

Research on Relations between Experiences and Object & Basic Theory of Musical Aesthetics

Yujing Guo

Minjiang University, Fuzhou, 350001, China

Keywords: musical aesthetics, research object, theory, disciplinary system

Abstract: Musical aesthetics is developed from the development of aesthetics, musical historiography, music criticism and other disciplines. Musical aesthetics draws essences from such disciplines and also presents unique disciplinary characteristics. From such perspectives as philosophy, psychology, sociology and aesthetic meaning of musical works, musical aesthetics explores for the nature of music, functional pattern of music and value standard of music. Research object is served as the initial point of research of any discipline. Musical aesthetics specifies its research objects, and its research objects are enriched with changing times, promoting establishment and enrichment of the disciplinary system. In this paper, a brief introduction is made to research objects and basic principles of music. Besides, the author also lays emphasis on the ontology and disciplinary system. At last, a simple analysis is made on relations between experiences and existing way of basic principles of musical aesthetics.

Musical aesthetics is an auditory-experience-based discipline of philosophy of art, which utilizes conceptual analysis, philosophical recognition and other methods to reveal universal laws for aesthetic establishment and practice of human music. Similar to common humanistic disciplines, chief issue of musical aesthetics is the object of research, which concerns both domain of discourse and research objective of musical aesthetics, and decides its disciplinary nature and development orientation. Musical aesthetics dates from the second half of the 19th century. Through researches and explorations by numerous people, fascinating achievements are made in both theoretical and practical fields, promoting long-term development of musical aesthetics. In the process of document analysis, however, the author finds that there are still considerable different views for the cognition of research object of musical aesthetics. Therefore, the author arranges achievements and experiences of previous researches, combines actual conditions of musical aesthetics at present, and obtains the research object of musical aesthetics from the field of disciplinary system, which is helpful for deep development of this discipline.

1 Research Object and Basic Theory of Musical Aesthetics

1.1 Research object

Research object refers to the object to be researched. In the development history of musical aesthetics, scholars at home and abroad mainly have five different views towards the research object of musical aesthetics: i) beauty of music; ii) aesthetic relations and laws of music; iii) particularity of musical art; iv) musical language; and v) musical culture. The five views either magnify or miniaturize the research object of musical aesthetics, which is not helpful for contemporary development of musical aesthetics. Musical aesthetics is a rigorous discipline. Its research object should be combined with the times. For contemporary musical aesthetics, the author thinks that importance should be attached to reasons for the existence of music and ways of people perceiving the meaning of life in music through sentimental experiences. Music is a sort of auditory art. Acting on human's auditory sense, music is the product created by activity of human consciousness. Music takes movable stereo as medium, which creates aesthetic objects with the objective of satisfying sentimental demands of human's auditory sense. Then, how it is possible for music to become the aesthetic object of human beings? For this question, we must return to the origin of music. As an intellectual product created by human, music has vitality with human development. Before the emergence of music, people can only experience some chaotic sounds. However, people give full play to activity of consciousness, and combine sounds with reasonable

structures and patterns. As a result, beautiful and fair-sounding melodies are produced. Therefore, it is human who make music to be displayed. However, human's aesthetic consciousness of music is also produces and develops accordingly.

With respect to object, music's becoming human's aesthetic object depends on beauty of music itself. Humans feel beauty of music through auditory sense, while this auditory sense is irreplaceable, which is resulted from combined action of subject and object. Therefore, the state of existence of music first needs sentimental media. Or, aesthetic object will lose the value of existence. Moreover, music has aesthetic value only when stereo acts as medium. From emergence and development history of music, it can be seen that music exists for humans. However, what strength humans can use to establish aesthetic relations? In the author's opinion, human beings are subjects creating, performing and appreciating music. In a series of practical activities, human perception is very important. This is aesthetic perception which structures relations between human and music. However, aesthetic perception fails to completely express relations between aesthetic object and aesthetic subject. Instead, relations between human and music are only reflected from the perspective of human's acceptance of music. Moreover, music is regarded as a common cognitive object. The fact that music is created by human is neglected. Till the end of the 20th century, Zhao Songguang proposed the concept of "aesthetic establishment". Wang Ningyi advocates the combination of "aesthetics" and "aesthetic establishment". In musical creation, aesthetics and aesthetic establishment are key factors for creating beauty of music. Creation of new musical works is a process of aesthetic establishment. The subject of aesthetic establishment here includes both the creator and the performer of music piece. No matter in primary creation or secondary creation, the strength of aesthetic establishment subject is embodied. On the basis of aesthetic perception, humans establish standards for musical beauty, create musical works, and transform subject strength to musical works in physical state. Therefore, research objects of musical aesthetics include music pieces. More importantly, musical aesthetics explores for the inevitability of various occasional relations from the perspectives of philosophy and aesthetics, explores for the ways of laws for musical beauty reflecting in musical works, and reveals the nature of and rules for musical beauty. In a word, research object of musical aesthetics from the theoretical perspective is comprehensive sentimental representation of a series of issues related to musical knowledge and theory. Musical aesthetics has the value of research and its musical value can be highlighted only when its object of research - music is deeply explored.

