

Influence and Reference—Taking the Song *Horse Racing* as an Example, the Comparison Between Han Erhu and Mongolian Matouqin

Leirong Gai¹

¹ Cinematography Institute, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Correspondence: Leirong Gai, Cinematography Institute, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

doi: 10.56397/AS.2022.10.02

Abstract

Different geographical locations and different civilizations constitute different musical development. Erhu and matouqin are both stringed instruments. The two musical instruments have similarities not only in appearance, but also in timbre. Just take the song *Horse Racing* as an example. This work was originally created for the erhu, but with its unique style and realistic skills, it has attracted more and more composers and performers to transplant for other musical instruments. Influence and reference to the erhu and matouqin versions. To develop folk music, we must adhere to cultural self-confidence and national self-confidence.

Keywords: erhu, matouqin, comparison, difference, *Horse Racing*

1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has talked about traditional Chinese culture on many occasions, expressing his recognition and respect for traditional culture and traditional ideological value system. On May 4, 2015, he had a discussion with the students of Peking University, and he also mentioned the core values and cultural confidence many times. In his activities and speeches on different occasions at home and abroad, General Secretary Xi showed the spirit and ambition of the Chinese government and people and boosted the cultural confidence of the Chinese nation. Therefore, in order to develop national music, we must adhere to cultural self-confidence and national self-confidence.

There are basically two reasons for the writing of this article. First, due to my professional reasons, the author has studied erhu with his family since childhood, studied folk music, has a relatively in-depth understanding of this stringed instrument, and has a deep understanding of Mongolian folk music and musical instruments. I have a very high love and interest. The author is currently studying for a master's degree in art at the Mongolian Academy of Film Art. After work, he continues to study, which provides academic support for a deeper understanding of Mongolian art and culture and the study of national musical instruments.

Secondly, in terms of professional theory, the erhu and the matouqin are both stringed instruments, but the author found during the first-line teaching that students in some grades could not distinguish the two very well. Matouqin, the two-stringed stringed instrument of Matouqin is regarded as an erhu, so this paper discusses the difference between the two and helps readers to better distinguish these two kinds of stringed instruments.

And the two musical instruments have similarities not only in appearance, but also in timbre. Just take the piece *Horse Racing* as an example. This piece was originally created for Erhu, but with its unique musical style and realistic skills, It has attracted more and more composers and performers to transplant for other musical instruments. In the process of transplanting other musical instruments, it also produced influences and references to the erhu and matouqin versions.

2. Comparison of Historical Development—Two Views on Historical Development

Different geographical locations and different civilizations constitute different music development. The Han nationality is the main ethnic group in my country, accounting for 91.11% of the population of all ethnic groups. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the three northeastern provinces, Xinjiang, Hebei, Qinghai, and the rest are scattered in Henan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Beijing, and Yunnan. The Mongolian population in my country is 5.98 million. Russia also has about 900,000 Mongolians. The huge Mongolian population The number has also created a huge and splendid Mongolian culture. Regarding the development process of the two musical instruments, there are currently two theories, namely:

2.1 Xiqin Said

According to historical records, the Xiqin is a stringed instrument invented by the Xi people, a minority of nomadic people living in the north during the Sui and Tang Dynasties. It is the oldest stringed instrument in existence and was introduced to the Central Plains during the Tang Dynasty. At that time, it was called Jiqin, and in the Yuan Dynasty, “Hu” was the name given to the northern minorities by the Central Plains people, indicating that this musical instrument originated from the grasslands, and was called “Huqin”, and later it was called Erhu with its two strings.

There is no clear written record of the birth of the matouqin. As early as the early thirteenth century, the matouqin had been widely circulated in the Mongolian people. The matouqin in the Genghis Khan period was called “Chao’er”.

2.2 Huobusi Said

There is also a view that the erhu is the evolution of the ancient Xiqin. It is believed that the Xiqin and other stringed instruments are derived from the xiantuo and were produced in the Tang Dynasty, but the ancestors of the matouqin are other stringed instruments, which are called “bow strings”. Fire does not think”, Mongolian musician and writer Sukhbaru wrote an article in “Instrument” magazine in 1983 to discuss this point of view. (Huqin)—Matouqin, is the historical evolution of Matouqin. It provides a new academic point of view for tracing the origin of Matouqin.

2.3 Summary

Although there are two different views, the first view has more adequate historical records, so the academic circles have more recognition for this explanation, and they also believe that erhu and matouqin are of the same clan and blood, but later developed due to different development regions. Two different forms.

3. Comparison of Appearance Features

3.1 The Development Process of the Erhu's Form and Structure

According to relevant materials and records, we found that the erhu has a long evolution process. In Mr. Liu Debo's book “*The Origin of the Erhu*”, a preliminary review of the erhu was carried out. Nanhu-Erhu is a major clue for the development of erhu”, we will follow the old gentleman's idea to analyze, we will find that “erhu” in different periods has different shapes, and the changes in shape and structure, mainly reflected in the following aspects:

3.1.1 The Shape of the Drum

During the period of Xiqin, because the documents of the Tang Dynasty did not have a clear and detailed record of it, the records and pictures of Xiqin can only be found in the “*Le Book*” written by Chen Yang in the Song Dynasty. It can be found in the Xiqin that the resonance box of the Xiqin, that is, its tube, is a flat cylindrical shape.

