

# INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC: AN EVALUATION OF THE INTERACTIVE INFLUENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND AESTHETIC THOUGHT

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**Abstract:** Traditional Chinese music had a long history, with rich and extensive aesthetic concepts. The integration of traditional music and aesthetic ideas has a significant impact on the formation of China's traditional music system. This article explored the interactive influence of traditional music and aesthetic ideas, and elaborated on the musical ideas in traditional Chinese aesthetics. The content of musical aesthetic ideas of Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism was discussed, and the position of aesthetic ideas in traditional Chinese music was analyzed. By combing and analyzing the relevant literature, ancient books and historical materials, it is possible to understand the historical evolution and mutual influence of traditional music and aesthetic thought. Traditional aesthetic concepts not only played an important role in the development of Chinese music, but also played an undeniable role in promoting the development of Chinese music over thousands of years of history. This article aimed to explore the interaction between traditional music and aesthetic ideas, as well as the impact of traditional aesthetics on music, in order to promote the integration and development of traditional music and aesthetic ideas. In the evaluation of the interaction between traditional music and aesthetic thought, there may be a situation that the concept is too simplified. The relationship between traditional music and aesthetic thought is very complicated, involving many schools, historical periods and regions. It may not be able to fully cover all the influencing factors if it is only summarized by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. It is suggested that the education and inheritance of traditional music and aesthetic ideas should be strengthened in music education. More traditional music artists and aesthetic theorists should be cultivated, so that they can pass on traditional music and aesthetic ideas to future generations and continue to develop and innovate in contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Chinese Traditional Music. Aesthetic Thought. Music and Aesthetic Thought Interaction. Traditional Music Merges Aesthetic Thought.

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**Resumo:** A música tradicional chinesa tem uma longa história, repleta de conceitos estéticos ricos e extensos. A integração da música tradicional e das ideias estéticas tem um impacto significativo na formação do sistema musical tradicional da China. Este artigo explora a influência interativa da música tradicional e das ideias estéticas, analisando as ideias musicais da estética tradicional chinesa, buscando promover a integração e o desenvolvimento da música tradicional e das ideias estéticas. Discute o conteúdo das ideias estéticas musicais do confucionismo, taoísmo e moísmo, bem como a posição das ideias estéticas na música tradicional chinesa. Ao combinar e analisar a literatura relevante, livros antigos e materiais históricos, é possível compreender a evolução histórica e a influência mútua da música tradicional e do pensamento estético. Os conceitos estéticos tradicionais não só desempenharam um papel importante no desenvolvimento da música chinesa, mas também na promoção do desenvolvimento da música chinesa, ao longo de milhares de anos de história. Na avaliação da interação entre a música tradicional e o pensamento estético, pode ocorrer uma situação em que o conceito seja demasiado simplificado. A relação entre a música tradicional e o pensamento estético é muito complicada, envolvendo muitas escolas, períodos históricos e regiões. Pode não ser capaz de cobrir totalmente todos os fatores de influência, se for resumido apenas pelo confucionismo, taoísmo e budismo. Sugere-se que a educação e a herança da música tradicional e das ideias estéticas sejam fortalecidas, na educação musical. Artistas musicais mais tradicionais e os teóricos da estética devem ser cultivados, a fim de poder transmitir a música tradicional e as ideias estéticas às gerações futuras e continuar a desenvolver-se e a inovar, na sociedade contemporânea.

**Palavras-chave:** Música Tradicional Chinesa. Pensamento Estético. Interação Música e Pensamento Estético. A música tradicional funde o pensamento estético.

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# INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC: AN EVALUATION OF THE INTERACTIVE INFLUENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND AESTHETIC THOUGHT<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Traditional music is a cultural heritage that can be passed down from generation to generation as a spiritual asset. The conflict and integration of traditional music and aesthetics are hot issues in today's society. Traditional music is passed down from the folk and has its own characteristics, either quiet or lively. It is a symbol of culture and history, as well as a spiritual wealth of regions and a people's one. However, aesthetic views are arbitrary, and personalized aesthetic trends are popular among people. Traditional Chinese music has the ability to solve anxiety, pain and stress, which can improve people's mental health level (Liu; Zhang; Zhao *et al.*, 2022, p. 891).

