



Cello and Film Music: Take the Performance Art of the Movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" for Example

Xiaohan Yu, Yumeng He*

School of Music, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, 116029, China

*Corresponding author email: dl_hym@126.com

Abstract. Film is a visual and auditory art form, which has been widely concerned since its birth. Cello, as a medium and bass instrument, has a vocal range close to the human voice. This paper discusses the role of cello in the creation and performance of film music from the perspective of the relationship between cello and film music, and studies and analyzes the application of cello in film music, artistic expression and the reflection on the combination of Chinese and Western creation through the example of film music of Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. Thus, more diversified and three-dimensional display of this unique charm of the instrument, reflect its value in film music, and better promote the future development of the cello in the field of music art.

Keywords: Cello; Film music; Auditory and visual integration

1 Introduction

Film music dates back to the time of silent film piano accompaniment, when the role of film music was not only to fill the silence, but also to be able to mask the noise of the projector. But with the development of the film industry, film music has become an indispensable part of the film. Today's film music still retains its basic function of reflecting the emotions and moods of The Times, but it has shed its role as a foil and evolved to actually shape the narrative as well as the character.

As a kind of visual and auditory art, with the assistance of film music, film can play a more complex role through the establishment of melody, guide and control the audience's psychological state through various ways, and affect the audience's information and understanding of the film, so as to affect the audience's emotional changes. Movie music is destined to be the most colorful background of a movie, and a good movie music often plays a crucial role, and all of this is based on the emotional induction of music.

Through reviewing the existing literature, it is found that many scholars have put forward the advantages of cello in the art of emotional expression in musical art works, and can use modern techniques to integrate ethnic music elements into cello works, so as to inherit Chinese ethnic music culture. However, few scholars have looked at the relationship between cello and film music. This paper discusses the role

of cello in film music creation and performance, and analyzes how cello plays its role through theory and examples.

In this regard, this paper mainly studies the role and artistic characteristics of cello in the creation and performance of film music. At the same time, taking the multiple application of cello in the film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" as an example, this paper explores how to eliminate the inherent thinking of cello and construct the expression mode of cello in the film music creation.

2 Artistic characteristics of cello in film music

2.1 The role of cello in film music

Cello music has appeared in many movie music, but the role it plays is different. For example, in the "memory" soundtrack of the Undertaker, the scene of cello playing directly appears. This way of directly appearing the performance picture can often make the audience more directly and quickly immersed in the plot of the film, and enhance the artistic atmosphere of the film. When Daori Kobayashi, the protagonist of the film, returns home after attending the funeral ceremony for the first time, he feels very complicated[1]. Complaining about why his life was so difficult and confused, feeling that life had no meaning and value, and thinking of his mother who had not been able to send his last death, he had the idea of playing the piano, so he opened his childhood violin bag, tuned the strings and played a melody that he was very familiar with, from which "memory" sounded.

The melodious sound of the cello is like the protagonist's inner monologue, telling his inner voice and memories. The cello music gradually turns from the music inside the painting to the music outside the painting. Through the presentation of the protagonist's childhood film, Daori Kobayashi's missing of his mother and memories of his childhood father are shown to the audience [2]. Then the picture gradually pulls back to reality. As can be seen from the music of the film "memory", the application of cello sound and painting synchronization shows the protagonist Daori Kobayashi's yearning for his childhood mother and the image of his father to the audience, and at the same time enhances the artistic charm of the film.

"memory" is also the theme music of the film "Encoffiners". Through the repeated use of the cello theme as the main line of emotional expression, it runs through the entire film and constantly promotes the development of the film plot. Whenever cello music sounds, it seems to add a touch of glory to the life of the protagonist, and the cello and the protagonist are closely linked together. Especially at the end of the film, when his father dies, Kobayashi turns the stone in his father's hand and hands it to his pregnant wife. Cello theme music plays, this time the music is not sad, more like a tribute to life. Kobayashi Daori finally untangled his heart and took the stone as the inheritance of life. The final appearance of the theme music in memory sublimated the themes of love, affection, and life and death in the film.

Cello music in the film can also be used as background music, through the cello's own timbre and emotional expression advantages in musical art works, so as to better help the film to show the emotional color of the protagonist. For example, in the

background music of "his smile" in the movie "Love Letter", the cello is heavy and restrained, but there is no lack of grand bass as the foundation, interspersed with a long melody of a higher octave. When the heroine learns of the unexpected death of the person who used to love, it is associated with the death of her father, and the music shows the heroine Fujinshu's sad feelings and strong emotional ups and downs.

