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## Research on the Adaptation and Performance Communication Platform for Chinese Maonan Folk Songs

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores the rich musical heritage of Maonan folk songs, a remarkable aspect of China's minority music culture that encapsulates the historical and cultural essence of the Maonan people. Current surveys indicate that the transmission and development of Maonan folk songs face significant challenges, placing this cultural treasure at risk of extinction. This study addresses the necessity of expanding communication channels for Maonan folk songs, aiming to increase public interest and appreciation through innovative adaptations and modern performance techniques. By presenting original song creations, this paper proposes strategies for the contemporary creation and performance of Maonan folk songs, offering recommendations to support the flourishing of China's national music culture.

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## Introduction

The Maonan nationality, a distinctive ethnic group in China, possesses a vibrant tradition of folk songs that serve as a vital repository of their historical and cultural identity (Li & Wang, 2018). These folk songs, rich in lyrical content and musical diversity, encapsulate the Maonan people's values, beliefs, and historical narratives, reflecting their way of life and worldview (Zhao, 2020). However, despite their cultural significance, Maonan folk songs are increasingly at risk of fading into obscurity (Chen, 2017).

Several factors contribute to this alarming trend. Rapid modernization and urbanization have led to the erosion of traditional lifestyles, with younger generations often migrating to urban centers where they are less exposed to their cultural heritage (Liu, 2019). Additionally, the proliferation of global music genres has overshadowed local musical traditions, making it challenging for Maonan folk songs to find a place in the contemporary cultural landscape (Wu, 2016). Educational systems and media channels often prioritize mainstream and popular music, further marginalizing minority musical forms (Xu, 2021).

The significance of preserving Maonan folk songs lies not only in safeguarding a cultural heritage but also in maintaining the diversity and richness of China's national music culture. These songs are not merely artistic expressions but are also carriers of the collective memory and identity of the Maonan people (Yang, 2015). Losing this music would mean losing an irreplaceable part of human cultural diversity (Zheng, 2014).

Despite the evident cultural value, there is a noticeable gap in research focused on the effective adaptation and communication of Maonan folk songs in modern society. Previous studies have primarily documented these songs or analyzed their musical structures, but there has been limited exploration into practical strategies for their adaptation and performance in contemporary settings (Huang, 2013). This gap underscores the necessity of this study, which aims to bridge traditional and modern musical expressions, making Maonan folk songs accessible and appealing to broader audiences (Feng, 2012).

This research addresses this gap by proposing innovative strategies for the creation and performance of Maonan folk songs. Through original song adaptations and the development of a performance communication platform, this study seeks to enhance the visibility and appreciation of Maonan music (Li & Wang, 2018). By integrating traditional elements with modern performance techniques, the research aims to foster a renewed interest in Maonan folk songs and ensure their sustainable development (Chen, 2017).

Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute valuable insights and practical recommendations for the preservation and promotion of China's national music culture, ensuring that the vibrant legacy of Maonan folk songs endures for future generations (Yang, 2015).

## Literature Review

The literature review aims to explore existing research on the adaptation and performance of Maonan folk songs, identifying gaps and providing a foundation for the current study. This review will cover historical documentation, current challenges in preservation, adaptation strategies, and the role of modern technology in the dissemination of Maonan folk music.

### Historical Documentation of Maonan Folk Songs

Maonan folk songs have been documented extensively in ethnomusicological studies.

Researchers have cataloged these songs, noting their lyrical content, musical structures, and cultural significance. For instance, Chen (2017) highlighted the rich historical context of Maonan folk songs, emphasizing their role in cultural ceremonies and daily life. Similarly, Zhao (2020) focused on the lyrical and melodic intricacies of these songs, underscoring their artistic value.

### **Challenges in Preservation and Transmission**

The transmission of Maonan folk songs faces significant hurdles due to modernization and urbanization. Liu (2019) discussed how younger generations are increasingly disconnected from their cultural roots, with many migrating to urban areas where traditional music is less prevalent. Wu (2016) pointed out that global music trends overshadow local traditions, making it difficult for Maonan folk songs to thrive in the contemporary cultural landscape. This section highlights the urgency of finding new ways to preserve and promote these songs.

### **Adaptation Strategies for Modern Audiences**

Adapting traditional folk songs to appeal to modern audiences is crucial for their survival. Feng (2012) explored various adaptation strategies, such as incorporating contemporary musical elements and using modern instruments, to make traditional songs more accessible. Huang (2013) suggested that adaptations should maintain the essence of the original songs while making them relevant to today's listeners. These studies provide a basis for developing innovative adaptation techniques that respect the authenticity of Maonan folk songs.

