



# An Overview of Pipa Studies of the Pinghu School

Luyao Shen

Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, Zhejiang, China

**Abstract:** *According to historical records, the pipa was introduced to the mainland from the western region during the Sui Dynasty, and two major schools of pipa were formed in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, and then the northern school of pipa gradually declined, and the southern school of pipa distinguished itself into the Wuxi school, the Pudong school, the Chongming school, and the Pinghu school, among many other schools. Among the many pipa schools, this paper chooses the Pinghu school for its research review, which will be elaborated from the definition of the school, the formation of modern pipa schools, the research on the genealogy of the characters of the Pinghu school, the research on the genealogy of the repertoire as well as the research on the performances.*

**Keywords:** Pinghu School; School; Development; Performance Technique.

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Pinghu is located in the Yangtze River Delta, in the northeast of Jiaxing Plain in Zhejiang Province, belonging to the typical water town of Jiangnan, which has been a culturally developed, beautiful and rich region since ancient times in history. Due to the unique geographical environment, the rapid development of the economy has also led to the unprecedented prosperity of folk culture and art, and the Pinghu School pipa was born and developed in such an environment of good timing and good people. This paper mainly focuses on the genealogy of the characters, repertoire and playing styles and techniques of the Pinghu School pipa. Through the study of the pipa music of the Pinghu School, it can be found that this is a traditional music form with strong local characteristics, and then through the inheritance and accumulation of successive generations of pipa players and musicians, it has become an important constituent of the pipa art nowadays.

## 1. Definition of genres

Regarding genres, in the 2001 revised edition of the Xinhua Dictionary, it is explained as follows, "Genre, i.e., a tributary of water, also refers to factions in academic thought, literary and artistic creation."

In the article "Appreciation of Pipa Schools", Sun Liwei quoted the famous pipa player and educator Mr Lin Shicheng's words about the characteristics of a school: "Through their works, they can correctly reflect people's life interests; they have reached a mature stage in their art, have considerable achievements and have reached a certain level of height; they are rich in self-contained stylistic characteristics; Theory and technique practice can be combined, and can be effective in passing on from generation to generation; it has been inherited and developed from generation to generation and passed on to the next generation."

Cheng Linhong, in his master's thesis, "Research on the Expressive Methods of Pipa Solo Performance of the Liu School", on the definition of the concept of school, believes that in the art of pipa, only the style with its own unique playing techniques, theoretical ideas, representative repertoire and performance of heirlooms can be referred to as a school.

In his article "Source, Stream, and Fusion - Topics on Chinese Pipa Genres", Fengshan argues that "version" is the main characteristic of a genre, and that "'Genre' is a group creation. ' is created by the group."

Wu Rong, in her master's thesis, "A Study of the Five Major Schools of Pipa in Jiangnan", on the definition of a school, argues that the reason why a school is named "school" is that it has its own unique style, which can be

expressed through music and techniques. It is only through the use of a collection of scores to express and interpret this style, and through the continuous performance and consolidation of this style by heirs, that the style of a genre can be passed on and eventually fixed. "Sheet music, the most basic vehicle, is what best characterises a genre's style, and this is precisely where the genre exists."

The definitions of "school" in Zhang Bo Yu's "The Backbone Score - The Basis of Pipa School Formation" and Zhang Lu's "The Backbone Score - The Basis of Pipa School Formation" are very similar. In the field of art, a genre generally refers to a faction with a unique style, but since there are many different ways of dividing genres into different fields, different things, and even different musical instruments, it is pointed out that this is a very uncertain definition, and it is emphasised that a genre is a collective, not an individual: if a genre is taken to be a collective, each individual has his or her own role to play in the collective, and there is no individualised style. is not sufficient to form the basis of a genre.

To sum up, the formation of a school is inseparable from the characters and works, but also inseparable from the precipitation of time, and with the development of time, the art style will be mature and perfected on this basis. Genre is commonly referred to as a unique style, which requires originality and superior artistic and technical skills, and can withstand the test of time and be passed on from generation to generation. In a genre, the overall musical style and musical thinking are similar, but the individual styles have their own characteristics, which is the relationship between the whole and the individual.

## **2. Formation and causes of modern pipa schools**

The Chinese pipa has developed from a foreign instrument, nourished by the culture of the Central Plains for thousands of years, and through the oral and mental transmission of its various schools, it has continuously inherited, fused and changed, and has become an important member of national music. According to historical records, the pipa school was basically formed during the Jiaqing and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty.

### **2.1 Formation of modern pipa schools**

Through reading and collecting relevant literature, it is found that there is a lack of thematic studies on the formation of the Pinghu School pipa, but in terms of the formation of modern pipa genres as a whole, the literature is still relatively rich. The formation process of the Pinghu School pipa, as one of the modern pipa genres, is included in the modern pipa genres and has many commonalities.

