



# Interpretating and Performing the Musical Styles of Selected Chinese Art Songs Based on Mao Zedong's Poetry

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**Abstract:** Mao Zedong's poetry significantly influenced Chinese vocal music in the 20th century and has been reflected in the creation of many Chinese Art songs. These songs are highly regarded in the Chinese music industry and are considered great works of Chinese literature and art. However, there is a lack of discussions on Chinese Art Songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. This research aims to interpret and perform the musical styles of selected Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. This study encompasses three research objectives. The first is to identify the characteristics inherent in Chinese Art Songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. The second objective involves the interpretation of the technical aspects of Mao Zedong's poetry in the context of Chinese art songs. Lastly, the third objective aims to perform selected Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry in the form of recitals. This study will be conducted through the practice-based research framework, wherein textual and non-textual documentation will be utilized to report on the practice. By exploring the integration of Mao Zedong's poetry into art songs, this study provides a distinct approach to interpreting and conveying his poetry's emotions, themes, and ideas.

**Keywords:** musical styles in Chinese Art songs, musical styles of Vocal Performance in Chinese art songs, research in Vocal Performance, Mao Zedong's poetry, Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context and background for the study. This chapter will outline the aim and objectives as well as the research questions that guided my study, will present an outline of the repertoire chosen for the purpose of the study, which will be performed in the form of recitals.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

According to Wei Ming's 2016 article "The Opposition and Unity of Mao Zedong's Theory of Poetry," Mao Zedong's poetry theory is an important part of Mao Zedong's literary thought. He had a great impact on Chinese poetry through his poetry creation. He demonstrated a deep understanding of the essence of poetry and the law of creation with his poetic theory, which injected new impetus into the development of Chinese poetry. Mao Zedong's poetry theory encompasses various viewpoints exhibiting opposition and unity characteristics. This is not accidental but rather a scientific and non-contradictory idea proposed by Mao Zedong himself based on the characteristics of poetry development during that time conducive to poetry playing a better role in a specific historical period (Wei Ming, 2016).

In the article "Mao Zedong's Poetry and the Distance", published in 2019, Wang Jianxin stated, "In magnificent China, there are so many beautiful mountains and rivers, attracting countless heroes to compete." Mao Zedong led a remarkable life and left a lasting impact on the country. Alongside his notable achievements in Qianqiu, he was also known for his poetic talents, which reflected his profound thoughts and aspirations and his experiences during his travels and leisure time. He was not a typical "traveler poet." as he possessed a deep essence of travel, the cultural heritage of places of interest, and the aura and charm of famous mountains and rivers. He skillfully merged poetry with distant locations (Wang Jianxin, 2019).

As stated in Wang Jianxin's 2020 article, "Mao Zedong's Poetry Creation, Dissemination, and Research Some of the 'Most'," Mao Zedong's poetry not only provides a historical account of the Chinese revolution and construction but also offers insight into his personal mental journey. His poetry successfully merges revolutionary political messages with excellent art forms resulting in a dynamic, daring, grand, and aesthetically pleasing style. Zang Kejia once noted that Mao Zedong's poetry is a vast subject. His poetry has been widely disseminated and popularized and has played a role in the upbringing of multiple generations of Chinese people (Wang Jianxin, 2020).

Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry are known for their reflection on the era and the culture of the nation, and some of them have gained popularity. These songs are not only well-liked by singers but also by the audience. They

embody an artistic technique that blends revolutionary realism with romanticism and a musical style that combines lyricism and assertiveness. They present a high-minded ideological realm full of revolutionary heroism and grandeur. These songs reflect the era and represent a cultural heritage that tells the story of the Chinese Revolution and its people. They were produced when the country was undergoing an ideological and cultural revolution, and these songs significantly shaped the nation's cultural identity. The songs reflected the political and ideological situation of the time and the artistic expression of the people.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

In terms of music performance research, there exists a need for an investigation into Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry, covering aspects such as musical analysis, performance practice, and defining a performance setting. An exploration of performance practice could involve examining vocal techniques, musical phrasing, expressive choices, and stylistic elements used to convey the poetry's intended meaning and emotional impact. Meanwhile, an investigation of musical characteristics could focus on the techniques employed by composers to create a musical language that complements and enhances the poetic text. This could involve studying melodic structures, harmonic choices, rhythmic patterns, and the use of traditional Chinese musical elements. Such research would shed light on the diversity of interpretations and musical styles employed in capturing the essence of Mao's poetry.