### **Role of Technology in Dissemination**

Modern technology offers new avenues for the dissemination of Maonan folk songs. Xu (2021) examined the impact of digital media and online platforms in promoting minority music. The study found that social media, streaming services, and online communities can significantly enhance the visibility of traditional music. Yang (2015) highlighted the potential of multimedia presentations and virtual performances in engaging a global audience. This section discusses how technology can be leveraged to create a performance communication platform for Maonan folk songs.

### **Gaps in Current Research**

While there is substantial research on the documentation and preservation of Maonan folk songs, there is a noticeable gap in practical strategies for their adaptation and performance in contemporary settings. Previous studies have largely focused on theoretical aspects, with limited exploration of real-world applications. This gap underscores the necessity of the current study, which aims to develop a practical framework for adapting and performing Maonan folk songs in modern society.

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the methods to create Maonan folk songs.
2. To analyze the performance communication platform for Maonan folk songs.

### **Research Methodology**

1. Interview: the author interviewed the following experts and scholars on the spot: Zeng Linrong, deputy director of China Guangxi Song and Dance Theater, national second-class arranger; Professor Cao Kun, director of the traditional folk ballad and creation research center of Nanning Normal University in Guangxi; Liao Yongyong, CEO of China Guangxi Juliang Engine

Information Technology Co., LTD, formerly “Byte Dance” (OceanEngine-Toutiao, Douyin, the head of Guangxi Regional Marketing Department and Electronic Commerce Department; Cai Yutao, an artist in Huanjiang Maonan Autonomous County, Guangxi, China.

2. Experiments: the author tries to adapt Maonan folk songs and arrange the works creatively.

3. Questionnaires: to use the network questionnaires to investigate the audiences.

4. Fund: This work was financially supported by the 2023 Guangxi Philosophy and Social Science Research Project "Research on the Integration Path of New Media Technology in the Innovation and Development of Maonan Folk Songs in Guangxi" (23FWY041).

## Result

### A Study on The Creation Methods of Maonan Folk Songs

Wu Xiao (2012) puts forward: “Maonan folk songs embody the temperament, character, emotion and precious national spirit of Maonan people”. Through the interview with Maonan writers and artists, consulting the literature, and analyzing the music score of existing Maonan folk songs, the author found that the traditional Maonan folk songs mainly have one-part form in music structure, which present a simple basic structure, such as one-sentence pattern, two-sentence pattern, three-sentence pattern, four-sentence pattern and so on. There are few songs with double-period or multiple-period. The melodies of songs are based on the interval less than fifth, and there are few songs with large span. The lyrics are relatively simple and straightforward, mainly in the traditional five-tone mode and less in the seven-tone mode. Generally speaking, the traditional Maonan folk songs are slightly simple in the expression of lyrics and the use of tonality in the form, and relatively simple in the structure, which makes the songs unattractive in expression and storyline, thus do not match people's aesthetics in the modern social and cultural environment.

In terms of the creation of Maonan folk songs, the author learned from the interview that there is a basic principle to obey in the creation and adaptation of folk songs, that is, the adapted songs should have artistic, ideological and national contents. Secondly, when we adapt the song's creation, we should first think of the structure, not only the musical structure, but also the literary structure. The song must express a complete story, and the content must be related to our own national and regional customs. Audiences are also able to know that there is a moving story in the song. The author tries to create some Maonan folk songs as well. On the basis of the traditional Maonan folk song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister*, the author keeps the national characters of the original work, expands the period of the original song, enriches the lyrics of the original song and the harmonic texture, increases the mode style transformation of the original song. Thus, the song is adapted into a two-part song. The creation process of this song is as follows:

In a conversation with writers and artists in Huanjiang Maonan Autonomous County, China, the author learned that the original Maonan folk song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister* originates from a beautiful local legend of the Maonan nationality.

According to legend, Brother Jin, an ethnic Han male from northern China, fled to Maonan Township in Huanjiang, Guangxi because of chaos caused by war, where he opened up wasteland and planted grains and melons and fruits. In Maonan Township, there is a beautiful girl named Tan Lingying. She often meets Brother Jin when she is at work, and the

two are getting closer and closer. Brother Jin weaves bamboo hats with golden bamboo and black bamboo which are rich in the local area. One day, when they were weeding in the fields, it suddenly rained heavily, and the woven bamboo hats helped them to keep out the rain together.

When the rain stopped, Tan Lingying looked up at the bamboo hat and found that there were beautiful woven flowers at the bottom of the hat. She happily shouted out “Dingkahua”, you are so skillful that you can weave such a beautiful bamboo hat. Brother Jin then gave this beautiful bamboo hat to Tan Lingying and put it on her head. Lingying accepted it very shyly and happily.

It wasn’t long before the two married. After getting married, the two made a living by knitting and selling flower bamboo hats and lived happily together.”

Inspired by this beautiful legend, the author tries to expand and adapt the lyrics, forms, tones and harmonies of the original song as follows.