The author has divided the formation of modern pipa schools into three stages by combing through the literature. Stage 1: At the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, between the 17th and the 18th centuries, the pipa art developed into two schools, the North and the South. The southern school, the Zhejiang school, represented by Chen Mufu, was characterised by the technique of playing with the wheel down; the northern school, the Zhili school, now in the Hebei region, represented by Wang Junxi, was characterised by the technique of playing with the wheel up. The second stage: the pipa songs of the north and south spread to various regions of the country and merged with local cultures, and many pipa schools with different styles emerged one after another. For example, Shandong pipa school, Tianjin pipa school, Jiangsu and Zhejiang pipa school, Guangdong Hakka Hanle pipa, Chaoshan pipa, Yuele pipa, Fujian Nanyin pipa, Suzhou Playing Pipa, Sichuan Qingyin pipa and so on.

The third stage: Around the middle of the 19th century, the invasion of the western powers led to the rapid development of the capitalist economy in the Shanghai area, which guaranteed the development of the culture in this region. The good economic foundation of Jiangsu and Zhejiang promoted the exchange and progress of music and culture in this area, so this area also became the centre of pipa music and culture exchange, and the famous five pipa schools in Jiangnan appeared one after another, i.e. Wuxi school, Pinghu school, Pudong school, Chongming school and Shanghai school. The northern pipa school developed more and more slowly, so that in the end no one inherited it and it collapsed.

Standing at the height of history, some scholars also believe that the division of schools at that time was a product of economic underdevelopment, the southern school of pipa, under the constraints of the transport, economic and exchange conditions at that time, many pipa schools were formed in a 300-kilometre radius area, and the differences between these schools were minute, and the commonalities were universal, so that if we look at it from

the present point of view, the five major schools in Jiangnan were actually one big school, namely, the Jiangnan school. Pipa schools are historical products of the development process of Chinese music, which are bound to be limited by certain time and space conditions, and will also change with the change of social and economic bases.

## 2.2 Reasons for the formation of the modern pipa genre

In his article "Discussing the Origin and Genre of the Pipa", Zhang Qin compares the Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo, the music of Chaozhou and the Suzhou Pipa, and argues that "the language and culture of different regions reflect on the pipa's musical performance". From this article, we can clearly understand the regional factor is the reason why pipa styles vary from place to place.

Xie Qing, in his article "The Early Formation of Pipa Schools - Tang Dynasty", argues that during the Tang Dynasty, pipa art had not yet formed what is nowadays known as a strict school of performance, but was more a reflection of rich individual styles of performance, and that their performance techniques, which are found in the literature, laid the foundations for the main performance techniques of pipa in the later generations.

Han Chao, in his article "The Formation and Classification of Modern Pipa Schools", on the inner reasons for the formation of modern pipa schools and their characteristics, believes that there are two points: 1) Regional cultural characteristics, modern pipa schools all belong to the Taihu Lake basin around Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and the folk music of this region has a delicate and gentle style, reflecting the cultural characteristics of the folk music of the Central Plains. 2) Teachers' inheritance characteristics, the stylistic characteristics of pipa schools are preserved through the "oral transmission" of their masters to their direct disciples. It is through the master's "oral teaching" to his direct disciple that the pipa school's stylistic characteristics are preserved.

Gao Jin, in his master's thesis, "The Evolution of Pipa in China and the Road to Nationalisation", summed up four major reasons for the emergence of pipa schools: 1. Geographic reasons, the five modern schools are centred on Shanghai, the most developed city in the country, which provides fertile soil for their development; 2. Economic background, China entered a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, which made the economy of Shanghai inclusive and blended the East and the West; 3. Political factors, during the Republican period, the warlords in the inland areas were dominated by wars, and Shanghai, as a leased territory of many countries and an important trading port, was subject to many restrictions. Political factors, during the Republic of China, the inland areas of warlords, war, Shanghai as a multi-country lease, and because it is an important port of communication, and by the multi-country mutual restraint, and thus have been spared from the war. 4. Cultural impact, multi-country culture with the migration of these populations were brought to Shanghai, the traditional culture of China and the Western culture of foreign countries collide with each other, "taking the essence, removing the dross of the Western culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture," and "the Western culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture," and "the Chinese traditional culture." "Taking the best and removing the dross".

Wu Rong, in her master's thesis, "A Study of the Five Major Schools of Pipa in Jiangnan," in addition to the geographical location and economic and political conditions mentioned above, also mentioned the subjective factor of the role of the individual, arguing that the performers played a huge role in the development and circulation of the pipa: "Some outstanding pipa players even built on the accumulation of their predecessors, and in the accumulation of long-term performance, they created their unique styles according to their own. Some outstanding pipa players have created their own unique styles based on the accumulation of their predecessors and their own perception and understanding." It can be said that each generation of masters has its own distinctive style, which makes the works of the same material present different artistic styles.