In the context of my proposed study, the focus is to identify the characteristics of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. In addition, my study will focus on develop practice on the technical aspects of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry.

## 1.3 Recital Programme for Recital 1

In the final recital, I will also perform an additional 15 songs, such as Table 1.

**Table 1. This is Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry**

	Composer	Title	Time
1	Qu Xixian	"He xin lang•Hui shou cong zi qu"	4 mins 20 secs
2	Liu Chunan	"Qin yuan chun • Chang sha"	3 mins 15 secs
3	Luo Bin	"Pu sa man • Huang he lou"	2 mins 35 secs
4	Ding Shande	"Xi jiang yue • Jing gang shan"	1 min 55 secs
5	Ding Shande	"Qing ping yue • Hui chang"	3 mins 20 secs
6	Ding Shande	"Shi liu zi ling san shou"	1 min 05 secs
7	Lu Zulong	"Yi qin e • Lou shan guan"	3 mins 55 secs
8	Xu Peiong	"Qing ping yue • Liu pan shan"	4 mins 10 secs
9	Tian Feng	"Qin yuan chun • Xue"	5 mins 30 secs
10	Wang Yun zhi	"Lang tao sha • Bei dai he"	4 mins 40 secs
11	Jiang Dingxian	"Shui diao ge tou • You yong"	2 mins 50 secs
12	Qu Xixian	"Die lian hua • Da li shu yi"	2 mins 50 secs
13	Wang Zhixin	"Qi lv er shou • Song wen shen"	5 mins 10 secs
14	Meng Yong	"Qi lv • Da you ren"	4 mins 50 secs
15	Li Jiefu	"Bu suan zi • Yong mei"	3 mins 30 secs
		Total time	60 mins 35 secs

## 2. Art Songs and Performance Literature

Art songs primarily originate from poetry, with rigorous logic and distinct personalities. Chinese art songs, with a history spanning nearly one hundred years, have gradually developed through the integration of Chinese and Western music cultures. They feature beautiful melodies that seamlessly blend lively music with poetic language, captivating the hearts of the public (Chen Xing, 2016). Mao Zedong's poetry is a treasure of Chinese art with enduring aesthetic value and artistic charm. However, relatively little research has been conducted on the style and singing of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. These art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry are the product of an exciting collision of Western musical art forms with exquisite Chinese literature. They personify the richness of culture and art across different periods and possess high artistic research value. These songs are frequently included as repertoire in large-scale concerts (Cai Zhiqi, 2021).

### 2.1 Chinese Art Songs

Chinese art songs emerged after the May 4th Movement, which is the product of cultural exchange between Chinese and Western cultures. At the beginning of the 20th century, Chinese composers developed elements of Chinese folk music and created a significant number of Chinese art songs based on modern Western composition techniques. Sun Xinming, in his master's thesis "On the Development Trajectory and Artistic Characteristics of Chinese Art Songs," published in 2016, claimed that the 1920s marked the initial development stage of Chinese art songs. The works of this period had traces of implementing the techniques of Western art songs. During the 1930s and 1940s, the creation of art songs reached unprecedented prosperity. Faced with life-and-death challenges, these compositions deeply resonated with musicians' souls and provided rich materials for the creation of art songs. In addition, the creative ideas of composers in this period changed. They absorbed the essence of national music extensively, resulting in art songs having a stronger mass appeal.

Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, earth-shaking changes have occurred in Chinese society and people's lives, giving rise to a new atmosphere in the creation of art songs. Many art songs adapted from folk music have emerged in response to the times' demands. At the same time, many art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry have also been created. However, during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the creation of art songs faced formidable challenges due to the influence of political factors. Despite such circumstances, composers persevered and managed to produce outstanding works of art songs, ensuring that the creation of Chinese art songs was not entirely disrupted.