1.2 Basic principle

1.2.1 Ontology of musical aesthetics

The ontology of musical aesthetics is one of important development trends of Chinese musical aesthetic theory in recent years. Musical aesthetics mainly includes the research on the essence of musical aesthetics and aesthetic significance of music as well as the fundamental attributes of music. Sentimental experience and expression of music are two important links for relations between human and music. In a certain sense, the two links are key points of attention for musical aesthetics, as brackets that can contain all issues related to music. In the *Relationship of "Music – Heart Enantiomorph" in Musical Comprehension Phenomenon*, Fan Xiaofeng pointed that: music comprehension is one of human activities. Human's comprehensive activities have three stages: sensibility, intellectuality and rationality. Through these three stages, music comprehension explores for musical phenomena, which are motive and cause for human's comprehension of object. To seek for music becomes inevitability and reality of object comprehension, so as to establish relations between subject comprehension and object comprehension. That is subject-object relationship. Before the entrance into preset situation, subject-object relationship shows the existence relationship of both items. Music phenomenon is potential subject. After entrance into cognitive activities, musical comprehension becomes dialogue between human and musical phenomena.

1.2.2 Disciplinary system of musical aesthetics

Musical aesthetics is an important discipline. Its disciplinary system is the basis for its basic theory. In the establishment process of disciplinary system of Chinese musical aesthetics in the 20th century, it is clearly stated when the system is integrated into the scope of historiography: the 20th

century is of special significance for Chinese educational circle. In this special historical period, musical aesthetics represents morphological characteristics of contemporary disciplines. To the 21st century, experts and scholars, based on previous research achievements, conclude new theoretical focuses, expand the disciplinary system, promote disciplinary construction of musical aesthetics, and give new significance to disciplinary system of musical aesthetics from the perspectives of phenomenology and orismology. In terms of the research on disciplinary system of musical aesthetics, on the one hand, appropriate arrangement is made to relevant musical aesthetic thoughts and relevant ideological resources. On the other hand, attention should be paid to the current music reality. A convictive interpretation should be given current situation and development prospect of musical aesthetics with deep theoretical attitude and critical consciousness. With respect to establishment and perfection of disciplinary system of musical aesthetics, we should not only maintain our characters but also make extensive researches on relations between musical aesthetics and other disciplines, so as to make contribution to the enrichment of disciplinary system of musical aesthetics, promote the development of contemporary music research, and strengthen the driving force of musical aesthetic research.

In the *Transplant, Rudiment and Interpretation – Research on Disciplinary Nature of Musical Aesthetics from Early 20th Century to 1978*, Fan Xiaofeng pointed that: most Chinese researches on disciplinary nature, research object and research method of musical aesthetics are only paraphrases of definition and cognition of western musical aesthetics for disciplinary nature, research object and others alike. With respect to the research on specific practical activities, China preliminarily integrate thinking patterns, cultural characteristics and social structure characteristics of Chinese traditional philosophy into the disciplinary system of musical aesthetics, and draw relevant theories and methods of western psychology and sociology.

In the *Disciplinary Construction of Chinese Musical Aesthetic from 2005 to 2008 and Work Report on China Musical Aesthetics Association*, Han Zhong'en reviews historic development of China in the establishment of musical aesthetics disciplinary system. China accomplishes the preliminary stage of the establishment of disciplinary system, and enters the sound development stage. In the expansion process of disciplinary system, China stably develops towards the longitudinal direction. At the same time, Han Zhong'en emphasized criticism produced in researches on musical aesthetics from 2005 to 2008 and different from researches in other disciplines. Moreover, Han Zhong'en attached great importance to pioneer consciousness, putting the exploration for essence, digestion & integration and ideological heritage of predecessors in the first place of research, and enhancing people's cognition of disciplinary nature of musical aesthetics. According to Wang CiZhao, the disciplinary system of Chinese musical aesthetics got its rapid development mainly in over thirty years after the reform and opening-up, mainly represented in disciplinary construction of colleges and universities.