To sum up, art and culture are inextricably linked to the political and economic factors of a place. Of course, other subjective factors are equally important, such as the aforementioned issue of mastership, that is, the role of people, which is the key to whether a school can be passed on in the long run.

## 3. A Study of the Character Genealogy of the Pinghu School of Pipa

The Pinghu School of pipa is a side branch of the Southern School of pipa, which developed and grew from the Southern School of pipa, and is a self-contained ancestral art school represented by Li Fangyuan, a native of Pinghu, Zhejiang Province. The Pinghu School of pipa is one of the most influential schools of the Southern School, which began in the middle of the 18th century, and after more than two centuries of establishment,

development and inheritance, the pipa art style has been consolidated and carried forward, and through the accumulation of inheritance and creation of successive generations of pipa masters and musicians, it has finally become an important component of the pipa art of the present day.

### 3.1 Origin of the Pinghu School Pipa

Pinghu school pipa is a mature school, according to historical records, it originated in the Qing Dynasty during the Qianlong period (1736-1795) in Pinghu, Zhejiang Province, Li Yansen family, inherited by his son, Li Huang, and passed on to the next Li Jinyong. The first three generations of the Li family were inherited by their first cousins, and always followed the feudal idea of "the piano does not go out". This kind of self-indulgent way of secret genealogy and family tradition laid a certain foundation for the accumulation of the art of this school, but the development of the art of pipa was constrained.

Many articles on the origins of the Pinghu School pipa, such as Du Jiazhen's "Analysing the Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, Master of the Pinghu School Pipa", Wang Xinjie's "The Innovation of Pipa Solo Pieces of the Pinghu School", and Zhang Yi's "The Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, Master of the Pinghu School Pipa", all agree with the history and express the same viewpoint.

### 3.2 Inheritance of the Pinghu School Pipa

In the process of transmission from the fourth generation, Mr Li Nantang, to the eighth generation, Mr Ren Hongxiang, each generation has contributed to the development of the Pinghu School of Pipa in a big or small way.

#### 3.2.1 Li Nantang

When the pipa was passed down to the fourth generation, Li Nantang broke the feudal idea of "not going out with the instrument" of the previous three generations, which made the pipa playing skills of the Pinghu School spread, and the genealogy of the pipa that had been passed down from generation to generation was able to get out of the Li family.

Regarding the reason why the inheritance method was changed in Li Nantang's generation, it was mentioned in Du Jiazhen's "Analysis of the Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, a Pipa Master of the Pinghu School", Wang Xinjie's "Innovation of Pipa Solo Pieces of the Pinghu School", and Zhang Yi's "The Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, a Pipa Master of the Pinghu School", that it was closely related to the social environment, which was in the period of the second opium war, when the influx of foreign cultures and capitalism forced Li to travel frequently between the two areas of Shanghai and Pinghu. The constant influx of foreign culture and capitalism forced Li Nantang, a businessman, to travel frequently between Shanghai and Pinghu, and the change in the environment made Li Nantang's mind open up and his traditional concepts change, and he made friends with a wide range of musicians, and exchanged the pipa sheet music that had been handed down by his own family with a lot of famous musicians and enthusiasts in Shanghai, which greatly contributed to the continuous improvement of the sheet music and the increasing number of pipa repertoire. This practice laid the foundation for the birth of the Pinghu School of pipa music.

According to the above literature, the contribution of Li Nantang's generation to the Pipa of the Pinghu School was not mentioned in the details of the sheet music such as playing techniques and fingerings, and it was not easy for Mr Li Nantang to share his family's secret Pipa sheet music with many musicians in those circumstances, so the greatest contribution of the fourth generation to the Pipa of the Pinghu School was to break the limitations of the secret Pipa transmission.

#### 3.2.2 Li Fang Yuan

Mr Li Fangyuan, the son of Li Nantang, the fifth generation inheritor of Pinghu School Pipa, was known as "Pipa Fetish", and was evaluated by the people of the time as "a good pipa player without any rivals", which had a great influence in the generation of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Regarding Mr Li Fangyuan's contribution to the Pinghu School of pipa, the New Score of Thirteen Big Songs of the North-South School of Pipa is indispensable, and many literatures have expressed the same viewpoint: The New Score of Thirteen Big Songs of the North-South School of Pipa marks the emergence of the Pinghu School, and it is the complete genealogy of Pinghu Pipa passed down to the present time. Pipa" genealogy has been handed down.