In today's society, due to changes in people's aesthetic views, traditional music has lost some people's interest due to their difficulty in understanding. The update of aesthetic fashion and the integration of new and old music can effectively promote the development and inheritance of traditional music. With the development of the economy and the society's one, many traditional cultural and entertainment programs have disappeared from the market, and many manufacturers of traditional musical instruments have also begun to seek new development directions. Many music festivals and performance programs, with traditional music as the theme, have also become popular in society. Aesthetic ideas have had a positive impact on the development of Chinese music, with musical elements, such as melody and instruments, shaping different music genres, including Chinese music (Zhang; Zhou; Sun, 2022, p. 147).

The interaction between China's traditional music and its aesthetic thoughts is a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship. Aesthetic thought provides theoretical support and aesthetic guidance for traditional music, and traditional music has become one of the important manifestations of the development of aesthetic thought. This interaction has laid a solid cultural foundation for the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional music, and also provided an important example for the research and inheritance of aesthetic thought. Chinese traditional music has a long history, which contains rich aesthetic concepts. The Chinese people's aesthetic concept can be traced back to the ancient times without any written records. After labor, primitive people began to understand how to decorate themselves and, thus, had the initial aesthetic concept, which is the formation of aesthetic concepts. After the slave society's and the feudal society's baptism in China, there was a prosperous period in the history of aesthetics. For a long time, the complementary aesthetic views of Confucianism and Taoism had a profound impact on it, and ultimately formed an aesthetic view centered on aesthetic imagery. Traditional Chinese music has a long-term impact on the development of thinking abilities. There is a positive correlation between the development of people's thinking logic and the listening of Chinese folk music (Wang; Luo, 2022, p. 97).

In recent years, some musicians have tried to combine traditional music with modern music, thus forming a form of music that can inherit ancient culture and make changes to modern music forms, which greatly promotes the preservation and transmission of traditional music. In early Chinese art criticism, a large number of music metaphors based on aerodynamics, such as “rhythmic vitality” or “literary vitality”, were used, which can be seen as a conceptual mapping between music and other arts. The music metaphor in Chinese aesthetics is clearly the guiding principle of personal art theory (So-Jeong, 2020, p. 31). For example, playing music with traditional Chinese instruments showcases the novelty and charm of traditional Chinese culture. In this sense, “tradition” and “contemporary” are not opposites, but rather “interaction” and “integration”. Moreover, the collision and integration of traditional music and aesthetics also involve various fields, including literature, music, dance and drama, which have undergone various attempts. The soundtrack of the film strives to integrate traditional music into the film, allowing the audience to experience a unique cultural charm. From the above aspects, it can be seen that, in people’s attention and understanding of traditional culture, it is still being continuously promoted.

Cross cultural music culture is driving the diversity development of traditional Chinese music, and the globalization of music is by no means unique to today’s era. It runs through the entire tangled history of music, driving one change after another in music style, and always triggering new aesthetic trends (Peng, 2022, p. 99; Ford, 1992, p. 436). When integrating traditional music and aesthetic ideas, it is a very complicated balance problem to keep the original flavor and traditional characteristics of music and make necessary innovations at the same time. Some people may worry that innovation may weaken the uniqueness of traditional music, while being too conservative may make music look outdated.

This article analyzes the interactive influence of traditional music and aesthetic ideas, studies the musical ideas in traditional Chinese aesthetics, and analyzes the musical aesthetic ideas of Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism. Based on the status of aesthetic thought in traditional Chinese music, this paper analyzes the ways in which aesthetic thought inherits and develops in traditional Chinese music, and proposes improvement suggestions for the impact of aesthetic thought on traditional Chinese music. Finally, it proposes ways to promote the interaction between aesthetic ideas and Chinese music, which not only demonstrates the guiding role of aesthetic ideas, in traditional music creation, but also explores the future development direction of the interaction between aesthetic ideas and Chinese music. The integrated evaluation of China’s traditional music needs to examine the influence of aesthetic thoughts on its formation and development, the position of traditional music in the aesthetic system, its interpretation and evaluation by modern aesthetics, the relationship between aesthetics and contemporary music practice, and the aesthetic influence in cross-cultural communication.

