

## Discussion on Application of Creative Thinking in National Music Appreciation

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**Abstract.** Music appreciation is served as the precondition and basis for music criticism. In the past, most music appreciation was about modally modeled appreciation for western music, and seldom music appreciation paid attention to national music. “Appreciation is creative” was also mentioned in the research on artistic appreciation. However, such research failed to make a deep discussion on “how to create”. Therefore, the author took national music as the object of research, and proposed that the mode of innovative thinking was one of intermediaries for generation of national music creative appreciation. Besides, the author also explored for innovation to national music appreciation with such methods as “correlated association”, “similar association”, “perspective conversion”, “value conversion”, and “relation divergence” in innovative thinking.

### Introduction

“Creativity” is interpreted as follows in the dictionary: “make efforts to create new thought and performance; new meaning”. [1] In this paper, “creativity” in national music appreciation refers to people’s unique and innovative understandings and distinctive comments generated for text, performance and evaluation of national music in its appreciation process. In the first part of this subject, creativity of appreciation has been stated. It is a stage of “resonance - inspiration” in the process of “listening - resonance - inspiration”. People have subjective initiative, and are subjects of “creation”. However, national music lays much emphasis on human appreciation, providing space of “creation” for objects.

When we talk about creativity, we have to mention mode of productive thinking. Thinking goes ahead of behavior. Combariea (1895-1916), a French musician, defined music as follows: “art of sound”. In those musical works, concept, imagination, inspiration, productive thinking and other similar words are usually associated together. To make innovations in national music appreciation, the mode of productive thinking is served as the intermediary.

### Application of associative thinking in national music appreciation

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“Associative thinking is to associate for certain relation between things or phenomena, so as to obtain enlightenment and find out innovative means.” [2] In music appreciation, musicians often adopt such innovative thinking method, for instance, rhythmic appreciation of a short segment in Beethoven’s *Symphony of Fate*. Beethoven used to interpret it as: the destiny is knocking at the door. According to the understanding of Berlioz, a romantic French musician, it is not scared to death at listening to the destiny’s knocking at the door. It just looks like the image of agitated Othello after great torture. He though that he felt this melody was more intrepid and more positive fierce confrontation with scorn and fearlessness instead of simply passive resistance to destiny. According to Peng Jixiang, Berlioz’s accurate and more vivid understanding of the work further supplemented and enriched its aesthetic value. At the same time, Berlioz also improved artistic criticism to a higher level. [3]

Berlioz appreciated *Symphony of Fate* as the image of agitated Othello. It is a kind of creative appreciation, which is achieved by the thinking mode of correlated association. Othello is the

protagonist in Shakespeare's plays as well as a hero with strong self-awareness. For "destiny" expressed in music works and the figure in the drama, the one is spiritual intention, and the other one is specific image. They appear to be irrelevant. However, Berlioz associated them together. The reason for association is that they are similar to each other. Such similarity is the essence of two factors – "destiny". The theme of *Symphony of Fate* is destiny. The destiny of Othello is a tragedy. Berlioz associated from the theme of "destiny", and associated the subject of "destiny" into a specific figure - Othello. He experienced sweetness and jealousy of love, and killed his wife as he believed in scoundrels. Under great impact from destiny, he was too agitated to have drastic resistance against his destiny. According to Berlioz, *Symphony of Fate* just describes mental fight of Othello against his destiny. As an appreciator, Berlioz creatively continued to write *Symphony of Fate*, and creatively imagined figures, plots and mentality in the story. Besides, he also dramatized a music theme, and enriched the connotation of music works, which gives further interpretation to Beethoven's "destiny". Beethoven gave a fuzzy theme, but Berlioz gave the origin, process and result of the event. Therefore, Peng Jixiang thought that Berlioz's accurate and vivid understanding of this music work further enriched its aesthetic value. This is Berlioz's creativity in music appreciation. Such creativity is reflected in application of "chained" correlated associative thinking.

### **Application of similar association in national music**

"Similar association is to associate communities or similarities of different things together, namely to seek common points in different things, so as to find new creativity." [4] The rhetorical device of "synaesthesia" in literature appreciation is similar to this method. In music appreciation, musicians also adopt it in many cases, for instance, Zeng Tianli. While appreciating *The Moon over a Fountain*, he creatively appreciated "Tian Wen".

Zeng Tianli's appreciation for *The Moon over a Fountain* is obtained by similar association with Qu Yuan's poem *Tian Wen*. It seems that the two items are irrelevant. The one is music work, in which artistic conception is created by the sound of erhu. The other one is literary work, in which its artistic conception is described with words. Their similarities lie on "artistic conception". Artistic conception gives us space for imagination and creation. As one of Qu Yuan's representative works, *Tian Wen* totally includes 112 sentences and 69 questions. The mode of raising questions is used to express his values and value orientation. By asking questions, we can understand his thinking and the degree and depth of his thinking. Who to ask about unsmooth destiny of A Bing? It is similar for expressed emotions. Just because of such synaesthesia, Zeng Tianli associated *The Moon over a Fountain* with *Tian Wen*. Creative appreciation is that *The Moon over a Fountain* is *Tian Wen* implying softness in firmness.

### **Application of creative thinking conversion in national music appreciation**

#### **Application of thinking value conversion in creative national music appreciation**

"Value conservation is to reexamine values of things, so as to find and develop new values more beneficial for humans." The most essential part of national music is its music value. Music is used for appreciation and emotional expression. In national music appreciation, however, people can creatively reexamine the value of music.