In Du Jiazhen's "Analysis of the Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, Master of the Pinghu School Pipa" and Wang Xinjie's "Innovation of the Pipa Solo Pieces of the Pinghu School", the same evaluation of Mr Li Fangyuan is also centred on the "Li's Spectrum", which is regarded as not only summing up the essence of the art of the Pipa of the Pinghu School that had been formed during the inheritance of the Pipa in the past five generations, but also embodying the development trend of the artistic fusion of that time, and at the same time, laying a solid foundation for the inheritance and development of the Pipa of the Pinghu School. It also laid a solid foundation for the inheritance and development of the Pinghu School pipa.

Shi Yang, in his article "Review of the Research on the Art of the Pinghu School Pipa in the Past Thirty Years", briefly combed through the development of the research on the art of the pipa of the Pinghu School during the period of 1982-2015, and when mentioning Mr Li Fangyuan, he gave quite a high appraisal, believing that Mr Li Fangyuan is the founder of the pipa of the Pinghu School in the modern times. Li Fangyuan's innovations are reflected in three aspects: first, the new method of compiling Li's score, forming new compositions through concatenation and other forms, such as the "Song on the Plateau", which Yan Dingwen believes that this new method of compilation and creation "injects new connotations into the piece of music, and enables the piece of music to develop along the lines of a new musical idea". Secondly, it is the innovation of technique. Qian Tiemin thinks that Li Fangyuan summarised and innovated many new fingerings in his life. Thirdly, new titles were added to the repertoire.

In the article "The Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, Master of the Pinghu School Pipa", Zhang Yi, when elaborating on Mr Li's contribution to the Pinghu School Pipa, believes that in order to realise his father's long-cherished wish "to have hope in the rising generation", Mr Li got rid of the restriction of the gateway, and accepted all kinds of new ideas, cultures, and schools of thoughts, and that the author has introduced four innovations in the "New Score of Thirteen Big Songs of the North and South Schools". Regarding Mr Li Fangyuan's innovations in the New Score of Thirteen Songs for Pipa of the North-South School, the author outlines four points: 1) the first to advocate the compositional method of collecting small songs into large ones, i.e., to adopt a wide range of folk songs and expand the repertoire; 2) to formulate a new fingering; 3) to create a novel title and song interpretation; and 4) to adopt a new style of music composition. Thus, a unique music theory and performance system was formed.

According to the above literature, we can find that from Mr Li Fangyuan's generation onwards, the pipa of the Pinghu School has developed innovatively in terms of fingering, titles, notation, etc., and all of them are more centrally embodied in the Li's Genealogy. However, in the course of reading the literature, there were many controversies about Mr. Li Fangyuan's innovation of "adding new titles to the repertoire," with some opposing it, believing that it might rather affect the expression of the piece, while others were in favour of it, believing that it "highlights the theme, making it easier for people to imagine the thematic idea of the piece. There are also those who are in favour of it, thinking that "highlighting the theme makes it easier for people to imagine the thematic idea of this piece of music" and "it is new and different, and it serves as a finishing touch"; and there are also those who think that it should not be rejected in its entirety. In Shi Yang's "Review of Research on the Art of Pipa in the Pinghu School over the Past Thirty Years," he argues that Wu Rong's viewpoint that "the title music will guide them to experience the music correctly, make their grasp of the music more accurate, and thus be conducive to the dissemination and development of the music. However, the arrangement of sub-titles in certain works is not reasonable, and in specific works, there are even inappropriate sub-titles that lead to the meaning of the preceding and following works not being too coherent" is relatively objective and pertinent. From the perspective of dialectics, I am in favour of this point of view, and we should "take the essence and remove the dross" of everything. In conclusion, the contribution made by Mr Li Fangyuan to the development of the Pinghu School pipa is obvious to all.

### 3.2.3 Zhu Ying

The sixth generation of pipa master Zhu Ying (字蔚青, No. Xingqing, Pinghu, Zhejiang Province, 1889-1955), who had learnt from Li Fangyuan since his childhood, was employed at the then nascent Shanghai National Conservatory of Music in 1927, so that the folk instrument and professional pipa preaching formally stepped into the modern institutions of higher learning. In nearly twenty years of teaching, he trained a large number of outstanding musical talents, such as Ding Shande, Tan Xiaolin, Chen Gongze, Yang Dajun, Yang Shaoyi, Fan Boyan, Xu Zhilin, Wu Zhenping, etc., who all made extraordinary feats in pipa performance and teaching.