## 1 TRADITIONAL MUSIC THOUGHT

### 1.1 CONFUCIAN MUSIC AESTHETICS: “GOODNESS” AND “HARMONY”

There were many different schools of thought in China’s music aesthetics, and the music aesthetics of Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism were representative of them. Firstly, Confucius elaborated on the traditional aesthetic concepts of music from two aspects: “goodness” and “harmony”. The “doctrine of the mean”, proposed by Confucius, refers to the sentiment of “neutrality” of the “music”, which is consistent with its advocacy of the doctrine of the mean. Confucian aesthetic theory fully affirms the role of music in social life.

Confucius believed that the beauty of simplicity and introversion in aesthetics is a form of unity between heaven and man, and advocated for the emotion of ‘harmony’ in music aesthetics. Confucius’ emotional attitude towards music aesthetics is moderate, which coincides with his philosophy of “moderation”. Xun Zi believed that, in times of chaos, music could inspire frontline soldiers to fight bravely, while in times of peace, it could cultivate a sense of “etiquette”. The specific aesthetic style, originally derived from folk forms, was transformed and integrated into the creative process of traditional Chinese music and dance, and it was appreciated by contemporary audiences (Emily, 2018, p. 77). For example, folk songs and opera music are all important parts of Chinese traditional music, which are famous for their simple and sincere style. In terms of the content and artistic form of music, Confucian music theory prioritizes “goodness” and “harmony”, followed by “beauty”. The traditional Chinese music aesthetics emphasize “harmony”, which is of great significance for the development of Chinese music art. At the same time, Confucian music ideology also regards music art as a way to seek truth.

### 1.2 TAOIST MUSIC AESTHETICS THOUGHT: NATURE AND HARMONY BETWEEN HEAVEN AND MAN

The Taoist aesthetic concept of music is manifested as “harmony between heaven and man” and “natural harmony”, and “emptiness and stillness” and “nature” are the core of Taoist aesthetic concepts of music. Lao Zi’s most famous and representative proposition is “governing without action”, advocating for nature, simplicity and peace, without being influenced by any desires. Therefore, Lao Zi advocated that music should be left to nature, expressing the most natural and simple realm. From the moment when Taoist music aesthetic thought came into being, it was integrated into Chinese music culture. Its core was natural and ethereal, and the pursuit of “great music has the faintest notes” was Taoist aesthetic concept. Taoism advocated the “sum of heaven and earth”. Lao Zi advocated simplicity, nature and peace. Zhuang Zi believed that harmony among people is the source of beauty. In Zhuang Zi’s view, peaceful and tranquil “happiness” are the ideal happiness. Both Taoist aesthetics and Western postmodern ones involve the enhancement of self-awareness, and

Chinese aesthetic philosophy has redefined the function of aesthetic education, which is to promote better human development through benevolence (Li; Carrie, 2022, p. 21).

### **1.3 MOHIST MUSIC AESTHETICS THOUGHT: “NON-MUSIC”**

A prominent feature of the aesthetic concept of Mohist music is “non-music”. Mo Zi criticized and opposed the Confucian philosophy of not seeking utilitarianism and overly emphasizing etiquette and music. Confucianism believed that music can avoid disasters, but it cannot solve the people’s problems who lack rest, clothing and food. It cannot eliminate war, prevent the weak from being bullied, or prevent thieves from stopping stealing. Of course, it should be pointed out that Mo Zi’s “non-music” is not a complete negation of music, nor is it a complete denial of its aesthetic significance. It is only a rejection of music that is excessively advocated by Confucianism. Mo Zi still affirmed the value of music in a sense, believing that music can make people’s body and mind relax and feel happy.