According to Sun Xinming (2016), the implementation of economic and political reforms in China resulted in a notable rise in the number of talented composers, leading to a second peak in the creation of art songs. This period witnessed the production of numerous works that reflected the societal changes of the time and celebrated the new way of life. These reforms, which took place during the late 20th century and early 21st century, brought about changes in the cultural landscape of China and provided greater opportunities for artistic expression and creativity. Consequently, composers were able to explore a wider array of artistic styles and themes, including the composition of Chinese art songs. The increased cultural exchange and exposure to diverse musical influences played a crucial role in expanding the creative horizons of Chinese composers.

In the article "Characteristics and Singing Analysis of Chinese Art Songs," published in 2021, Yang discussed that Chinese art songs have three main artistic characteristics: the combination of lyrics and melody, a focus on pronunciation, articulation, and rhythm, and lastly the expression of artistic ideas in the songs. Additionally, three elements are highlighted in the singing style: reflecting the cultural essence of the nation and the characteristics of the times, improving personal singing abilities and cultural cultivation, and resonating with the work in a performance context. Ultimately, it was concluded that Chinese art songs embody the essence of Chinese culture. To further advance the development of Chinese art songs, singers must continually practice fundamental skills, enhance their cultural knowledge, increase their understanding of cultural heritage, subtly express the content of the songs, and reflect Chinese culture in order to fully showcase the charm of these art songs (Yue Yang, 2021).

The article "Aesthetic Embodiment of Vocal Performance Art," published by Leng Yan in 2022, stated that vocal music performance is a crucial form within the music performance system. This is mainly demonstrated by vocal music performance art utilizing the human voice as a medium of emotional expression, reflecting the performer's understanding and interpretation of the work throughout the performance. Therefore, vocal performers need to possess strong comprehension abilities and professional performance skills to make the work more unique and authentic in its presentation of artistic effects, ultimately allowing the charm of vocal works to be fully realized and embodied (Leng Yan, 2022).

According to Van Aalst (2012) and Tokumaru et al. (2017), Chinese art songs, also known as "guoyue" or "Chinese classical songs," constitute a genre of vocal music that sets Chinese poetry or lyrics to music. They exemplify a fusion of traditional Chinese poetry and musical elements with Western musical techniques and styles. Chinese art songs often incorporate elements of Chinese traditional music, such as pentatonic scales, melismatic ornamentations, and subtle rhythmic

patterns, while incorporating Western harmonies, tonalities, and compositional techniques. In terms of vocal performance, Chinese art songs emphasize clear diction, precise articulation, and expressive delivery of the poetic text. Singers interpret the emotional content and imagery of the poetry, employing subtle nuances and variations in phrasing, dynamics, and vocal timbre. Meanwhile, in his thesis “The Origin and Development of Chinese Art Songs,” Chen Xing provided a detailed examination of the origin and development of art songs, exploring how these centuries-old Chinese art songs have blended with Western music culture multiple times and gradually evolved. He specifically examined the development of Chinese art songs in terms of language and song structure (Chen Xing, 2016).

Zhang Tieyi’s doctoral thesis, “The First Generation of Art Songs in China,” explored the historical development and formation process of Chinese art songs and an introduction to Chinese music in the early 20th century. He extensively discussed the art song works of Huang Zi, Liu Xue’an, He Luting, Qian Renkang, Jiang Dingxian and other composers. I have also included some of the compositions of Jiang Dingxian in my concert repertoire (Zhang Tieyi, 2019).

In his master’s thesis, “On the Development Trajectory and Artistic Characteristics of Chinese Art Songs,” Sun Xinming discussed the origins of Chinese art songs and their development and changes throughout each period. He specifically highlighted the creation of a group of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poems after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. He posited that art is derived from life and is higher than life and that the creation of art songs in different periods reflects the distinct characteristics of the times and art (Sun Xinming, 2016).