In the article "Zhu Ying's Musical Thought and Creation", Jia Chong takes Mr Zhu Ying's life as a clue to give a more comprehensive account of his musical thought and creation, in which Mr Zhu Ying's musical thought is mainly summarised in three points: 1. In the view of Chinese and Western music and their relationship, he advocates the "equal importance of Chinese and Western music"; 2, Mr Zhu Ying's loud call for the finishing of Chinese music; 3. He realised that the underdevelopment of Chinese music was closely related to the "secretive" thinking of Chinese musicians, and therefore advocated the abandonment of the secretive complex in the process of inheritance. In addition, the author believes that Mr Zhu Ying pays close attention to the actual facts and creates works with obvious characteristics of the times, mostly based on historical themes, such as Works such as "May 3rd Memorial", "Lament for the Flood", "Unforgettable Song", "Battle of Songhu", etc. And the new ancient music works "Autumn Palace Lament", "Everlasting Regret" and "Night Mooring at Maple Bridge" created by borrowing elements from Western music.

Xiao Yang, in his article "Zhu Ying's Person and Contributions - Summarising and Reflecting on Zhu Ying's Ten Years' Experience of Performing and Teaching Chinese Pipa at the National Conservatory of Music and the National Institute of Music," mainly elaborated on Mr Zhu Ying's educational career. Mr Zhu Ying attached great importance to the education of Chinese music, not only breaking the usual "class-type" teacher-trainer teaching method of traditional Chinese music, but also scientifically borrowing the knowledge and creative concepts of western composition, music theory, harmony, etc. for the creation of pipa music.

In the article "Zhu Ying and the Pinghu School Pipa", the author summarises five points regarding Mr Zhu Ying's contribution to the development of the pipa of the Pinghu School: introducing the pipa of the Pinghu School into the classrooms of institutions of higher learning, advocating the concept of "the combination of the literary and the military".

In the article "Inheritance and Innovation of the Art of the Pinghu School Pipa", Zhao Qian jian, talking about Mr Zhu Ying's innovation of the pipa fingering method of the Pinghu School, introduces a new method created by Mr Zhu Ying, i.e., pinching the strings with his thumb, so that all five fingers can play on the strings, and reinforcing the exercise of the strength of the left hand, so that the strength of each finger is kept in the same place. The author believes that the application of this method will greatly enrich the expression of zither music and improve the artistic level of the Pinghu School. This innovation of the left hand fingering was also mentioned by Liu Fei in her master's thesis, "The Study of the Pipa Pinghu School's "Lower Outgoing Wheel" Playing Technique".

Xie Qing, in the article "Heroes are still around with the sound of horses' hooves--Investigating <Yulun Robe>Pinghu School Pipa Transmission", which is about the pipa inheritance of the Pinghu School, thinks that Zhu Ying is an important figure of this school, who has been carrying on this school, who is brave to innovate in the technique in practice, and who adopts the art of combining the art of literature and martial arts with a focus on the sound, rhythm and feelings of the artistic expression. In his performance, he advocated that "lightness, heaviness, speed and slowness should be taken into account, and happiness, anger and sadness should be clearly defined", which created a world in which the art of pipa performance could be perfected.

In the article "The Inheritance and Innovation of Li Fangyuan, Master of the Pinghu School Pipa", Zhang Yi, regarding Mr Zhu Ying's contribution to the inheritance of the pipa of the Pinghu School, mentions the "Pipa Exercises for Beginners" compiled by Mr Zhu Ying, which designs the exercises for the basic skills of the pipa from the shallow to the deep and from the easy to the difficult, so as to make the teaching and learning of the pipa more standardised and scientific.

From the above literature, it is clear that the development of the pipa of the Pinghu School made an unprecedented breakthrough in Mr Zhu Ying's generation - there was a scientific, standardised and unified teaching method. Mr Zhu Ying's contributions to the pipa of the Pinghu School include the innovation of fingerings for playing, the editing of teaching materials for the pipa, the composition of many pipa songs, which enriched the pipa repertoire, and in addition to this, I believe that Mr Zhu Ying's musical idea of "promoting both Chinese and Western music" cannot be ignored. It can be said that apart from being a pipa player, Mr Zhu Ying was also a great educator.

#### 3.2.4 Yang Shao Yi

Zhu Ying's student Yang Shaoyi (1913-1974), the seventh generation of pipa inheritors of the Pinghu School, was recognised as "Zhu Ying's best pupil", and made outstanding contributions to the development of the pipa of the Pinghu School. He has been teaching at the Xi'an Conservatory of Music since the 1950s and has trained pipa

talents such as Yu Guisun, Ren Hongxiang, Li Jianzheng, Wang Tianjian and He Mingwei. In addition, Yang Yusun (b. 1950), the son of Yang Shao Yi, studied pipa and Chinese painting at an early age under the influence of his family. He has devoted himself to the manufacture and improvement of national instrumental music in order to make folk music a foothold in the world, and has also compiled and edited a genealogy of the pipa of the Pinghu School, entitled "The Remains of the Pinghu".