China’s music aesthetics covers many different schools, among which Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism are three important schools of thought. Although the representatives’ specific views of these schools in music aesthetics are not as clear as those in other fields, they have had a certain impact on the development and aesthetic concepts of traditional music in China. Confucian music viewpoint: Confucius emphasized the educational function of music, and he believed that music was a force that could adjust people’s mind and morality. He advocated using elegant music to cultivate people’s sentiment and noble character. Taoist music point of view: Taoism held a detached attitude towards music, believing that music is a nature’s product and should not be excessively interfered. Taoism emphasized returning to nature. Music should be simple and pure, and return to nature. Mohist music viewpoint: Mozi had a pragmatic attitude towards music. He believed that music should have a clear function to reconcile social order and governance. Mozi advocated using the function of music to achieve the purpose of moral education.

## **2. STATUS OF AESTHETIC THOUGHT IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

### **2.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE IN CHINESE MUSIC**

The main theme of traditional Chinese art is “nature”. Whether it is landscape painting, poetry, or garden landscapes, they all praise and imitate nature. Traditional Chinese music, on the other hand, places more emphasis on the connection with nature, revealing an attitude and observation towards nature from the materials and techniques of musical instruments to the content of the music. The themes in Chinese music can be divided into two aspects in terms of their content. One part describes the return to nature; the other

part directly expresses the nature's imagery or its significance for life. From the perspective of themes, it can be roughly divided into two types: unrestrained landscape and pastoral adaptation. Pastoral adaptation emphasizes a sense of enjoyment and a calm outlook on life. Why should Chinese art focus on "nature" as its theme? The agricultural society in China, since ancient times, has made the relationship between humans and nature closer and complementary, and nature has become a source of support and spiritual comfort for human survival.

The core of China's traditional music aesthetics is to emphasize the harmony with nature, humanistic feelings and moral education. These aesthetic thoughts are reflected in the creation, performance and appreciation of traditional music. Aesthetic thoughts together constitute the basic framework of China's traditional music aesthetics, which influences the creation, performance and inheritance of music. Traditional music aesthetic thought embodies China's ancient wisdom and aesthetic concept, making traditional music an important part of China culture.

A nature's important characteristic is what Lao Zi calls "inaction". When humans are disturbed and cause great harm to their emotions, they would want to return to the nature's embrace and approach that tranquility. Environmental aesthetics and environmental ethics have influenced human creation and the connection between humans and the environment. There are two different interpretations of the aesthetic appreciation of nature in contemporary Chinese and Western aesthetics. They are sometimes referred to as ecological aesthetics (Sandra; Levi; Allen, 2018, p. 399; Capogna, 2016, p. 379). There is a limit to human existence, and what nature reveals is infinity. Integrating nature means approaching infinity and eternity. In traditional Chinese music, the relationship between man and nature is as harmonious as that between a benevolent person, who enjoys the mountains, and a wise person who enjoys the water. Humans and nature are not opposed. On the contrary, there is no contradiction between humans and nature. The aesthetic attitude of returning life to nature is the essence of Chinese music.

Under the background of globalization and modernization, the interpretation of traditional music aesthetics is facing the challenge of cultural identity and innovation integration. On the one hand, traditional music, as an important part of China culture, is regarded as a symbol of national identity and traditional values and needs to be inherited and protected. On the other hand, changes in modern society and cultural exchanges make it necessary for traditional music to seek innovation and attract more young people to participate, thus maintaining its vitality and attraction.

Historical integration: traditional music and Confucian aesthetics. Confucianism emphasized the educational function of music and regarded music as an important means to cultivate people's sentiment and character. In ancient society, Confucian aesthetic

concepts influenced the creation, performance and appreciation of music, making music a carrier of education and cultural inheritance. Modern integration: the influence of aesthetic thoughts on traditional music. Modern aesthetic thoughts have brought new horizons to the interpretation and evaluation of traditional music. Different aesthetic theories, such as postmodern aesthetics and cognitive aesthetics, have provided different analytical angles for traditional music aesthetics and expanded its research field.