## 2.2 Mao Zedong’s Poetry

In the article “Review and Comment on Mao Zedong’s Poetry Research in 2020,” Deng Xue indicated that the research on Mao Zedong’s poetry in 2020 focused on various aspects such as the appreciation and introduction, the analysis and research, its historical significance and contemporary value, the translation of the poetry, and its dissemination. To further deepen the exploration of Mao Zedong’s poetry, it is necessary to strengthen the academic content of the research, emphasize the introduction and application of new research methods, and improve the practical relevance of the findings in order to establish new avenues for academic growth (Deng Xue, 2021).

In Wang Jianxin’s article “Some of the Most in the Creation, Dissemination and Research of Mao Zedong’s Poetry,” the author emphasizes that Mao Zedong’s poetry not only serves as a historical portrayal of the modern Chinese revolution and construction but also presents a genuine reflection of Mao Zedong’s personal mental journey and the political ideals of revolution. The art form of his poetry exhibits remarkable unity, showcasing a vigorous, bold, magnificent, and beautiful artistic style. Mao Zedong’s poetry has been widely disseminated and popularized, accompanying the growth of several generations of Chinese people. Thus, the study of Mao Zedong’s poetry holds historical and practical significance (Wang Jianxin, 2020).

“The Biography of Mao Zedong,” edited by Ross Trier and translated by He Yuguang and Liu Jiaying, issued a comprehensive overview of Mao Zedong’s life, including his family background, personal growth, educational experiences, ideological transformations, and leadership qualities in directing the Chinese people through struggles and the establishment of a new China. Ultimately, Mao Zedong emerged as a generation-defining leader and an influential figure of his time (Ross Trier, 2010).

“Selected Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry” edited by the editorial committee of “The Country Is So Beautiful,” featured 20 art songs inspired by Mao Zedong’s poetry and included a CD of some songs. Additionally, the publication provided information on the background and appreciation of each work, which proved beneficial for researchers. However, it should be noted that there were only numbered musical notations, and no staves were included (The editorial board of “So many beautiful mountains and rivers,” 2014).

## 2.3 Vocal Performance

The characteristics of Chinese art songs can vary, but they often incorporate elements of Chinese traditional music, such as pentatonic scales, melismatic ornamentations, and subtle rhythmic patterns. At the same time, they may also incorporate Western harmonies, tonalities, and compositional techniques. In terms of vocal performance, Chinese art songs typically emphasize clear diction, precise articulation, and expressive delivery of the poetic text. The singer’s interpretation aims to convey the emotional content and imagery of the poetry, often employing subtle nuances and variations in phrasing, dynamics, and vocal timbre.

In her thesis titled “Singing Analysis of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s Poetry—Taking ‘Qinyuanchun-Snow’ as an Example,” Huang Shuang provided an in-depth description of the challenges encountered by singers when performing Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry, which are often characterized by their grandiose nature and wide vocal range. Singers require solid vocal singing abilities, including superb voice skills, good breath control, and skilled articulation, to effectively perform these songs (Huang Shuang, 2012).

Hu Dongye indicated in his doctoral thesis, “Research on Chinese Art Song Singing from the Perspective of Poetics,” that poetry and poetics theory were the core theoretical basis and research methods for the creation, research, and practice of art songs, yet were often easily overlooked or forgotten in current studies. From the perspective of singers, to elevate the singing of Chinese art songs to a higher level, it is necessary to regain the correct starting point and direction, and the concept of “Poetry and Music Compatibility” should be a clear and complete theoretical system. This perspective helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the research on singing Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry (Hu Dongye, 2020).

In their doctoral thesis titled “Study on Chinese Art Song Singing Thinking,” Meng Zhuo emphasized that Chinese art songs hold significant importance within Chinese music culture. They have developed their own singing style and distinctive characteristics through long-term practice. Moreover, an in-depth discussion was conducted on the nationality, artistry, and polyphony of Chinese art song singing, which played an important role in enlightening my own singing research (Meng Zhuo, 2021).