In addition, the cello can also show specific times and local ethnic color pictures by changing playing techniques.

Using cello music with different playing skills can often make the film picture more full and the character image more three-dimensional. For example, in the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the theme song of the same name, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", appears in the opening credits introduced by the cello. The cello imitated the playing skills of the traditional Chinese instrumental music, the horse-head qin, and its bleak glissando was full of Oriental colors, reflecting the misty beauty of the water towns in the south of the Yangtze River like ink paintings, showing the feelings between the protagonists Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian vividly. Until the addition of the orchestra, the picture of the pipa's timbre appears to follow the protagonist's perspective, and the picture of the lively and dangerous capital is frozen in front of the audience.

2.2 The difference between cello music and cello playing music in movies

The cello, an instrumental music from the West, has experienced hundreds of years of historical precipitation, giving the cello a strong cultural connotation. Whether in film music or in music performance, the cello plays a very important role, but the two are still very different.

Cello music is usually performed according to the creator's own ideas. The adjustment of all the techniques of the cello and the interpretation of the melody are equivalent to a bridge, passing the artistic conception that the composer wants to create to the audience[3]. In the performance of cello music, through the adjustment of its combination and techniques with other instrumental music, the thick timbre of the cello with strong penetrating power can often provide more playing space for the main instrumental music, fill the lack of vocal area, and enrich the level and gradient of music. To help the creator, to convey the emotion injected into the music to the audience, to serve the music itself and the composer.

Film is a visual and auditory way to show the story to the audience. The addition of cello music can present more profound cultural connotation through its own artistic charm. The low and melodious tone of the cello contains a deep emotional artistic charm. Constantly promote the development of the plot of the film, enhance the narrative of the film, and make the film characters more three-dimensional and full. The auxiliary film transmits the inner emotions of the characters and the subjective ideas with deep meaning to the audience, which not only improves the artistic quality of the film, but also gives the film music more space for development, and also makes the audience feel the unique charm of cello music.

3 The artistic expression of cello in film music

3.1 Artistic fusion of creation and performance

The film music of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is an important monument in the development of Chinese cello music. In the film music, the cello's wide vocal range and extremely malleable musical characteristics coupled with Mr. Ma Yo-yo's wonderful interpretation have almost made us forget that the cello is an instrumental music from the West. By imitating and learning Chinese folk instrumental techniques such as the descending glissando of the Huqin on the cello, the wheel finger and plucked string in plucked instrumental music, and the multi-melody decoration, we also innovated the traditional techniques of Chinese folk instrumental music by learning the playing style of western instrumental music [4].

In order to find the commonality between the cello and the national instrumental music, the unique charm of Chinese traditional folk music is presented, so that the film music is full of various colors and has the chivalrousness of China's ancient rivers and lakes, and also shows the changeable charm of the cello. Through the use of traditional Chinese instrumental music such as huqin, pipa, guqin, flute, bell and drum, composer Tan Dun has created lifelike artistic images for the film, filled the music with a strong historical and cultural atmosphere [5], and demonstrated the unique aesthetic consciousness and cultural connotation of the Chinese nation. In particular, in order to perfectly unify the picture structure and music of the film when depicting the picture of a specific region, local traditional ethnic instrumental music is selected to add to the background music, so as to fully integrate the visual and auditory art and reflect the local customs and customs[6].

3.2 Application case analysis

The 2001 film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, directed by Ang Lee, became the first Chinese-language film in history to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. He not only raised the reputation of Chinese films to a new level, but also led the film scores composed by composers living in the United States to the world stage. Tan Dun's perfect fusion of Chinese folk music elements and western instrumental music in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*'s score, coupled with the exquisite performance of Chinese cellist Yo-Yo Ma, can be regarded as the peak of modern Chinese film music.

The theme song of the same name from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* appears at the beginning of the film, introduced by the cello melody. In this piece of music, Tan Dun uses many Chinese folk music materials in order to reflect the national colors. For example, the wavy line in Example 1 (See Fig.1) adopts the "big kneading string" playing method of the cello [7]. When the normal cello plays the string, in fact, you only need to press the fingers tightly on the string and then swing the forearm to drive the string vibration, of course, this will be limited by the small amplitude, and the effect will not be so obvious.

