

## The Performing Art of Percussion in Sichuan Opera

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### Abstract

This article aimed to study (1) The performance style of Sichuan opera percussion music. (2) The performance techniques of Sichuan Opera percussion music. (3) To seek the inheritance path of contemporary Sichuan Opera Percussion music. They were selected by Analysis data by Descriptive statistics and Content Analysis.

The research results were found as follows:

1. The playing style of Sichuan opera percussion has gradually become unified from the different styles of the previous four rivers. As a result, the way of talent training has changed, from the former college and regiment system, the master-apprentice inheritance system to the unified talent training in the school. Therefore, the playing style of Sichuan opera percussion music gradually formed with Chengdu as the center, that is, the playing style of the West Sichuan Dam School.

2. As the drummer is the conductor of the whole Sichuan opera percussion music and dominates all the elements of the Sichuan opera performance, the performance techniques here are mainly to explore the drummer-based performance techniques (that is 'eye-making'), which are 16 eye-making methods of the right hand and 5 eye-making methods of the left hand.

3. Centered in Chengdu, it has jointly carried out the teaching of popularizing Sichuan opera percussion music with colleges and universities, which not only allows college students to let primary and secondary school teachers learn more about Sichuan opera percussion music, but also expands the inheritance path of contemporary Sichuan opera percussion music.

**Keywords:** Sichuan Opera, Percussion, Performing Art

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## Introduction

Sichuan Opera is a wonderful flower of Sichuan national culture and art. Among them, percussion music, as the main accompaniment instrument of Sichuan opera art, is known as the honor of "three singing, seven beating", and is the soul and pillar of Sichuan Opera. The academic research of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums has been started since 1983, as an important soul pillar of Sichuan opera art, its academic research results only account for about 14% of the total amount of Sichuan opera art research. The existing theoretical research more stay in the development status of Sichuan opera drums, artistic expression of external analysis and a minority of drums brand functional research, about Sichuan opera drums four schools their playing style and the internal rhythm and structure of the research is basic for blank

About the study of Sichuan opera drums in the new period, scholars with their own unique perspective constantly promote the development of Sichuan opera art, which of the Sichuan opera research institutions present frequency of the top ten units are: Sichuan Sichuan opera art research institute, Sichuan province, Sichuan art vocational institute, Sichuan Sichuan opera institute, Chongqing Sichuan theatre, Sichuan university institute of literature and journalism, Chongqing culture art research institute, Sichuan province cultural department. Most of them are concentrated in southwest China, especially in Chengdu. The target audience is the professional students and amateurs of Sichuan Opera percussion music

By combining both the qualitative and the quantitative research methods, this paper analyzes the historical development, repertoire and performance techniques of Sichuan opera percussion music. And for the Sichuan and Chongqing areas of Sichuan opera percussion teachers, percussionists, students and audiences conducted a one-year research.

This research paper presents the Sichuan Opera Percussion theoretical research and the future sustainable development path under the background of the new era.

## Research's objective

1. To study The performance style of Sichuan opera percussion music
2. To explore the performance techniques of Percussion in Sichuan Opera.
3. To seek the inheritance path of contemporary Sichuan Opera Percussion music.

## Literature review

Concerning the current Sichuan opera drums theory research, is still stuck at a surface stage, the existing theoretical research more stay in the development status of Sichuan opera drums, artistic expression of external analysis and a minority of drums brand functional research, about the present percussion playing style and the internal rhythm and structure of the research is basic for blank.

1.About the performance characteristics of Sichuan opera percussion. It mainly includes the research on the importance, characteristics and types of rhythm. Sichuan Taste discussed Peng Chaoyi (1983) that “the three characteristics of Sichuan flavor should not be lost, among which "half gongs and drums and half opera, gongs and drums are an important feature of Sichuan opera art" is one of its three characteristics.”(p.37) Its style is unique, there are more than 200 gongs and drums brands, the rhythm change is very flexible, strong expression, with dance, performance, figure, help, Tao white have played a very good role.