## 2.4 Artistic Review

Most of Mao Zedong’s poetry were recitals, with some also performed as choral art songs. Art songs were exclusively performed as solos during specific comprehensive performances or recordings. Notable performances of these art songs include the successful chorus performance of the China Central Broadcasting Art Troupe in 1967, where they sang “Qinyuanchun Changsha” composed by Li Jiefu; the rendition of “Bodhisattva Man Yellow Crane Tower” composed by Luo Bin and recorded by singer Liu Bingyi, showcasing their broad baritone range; “Shanguan,” sung by Huang Ronghai; “Qingpingle Liupan Mountain” which was composed by Xu Peidong and sung by Song Zuying; the performance of “Seven Laws Long March,” composed by Yan Ke and Lu Yuan, performed by Yan Weiwen, which conveyed the determined spirit of the Red Army, undeterred by the challenges of their expedition and “Qinyuanchun • Snow” composed by Tian Feng and sung by Ma Yutao 1977.

Other songs also included “Butterfly Love Flower Reply to Li Shuyi,” written by Qu Xixian and sung by Liang Qirong at the 7th Zhejiang Young Singers Competition in China ; “Two Songs of Seven Laws Sending the God of Plague,” composed by Jiefu and presented by singer Yin Xiumei, conveying the Chinese people’s belief in sweeping away all plague gods and pests ; “Seven Laws Responding to Friends,” rendered by Meng Yong and sung by Jin Yao, reflecting the poet’s vision for a bright future in Hunan and expressing his heartfelt wishes for the well-being of the people in his hometown and “Bu Suzanzi Yongmei”, which incorporated the style of Chinese opera, created by Sun Xuanling and performed by singer Wu Bixia.

As for the performance of art songs on television, these included “Xijiang Moon • Jinggang Mountain” and “Bodhisattva Man Dabaidi”, both performed by baritone singer Yang Hongji. The former was composed by Chen Geng for the TV program “Hundred Years of Songs” in China, and the latter by Liu Kexin for an episode on the TV series “Red Cradle”.

Liao Changyong was known for singing foreign opera arias. However, in recent years, he has dedicated himself to expanding the repertoire of Chinese art songs. He has successfully held and recorded concerts and albums for Chinese modern and contemporary art songs. In an interview, Liao Changyong stated that Mao Zedong’s poetry carries great tension and that Chinese art songs based on the poetry have gained widespread popularity throughout China and possessed high artistic value. He believed that re-performing these classics in Bel Canto style could create an artistic “superposition effect”.

While some Chinese singers and college vocal music teachers, led by Professor Liao Changyong, have made efforts to research and promote Chinese traditional music culture and Chinese art songs, there is currently aimed availability of video or audio materials available for art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry. This lack of resources has led me to believe that the interpretation and promotion of art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry are currently inadequate.

## 3. Research Methodology

In the context of my study, the methodology is defined as concept of performance. The main concern of concept of performance is related to four important aspects. The first aspect is related to research approaches for conducting the study. The second aspect is related to phase of investigation of the study. The third aspect is related to data collection of the study. The fourth aspect is related to reflection.

### 3.1 Research Methodology/Research Paradigm

In the field of music performance research, there are three main research paradigms: practice-based research, practice-led research, and artistic research. The terms practice-based research and practice-led research are the most commonly used (Sullivan, 2006). The investigation model of my research will be conducted based on a practice based research paradigm. As Linda Candy (2006) interpreted, practice-based research encompasses an original investigation executed partially through the practitioner’s practice and the resultant outcomes of said practice. The demonstration of the doctoral thesis is



exemplified through creative manifestations, such as images, music, designs, models, digital media, or other forms of outcomes, such as performances and exhibitions. The research context and climate may be expressed in written form, but the full comprehension of the study can only be attained in relation to the creative results.