Then, in this passage, as the protagonist Li Mubai walks into the picture, the cello string kneading appears. At the same time, the amplitude of the string kneading and the range of sliding between vocal ranges are continuously increased. The performer freely exerts sliding to increase the range of vocal range, and the pitch is played to fluctuate repeatedly like a wave, and then gradually weakens as the volume decreases. The film shows the hazy beauty of Jiangnan water towns like ink paintings to the audience.



Fig. 1. Music Example 1

In the soundtrack of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a lot of glissando techniques are used to imitate the playing skills of the morin Qin. Especially in the lyric section of solo cello, as shown in Example 2 (See Fig.2), the glissando connects almost every note, and the melody is very Oriental. Especially in the film, when Yu Xiulian chooses to wait for Li Mubai in Beijing, the glissando technique of cello in the background music not only adds a lot of charm to the tune, but also shows the affair between the protagonist Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian incisively and vividly. Entering through the cello melody scattering style, it gives people a sense of desolation [8], and also paves the way for the tragic ending of the Jianghu resentment caused by Li Mubai's withdrawal from Jianghu.



Fig. 2. Music Example 2

With the end of the cello solo melody, the original calm life seems to gradually disappear with the cello glissando. Film protagonist Yu Xiulian with the escort into the capital, cello sixteenth notes closely arranged, short and powerful. With the pace of the protagonist entering the capital, the rhythm is gradually accelerated, and the pipa melody enters the lively and prosperous capital in the audience. The combination of the cello and double bass melody and the Chinese opera band in the drum suggests that the surface of the peaceful lively capital is actually a crisis, undercurrents, but also indicates that Yu Xiulian at the moment of inner sorrow. Until the addition of orchestral music, the film lens gradually pulled away, showing the whole picture of Beijing to the audience, and the pipa melody gradually weakened, thus ending the song (See Fig.3).

In addition, in this film music, the cello also imitates another traditional way of huqin glissando playing - the underglissando. As shown in Example 4 (See Fig.4), for this arrowhead glissini technique, the glissini of the note is not determined after the note. Players can freely play according to their own understanding of the music, and

determine the length and range of the glissini according to the direction and position of the arrow, so as to deduce the free and easy Huqin, and deduce the unique eastern charm with the piccolo.

The image shows a musical score for Music Example 3. It consists of six staves: Vc.solo (Violoncello solo), Vln. I (Violin I), Vln. II (Violin II), Via. (Viola), Vc. (Violoncello), and Ch. (Contrabasso). The Vc.solo part starts with a long glissando line and a note, with the instruction '(to hold the guitar pick with mouth lips)'. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts play a rhythmic pattern starting at a *p* dynamic. The Via. part also plays a rhythmic pattern starting at a *p* dynamic. The Vc. and Ch. parts play a rhythmic pattern starting at a *ppp* dynamic, with dynamic markings increasing to *mp*, *f*, and *ff*. There are also performance instructions like '(fade out)' and 'ord.' (ordine).

Fig. 3. Music Example 3

The image shows a musical score for Music Example 4, which is a single melodic line in treble clef. It features three notes marked with '(dolce)' and a dynamic marking of *mf* at the end. There are also performance markings like '>' (accent) and a wavy line indicating a glissando or vibrato effect.

Fig. 4. Music Example 4

The traditional way of picking the cello string is to press the string with the left hand and pick the string with the fingers of the right hand. In the section of Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, I chose to imitate the playing techniques of Chinese national picking instrument, pipa and Ruan picking string[9]. For example, in Example 5 (See Fig.5), the solo cello uses a guitar pick to pick the strings. In order to play a sonorous and powerful heavy sound effect here, the playing technique is very similar to the "sweeping Buddha" technique of the Chinese national plucked instrumental pipa. According to the score, we can see that the speed gradually increases as the notes become closer together. In the subsequent development of the music, guitar picks are also used to pick the strings, as shown in example 6 (See Fig.6). Because the material of the pick is harder than the finger picking string, the effect of using the pick string will be more flexible and powerful, crisp and bright, and also greatly improve the speed of the pick string.