In the article of "Music and Ink, Reflecting and Enhancing Each Other - The Biography of Yang Shaoyi, the Seventh Generation of Pipa Player of Pinghu School", Shi Yang mentioned that in 1932, Yang Shaoyi joined the folk music group "DaTongLeHui Society", which aimed to advocate and explore the Chinese folk music, and his main activity was to learn to play and develop folk instrumental music. In October 1932, Yang Shao-yi was assigned by the "Da Tongle Association" to perform and develop folk instrumental music, and the treasure of folk music "Moonlit Night of Spring River" was born in the "Da Tongle Association", Dong Junxiang took the lead in setting up the first overseas branch of the "Grand Concert Association" in Jinan.

In his master's thesis "An Analysis of Yang Shao Yi's Performance Score for the Pipa Piece <Pingsha Falling Geese>", Yang Meng Nguyen mentions Mr Yang Shao Yi's activities of arranging and passing on the classic works of Li's Score in his biography and contribution to the Pipa. Secondly, Mr Yang Shaoyi continued to collate music scores and teaching materials in the course of his teaching, and in 1963, he collated and issued "Pipa Teaching Materials" in four volumes of oil-printed scores, which included: "Li's Score in Ruler's Score", "Detailed Ruler's Score Proofread by Zhu Ying", "Yang Shaoyi Performance Score in Simplified Score", and "Yang Shaoyi Performance Score in Liner's Score". Based on many years of study, teaching and playing experience, the 13 sets of the major compositions have been translated into simple and line scores, preserving the style of the pipa school, and providing a quick way for pipa scholars to learn in the future.

Jiang Baohai, in his article "Chinese Rhythm - The Inheritance of the Pipa Art of the Pinghu School", commented on the contribution of Mr Yang Shao Yi, saying that: he compiled the Pipa Teaching Materials in a variety of scores, passed on the traditional skills and devoted himself to the organisation of the tradition of the Pipa art of the Pinghu School, as well as writing the book "Spring and Autumn of the Pipa" with great care.

Zhang Ming and Wang Fandi, in their article "Mr Yang Shaoyi and the Art of Chinese National Music Pipa", take Mr Yang Shaoyi's life as the main line and sort out his contribution to the pipa of the Pinghu School, which is more or less the same as that of Yang Yusun and Jiang Baohai's "Yang Shaoyi and the Art of the Pipa of the Pinghu School". However, this article mentions that Mr Yang Shao-yi "has been striving for a new type of association that starts from the collation and excavation of China's inherent traditional music culture, and takes the cultivation of national music talents as its own responsibility", and that in the process of excavating and collating the pipa art of the Pinghu School, Mr Yang Shao-yi has made friends with famous artists, exchanged information regardless of the gateway, visited friends with the music scores, and was adept at rallying the strength of the team. The relationship between his research and the inheritance of the pipa art tradition of the Pinghu Li School, and the significance of his way of learning to enhance the quality and value of classical works of folk music.

In his article "Analysis of the Musical Characteristics and Performance Techniques of the <Huaiyin Pingchu>", Jiang Wei argues that Yang Shaoyi is one of the most contributing figures in the inheritance of the Pipa of the Pinghu School, and that it was from him that the art of the Pipa of the Pinghu School began to spread in Shaanxi Province. His philosophy of inheritance does not emphasise the "factions" and gateways of traditional pipa art, but rather absorbs the advantages of different schools and promotes the development and reform of the pipa art of the Pinghu School.

### 3.2.5 Ren Hongxiang

Ren Hongxiang, a student of Yang Shao Yi, the eighth generation inheritor of the Pinghu School, compiled and published 13 Pipa Pieces of the Pinghu School on the basis of the Pinghu Legacy using the modern common simple notation for pipa music and playing symbols.

Comprehensively, it is found that the inheritance and development of the pipa of Pinghu School is character-driven, so there is a representative character for each generation. Therefore, the influence of the inheritance characters who have made outstanding contributions to the inheritance and development of the pipa of Pinghu School over the past hundred years is beyond doubt, and they have become the focus of research in the academic circles. The pipa of the Pinghu School is handed down by "oral transmission from heart", and there are two main types of transmission: the

direct transmission and the teacher's succession, which has gradually become the main way with the passage of time and the development of the times. The development of the Pinghu School Pipa to the present day cannot be separated from the efforts of each generation. In addition to the literature on the inheritance of the Pinghu School Pipa mentioned above, there is also a lot of literature on the school education related to the Pinghu School Pipa, which I believe is an important way that is suitable for and conducive to the development of the Pinghu School Pipa in the present day.

