



# Overview of Tseng Zhimin's Music Thought

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**Abstract:** *Zeng Zhimin is a famous educator, theorist and social activist in the enlightenment music in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China. She is also the initiator and pioneer of "new music" and one of the pioneers in the development of song creation and education in school. He has made great achievements in artistic practice, music creation and theoretical research. He is a faithful practitioner of art. He publicly publishes music songs, writes music theory teaching materials and singing teaching materials, introduces western music theory to Chinese people, expounds music education thoughts, and establishes the first western orchestra in China. On the basis of learning from the western music culture, his music thought proposed to create music in line with China's national conditions, and made outstanding contributions to the rise of school music and the development and dissemination of modern music culture under the background of The Times.*

**Keywords:** Zeng Zhimin; "New music"; School music.

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## 1. Introduction

Zeng Zhimin is one of the representative musicians in the Chinese modern school music period. The change of the nature of modern Chinese society has brought about fundamental changes in Chinese traditional music. With her strong desire to change the backwater of modern Chinese music and her great ideal of making new music for China, she will educate Chinese youth with such a lofty music education concept and make a contribution to the development of modern Chinese music education. He advocated the social function of music, vigorously advocated school music education, and put forward the principles of music and song creation, aiming to create a new Chinese song for China in the 20th century, that is, put forward the concept of "new music", which ran through the whole process of his music career. His music thought can be divided into three parts, proposing the concept of new music, emphasizing the social function of music and the role of music in social change; Vigorously advocate the development of new music education; About the principles of school song composition.

## 2. Put forward the concept of "New music"

She first proposed "New Music" in 1904. Xiao Youmei's "Ordinary Music" : "To create new music for China, but music is good for the country." However, Tseng Min does not define the concept of "new music", nor does she give a comprehensive explanation of its quality, shape and connotation. From the historical data, during this period, there was no special musician to systematically discuss "new music", but only around the concept of "new music" and "music code" music creation.

The Contribution of Liang Qichao and Tseng Min to Modern Music Culture by Davy, after a brief overview of Tseng Min's life, focuses on the discussion of Tseng Min's musical thoughts. Davy believes that an important contribution of Tseng Min is to put forward the "thoughts of developing new music" in music theory. And take Tseng's "Music Education" and "Music Classics Textbook" (introduction) as examples to illustrate the embodiment of this thought. The creation of "new music" said by Zeng Zhiwei is different from the old traditional feudal music. This difference is not to imitate western music, so "new music" needs to have Chinese musical characteristics and should be regarded as the forerunner of the new music movement as a wing of the new culture during the May Fourth Movement.

Chen Yanqiu and Li Yan's article "The Similarities and Differences of Li Shutong's and Zeng Zhimin's Music and Song Thoughts -- Starting from the" On the Relationship between School Music "published in" Shenbao "pointed out that Zeng Zhimin's ultimate goal is to improve traditional Chinese music, create a new musical culture and a

musical culture with traditional Chinese characteristics. This is Tseng's accurate assessment of the difficulty and long-term nature of creating "new music". The foundation of developing new music is to learn western music theory, let Chinese people learn western music creation ideas, and educate future generations to spread and accumulate western music technology theory. Only through the study of basic music theory knowledge can we gradually develop and build new music ideals at a higher level.

In Wang Ni's A Study of "New Music" in China in the 20th Century, she makes a review of "New music" and its related concepts and contents. Although she does not make an explanation of its definition and connotation, it is clear from the historical materials involved that the so-called "new music" does not exist independently. It is in contrast to the "old music" that Tseng Min said "flowed into the base" and "can't be saved". Its "new" lies in breaking the big establishment, breaking the traditional music thought, turning to learn the western music culture, and using the learned "new" music culture to achieve the purpose of "benefiting the country".

Min Zeng's concept of "new music" is not to blindly copy all western music theories, but to transform "old music" on the basis of learning western music culture to form China's own "new music".

### **3. Vigorously advocate new music education and put forward the popularization of music**

One of Tseng's most important contributions is the idea of developing new music in music education theory. In 1904, he published a paper on Music Education, which systematically discussed the roots and definitions of music, the functions of music, the reasons for the backwater of Chinese music, the methods of learning music and the creation of music and other issues, which was one of the most valuable music papers at that time.

Chen Lingqun's book *Tseng Min: An Older Musician Who Should Not Be Forgotten* points out that Tseng Min also systematically expounds the development of modern Chinese music education in her book on Music Education. In view of the situation that the new music atmosphere at that time was "but not on the right track", the paper starts with the fundamental problems of music aesthetics such as the origin, definition and social function of music, and puts forward the requirements of advocating and developing modern music education in school, society, family and other aspects. Although some of them seem naive today, it is worth noting that as early as that time, she put forward the problem of learning western music for the development of music education, "with my eyes, with my learning skills" and "choose carefully", warning not to be a "poor choice and not a good outcome."

