue-style lyrics "Ah no, I won't go home, I love the wind blowing this night" [2], it reflects the young woman's innocent and romantic but stubborn character. The third sentence is a narrative phrase of the narration. The tonality is changed from F major to d minor, and the rhythm is still the urgent dotted and second half beat rhythm pattern, expressing the anxiety that the young woman rejects advice and still wanders by the sea. The last sentence is the piano's interlude in F major. Although the rhythm is stable, the staccato in the treble still implies the young woman's innocent and lively character.

The second period is similar in structure to the first period, but a little more urgent in emotion than the first period. Compared with the first sentence of the previous period, the first sentence has one more part and the melody has added a big jump of seven or eight octaves, and the worry about the young woman has become more intense. The melody and accompaniment of the second soprano solo are added with some decorations, which sound more brisk and soft, and the image of the young woman becomes

more and more distinct. In the chorus part of the third sentence, there are only soprano and contralto parts at the beginning, and two male voices are suddenly added in the last two bars. Compared with the first period, the ups and downs and fluctuations become larger, and the emotional contrast is also stronger.

The structure of the third period is roughly the same as the first two periods, but it is more musically expressive, foreshadowing an imminent storm. The rhythmic pattern of the chorus part is more unstable with the addition of triplets. The tonality shifts from d minor to A major, there is crescendo tremolo of the accompaniment part, and the large number of chromatic notes and the strong diminished seventh chord used in the melody part all indicate that the sea surface will become more and more uncalm. At the beginning of the third sentence, the theme of the female solo becomes 6/8 meter, and many rests are added to the rhythm. Compared with the previous part, there is a sense of lightness and jumping, depicting the scene where the young woman refuses to listen to advice and begins to dance on the seashore, which highlights her willfulness, innocence and ego. In the fourth sentence of interlude, the texture of the accompaniment and melody part is changed, the third chord is added, and the dynamics are lighter. The young woman's steps are no longer light, she begins to be swallowed by the waves, and her footsteps gradually leave the beach.

In the contrasting period, the storm finally arrives, and the whole work reaches its climax. The accompaniment part of the whole passage is basically the octave tremolo in the bass district, and the audience seems to be in the rolling waves at this time. Introduced by the male chorus at the beginning, the sound effect is fuller and firmer, creating a tense atmosphere. Then the female voice part is added, and the part becomes more three-dimensional and fast. In the second sentence of the soprano solo, a female

chorus is added, but the prominent solo part contrasts sharply with the chorus part that is still persuading.

The speed of the last period slows down and the overall mood becomes gentle and melancholy. The soft chorus part merges with the lyrics, telling the miss for the young woman. After bar 172, the music returns to its original tempo and the whole piece calls out to the young woman for the last time. At this time, the tremolo is added to the accompaniment part, expressing the pain and sadness of the young woman's death. The subsequent ending uses the piano to show that the waves are getting smaller and smaller, disappearing together with the young woman, and the sea returns to calm.

3. ARTISTIC IMAGES IN "MELODY OF THE SEA"

In "Melody of the Sea", the author uses the three art forms of chorus, solo and piano accompaniment to shape and portray different characters. The chorus part represents the poet who has persuaded the young woman many times, the soprano solo represents the young woman who insists on going her own way, and the piano solo represents the sea symbolizing the dark forces. The three characters are vividly portrayed and each theme uses a different way of expression, which is very expressive. For example, the chorus part is used to express the poet's worries and grief; the soprano solo narrates the young woman's innocent and stubborn words; the piano accompaniment appears as an independent part, in order to show the different states of the waves on the one hand and reflect the light pace of the young woman on the other hand. The composer has cleverly laid out the rhythm, texture, dynamics and tone of each theme. The development of each period is progressive, and the musical image is contrasting and very dramatic [3].

4. ANALYSIS ON THE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT OF "MELODY OF THE SEA"

4.1. Piano Accompaniment Texture

The piano accompaniment composed by Mr. Zhao Yuanren for the artistic work can be played as an independent piano work. In "Melody of the Sea", he uses the changes in the texture of the piano, the tonality distribution, as well as the changes in strength to mainly depict the image of the sea, which symbolizes the vicious power. At the same time, in

each period, he uses different textures to express the young woman's steps, dances, and struggles.

For example, during the intro at the beginning of the whole piece, the dynamics is piano. The left-hand accompaniment part has an octave tremolo in the mid-bass district to express the seemingly calm sea, creating a dull and depressing atmosphere, which is a good foundation for the entry of human voices.

Later, in different periods, the octave tremolo of the left-hand bass part also appears frequently and has different dynamics arrangements with the mood of the storyline.

The climax of the whole piece, starting at bar 107, depicts the coming of the storm. The accompaniment part of the entire period is almost always the powerful octave tremolo, to set off this most tense moment and express the wrath of the sea. The melody part is changed into cylindrical chords, making the timbre fuller and firmer, and with the rendering of the chorus part listeners feel like they are at the wrathful seaside.