According to Borgdorff (2012), practice-based research is a broad term encompassing various forms of research oriented toward practice within the arts. However, an approach to practice-research that is solely pragmatic in nature and fails to incorporate essential theoretical frameworks and conceptual underpinnings, will result in a lack of scholarly significance in practice. It is not unexpected that, as Candy and Edmond (2018) noted in a recent article, the practice-based research approach has yet to achieve a stable and agreed-upon definition and discourse, despite its extensive utilization in academic contexts for more than 35 years. Herry Djahwasi and Zaharul L. Saidon (2020) posited that the existence of a disconnect between art theory and art practice within an academic context can be described as an anomaly. On the one hand, scholars in the field of art develop established theoretical frameworks. On the other hand, artists are engaged in the creation of artistic works

### **3.2 Phase of Investigation**

Referring to the research question, the artistic design in my study is divided into three phases of investigation. The first phase of investigation in my study is to identify the characteristics of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. This phase will be conducted based on the analysis of the musical elements present in the chosen art songs, which involves examining the melodic structures, harmonic progressions, rhythmic patterns, and tonalities used in the compositions. The aim is to identify recurring musical motifs, stylistic devices, or distinctive features characteristic of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry.

In the second phase of the investigation is to interpret the technical aspects of Mao Zedong's poetry Chinese art songs. This includes analyzing the text of the poetic forms, phrasing, and articulation and determining dynamics and expression in the form of reflective practice. Understanding poetry means familiarizing myself with Mao Zedong's poetry by reading and studying his works while also paying attention to the poetic forms, such as rhymes, meters, and structures used. I need to consider the historical and cultural context in which the poems were written to gain insights into their themes and meanings. It is important to break down the poetic text and examine its linguistic and semantic elements when analyzing it. This involves identifying key imagery, metaphors, symbols, and literary devices employed by Mao Zedong. Additionally, I should consider the emotional tone, narrative flow, and rhetorical techniques employed in the poems.

Dynamics and expression involve exploring the dynamics and expressive markings in the musical score. I reflect on how this study can be interpreted to convey the nuances of Mao Zedong's poetry and consider the emotional spectrum of the text and how it can be effectively conveyed through variations in dynamics, vocal timbre, and expressive interpretation. Phrasing and articulation mean to determine how the technical aspects of the poetry influence the phrasing and articulation in the vocal performance. This requires paying attention to the natural speech patterns and rhythmic flow of the text as well as considering how the vocal line and musical phrasing align with the poetic structure, emphasizing the meaningful units of the poetry.

Reflective practice in music performance research involves actively reflecting on one's own performance experiences, evaluating and analyzing them, and using those insights to improve your skills, interpretations, and understanding of the music. It is a self-assessment and critical thinking process that helps musicians deepen their musicality and develop as performers. In the context of this study, a reflective practice means engaging in reflective practice by evaluating how effectively this study is capturing and conveying the technical aspects of Mao Zedong's poetry in music performance.

My study's third phase of the investigation is to perform the repertoire in the form of a recital. My solo concert will be presented through an entire performance of Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong's poetry. The solo concert is set up with a grand piano, LED background curtains, supporting guests, costumes, recitations, cameras, video cameras, and other elements, all presented in my unique style. In this phase, I will arrange the singing performances in chronological order to create the singing program for the solo concert. I have obtained or purchased the required sheet music for the concert and ensured that they are usable without any issues.

### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

As depicted in the Figure 1 above, the conceptual framework outlines the proposed investigation of features of the selected repertoires in this study. The investigation will consist of two aspects. The first is theoretical in nature, while the second investigation will merge the theoretical and practical aspects. The theoretical aspect will be conducted based on the performance review, which aims to identify specific techniques used by previous performers, such as breathing techniques in singing, articulation, and distinctive features of the singing style.

Meanwhile, the theoretical and practical investigation covers musical, technical, and expressional analyses. These anal-

yses will shape the design practice of the selected Chinese art songs based on Mao Zedong’s poetry. The objective of the performance review will be conducted based on critical reflection.

