

# Study on the Artistic Style of Zandaren Music of Oroqen Nationality

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## ABSTRACT

The Oroqen, an ethnic minority in northeast China, have lived in vast forests for generations. Though proficient in singing and dancing, they enjoy no language or character of their own due to living environment. Oroqen folk music is deeply influenced by religion, culture, and mode of production and life. The structure of "Zandaren" music of Oroqen, which is derived from daily life, is not complicated, keeping the unique artistic features of Oroqen nationality. The artistic style of Zandaren music of Oroqen nationality is elucidated in this paper to promote the progress of Oroqen folk music.

**Keywords:** *Oroqen, Zandaren music, artistic style*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Greater Khingan Mountains in Heilongjiang Province has been home to Oroqen nationality for generations, who create unique art culture from existing mode of production and life. Zandaren music is a classic example. People there communicate and express emotions through music, which usually includes minor and folk songs, endowing people with the beauty of elegance and pleasure. Zandaren, an integral of Oroqen folk music art and culture, serves as an epitome of the production and life of Oroqen people in a special period.

### A. Overview of Zandaren

Zandaren in Oroqen is also called Zandale (or Jandalun), which means song or ballad. Such music dominates the folk music of Oroqen. Zandaren, similar to folk song or minor in Han nationality, covers a wide range of subjects and involves all aspects of life. Zandaren songs are diverse in genre and closely related to real-life scene. Emotions in daily life can be expressed through music, and people there sing whatever they want, with no fixed lyrics. The lyrics are generally short in length and freestyle based on the mood of the singer. Zandaren songs of Oroqen are performed in two forms, among which one is music with a regular rhythm, such as Returning from Hunting,

while the other is long, high-pitched music with few lyric, such as The Milk of Yellow Horse.

## II. ARTISTIC STYLE OF ZANDAREN MUSIC OF OROQEN NATIONALITY

### A. The language and lyric characteristics of Zandaren

Zandaren of Oroqen is similar to Ewenki language and under tungusic branch of Altaic language family. It boasts 15 vowels and 18 consonants in pronunciation. As for language, Oroqen failed to create its own characters. As a result, the inheritance and development of Oroqen songs depends on intergenerational transition. The language and intonation of Oroqen share characteristic, which are obviously agglutinative language. Therefore, folk songs of Oroqen are more mellow and full in performance and outperform that of other nationalities in artistic charm. The lyrics of Zandaren are simple and casual. Metaphors, exaggerations and other figures of speech can be adopted, among which the most common one is bi-xing (parable and elation). Bi-xing is usually employed to sing the surrounding things, generally endowing flowers, plants, animals with human characteristics. Lining words abounds in Zandaren, which proves the uniqueness of Oroqen nationality. The emotions expressed in songs vary from place to place. Zandaren of Oroqen shows the characteristics of Oroqen nationality and the unique artistic features of Oroqen folk songs.

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### *B. The singing style and technique of Zandaren*

The expression form of Zandaren is simple, mainly to vent people's mood. Zandaren requires little singing technique. The lyrics are mostly improvisational rather than elaborately composed, mainly to express emotions. However, it requires more and high on voice. The voice must be resounding, full and strong to impress the audience. As for the timbre, it should be beautiful and flexible, as if it were a call to the distance. The performance of Zandaren requires long tone. Note holding for too long is not acceptable at the end of the song. As for timbre, alto voice should be round and sonorous, while low pitch should be thick and loud. Such singing contributes to the inheritance of Zandaren of Oroqen. In addition, recognizable voice is needed for singing, and the song must be full of emotion and vitality, so as to better express the feelings of the Oroqen people.

### *C. The singing forms of Zandaren*

Zandaren songs of Oroqen are mainly sung in the form of solo, chorus and duet. Solo is the most common one, and the accompaniment of musical instruments is optional. Chorus is finished by many people. Early Oroqen would sing together to express their joy through songs on their way back from hunting. Duet involves one or more groups of two, mostly in the form of question and answer. The lyrics are usually improvised rather than written in advance. The singing form of Zandaren features their own characteristics, and singing with level tone is employed. Before 1953, Oroqen people lived a primitive social life in the mountains. They kept in touch by shouting, hence the singing style. Such shouting style of singing can best reveal the characteristic of the Oroqen Zandaren folk songs of Oroqen. In addition, Zandaren songs of Oroqen are unique in grace note. Grace note is mainly used as appoggiatura at the end of a sentence. Singers usually use it to express their emotions. However, given the excessively high range, the key is usually lowered at the end of a sentence, so as to better reflect the bold and brave character of the Oroqen, which is unique in hunting people.

## **III. THE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF ZANDAREN MUSIC OF OROQEN NATIONALITY**

Zandaren music of Oroqen is cultivated by the unique culture of the Oroqen ethnic group, which is mainly transmitted by word of mouth. Given the absence of written language, such oral transmission among generations is essential for the inheritance of folk music, without which Zandaren music of Oroqen cannot be preserved in a changing society. However, the ever-changing society highlight the flaws of heavy reliance on one single method for inheritance. The way of life of Oroqen nationality has changed from hunting

to settlement. It is no exaggeration to say that their way of life has been subverted, which leads to change in the way of inheriting its culture. What's more, the Oroqen people has adapted to such changes. The Internet allows people to expand the influence of Oroqen culture and art through a variety of media. If oral transmission among generations are exclusively relied, the music culture of Oroqen will disappear with the changes of the society.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

Oroqen folk song which is one of a kind belongs to a cultural branch of Chinese minorities. In view of its origin in people's daily life, Oroqen folk song enjoys distinct regional characteristics. Zandaren songs of Oroqen focus on the language and life characteristics of Oroqen, highlighting the charm of Oroqen music in a unique way.

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