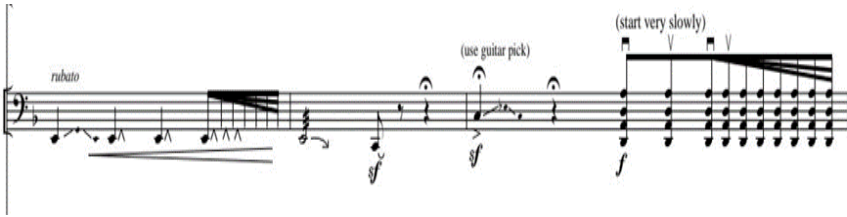


Fig. 5. Music Example 5



Fig. 6. Music Example 6

4 Conclusion

Music is an essential part of our lives and has the most unique art form. Concrete but abstract, we can not see or touch, can only rely on hearing to appreciate the emotion and charm of music. The emergence of film music not only helps the audience to understand the film, but also can more intuitively perceive the music. The cello in the film music, its deep melodious tone, as the "language" in the film, to elaborate the inner emotions of the film characters and those implicit meaning of the main body thought. It enhances the narrative of the film and makes the film characters more three-dimensional and full. At the same time, cello can be presented in a diversified way in film music. For example, in the film music of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, composer Tan Dun creatively uses Chinese folk music elements in the film music in the form of a combination of Chinese and Western elements, so that nationality and cello are perfectly integrated, thus creating a variety of unique playing techniques and sound effects with ethnic implications. This effect is not only a breakthrough in cello creation and performance, but also shows the possibility of "nationalization" of cello music in China. Composer Tan Dun's courage and responsibility to consciously protect and inherit folk music has pushed the creation of Chinese film music to a new height.

The success of the film music of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is not only a big step for Chinese traditional folk music to enter the international stage, but also a big step for the creation of Chinese cello music, and also provides a new direction for the development of Chinese cello music. We can completely break the shackles of traditional creative ideas, boldly use modern composing techniques to integrate ethnic music elements into cello artistic creation, and fully learn from the playing techniques of traditional Chinese ethnic instrumental music to make the cello closer to the traditional Chinese music culture and emotions. The Chinese culture has a fine tradition of openness, inclusiveness and inclusiveness since ancient times. In particular, under the general trend of economic globalization, cultural diversification continues to advance, and various ideological and cultural exchanges are becoming more frequent, which is

also an inevitable trend of the integration of cello and Chinese folk music culture under the rapid development of society. We should consciously assume the responsibility of inheriting national music culture, strengthen the integration and balance between various elements and types, and promote the development of contemporary music creation in a more accurate direction.

At the same time, we have to admit that there is still a lot of room for research and development in the diversified creation of cello music. We can enrich teaching resources and let students explain more knowledge about cello and appreciate more famous cello songs with the help of multimedia. Strengthen the popularity of the cello to expand their horizons, so that students can have more understanding of the cello. In the process of expanding the innovation and breakthrough of the nationalization of cello music, it is necessary to find a suitable way of expression on the basis of not abandoning the traditional Chinese ethnic elements, so that the cello can complement itself and give full play to its respective advantages and characteristics, so as to promote the diversified development of Chinese music culture. On the basis of practice, we should also continuously accumulate experience, which is the basis and important guarantee for the long-term development of Chinese art.

With the continuous development of the film industry, film music has become an indispensable part of the film. The existence of film music helps the film to convey the inner emotions of the characters and those implicit themes to the audience. The cello, with its own artistic charm and cultural heritage, not only improves the artistic quality of the film, but also gives the film music more space for development, and gradually makes the audience realize the unique charm of the cello. At the same time, through research, it is found that the cello can also be used in diversified ways in film music. Especially in this era of rapid social development, the integration of Chinese and western music culture is an inevitable trend, and it is also an inevitable development of music culture. We should actively maintain and promote the diversification of world music culture, further improve the international communication of Chinese folk music culture, and carry forward the traditional Chinese folk music culture and push it to the world stage.

This paper analyzes the specific application of cello in film music creation and performance from the perspective of the relationship between cello and film music, and combines the analysis of some representative film music in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* to sort out the diversified application of cello in film music and the reflection on the combination of Chinese and Western creation. It provides some theoretical basis for the application of cello in film music, and also hopes that the public can have some understanding of cello, promote the development of cello music art, strengthen the popularity of cello and let the public have a better understanding and love of cello.

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