Jiqin is the same as Xiqin, but it is called differently in different times, so the qin barrel is still flat and round. The direct basis of the Mawei Huqin period is the records of many murals in the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang. Among the many Dunhuang murals, it is clearly seen that the horsetail huqin tube is round. Nanhu is also known as Fujian Nanyin Erxian. According to historical data, the Nanhu qin tube is the same as the Xiqin, and it is also a flat cylinder.

By the Ming Dynasty, the shape of the erhu had been basically determined. In the paintings of You Ziqiu during the Jiajing period, experts identified and found that the qin barrel was short, but did not explain the shape of the erhu. In the later period, due to the needs of performance, musical instrument improvers replaced the qin. As the barrel increases, the erhu barrels have successively flat hexagonal, flat circular, hexagonal, oval, flat octagonal, front octagonal and rear cylindrical. Nowadays, the most used one is the hexagonal barrel.

3.1.2 Body Material

During the Xiqin period, according to the Song Book of Music, the body of the qin was made of bamboo, and it

can be seen that there are bamboo knots on its body. Jiqin body material is the same as Xiqin.

3.1.3 Changes in the Bow

The bow material of the Xiqin period was bamboo.

In the Jiqin era, the material of the bow has not changed, and the sound is still produced by friction with bamboo pieces, and the sound is very loud.

In the period of Mawei Huqin, the change of the title can already reflect the obvious change of its bow. The first record of the bow of the horsetail material can be found in Song “Mengxi Bi Tan. Volume 5”.

According to research, the bow used by Nanhu is also made of ponytail. The erhu still uses the ponytail bow, which means that the sound emitted by the ponytail bow conforms to the public’s aesthetic habits.

3.1.4 Materials and Methods of Film Forming for the Resonance Box

In the Western Xia period, there are a lot of murals and written records on the horsetail huqin. In the tenth cave of the Yulin Grotto in Guazhou, the huqin barrel has a skin pattern, but the specific material cannot be reflected.

3.1.5 Evolution of Strings

The Xiqin has two strings, but there is no literature describing its material.

3.1.6 The Appearance of Thousands of Pounds

After years of evolution, the shape and characteristics of the erhu have gradually become stable. The shape of the Fujian Nanyin Erxian is almost exactly the same as that of the Tang and Song Xiqin, except for the addition of Qianjin and horsetail bow hair.

3.2 The Development Process of the Shape and Structure of the Matouqin

The development process of matouqin is also long. This musical instrument on horseback is considered to be the pearl left by Genghis Khan. Since Xiqin said that it is more recognized when studying the historical development process of matouqin, the development process of matouqin is also introduced from the beginning. Xi Qin is the starting point for analysis.

It is recorded in the history books of the Jin Dynasty that “the Xiqin is a musical instrument of the Xi department. In terms of structure, the decoration on the top of the horse head qin at first was not a horse head.” The horse head decoration gradually evolved according to totem worship in the later period, and the Mongols grew up on horseback since childhood. They believed that the horse is the most beautiful in the world. Compassionate, the most perfect livestock, the Mongolian totem worship makes the horse an extremely auspicious and important animal in the eyes of the Mongolians, and an extremely important partner of the nomadic people. The Mongolian nation is also the nation with the most horses in the world. As a friend of the shepherd, he believes that the head of the horse is respected, and no one can hit the head of the horse. It is carved into the shape of a horse’s head, which has a certain regional iconicity.

The matouqin case from “Chao’er” to before the reform and opening up was covered with python skin, so the sound produced was low, and it was not able to meet the playing needs of professional groups at that time for matouqin.

After the reform and opening up, when it comes to matouqin, one has to think of one person, that is, the Mongolian performer Qi Baoligao, known as “the ancestor of the matouqin”. Master Qi Baoligao improved the sound of the matouqin. Matouqin has now become the foundation of an independent major in major art colleges and professional academies, and under his research, the first Matouqin ensemble was born, making Matouqin improved after the reform and opening up. Great development, in 1983, Master Qi Baoligao and several musical instrument improvers from Inner Mongolia National Musical Instrument Factory made a lot of attempts and improvements, and improved the surface of the matouqin to the surface of sycamore wood, making the matouqin in the In the mid-1980s, it entered the era of wooden surfaces, and it has been used since then.

In modern times, Qi Brigold, the son of Master Qi Baoligao, continued to improve the matouqin. In order to make the timbre fuller and produce the effect of multiple parts, he developed the four-string matouqin, a new type of matouqin. Can create a fuller harmonic texture and tone.