#### **4. Study of the repertoire genealogy of the Pinghu School pipa**

The pipa repertoire of the Pinghu School was first introduced by the fifth-generation inheritor, Mr Li Fangyuan, who edited the "New Score of Thirteen Great Songs of the North and South Schools of the Pipa", and only then did thirteen repertoires representing the Pinghu School appear, which were significantly changed in terms of title and notation in comparison to the period of the North and South Schools. With the efforts of later generations of inheritors, the repertoire of the Pinghu School pipa has continued to expand, and the style has changed with the passage of time.

The representative work of the Pinghu School is the "New Score of Thirteen Great Pipa Songs of the North-South School" edited by Li Fangyuan, which contains thirteen pipa songs: "Haiqing Naihe", "Yangchun Ancient Songs", "Full General's Decree", "Yu Lun Robe", "Huaiyin Pingchu", "Seishang Qu", "Han General's Decree", "Pingsha Lungyan", "Chen Sui Ancient Tone", "Xunyang Pipa", "Nishang Qu", "Pu'an Mantra", and "Qinglian Lepidol". . With the passage of time, future generations of pipa inheritors of the Pinghu School have continued to create new works, and on the basis of grasping the overall stylistic characteristics of the pipa of the Pinghu School, they have also developed their own stylistic characteristics. Wu Rong, in her master's thesis "Research on the Five Major Schools of Pipa in Jiangnan", also mentions eight pipa pieces for beginners, namely: "Yu Shun's Smokey Wind Exercise", "Wen Wang's Sisi Exercise", "Confucius' Turtle Mountain Exercise", "Interlude Exercise", "Autumn Thoughts of Bachelor Su's Cave Garden", "Song of Huanwu", "Han Herb King's Escape on the Lake" (also known as "Song of Returning to the Field"), "Walking on the Dragon's Flanks" (Song of Stepping on the Green), and "Three Songs of Plum Blossoms of the History of the Female Historian Zhuang Dark Fragrance". (also known as "Song of Returning to the Field"), "Walking on the Long River" (Song of Treading Green), and "Three Songs of Plum Blossoms in the History of Zhuang Dark Fragrance".

In addition, there are many pipa songs in recent times. Mr Zhu Ying pays close attention to current affairs and expresses patriotic feelings with the theme of real life in the face of national difficulties, such as: May 3rd Memorial, Mourning for the Flood, Unforgettable Song, and Songshu Bloody Battle. He has also composed pipa songs with historical themes, such as "Autumn Palace Complaint", "Long Hate Song" and "Night Mooring on the Maple Bridge" (an ensemble piece). Zhu Ying also composed some small pieces such as "The Dang Ren Ren", "Spinning Song", "Autumn Intentions", "Mountains and Ranges", "Butterfly Flower Dance", "Happiness in the World", "The Song of the Same Voice" and so on. As well as Mr Yang Shao Yi's old pipa song "The Moon is High", which he discovered and compiled, he adopted the stylistic characteristics of the Pinghu School, and developed it by studying, analysing, and creating on the basis of the more primitive ancient scores.

#### **5. Research on the Performance of the Pipa of the Pinghu School**

The Pinghu School has always been full of famous musicians, and each player has his own personal style, even a teacher's student has his own individual style in later development. The playing style of the Pinghu School is also constantly changing. In the early period, the artistic style of the Pinghu School was still relatively simple and elegant, but by the time of Li Fangyuan, because of his open-mindedness and increased exchanges with other pipa players, he had learnt many different things, and his pipa art was already in a magnificent style, with a wide variety of fingerings. Zhu Ying, the direct descendant of Li Fangyuan, taught at the Shanghai National Institute of Music, where he integrated the Western theories and techniques he had learnt into the traditional pipa music, and composed a number of his own pipa pieces to consolidate this fusion of East and West, which had a great influence on the Pinghu School. Today, the Pinghu School is generally referred to as the playing style of Li Fangyuan and his disciple Zhu Ying.

##### **5.1 Technical studies**

Through reading and collating the literature, it was found that the pipa of the Pinghu School is characterised by its



dense and complex fingerings. The New Pipa Score of Thirteen Great Songs of the North and South School compiled by Mr Li Fangyuan has 58 fingerings, which is 26 more than the Hua's Score, and is not only twice as many, but also more advanced and scientific than that reflected in the fingerings of other pipa scores. In addition, later generations of pipa inheritors have also innovated the fingerings, making the Pinghu School's fingerings constantly enriched.

## 5.2 Stylistic studies

The Pinghu School has presented a literati atmosphere since its inception, with high demands on the player's temperament and personal cultivation, emphasis on the player's inner feelings towards the music, and the pursuit of a profound aesthetic mood, with a unique artistic charm.