In the accompaniment form of the third volume in the 1992 book Sichuan Opera, the author classifies them according to their own characteristics, which is also the first and only study on the brands of gongs and drums in Sichuan Opera according to their rhythm characteristics. The author believes that the percussion of the big gong is the support point of the rhythm of the gong and drum, the rhythm types of gongs and drums are classified as [punch], [long hammer], [water pushing sand] and [buckle].These traditional gong and drum brands all have their own characteristics and different functions in Sichuan Opera.(Zhong Kaizhi2015,P130) "concise and practical Sichuan opera effect drums", for the effect of gongs, drums, cymbals, small gong, gong several Sichuan hit the main instrument on the rhythm of the analysis, vividly shows all kinds of natural scene, character psychology, rendering of the performance action played a vivid role. This paper discusses the effect of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums on the stage of Sichuan opera, and have an irreplaceable role.

2.About the playing style of percussion in Sichuan Opera. The historical background of the art of the four rivers of Sichuan Opera was mentioned.(Common Sense of Sichuan Opera,1987)Due to the differences in regional pronunciation and the different appreciation habits of the masses, the performance of the same play in different regions, its voice and performance, all have their own characteristics. This kind of Sichuan opera class with fixed and similar artistic styles in the same area often flows through waterways, active in urban and rural areas, and has a number of unique plays and outstanding actors, forming an art school divided by river channels, including West Sichuan Dam, Ziyang River, North Sichuan River and Lower East Sichuan River,

called four rivers. According to Figure 1 We can see the different playing style of four river channel.

Sichuan Opera gong and drum school (River channel)		
school	region	Good at operas and characteristics
Upper Dam (also known as Upper River Channel, West Sichuan Dam, West Dam, Fu River)	With Chengdu as the center, Wenjiang, Pixian, Chongzhou, Dujiangyan area	Once used to high accent opera, after singing more huqin opera, "Sichuan huqin" authentic reputation
Ziyang river	Luzhou River and Ziyang River area	He is famous for singing a high-accent opera
North Sichuan river	With Nanchong as the center, including qubao River, Suining River area	To sing the play, play many original play, the structure is rigorous, the introduction of the next poem, tight rhythm, full of singing
Lower Sichuan East (also known as Lower River Channel)	With Chongqing as the center, including Fuling, Wanzhou area	Mainly sing Kunqu opera, hu qin, play, a variety of voices, miscellaneous play, mainly hu qin opera

**Figure.1** The different river channel style of Sichuan opera percussion

3. Performing skills about Sichuan opera percussion. The performance skills are mainly the analysis of the performance skills of the drum maker, because the drum master, as the percussion part and the conductor of the band, his performance skills play the most important role. The drum's command gesture, namely "eye", is also an important signal for the band to understand its musical development. As for the type of playing "eyes", there are many rules and rules in Sichuan Opera.(Wang Guanfu,1998).About si drum gestures in drums playing prompt role has several, "common Sichuan opera drum spectrum and playing tips"(Zhong Kaizhi,1993).For example, first, as a drum tip, ① 'Yu Ling' represent preparatory order ② 'Dong Ling' represent acting command. ③ Stop the eye, indicating the end of the paragraph, ect. These gestures are hints for the speed, strength and different brands of gongs and drums.

4.Research on Sichuan opera percussion performers."Sichuan opera si drum", the author(Zuo JunChen,1991) as an experienced drum division, in inherit and develop the

Sichuan opera music, Sichuan opera art education has made great contribution, also put forward the basic requirements of three professional: " 1, drum division to master the various character, all kinds of voice and all kinds of plate, performance and music image shaping.2, the drum division should take the band as a whole, so that the band's variety of sound can well cooperate with the stage actors " singing, reading, doing and playing.3. The drum master should master all kinds of vocal knowledge of Sichuan opera music, understand and be familiar with various traditional programs and excellent traditional plays, and have the courage to bring forth the new on the basis of inheritance, but avoid the nihilism creation method of removing the style and characteristics of Sichuan opera. The book also mentioned for Sichuan opera music has made outstanding contributions to the schools of drum, such as dam famous drum, the late Qing dynasty s famous Sichuan dam" five tiger general, during the period of the republic of China" five tigers. Famous drum master of Ziyang River. Famous drum masters of the North Sichuan River. It mainly studies the older generation of Sichuan opera drum masters, which involves the contribution of the drum masters in the professional field, as well as some performance style and techniques.