The subsequent piano interlude at the end of the contrasting period beginning in bar 135 describes the scene of the young woman being engulfed by a ruthless sea. The composer here uses the continuous ascending arpeggio scale, triple descending chord decomposition, and chromatic descending scale textures. The continuous ascending arpeggio scale shows the young woman being rolled up by the waves; the triplet descending and chromatic descending scales show the young woman being thrown by the waves. The interweaving of several textures vividly depicts the tense situation of the young woman's figure flapping, swaying, and being rolled up and dropped by the waves. And the continuous octave of bass accentuates the cold and gloomy image of the sea.

At the end of the last piece of music, the chorus part expresses the image of the poet who is in memory of the young woman and the piano interlude immediately behind it represents the graceful figure of the young woman. Although she has passed away, her figure still appears in the poet's mind from time to time, making people never forget her.

4.2. Relationship Between Piano Accompaniment Texture and Tonality Distribution

In the tonality distribution of the piano accompaniment, the composer flexibly uses the mutual conversion of the major and minor keys of the same tonic and the modulation of the equal harmony

[4], to be unique in the composition. For example, when expressing the image of sea waves, the tonality is a d minor melody with dark and oppressive colors. And in the piano interlude that depicts the image of the young woman, the tonality will change to the bright and lively F major. With the brisk staccato melody in the treble, the young woman's innocent and stubborn character is more distinct.

Zhao Yuanren makes the artistic image in "Melody of the Sea" more complete and expressive through the texture changes and tonality distribution of the piano accompaniment. With the change of texture and tonality, the contrast and change of the image are also more distinct. The cooperation of the piano accompaniment and the chorus part also greatly enhances the infectious ability of the chorus work.

5. RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MUSICAL TEXTS OF "MELODY OF THE SEA"

5.1. Relationship Between the Texts of "Melody of the Sea" and the Piano Accompaniment

In order to combine the words and music closely, Zhao Yuanren conducts a comprehensive and meticulous study on the lyrics and tunes in the song. For example, in order to make it easier for listeners to understand, Zhao Yuanren makes three small changes in Xu Zhimo's poetry: namely, the "evening mist" in the first period is changed to "twilight", the "rapid spin" in the third period is changed to "spin", and the "in the sea foam" in the fourth period is changed to "in the foam of the spindrift" [5]. After analyzing the texts and piano accompaniment of "Melody of the Sea", it can be found that the piano accompaniment in the song is also closely integrated with the words and music, all of which reflect the composer's meticulousness and exquisiteness.

In bar 86 of the music, the soprano solo appears for the second time, which is the young woman's second response after being persuaded by the poet. The young woman's innocent and romantic response and the beginning of learning sea gull's dance by the sea make her innocent and romantic image fuller. At this time, the piano accompaniment also changes into arpeggio chords in the treble, with soft dynamics, graceful and brisk, echoing the meaning of the lyrics, as well as the color of the melody and harmony.

In bar 107 of the climax of the whole piece, the sea begins to raise high waves. The poet anxiously warns the young woman of the danger and begs her to get out of the sea: "Listen the wrath of the sea, please,

young woman, go home, young woman" [2]. At this time, the male chorus accompanying the lyrics also expresses warning and intense emotions, and the strong piano accompaniment is closely combined with the words and music, creating a scene of surging waves and hidden dangers: The left-hand part is the octave tremolo representing the coming of the waves, the right-hand part also becomes a full cylindrical chord, and the rhythm is mostly dotted, showing that dreadful dangers are approaching step by step.

5.2. Summary of the Relationship Between the Texts of "Melody of the Sea" and the Piano Accompaniment

Through the analysis of the piano accompaniment and texts in "Melody of the Sea" in the previous section, it can be concluded that the relationship between the piano accompaniment and the texts of "Melody of the Sea" is closely integrated and matched. Its piano accompaniment can not only describe independent musical images, such as waves and dance steps of the young woman, but also can be combined with the text, echoing the meaning, melody and harmony colors expressed by the lyrics at different times, playing a role in setting off, contrasting, enriching the characters and rendering the artistic conception of music. These all benefit from Zhao Yuanren's profound literary skills, creative attitude of striving for perfection, and skilled artistic techniques. It is the combination of these factors that makes his piano accompaniment more advantageous in setting off the melody mood, inspiring the singers to express their passion, and highlighting the connotation of the song [3], with a great inspiration for the creation of later piano works and art songs.

6. CONCLUSION

As a representative composer in the early stage of new music, Mr. Zhao Yuanren's works always carry the humanistic spirit and certain progressiveness of the "May Fourth" Period. Before the appearance of Chinese art songs, piano accompaniment has always been the object of auxiliary foil, but the appearance of the work "Melody of the Sea" has made the piano accompaniment in art songs have an independent status. Besides "Melody of the Sea", the piano accompaniment in many of Zhao Yuanren's art songs is like this: it can complement and promote each other when combined with words and music, but it can also shine when it's separate. Although most of Zhao Yuanren's music creation is mostly songs, his pursuit of perfection and bold and innovative spirit in the composition of piano accompaniment has exerted a wide and far-reaching influence on the musicians of

later generations, which is worthy of serious study and research by future generations.

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