## **2.2 ENLIGHTENMENT OF AESTHETIC THOUGHT IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

In modern music education, it is necessary to cultivate both specialized music talents and their musical literacy. Ancient Chinese aesthetics has positively influenced traditional literature, music and other fields, contributing to the development of cross-media aesthetics (Stephanie, 2019, p. 440; Zheng, 2015, p. 35). Music aesthetics is the art of studying the essence, particularity and social function of music in aesthetics, as well as the relationship among the content, form and laws of music beauty. The aesthetic concept of music is the enlightenment of Chinese music culture. Although there were no written texts in ancient times, people already knew how to decorate other things and, for the first time, aesthetic consciousness activities emerged, which was the emergence of aesthetic concepts. The emergence of music aesthetics can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn period, when people gradually studied and created music.

Confucian aesthetic theory highly affirms the value and function of music, and regards music as an important tool for enlightenment, education and social cohesion. This view continues to influence China's traditional culture, making music play an important and unique role in China's social life.

This "non-musical" concept of Mohist music aesthetics has been practiced, to some extent, in ancient music practice. In Mozi's book, called "Mozi", he accused the gorgeous music and complicated musical instruments that were popular at that time, thinking that such music was too extravagant and wasted resources, which did not conform to the Mohist concept of pursuing frugality and practicality. Mozi advocated controlling the expression of music, emphasizing the social function and practical value of music, and using music to reconcile social order and educate the people.

## **2.3 INHERITANCE OF AESTHETIC THOUGHT IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

The music videos of Chinese youth bands reveal how national ideology is aesthetically awakened by choosing popular culture (Zou, 2019, p. 178). Chinese traditional music is the inheritance of aesthetic concepts. The essence of aesthetic concepts is refined

and concentrated. On this basis, this music aesthetic concept is further enriched, and the fine quality of Chinese traditional music is constantly retained, thus promoting the vigorous development of Chinese traditional music.

## **2.4 PROMOTION OF AESTHETIC THOUGHT IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

The aesthetic ideas of music are also the source of the development of traditional Chinese music. Music Aesthetics is a sublimation and further expansion of traditional Chinese music, allowing more people to understand the beauty of traditional Chinese music and contributing to its broader development. The spirit of Chinese aesthetics is deeply rooted in the concept of the unity of heaven and man, and its sustained mechanism can be traced back to its fundamental development reasons (Wang, 2021, p. 289).

Nature is regarded as the supreme existence in China's traditional art, and it is the source of artists' inspiration and the main theme of creation. Through the nature's expression, China traditional art bears people's thoughts on life, the universe and the relationship between man and nature, and shows China's ancient wisdom and aesthetic concept. This nature's praise and integration also reflects the profound cultural background and philosophy of life in China.

## **3 IMPACT OF AESTHETIC IDEAS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

Chinese traditional music has a long history, which contains numerous aesthetic personalities and rich and extensive aesthetic ideas. The aesthetic concepts of traditional music significantly influence China's traditional music system. By comparing with Western music, it can be seen that the traditional Chinese music system has obvious and unique aesthetic characteristics. The exchange of Chinese and Western aesthetics and culture has practical possibilities and ontological characteristics, and traditional Chinese culture may be the hometown of traditional aesthetics (Yong, 2020, p. 181). From the perspective of the entire aesthetic history, the development of Chinese music has been influenced by many aesthetic schools, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism and Confucianism, but most of them have been absorbed by Confucianism and Taoism. The aesthetic concepts of Confucianism and Taoism have been running through the development of music since the pre-Qin period. The aesthetic ideas of Taoism and Confucianism have had a significant impact on the development of Chinese aesthetic thought (Chen; Qi; Hao, 2018, p. 61). China Garden is not only an aesthetic place for meditation, but also for social interaction and restoring one's vitality (Marcello; Hans-Georg, 2021).

### **3.1 INFLUENCE OF CONFUCIAN AESTHETICS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC**

Different musical aesthetic ideas have flourished in the long river of history, and have had a significant impact on the formation of China's musical aesthetic ideological system (Xiong, 2020, p. 54; Nowell, 2015, p. 158). As the mainstream of traditional Chinese music aesthetics, The advocacy of Confucianism has both favorable and unfavorable effects on the development of traditional Chinese music.