In the article "Liang Qichao and Tseng Min's Contribution to Modern Music Culture", Davy mentioned that Tseng Min attaches great importance to music education, but it is not only limited to school music education, and put forward: "In this period of new and old replacement, it is impossible to import civilization, and especially it is difficult to import but not to use. ... If you want music to develop, but only in the field of education, its strength is very weak." According to this situation, Tseng Min put forward the idea of "popularizing" music, pointing out: "Still think that popularization is not fast, then hold concerts every month, or hold workshops every day, or set up music halls in public places for the upper, middle and lower social people; Each knows the beauty of school music." Social music education and family music education are included in music education in order to promote and develop the cause of modern music education.

In her essay "Tseng Min Min's Thoughts on Music Education", Ji Qun mentioned that Tseng put forward the concepts of "school music" and "social music" while emphasizing the functions and functions of music. He believes that school music can enable students to achieve the purpose of "correct pronunciation, self-cultivation, beautiful thinking, unity"; Social music makes people gain lessons from music by popularizing singing and instrumental music performance, thus producing effective effect.

In Gong Ping's book *Tseng Min: A Musical Sages Who Should Not Be Forgotten*, she summarizes Tseng's music education thoughts. The music education model she advocated is a scientific educational method that extends from music theory to music creation, from the entertainment function of music to social education and aesthetic education, and gradually progresses from simple to deep, thus highlighting the educational role of music.

Giving music a great vision of changing society, she traced the history of school music to the Chinese music teaching tradition and explained the implementation methods of school music. In addition, he put forward the idea of popularizing music and advocated and developed the cause of modern music education extensively.

#### 4. The theory of composing and creating school songs

Ms. Tseng made an in-depth analysis of the composition and composition of school songs. He was deeply dissatisfied with the difficult lyrics of music songs at that time, and he put forward more systematic principles for the creation of music songs, requiring popular and profound meaning, which played a role in promoting the development of school music songs at that time.

As noted in Wang Yuhe's *History of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Music* (Second Revised Edition), Tseng also made a very shrewd criticism of the compilation of school songs earlier. He pointed out: "Today in our country, the so-called school singing, its profound text, ten times more than reading; There is even a word, that is, dozens of lines of lecture notes, and childish still do not know. If it is to teach childish, how can it achieve the purpose of singing?" Therefore, he advocated that songs should be "straight in quality and meaningful in divine flavor", and that "the most shallow words should be stored with profound meaning and released as articles." With its text also ning custom, with its song also ning straight, with its filling also ning nature, with its ancient also ning fluent "; To achieve "words want to be strict and righteousness wants to be right, qi wants to be prosperous and God wants to flow, words want to be short and the heart wants to be long, goods want to be high and actions want to be clean."

Jiang Jiang's article "Music, Not Enough to say music: Tseng Min's" New Music "Thoughts" points out that in order to improve the combination of songs and lyrics, he put forward a positive idea, calling for healthy content and simple words in the creation of lyrics. He pointed out the disadvantages of the old poems and criticized the profound meaning of the old poems. In terms of tunes, he advocated that both notation and composition should follow the Western style.

Guo Na's *Analysis and Comparison of Tseng Zhimin and Li Shutong's Musical Thoughts* pointed out that the song *Farewell* composed by Li Shutong had changed in the process of compilation by eliminating the syncopation and appoggiatura at the end of each phrase in the original song. Zeng Zhimin is against this approach, he pointed out in the fifth chapter of "Music Education", Music and poetry: "All western popular songs, countries can be translated. But the translator must not move a sound, the convention is also. If you don't agree with each other, you can't change it.

School music has important enlightenment and pioneering significance, and is the forerunner of "new music" in China. Min Tseng set out specific principles for her creative work and enriched the modern music culture.

#### 5. Brief summary

As a pioneer of Chinese new music, Zeng Zhimin's ideological transformation from advocating the west as a teacher to emphasizing tradition and innovative development is also an important feature of her musical thoughts. This transformation is an inevitable result of her musical exploration in that special social environment. Min Tseng's musical thoughts and theoretical activities were launched at a very short and rapid time when China's feudal society was on the point of collapse and the transition to capitalism. Under the feudal literature and art policy of the late Qing Dynasty, he introduced and propagated new musical ideas, theories and school songs. Although their thoughts and theories lack the proper system and perfection, and obviously have historical limitations. However, just as we look at the reformers and revolutionaries in the late Qing Dynasty, "from the specific historical conditions of China at that time, we should admit that the reformers and revolutionaries were brave pioneers of the bourgeoisie."

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