

Presentation of Chinese Stories in the Language of Music by A Grand Master ——Tan Dun

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Abstract: All nationalities in the world have their own language, as the saying goes that “no rain across the river, no ventilation in ten miles”, which turns out the direct communication between different languages is rather difficult. However, there is a kind of language for people in the world for communication without interpretation and translation that is music. Music is also known as the common language of people and the culture of a nation. If you want to go global, it is the music of a nation that is easiest to start from and easiest to reach the destination directly. There is a legendary master with important status in Chinese music profession —— Tan Dun. This article is designed to express the feelings from the perspective of an ordinary person by understanding the music experiments of Tan Dun.

"In Europe or Western countries, music is rarely regarded as a sound of nature. The music composed by Tan Dun is the sound of nature that we have not heard for a long time but attracted by its charm. The music of Tan Dun is just what we need when the East and the West will be united as an integrated home."(John Cage) "Tan Dun is back. He has changed our worship of traditional music and brought us back to the ancient nature by paddling in the water." (Yu Dan)

1. Searching Ancestor·Nostalgia·Bridge

In the program of Voice, Tan Dun expressed that he was born and grown up in a village in Hunan Province and the dream at his childhood was to become a sorcerer, because the sorcerer (ashashist) in Hunan Province is very interesting, which enable him to laugh and cry just in a short time. He said he knew the language of the future and the language of the past. Besides, he was proficient in singing while playing a stringed instrument, and his first goal in his childhood was to become a wizard (ashram musician).I think it is because of his contact with these cultures and with nature that Tan Dun has produced so many works with Chinese traditional culture as the core.

Tan Dun said that in this work of Map, he searched for the spiritual path and found his lost relatives and friends, and recovered his lost culture and music through the sound of slaying and so on. After understanding the intention of Tan Dun for this work, I appreciated this work again. What impressed me the most was not the use of multimedia in creative manner or the use of technique of cello sliding, rather his concern for people and culture behind the music.

Tan Dun says that music is a bridge connecting the past and the future.

What is similar to the work of Map is Nvshu, which can be said to be the bible for women. Mr. Tan told the story through 13 scenes and 13 movements and watched the TV show of Day Up, which showed 3 movements, first movement and the second movement were the favorite ones. The first movement, the Secret Fan, I was immersed in the situation as soon as the strings of the harp were plucked. The second movement of "Mother's Song" is impressive, "daughters should be instructed to follow the opinion of parents, women should first keep chastity and to fulfil filial piety for father and mother, brothers and sisters should treat each other with harmony", the voice of the old woman and the little girl overlapped and interwoven, and the heartstrings of the audience were touched with the melody of the harp. Harpist Elizabeth is a foreign concert performer, although she has never been in contact with the ancient Chinese culture, she is frequently moved in the cooperation with Mr. Tan.

The work depicts traditional Chinese folk culture -- "Nuo Drama", in which humans can talk to ghosts and nature. By this kind of form, the idea that "music is a bridge" was expressed: the past and the future can be connected through bridges, and the eastern and western cultures can also be connected through the same idea. In a textual explanation of the score, Mr. Tan wrote that the stones in the work were ghosts, the violins were ghosts, the dead were ghosts, the people to be born were ghosts, and all ghosts could communicate with each other.

2. Sentiments For Martial Arts Chivalry

As an internationally recognized music master, Tan Dun was in the vision of the public for his film and music. In 2001, he won the Academy Award for best original score for the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. In 2002, he released the music album for the film "Hero" and won the Grammy Award for best film original music album for "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon". In 2006, he released the soundtrack album "The Banquet". "These three works are very impressive."

In TV interview program of Yang Lan One on One, Tan Dun says that film music has provided him with a space to experiment with chili and chocolate. Why? Because his works are manifestations of eastern and western musical elements, various musical elements can always be integrated with refreshing sound and visual effects.

In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the understanding of Chinese Martial Arts was presented in this work, the film of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" is not a traditional Hong Kong martial arts films, and the essence of this film was derived from the traditional opera, for example the scenario of "Fight in Night" was performed with the rhythm of martial arts with Chinese opera drums, the whole situation is tense and visual effect is very exciting, drum beats were made with fighting from beginning to the end, as the fighting stopped, the drum beats were halted all of a sudden. The main soundtrack is made by cello, Tan Dun changed the original image of playing sad and plain melody by cello, and instead he fostered sentiments of eastern nationality in the film, which is similar to erhu and horse head string instrument of Northern prairie. This unique chili chocolate won Tan Dun the title of best original Oscar winner at the 73rd Academy Awards, enabling Tan Dun to be followed by numerous popular audiences and he was invited by many major domestic directors.

In "Hero," Tan Dun twists the Perlman (the most expensive violin in 17th-century) down an octave, producing a hoarse sound that sounds like a Mongolian tune, as if a glimpse of the glory days of the heroic Qin dynasty under reign of the first Emperor Qin. That performance by the guqin also left a deep impression to people, murderous spirit was hidden in the strings.

In "The Banquet", the music is scary at the beginning, and "Yue Ren Song" is different from the versions performed by female masters we've heard before. As a folk poem of Chu state, Yue Ren Ge is an early ode to love in our country. As recorded in Liu Xiang's book, during the Spring and Autumn Period, the younger brother of the king of Chu, was traveling by boat in the river and a boatman who admired him sang a song for him, which was euphemistic and appealing and Yue Jun was moved. However, this boatman was from Yue, so Yue Jun immediately had it translated into Chu language, hence the lines of Yue Ge were produced. When Yue Jun understood the meaning of the song, he was not angry. Instead, he went to embrace the boatman covering him with an embroidered quilt with a hope to sleep with him. After understanding the background story, I found that the song by teacher Tengri was more appropriate to the complex feelings.[10]

3. Integration of Man and Nature

Tan grew up in nature and he stated in Yi Gongli that "Nature is a big musical instrument". He is good at composing instrumental music from nature and insisted that "sound from nature" can also be called "organic music".[7-9] Some scholars call it "new sound" or "new music". As far as the author is concerned, "organic music" is more appropriate to name the sound.

There's another story behind the emergence of such a idea. In 1998, Tan Dun accompanied his pregnant wife for the ultrasound physical examination. On the screen, the baby was lying in the amniotic fluid with waves swaying slightly. Inspired by the such scene, Tan realized that the very

first sound heard was the sound of water, and water was the source of life.[4-6]Tan then wrote one of his organic music series, Water Music. In eyes of Tan Dun, life and nature are closely linked, and all sounds of nature are beautiful and alive, as a result, people would think of Tan Dun as soon as the music regarding water and stones in a work was mentioned [1].

Tan Dun adopted a lot of natural sounds in his works, such as stone music, water music, paper music and pottery music, and presented disharmonious, weird and sharp effects on the acoustics, trying to encourage the audience to experience and perceive all kinds of beautiful or disharmonious sounds in the life around them in a new way. On this basis, the natural instruments, types of sounds and performance techniques were enriched, and further endowing organic music with profound literary and philosophical connotations, making it a kind of expression way for music with philosophy and subtlety [2].

Conclusion

"I'm not trying to be unique but to be creative," Tan says. He has been constantly practicing this kind of concept. One will be forgotten if he stands still without making progress in whatever industry and field. [3]Tan Dun, as a member in innovation of Chinese music, is willing to explore ancient culture and is good at discovering the beautiful sounds in nature, and takes music as a bridge for communication. He is not only a magician who plays musical notes, but also a grand master who is endowed with humanistic spirit and maintains passion for music like a child. Therefore, Tan set an example for all of us.

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