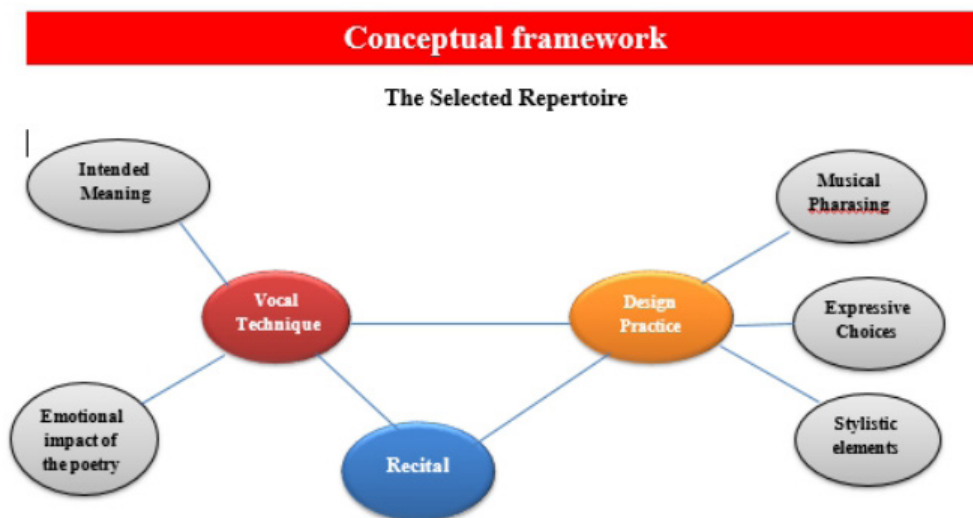


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The design practice of Chinese art songs encompasses three fundamental elements: musical phrasing, expressive choices, and stylistic elements. According to Chen (2021), it is worth noting that Chinese art songs frequently exhibit discernible and emotive musical phrasing. The melodic contours found within Chinese art songs are frequently influenced by the innate rhythmic patterns inherent in the Chinese language and the distinctive attributes of Chinese poetry. The meticulously constructed phrases within the musical composition serve as a vehicle for transmitting profound emotional states, and the profound significance is encapsulated within the lyrical content. The employment of rubato, accelerando, and ritardando is frequently observed to imbue the melodic structure with subtlety and emotive depth, thereby affording the vocalist the means to communicate the affective essence of the composition effectively.

When considering the realm of Expressive Choices within the context of Chinese art songs, it becomes evident that singers are endowed with a vast array of options to effectively communicate the intricate emotions and profound significance inherent in the music. Vocal embellishments, including vibrato and portamento, are frequently employed to imbue the singing with a heightened sense of warmth and tonal richness. Furthermore, the utilization of dynamic contrasts and nuanced alterations in volume serves to accentuate specific words or phrases. The singer’s adept utilization of vocal inflections and timbral variations serves as a conduit for the profound emotional intricacies and nuances embedded within the lyrical content (Everett & Lau, 2004).

Within Stylistic Elements, Chinese art songs seamlessly amalgamate traditional Chinese music components with Western classical music styles, engendering a singular and discernible musical style. The melodic compositions frequently incorporate pentatonic scales, a hallmark of Chinese musical tradition, along with distinctive Chinese ornaments. These musical elements effectively evoke a profound essence of traditional Chinese music. Moreover, the integration of Western harmonies and chord progressions is a prevalent technique employed to imbue the music with a heightened sense of luxury and intricacy. Incorporating traditional Chinese musical instruments, such as the pipa, guzheng, and erhu, within the accompaniment augment the inherent stylistic characteristics of Chinese art songs (Hallis, 1995).

#### 4. Conclusion

Chinese art songs are characterized by their intricate musical phrasing, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall expressive quality of the performance. The artist’s deliberate choices in expressing emotions and conveying the intended message further enhance the richness of these songs. Additionally, the incorporation of various stylistic elements adds depth and authenticity to the musical composition, making it a truly captivating experience for both the performer and the listener. The amalgamation of traditional Chinese musical elements with Western classical influences engenders a sonorous and affective auditory encounter, thereby endowing Chinese art songs with a wide-ranging appeal and accessibility to diverse listeners. The perpetual pursuit of vocalists and composers within this particular genre persists, as they delve into uncharted

territories and push the boundaries of artistic expression (Yong, 2023). In doing so, they uphold the rich heritage of Chinese art songs while simultaneously propelling its evolution

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