5.Research on the development of percussion music in Sichuan Opera. With Sichuan Opera, percussion has accompanied the ups and downs of Sichuan Opera for nearly 400 years. Experts on the origins of percussion before its integration into Sichuan Opera are divided, and it is difficult to trace the history of thousands of years. After the birth of Sichuan Opera, the inheritance and development of percussion music in the contemporary era, in the content of inheritance, (Ji Yaping,2018) believes that on the road of national art inheritance, without the inheritance of tradition, all reforms will become "water without a source". We should inherit the rhythm and style of the original gongs and drums in Sichuan Opera, and present the real "flavor" of the gongs and drums, and then change and develop in combination with the needs of The Times. On the other hand, regarding the way of inheritance, the author(Hou Siqi.2017) from the compulsory education music curriculum standards, think as intangible cultural heritage music project —— Sichuan opera drums, should be applied to the curriculum, make the students from the national music culture, set up the consciousness of national music culture. Therefore, learning Sichuan Opera gongs and drums from primary school is one of the most effective ways to inherit folk music. And dialectically view the positive role of gongs and drum learning in improving pupils' musical literacy, music aesthetic ability and team spirit.

To sum up, in the previous studies on percussion performers, performance styles, characteristics, techniques and historical development of Sichuan Opera, qualitative research methods were adopted, such as literature research and field

research. The research on percussion music of Sichuan opera only stays at the level of music ontology, but the characteristics and development of an art are inseparable from the historical background, creative motivation, and audience groups of works in its era. Only by understanding the music ontology under these comprehensive historical factors can we fully understand the performance art of percussion music in Sichuan opera.

### Conceptual Framework

The topic of "Research on the Performing Art of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums" consists of two basic concepts of "Sichuan Opera gongs and drums" and "playing art". Among them, "Sichuan Opera gongs and drums" is the main research object of this topic, and "playing art" is the main perspective and core of this topic study of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums. After the two mutual connections, the research scope of this topic also provides the basic direction for this research, that is, what is the performance mode of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums? What is the importance of Sichuan opera drum masters in the drama? What are the genre style characteristics of gongs and drums in Sichuan Opera? The achievements of gongs and drums in Sichuan Opera go on a journey? The following study framework is formed:

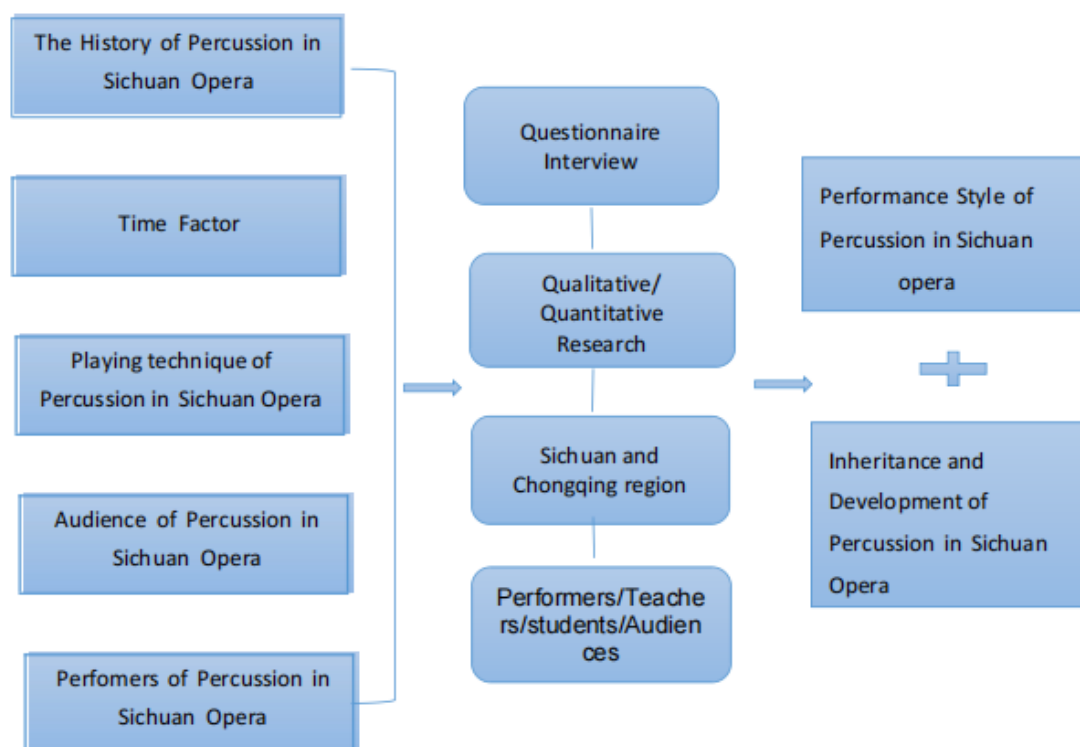


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

## Research Methodology

Qualitative research method is used in this paper, reflected as follows:

The qualitative research first relies on the playing experience, aesthetic experience and related music theory, the Sichuan opera drums in different periods and different schools of playing style, evaluation of different aesthetic ideas, from the historical and modern, academic and artistic, subjective and objective aspects of Sichuan opera drums art characteristics, analysis of the formation of these phenomena. Secondly, by interviewing the full-time teachers and performers of the Sichuan Opera school and the troupe, I can understand their aesthetic concepts and teaching concepts.