#### **3.1.1 POSITIVE IMPACT**

During the Han Dynasty, the aesthetic ideology of Confucianism was officially established and revered, pursuing the idea of neutrality and simplicity. The requirement for music was the unity of "beauty" and "goodness". This ideology strengthened and solidified people's social mentality of moderation, and it was a concrete manifestation of the fusion of the doctrine of moderation and aesthetic consciousness. It is also a mental state that expresses people's inner peace, low selfishness and desire, tolerance in times of adversity, and not going to extremes. Confucianism emphasized the use of music to regulate the relationships between individuals and society, thus enabling music to have a strong intervention in society and play a certain role in social stability. The Confucian music education ideology places great importance on the educational and social functions of music. It is also emphasized that there is no distinction between nobility and commoners, or between the Chinese and the barbarians in the object of education, which broadens the scope of education in society and transforms non-education into education. This has epoch-making significance in the history of education.

#### **3.1.2 NEGATIVE IMPACT**

Firstly, Confucianism has always emphasized the importance of music and political communication, requiring music to comply with political needs and serve politics. Although music has a certain social function, the excessive emphasis on ritual and music, the opposition, exclusion and fight against the idea of advocating change and innovation would make music alienated as a tool of indoctrination of the ruling class and a slave of politics, which makes traditional Chinese music not free from the fence of politics and not become a serious and independent art. Especially in instrumental music, it lacks independence and does not form a purely musical theme.

Secondly, the Confucian aesthetic perspective explored music from the perspectives of philosophy and ethical politics, emphasizing the external connections between music and

politics. It also placed too much emphasis on the social and educational roles of music, while neglecting the regularity, uniqueness, aesthetic and entertainment functions of music itself. Therefore, compared to Western music, traditional Chinese music lacks rich layers and contrasts, forming an aesthetic form of music dominated by linear thinking, resulting in a single form of traditional Chinese music that lacks variation, thus, to some extent, restricting the diversity and versatility of musical art.

### 3.2 IMPACT OF TAOIST AESTHETICS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC

The core of Taoist aesthetic thought is the worship of nature, believing that everything is born from nature, and the harmony between heaven and earth is also the most beautiful movement. This concept has important guiding significance for the aesthetic concept and development of traditional Chinese music. Although the development of traditional Chinese music has been impacted by the continuous input of foreign cultures, in reality, the aesthetic concepts of Taoism are deeply rooted in the soil of traditional Chinese music.

It can be said that the establishment of Taoist theory has laid a solid foundation for the Chinese people's spiritual liberation. During the Wei and Jin Dynasty, Ruan Ji, Ji Kang and others successively joined in, inheriting the Laozhuang theory and exploring new concepts, thus enabling the inheritance and development of music concepts. Ruan Ji's *Music Theory* proposed that "this natural way is the origin of music", believing that the Heavenly Way is the Heavenly Way, and advocating that nature is the origin of music (Botirova, 2021, p. 69; Luczanits; Snellgrove, 2022, p. 266). In Ji Kang's *On Sound without Sorrow and Music*, whether it is the essence or function of music, its main content still advocated for nature and governance without action (Joerg; Jesse, 2020, p. 223). In the Tang and Song Dynasty, Taoist music was highly praised, and it blended with other genres of music, rapidly spreading and developing. A large number of poets, such as Li Bai, Bai Juyi and Lu You, were influenced by Taoist aesthetic concepts in their aesthetic concepts. They played an important role in poetry and music, Song music and guqin music. Zhang Kongshan and Hua Yanjun are still the inheritors of Taoist aesthetic concepts. They combined traditional instruments, such as erhu and guqin, with Taoist aesthetic concepts, inheriting and developing Taoist aesthetic concepts. Taoist aesthetic concepts have deeply influenced generations of people's understanding of music and have had a profound impact.

The aesthetic concept of Taoism emphasized the pursuit of the true nature of music, which provided an ideological guidance for the development of traditional Chinese music. Since its formation, Taoist aesthetic ideology has been running through the development process of Chinese music culture and leading the direction of traditional Chinese music development. In today's world, where traditional Chinese music and modern pop songs blend together, the excellent songs, created by people, still reflect their pursuit of natural beauty,

indicating that Taoist aesthetic concepts have had a potential impact on people's musical aesthetic concepts. The Taoist aesthetic concepts and other Chinese music aesthetic concepts have infiltrated each other, gradually developing into Chinese music aesthetic concepts, and have had a huge impact on the development of traditional Chinese music.