Why does the pipa of the Pinghu School have such a strong literati style of simplicity and elegance? Xu Chengxi's "On the "Qi" and "Rhyme" in Traditional Pipa Songs - Taking Pinghu School Pipa's <Yangchun Ancient Songs><Pingsha Lungyan> as an Example," Zhao Jin's "The Formation and Characteristics of the Artistic Style of the Pinghu School Pipa", and Liu Fei's master's thesis "The Study of the Pipa Pinghu School's "Lower Outgoing Wheel" Playing Technique", all agree that this is inseparable from the personal artistic qualities of the inheritors of the Pipa of the Pinghu School, and that the formation of the Pipa of the Pinghu School is a result of the family's accumulation of the style on the one hand, and the fusion of the knowledge of the literature and the knowledge of music of Li Fangyuan on the other hand. On the other hand, it is the expression of the fusion of Li Fangyuan's knowledge of literature and music. Zhu Ying, Yang Shao Yi, Fan Bo Yan and Yang Dajun were also proficient in calligraphy and painting. The scholarly music style of the Pipa School has always been the keynote of the development of the pipa music of the Pinghu School.

To sum up, the traditional pipa scores strive to be simple and original, and the scores are passed down from teacher to teacher, but the Pinghu School has achieved a high level of creativity with the addition of flowers that no one has done before. To a certain extent, it can be said that it is the pursuit of innovation and the lack of adherence to traditional scores that has kept the Pinghu School moving forward, and to this day, the Pinghu School has formed a very active and well-established school that has attracted a lot of attention. There are more than one hundred kinds of playing techniques in Pinghu School, such as full wheel, wipe and sweep, pick and sweep, double fly, hanging line whirl, support, etc. The right hand's wheel finger technique is mainly lower out of the wheel, but also use the upper out of the wheel. The liberation of the little finger of the left hand in playing is a great innovation of Mr Zhu Ying of this school. The Pinghu School of music performance style advocates "meaning in the finger first, meaning to the finger with the meaning of the combination of real", emphasises the inner emotion, reflecting the literati school of "poetry in the painting, painting in the poem," the meaning of the characteristics.

## 6. Concluding remarks

In this paper, the study of the pipa genre of the Pinghu School is conducted, and the definition of the genre, as well as the repertoire genealogy, character genealogy, and performance of the pipa of the Pinghu School are sorted out. Regarding the definition of the genre, it is concluded that the four aspects of characters, works, time and influence together build a genre. In the study of the genre, the characters and works as the core of the common time perspective and the change of style in the flow of time as the historical perspective constitute the two basic perspectives in the theoretical framework of the study of the Pinghu School, and they are also the two basic clues of the common time and the history, and the existing studies basically follow such a system, and carry out the study from these two points. In the study of the formation of modern pipa schools, many experts and scholars have roughly the same formation and definition of pipa schools. From the historical point of view, this process cannot be separated from the objective factors such as political and economic factors and the role of characters, but some scholars have found that the five major pipa schools of the modern era have a lot of commonalities by comparing and contrasting with other schools in the same period, and they should be referred to collectively as the Jiangnan School from the present point of view. When researching the repertoire of the Pinghu School, it was found that the repertoire of the Pinghu School's "New Pipa Recordings of Thirteen Great Songs of the North and South Schools" was most similar to that of the Wuxi School, and that later pipa inheritors also created pipa songs that were unique to their own styles and characteristics. When researching the representative pipa inheritors of the Pinghu School, it is indispensable to analyse their repertoire, and characters and works are inseparable. Each generation of pipa inheritors has incorporated their own characteristics on the basis of retaining the excellent achievements of their predecessors, and it is also the process of absorbing the advantages of other schools, innovating, and enriching the methods and forms of inheritance. In addition, the question of what kind of connection there is between each

school and what kind of artistic style each school has is also very important, but these questions involve a small amount of relevant literature, and need further exploration by scholars, so that we can have a clearer understanding of the differences and similarities of each pipa school in modern times, and can better appreciate them.

Through the reading and combing of literature, the problem of imbalance in the research content of the pipa of Pinghu School was found. From the research results in recent years, most of them focus on a few key figures and classical repertoire such as Li Fangyuan, Zhu Ying, etc. The research directions and contents are very similar, and there is very little research on the inheritors of the pipa after the sixth generation. The research direction and content are very similar, and there is little research on the inheritors after the sixth generation. There is almost no research on the music creation, music concept, and the connection and fusion between genres of the Pinghu School. Starting from the definition of a school, I think that the study of individual cases has a certain representativeness, but the study of a group can only reflect the comprehensiveness of a school as a whole. Therefore, the Pinghu School should be combined with political, economic, social and cultural factors to grasp the style of the genre as a whole and in a macroscopic way.

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