After more than three hundred years of development and development, it has formed a cultural ecosystem integrating performance, video recording, appreciation and research. Based on the literature, the author will summarize professional teachers and performers through their profound and mature insights on the phenomenon of Sichuan opera music, which will provide high academic value for the study of this topic.

## Results

Objective 1. The 3research result showed that since the establishment of Sichuan Vocational Art College (the former Sichuan Opera School), the playing style of Sichuan opera percussion music has gradually become unified from the different styles of the previous four rivers. As a result, the way of talent training has changed, from the former college and regiment system, the master-apprentice inheritance system to the unified talent training in the school. Therefore, the playing style of Sichuan opera percussion music gradually formed with Chengdu as the center, that is, the playing style of the West Sichuan Dam School.

Objective 2. The research result showed that combined with the characteristics of the rhythm, structure and connection of Sichuan opera percussion music, several main playing techniques based on the playing style of Xiba in Sichuan are obtained. As the drummer is the conductor of the whole Sichuan opera percussion music and dominates all the elements of the Sichuan opera performance, the performance techniques here are mainly to explore the drummer-based performance techniques (that is 'eye-making'), which are 16 eye-making methods of the right hand and 5 eye-making methods of the left hand.

Objective 3. The research result showed that the inheritance mode of apprenticeship and college and regiment training in the past has been transformed into the unified personnel training of the school, although the playing style tends to be unified gradually, on the other hand, this teaching method is more systematic and

more beneficial to inheritance. Through the efforts of contemporary Sichuan opera percussion educators and performers, the performance of Sichuan opera percussion music has moved from Sichuan and Chongqing to the whole country and even the whole world, and with Chengdu as the center, it has jointly carried out the teaching of popularizing Sichuan opera percussion music with colleges and universities, which not only allows college students to let primary and secondary school teachers learn more about Sichuan opera percussion music, but also expands the inheritance path of contemporary Sichuan opera percussion music.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Through this research, I found that the audience group of percussion music of Sichuan opera has shown a growing trend in recent years, which is due to the promotion of percussion playing art by percussion performers of Sichuan opera. on the other hand, it is the contribution made by percussion teachers in the field of education, which brings a good effect. The continuous spread of percussion music of Sichuan opera has enhanced the probability of students majoring in percussion music of Sichuan opera being transformed into the audience group of percussion music of Sichuan Opera, expanding the audience group while increasing the communication effect of Percussion music of Sichuan Opera. as a result, we can build a sound development to promote the inheritance and promotion of percussion music of Sichuan opera. In addition, according to the data obtained from the corresponding questionnaire survey, the audience group of Sichuan Opera Percussion generally believes that its development at this stage is affected by five factors, namely, the development process, the times, the performer, the performance style and the audience group itself.

### **Knowledge from Research**

As an art form that has been circulating and developing for a long time, the factors affecting its development are complex, and it is the product of the development of gathering various forces. Through the analysis, the conclusion that there is a significant positive correlation between the development process of the Percussion, factors of The Times, performers, audience groups and performance methods of the performance style, inheritance and development of Sichuan Opera percussion ". In addition, the above five independent variable factors also have mutual influence and complement each other, so this is also the attribution of the cause and uniqueness of the complex historical development of Sichuan opera percussion performance art and the rich artistic charm. The schematic diagram is as follows