The contribution of Buddhism to China's music aesthetics is mainly reflected in the religious use and spiritual enlightenment of music. The contribution of Mohism to China's music aesthetics is mainly reflected in the social function and practicality of music. Legalists' contribution to China's music aesthetics is mainly manifested in the political function of music. China's music aesthetics has been continuously influenced by various schools in the long history. The different viewpoints and value orientations of these schools have enriched the connotation and forms of expression of traditional music in China, and provided valuable reference for modern understanding and interpretation of traditional music aesthetics.

Mohist aesthetics advocated the simplicity of music, emphasizing that music should return to authenticity and nature, rather than excessively pursuing luxuriance and skill. This concept has influenced, to a certain extent, the creation and performance style of ancient China's traditional music, making it pay more attention to natural and true expression.

## **4 PROMOTING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN AESTHETIC IDEAS AND CHINESE MUSIC**

### **4.1 COMBINATION OF GERMAN AND AMERICAN THOUGHTS WITH MUSIC AND RITUALS**

Aesthetics attaches great importance to the psychological function of cultivating, harmonizing and enhancing people's moral sentiments between beauty and art, and emphasizes the positive role that art plays in individual moral cultivation and the society's harmonious development. Regarding ethics, Mencius believed that "abundance is beauty". The Confucian music ideology of "rites and music" closely combined music with social politics and ethical morality. "Rites and music" is the theoretical basis for the overall music concept of Confucianism., Rites and music complement each other, playing an important role in personal cultivation and personality improvement. Artists recognize that music originates from the expression of human inner emotions, values subjective inner emotions and the creation of subjective spiritual culture, and recognizes that subjective spiritual culture can affect the quality of musical works. Aesthetic experience involves the expression and critical judgment of both cultural and social forms. Quantification, related to the digital environment, is changing the cultural form of aesthetic judgment (Nancy, 2018, p. 289; Falconer, 2019, p. 42).

In Confucian music theory, music and ritual are inextricably linked, which is an important way to strengthen ritual. Confucian ritual is a political and social ethical foundation based on "benevolence". The unity of ritual and music is the unity of reason and

emotion, using reason to restrain emotion and ritual to assist music. Music is constrained and guided by ritual. Poetry, music and ritual are all complete, and the emergence of poetry, the establishment of ritual and the achievements of music constitute a complete traditional aesthetic ideology. The criterion for evaluating music and poetry is the combination of “ritual” and “music” in primitive Confucianism. In the view of primitive Confucianism, the implementation of “moral governance” must have a prerequisite. This is related to the second level of “etiquette and music” in Confucianism, which is to cultivate an individual’s “gentleman” personality.

#### 4.2 COMBINING RENMEI THOUGHT WITH PERFECTION IN MUSIC

Aesthetics pursues the perfect unity of two moral qualities: beauty and goodness, and truth and goodness. From an anthropological perspective, the ability of aesthetic concepts to create art and music is widely accepted as a human species’ defining feature (Eugen; Winfried, 2021, p. 437). Confucian aesthetics fully affirmed the unity of “beauty” and “goodness”, and “goodness” and “truth”, and regarded this unity as an absolute and definite necessity. The rational spirit, represented by Confucianism, contains a strong sense of morality. In the history of Chinese philosophy, “goodness” is a core issue. On the one hand, it affirms the joy that music brings to mankind. On the other hand, it closely combines music with “goodness” and emphasizes the unity of the beauty of music and the goodness of ethics.

In traditional Chinese art, the reason why music first caught the philosophers’ attention is closely related to its unique sensibility and emotions. According to Confucianism, natural people can only become cultural beings through education.