In terms of disciplinary affiliation, Wang Sen proposed an eclectic viewpoint in order not to be partial to aesthetics or musicology: research object of musical aesthetics is music, while its research method and result should give expression to aesthetic and philosophic theories. However, this viewpoint makes someone to think that musical aesthetics is resulted from simple addition of musicology to aesthetics. Mao Yuan said that "musical aesthetics can not be separated from dual attributes of music and aesthetics. Musical and aesthetic attributes are essential attributes of musical aesthetics". Some scholars also think that musical aesthetics is an independent discipline which exceeds disciplinary definition of musicology and aesthetics. They think that musical aesthetics is an academic discipline.

2 Musical aesthetics is a super-experiential discipline.

According to Wang Ningyi, the existence way of basic theory of musical aesthetics must be super-experiential. He proposed its existence way from the research on relevant concepts and theories of musical aesthetics, causing the educational circle's query and discussion on concept and from concept to concept.

From the nature of musical aesthetics, it is a super-experiential theoretical discipline involved in

research on human's music aesthetic activities. Music aesthetic activities include two aspects: music aesthetic experience and music aesthetic concept. With time as the clue and key figures in the history of musical aesthetics as the base point, the former analyzes music aesthetic theories proposed by these musical aesthetes. The latter belongs to the scope of musical aesthetics, taking logical relationship as the clue, regarding the history of musical aesthetics as a continuously developing theoretical system with various incidence relations, researching theoretical research emphases of various historical times and schools, and exploring for issues centered on which researches of various schools are developed, for disputes between schools and schools and for values represented behind these disputes. China's research on musical aesthetics started in the 20th century. In the research process of nearly 200 years, we have made great achievements in experiences in musical aesthetics. Moreover, *The History of Chinese Ancient Music*, *The History of Chinese Musical Aesthetics* and other fundamental works are published in succession. Compared with experiences in musical aesthetics, researches on musical aesthetic concept are relatively insufficient in China. For instance, China fails to establish a set of complete music aesthetics scope system. The central issue lies on great disputes about whether musical aesthetics exists as concept or experience. What represented behind these disputes are that: whether musical aesthetics should be a theoretical discipline or a practical one. After researches over a decade, it is basically acknowledged in the educational circle that musical aesthetics is a theoretical discipline. Han Zhong'en said that "in musical aesthetics, rational methods are used to research ways used by humans for aesthetic activities and relevant results". According to Zhao Songguang, musical aesthetics is a special philosophy of art involving in the research on laws and final goals of humans' aesthetic establishment and aesthetic practices. Zhang Qian thinks that is a basic theoretical discipline involving in the research on aesthetic rules for art of music. Wang Ningyi fully absorbs the concept of aesthetic establishment proposed by Zhao Songguang, and combines aesthetic establishment and aesthetics. He thinks that musical aesthetics is a super-experiential theoretical discipline from concept to concept. Although scholars still have different opinions towards cognition and comprehension of the disciplinary nature of musical aesthetics, they unanimously think that musical aesthetics is a theoretical discipline.

Up to this day, the research on musical aesthetics has already remarkably exceeded its original scope. However, we can not generalize its research object at random. Instead, we should view the relationship between the highest indexes and playing skills, distinguish musical aesthetics from musical performance, positively research existence way of contemporary musical aesthetics, explore for the relationship between musical aesthetics and the whole social value system from historical stereo experiences and music aesthetic experiences, and explore for contemporary development and future development orientations of musical aesthetics.

Conclusion

Since the entrance of musical aesthetics into China from the 1920s, a batch of scholars and experts dedicate their whole lives to the research on musical aesthetics and arrangement of historical materials. As a result, the disciplinary system of musical aesthetics is established gradually. While absorbing and referring to research results of western musical aesthetics, we should also find key points of Chinese musical aesthetics from the perspectives of Chinese ancient philosophy, enrich the contents of musical aesthetics, find more methods for research on musical aesthetics, find various relations between human and music, explore for inevitability behind occasional relations, promote progresses of other disciplines while promoting the development of musical aesthetics, and improve the level of civilization of human society.

References:

- [1] Xing Wanli, *Methodology of Musical Aesthetics Research – Unification of Experience, History and Logics Methods* [J], Keyuan Monthly Publication, 2010 (2): 95-96;
- [2] Wu Yuanhua, *Contemporary Explanation for Research Object of Musical Aesthetics* [J],

Music Space, 2013 (10): 61-62;

[3] Yang Sai, *Center and Boundary of Musical Aesthetics Research* [J], Journal of Art College of Inner Mongolia University, 2008 (1): 10-13;

[4] Wang Henghua, *On Functions of Music* [J], Northern Music, 2011 (1): 37-38;

[5] Kong Xuqian, *Discussion on Cai Zhongde's Research on Musical Aesthetics* [D], Shandong Normal University, 2012.