"Value conservation" thinking can be found everywhere in national music appreciation. For instance, when rice is about to mature in the Dai nationality, drum must be played continuously. According to old women, it is helpful for rice. Appreciators gave play to creativity, and converted the music value of drum into the meaning of harvest. It happens that there is a similar case. Er Yuan, Jian Chuan, He Qing and other people in the Bai nationality will blow surnai, and song continuously while transplanting rice seedlings. According to local people, it is better for more songs in the planting season. This is a kind of strongly cultural appreciation mode, with strong subjective thought and subjective consciousness of appreciators, in which national music is granted with special value. Such special value is of certain creativity just because of its specialty. They converted sound appreciation value of music into the value of "catalyst" promoting growth of crops. Music is granted with people's

good subjective wishes. Music becomes a kind of new value carrier. This is cultural creative appreciation as well as reexamination of the appreciator for music value, so as to find and develop new values more beneficial for humans. This is thinking of value transfer. Although this value is people's spiritual idea, it gives play to people's subjective initiative and creativity. Thus, there are lots of cultural interpretations in national music. These interpretations have diversified subjective and spiritual features.

### **Application of perspective conversion in creative national music appreciation**

If the angle of appreciation is single in national music appreciation, the appreciation effect will be stereotyped. We are often limited by single angle and conventional thinking in the appreciation process. According to "conversion of thinking angle", all things have multiple different sides. You will naturally obtain different results by observing them from different angles. Even for the same side of the same thing, you will also have cognitive difference by observing it from different angles. [5] Generally, song and dance will not be separated in national music. Appreciation for national music is also appreciation for song and dance. As long as you can convert to another angle, it will generate different appreciation effects. Diversity is a pattern of manifestation of innovative national music appreciation, such as Sani people's *Axi Tiaoyue*.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of war: the Anti-Japanese War broke out in 1937. Yunan 60 Army marched to the frontline. People from all walks of life sent them off with various patterns. Zhang Chong, leader of 184 Army, said that "in my opinion, *Axi Tiaoyue* is the most appropriate music used to send officers and men off to the frontline. I command you to organize a team to play *Axi Tiaoyue* in the camp, so as to encourage my soldiers." [6] As appreciated by army leaders, *Axi Tiaoyue* can enhance troop morale.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of state leaders: in 1951, Shi Guoqiang and Duan Jiaying joined in the Chinese people's consolation group to North Korea. President Kim Il-sung was interested in listening *Axi Tiaoyue*. After the performance, he said that "this sound seems to urge us to move forward!" Peng Dehuai was also interested, and said that "yes, it seems to ask us to march forward! We should fight shoulder to shoulder, and defeat American invaders." [7] As appreciated by state leaders, *Axi Tiaoyue* is inspiring.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of foreigners: in 1986, American music circles listed *Axi Tiaoyue* into one of the most popular music works in the world, and broadcasted it in the rest. The former President Nixon evaluated it as: "*Axi Tiaoyue* is the most exciting music. After listening, you will feel energetic." [8] As appreciated by foreigners, *Axi Tiaoyue* is exciting.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of artists and common people: it is written in *The 3<sup>rd</sup> China Art Festival · Collected Works*: "Tiaoyue is stirring. People snap loudly. It makes people feel as if enter the spring and want to sing and dance....." [9] As appreciated by common people, *Axi Tiaoyue* can drive others to join it.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of Axi people: *Axi Tiaoyue* is a kind of dance used by Axi people to celebrate harvest and victory. They want to dance while hearing this music. As appreciated by Axi people, *Axi Tiaoyue* is a kind of lifestyle.

Analysis on *Axi Tiaoyue* from the angle of scholars: "lots of music in Sani Nationality is composed of do, mi and sol. Some scholars thought that it was formed due to the influence from western trumpet (with do, mi and sol only). [10] As appreciated by scholars, *Axi Tiaoyue* is note.

Among above comments on *Axi Tiaoyue*, some people emphasized its function and action. Some people appreciated its musical beauty. Some people were moved. Some people paid attention to music form. Some people felt a kind of lifestyle.....it is not difficult for us to find out that we can obtain completely different comments by shifting different angles. The more diversified appreciation results can represent more creativity of appreciation. Hermeneutic can be used to explain perspective conversion. Moreover, thinking of perspective conversion is also universally applied in creative national music appreciation. "From different angle I can see the different scenes, failing to see Mount Lu as it is." This appreciation effect also gives expression to creativity.

## **Application of relation divergent thinking in creative national music appreciation**

In terms of divergent thinking, single and rigid means of interpretation should be avoided while observing or interpreting a thing. Instead, things and relevant relations should be re-understood and reinterpreted according to thinking relevant to various relations. [11] A Bing applied relation divergent thinking in associating national music Tingsong with moral courage of Yue Fei, and associated divergence to associate two irrelevant things. This is a kind of creative appreciation.

I have to declare here that I don't discuss the title of this music. Instead, I want to understand innovative consciousness of those appreciators who first interpreted "Tingsong" as "Tingsong" through comments and analysis on this music. This is a piece of program music. Program music leaves great space for listeners to generate aesthetic creation. The title gives us guidance, and divides an associable range. The tile of "Tingsong" is full of artistic conception. We can associate and create many things. Usually, Chinese music stresses creation of aesthetic creation as well as symbolic meaning. In "Tingsong", A Bing associated this music with moral courage of Yue Fei, making the music tangible and poetic.

To sum up, it is possible for national music appreciation to make innovations by application of innovative thinking. Moreover, national music appreciation belongs to aesthetic creation. "Aesthetic creation is featured by freedom, spirituality and diversity." [12] Among above cases, national music appreciation with innovative thinking means (e.g. "relevant association", "similar association", "relation divergence", "perspective conversion", and "value conversion") gives expression to diversified features of people (freedom and spirituality) and innovative object (i.e. national music).

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