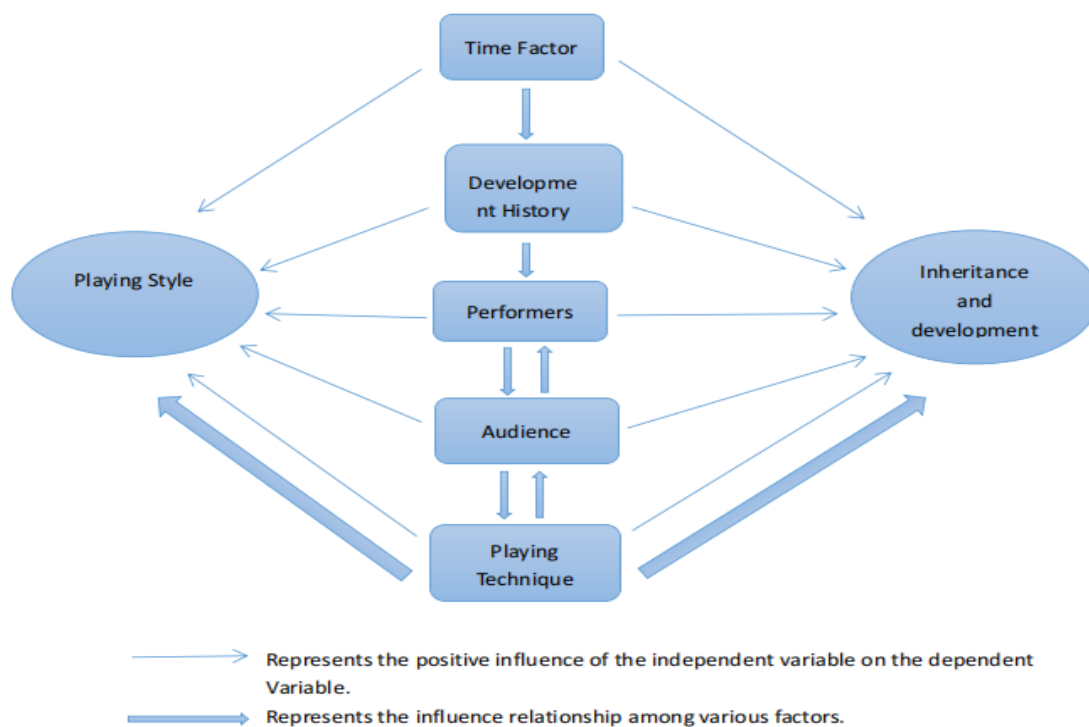


Figure 3 Knowledge from Research

## Conclusion

In essence, the study of Sichuan Opera Percussion performance art is a practical study, which also needs theoretical research. In previous studies, it is found that on the one hand, the performers have more analysis of instrument performance, namely music ontology, from the perspective of performance; on the other hand, from the perspective of theoretical research and the perspective of history or music evaluation, it has little connection with performing arts and performance characteristics. There are few studies that can analyze theory with practice under the historical and cultural background. This study from the perspective of history, combined with qualitative research and quantitative research method, explore the Sichuan opera percussion from ancient playing form, skills, style, performers in the process of evolution, a more comprehensive interpretation of Sichuan opera percussion in the present style and inheritance development path, for the development of Sichuan opera percussion in the future provides a more detailed research basis.

## Suggestions

### 1.Suggestion for government

Strengthen the relevant policy support of the government, vigorously publicize the percussion culture of Sichuan opera. First, increase government purchase,

bring Sichuan opera performances into the catalogue of basic public cultural services, and organize Sichuan opera troupes to perform for the masses in rural areas and communities by means of government purchase. Second, the integration of culture and tourism promotion. Sichuan opera as the regional culture, cultural personality and folk customs, through the form of cooperation with tourist attractions, relying on the local characteristics of cultural resources, dig deeper into the tourism projects such as red culture, classic stories, etc.

## 2.Suggestion for the future investigator

As a performing art of Sichuan Opera Percussion, the author believes that we must have the ability of percussion performance of Sichuan opera, understand the actual application of Sichuan opera, which is the inherent laws and characteristics of the music itself, and then in-depth theoretical research and construction.

## 3.Suggestion on inheriting and innovating ways

The innovation here includes two aspects, one is the innovation as the accompaniment element in Sichuan Opera, and the other is the innovation as the form of independent performance. For example, under the modern opera creation and performance system, the drum masters should play their own role as the band conductor, They should protect and use the original rhythm, Musical Instruments and timbre of Sichuan Opera gongs and drums, highlight their self-value, and reshape the leader in the stage performance of Sichuan Opera. On the other hand, while adhering to the essence of Sichuan opera gong and drum music, we try to make new integration in the performance forms, such as the combination of Sichuan opera percussion and other kinds of percussion music, folk music and western music forms.

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