4. The Similarities and Differences Between the Modern Erhu and the Modern Matouqin

4.1 Same Point

Both are bowed and stringed instruments, and the bow hair is made of ponytail material. The resonance principle is the same. The vibration generated by the friction between the bow and the strings is resonated by the speaker to generate sound. The sound is determined by the thickness and hardness of the speaker panel, back panel and hoarding.

4.2 Differences

4.2.1 Different Shapes

The bar of the horse head qin is slender and the trapezoidal resonance box resembles a cross section of a horse's skull. The erhu stem is more slender than the matouqin. And the piano case is cylindrical.

4.2.2 Strings are Different

In the past, the strings of the erhu were mostly twisted together by multiple strands of silk and twisted into one strand, but they are modernized into metal strings.

The strings of the traditional matouqin are composed of a lot of scattered ponytails. They are combed into a bundle and are not crossed, but are tensioned on the piano in parallel. Now the ponytail strings are replaced by nylon threads. The characteristics of the beam strings are completely preserved.

4.2.3 The Sound Box is Different

Matouqin is generally covered with paulownia wood, and sound beams and columns are installed in the resonance box. In order to facilitate the coordination and unity of the vibration of the face and the back plate, and improve the sound quality.

The conduction system of the erhu in the resonator has only the structure of the piano bar and the double resonator, and the conduction mode is relatively simple, so there are fewer overtone columns, which is not conducive to the firmness and transmission of the resonance.

4.2.4 Bow Mechanics are Different

The bow of the matouqin is completely outside the strings. The bow hairs are elastic. The control of the bow, including the trajectory, angle and strength of the bow, requires high requirements, and it is easy to cause tension in the right forearm. The bow hair of the erhu is sandwiched between the two strings and cannot be taken out independently when playing.

4.2.5 The Tuning is Different

The matouqin is tuned as positive 4 degrees d1~a, positive 5 degrees d1~g (thick strings are outside, thin strings are inside), and reverse 4 degrees a~d1. Erhu tuning is usually d1 for the inner string and a1 for the outer string.

4.2.6 Play Differently

Since the erhu bow is stuck between the two lines, it cannot be taken off. The matouqin bow is placed horizontally on the strings and can be taken off at any time. It is two completely independent objects from the piano. tone skills,

When imitating the technique of the horse's neighing, because it can play two tones, the sound effect of the matouqin is more three-dimensional, and the sound effect of the erhu is slightly thinner than that of the matouqin.

4.3 Summary

In terms of appearance, the two are increasingly learning from each other in the process of development and production. In works of different genres, erhu will deliberately imitate the timbre and playing skills of matouqin, and matouqin will also learn from erhu's handling of works.

5. Comparing the Styles of Songs, Taking the Song *Horse Racing* as an Example

Judging from the repertoire, most of the two instruments love to create repertoires with horses as the theme. Due to the unique playing techniques of stringed instruments, the bow and the strings are in contact and friction. *Horse Racing* is an erhu solo composed by the composer Huang Huaihai. The melodious tune shows a picture of a grassland nomadic horse racing competition, which is well received by audiences at home and abroad. With the continuous popularity of this piece, there have been violin, matouqin, guzheng, accordion and other musical instrument versions of *Horse Racing*, this article takes the erhu and matouqin versions as examples to compare the erhu and matouqin. This piece of music is deeply loved by people for its majestic momentum, warm atmosphere and unrestrained melody. Whether it is a flamboyant racer or a galloping and neighing horse, they are all vividly represented by the melody. The music unfolds in the neighing of the horses, and the melody is rough and unrestrained. The crisp and elastic jumping bow from far to near, with distinct vibrato, depicts the Mongolian herdsmen celebrating the grand occasion of horse racing. Listening carefully to the performance of the two versions, it is not difficult to find that in terms of musical structure, the Matouqin version has not changed the musical structure of the erhu version, and the application skills have not changed, but I have to mention that in this piece of music, the erhu version The handling of horse hooves, horse calls, bow jumping and other skills is completely borrowed from the horse head qin. It provides a blueprint for performance and creation of other grassland-themed works created later.

It can be seen that the playing techniques of erhu and matouqin learn from each other, complement each other, and promote their respective development under the influence and reference of each other.

References

- Ke Qinfu. (2001). Research on the origin and development of Matou Qin. *Journal of Inner Mongolia University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*.
- Li Jing. (2016). The reform and development of Erhu musical instruments in China. *Science and Technology*.
- Gao Ping, Bao Xiaoxiang Erhu. (May, 2003). The evolution history of matouqin is proved in Chifeng. *Guangming Daily*.
- Du Yang. (2014). An overview of the development history of Erhu. *Music Grand View*.
- Xun Xiaolan. (2020). The evolution and development of Chinese huqin bowed and stringed instruments. *Music World*.
- Jia Man. (2019). A new research on the origin of Huqin. *Music Research*.
- Wang Pingping. (2008). The history and current situation of Fujian Nanyin Erxian. *Popular Literature and Art (Theory)*.
- Zhang Jinsheng. (2019). The 40th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up. Review of the Art Development of Matouqin in Inner Mongolia. Baidu's Wenku database.

Appendix A



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).