Philosophical characteristics of traditional literary theory and aesthetic thought: the internal characteristics of Chinese traditional civilization emphasize transcending the appearance of the current method, focusing on the origin, expanding the aesthetic vision and belonging to the psychological consciousness of aesthetic common national traditional culture (Yang, 2022, p. 592; Porter, 1994, p. 458). The entire aesthetic concept of Taoism is based on its understanding of “Dao”. Taoism places the value of individual life and the individual’s free development, without competition with others, in the highest position, and adopts a transcendent attitude towards the interests, gains and losses, disasters and blessings, honor and disgrace, and the human world’s right and wrong, listening to its nature and not allowing it to be in the heart. This transcendence precisely touches on issues, such as the psychological characteristics of aesthetics, and believes that, only in this way, one can obtain liberation from human suffering, always maintain spiritual freedom and achieve the realm of beauty. The many famous Taoist sayings about “technique” and “Dao” reflect some of the characteristics of aesthetics and artistic creation, but also imply an understanding of the high degree of unity between conformity and purpose required in artistic creation. In music

appreciation, people would promote the understanding of life and the future by enhancing the feeling of music and artworks (Peng, 2021, p. 47).

### 4.3 HARMONY IN NEUTRALIZATION THOUGHT AND MUSIC

The core concept of traditional Chinese music is the music theory of “neutralization”, which governs the world with the music of “neutralization”. Under the influence of aesthetic concepts, traditional Chinese music has developed a complete set of music aesthetic concepts, based on “neutrality” in the development process, which has been widely applied in modern society. Confucius advocated maintaining the sentiment of “harmony” in the aesthetic process of “music”, using music as pleasure, and achieving a noble realm of life with a sense of freedom and personal beauty.

“Harmony” is the most representative aesthetic concept in traditional Chinese music aesthetics, which has had a certain impact on both Confucianism and Taoism, and has been given different meanings by various philosophical views. Gou Zi attached great importance to his educational role in promoting political harmony and cultivating talents, which was closely related to his political philosophy and talent outlook, providing inspiration for future generations. Only by following the nature’s laws, one can obtain freedom, which is beauty. If it goes against the nature’s laws, human freedom would be limited, and beauty would be destroyed. Music can enhance people’s attention to things and help them focus on constructing a situational psychological picture (Yang; Zheng; Wu *et al.*, 2022, p. 1544). To have fun, one must first have a calm heart. In the absence of desire in the subject, music cannot be created, which means that music creation must control its own desires.

Traditional music performances can integrate modern stage performances, lighting technology, visual arts and other elements to attract more young audiences’ interest. For example, multimedia elements are added to traditional music performances to create an immersive performance experience and make traditional music more modern and fashionable.

### CONCLUSIONS

In Chinese aesthetic concepts, there are many different schools of thought, with Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism being the most typical ones, which have a significant impact on traditional Chinese music. Among them, life is the main body; and harmony is the aesthetic criterion. The pursuit of “harmony between heaven and man” is the characteristic. To make Chinese music more authentically Chinese in color and to promote the continuous development of traditional Chinese music, it is necessary to strengthen the aesthetic concept of traditional Chinese music, make it more vibrant, better inherit and develop it in order to

make it more Chinese in color. This paper examined the contemporary significance of the interaction between traditional music and aesthetic thought. In other words, by sorting out the influence of aesthetic thought on traditional Chinese music, an in-depth understanding of the influence of Confucianism, Taoism and other aesthetic thoughts on traditional Chinese music can be provided. A clearer understanding of the development of aesthetic thought on traditional Chinese music can be allowed, providing a more solid theoretical basis for future research on the interaction between traditional Chinese music and aesthetic thought.

Chinese traditional music, as a whole, is like traditional Chinese black and white ink painting, with a concise form. It is precisely because only black and white can accommodate all colors. It is also precisely because its form is more concise, has greater freedom and can summarize richer connotations, displaying a more profound artistic conception. The aesthetic concepts of traditional Chinese music have had a profound impact on Chinese music and, to this day, the aesthetic concepts of music, used by people, are still based on tradition. Traditional aesthetic concepts not only played an important role in the development of Chinese music, but also played an undeniable role in promoting the development of Chinese music over thousands of years of history. As a modern person, people must learn to take the traditional essence and discard the dross, and constantly innovate and explore new aesthetic concepts as time goes by. Based on traditional music and utilizing excellent musical techniques and methods, people aim to contribute to Chinese music and the world's cultural arts.

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