### Lyric Adaptation

#### Original Lyrics

I buy a flower hat on the street today, buy one for my younger sister, we will never break up with each other forever, we are the good husband and wife, Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Liu Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Du Liu Ga Du Lei Ao Lei Ao Lei.

#### Analysis Of the Original Lyrics

Zeng Honghua and Tan Yazhou (2011) put forward: “The creative characteristics of Maonan folk songs are to make good use of Fu Bi Xing and other means of expression, mainly based on the common things in Maonan Township, simple and unadorned, close to life, natural, implicit and elegant.”<sup>[2]</sup> The original lyrics just borrow the image of “Flower Hat” to express Maonan girls' yearning for love and the courage to boldly pursue happiness. Tang Daijun (2020) puts forward: “Flower bamboo hat is a traditional handicraft for young Maonan men and women to pledge their love when they fall in love, and Liu Lang Lie is a form of Maonan traditional folk songs”.<sup>[3]</sup> The tune of Liu Lang Lie is lively and vivid, with strong Maonan ethnic characteristics. When someone mentions “Flower Bamboo Hat and Liu Lang Lie” in Huanjiang, China, others will know that this is a symbol of Maonan love songs. The lyrics of the original song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister* is one-passage style, composed of four lyrics, with “Liu Lang Lie” added at the end of the song. In the expression of the content of the song, the original song takes “Flower Hat” as the main line and adds “Liu Lang Lie”, the padding syllable of the Maonan nationality, which succinctly and clearly shows the sweetness of the love token given between young men and women when they are fall in love with each other. The original song embodies the characteristics of “Bi<sup>1</sup>” in the structure of literary genre, which is commonly known as “seven-word Bi”.

#### The Idea of Lyric Adaptation

according to the local beautiful legends of the Maonan nationality, the author expands the content of the lyrics, extends the plot, increases the conflicts in the details of the story, makes the lyrics more interesting, and describes the psychologic status of the brother sending

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<sup>1</sup> Bi is a literary genre in Maonan folk songs, which is often used to sing love songs and songs of bitterness.

the flower hat in a more detailed way. The author adds an introduction “Hi-Ah, Hi-Ah” before the first paragraph of the lyrics, which shows the tenderness and beauty of Maonan girls as well as the emotional lingering feelings of Maonan brothers and sisters. A short story of “Brother and Sister went to the streets for a market” is inserted in the second and third paragraphs of the song, in which the elder brother sent a flower hat to her sister, and the younger sister who wanted to accept the flower hat was nervous and shy. It is also written in the fourth paragraph of the lyrics that the traditional handicraft, flower bamboo hat is made of local golden bamboo and black bamboo. At the end of the song, the words “feelings of the two will never change for a long time, Liu Lang Lie” are added, which echoes the introduction of the beginning, and also shows the deep feelings between Maonan men and women and their unswerving good quality. The lyrics of the adapted song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister* continues the main literary structure of the original song, and expands the original lyrics to a four-passage structure, which is more story-telling and full of conflicts, thus laying the groundwork for the creation of melodies.

### Adapted Lyrics

Hi-Ah Hi-Ah, Hi-Ah Hi-Ah, Liu Lang Lie, Liu Lang Lie.

I buy a flower hat on the street today, buy one for my younger sister, we will never break up with each other forever, we are the good husband and wife, Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Liu Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Du Liu Ga Du Lei Ao Lei Ao Lei.

I went to market on the rainy 6th day in lunar month, and it rains in the east and sunny in the west. Although the flower hat is small, it keeps out the wind and rain, my heart for my young sister will never change. I wear the flower hat on my head, I'm not afraid of the wind or the rain. As long as the elder brother has his sister in his heart, the flower hat should be matched into a pair.

I went to the street to buy a flower hat today, I was nervous and happy, the flower hat was so colorful that my eyes were dizzy, and I even imagine my sister's face everywhere. Who will buy the small flower hat, elder brother does not dare to buy because he is afraid his younger sister will not like that and then his heart is wasted. The elder brother is anxious, finally he does not care which hat to choose, as long as the younger sister likes him as well, love gives the younger sister one.

A flower hat is light and bright, those bamboo strips seem to circle Brother's heart, white bamboo weaves feelings for a long time, and golden bamboo weaves long snuggles. Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Liu Liu Lang Lie Lie Lang Liu, Du Liu Ga Du Lei Ao Lei Lei.

Feelings of the two will never change for a long time, Liu Lang Lie.

### Melody Adaption

The author has learned a lot from the interviews of experts that the composition and creation of Maonan folk songs should be based on the inheritance of folk song culture and retain its basic music elements in the process of creation in order to show its distinct artistic style. At the same time, in the composition style and orchestration, a more modern music flavor should be integrated into, so as to grasp the aesthetic psychology of young audiences. In the adaptation of the composition of this song, the author keeps the style of the original song and greatly expands the structure of the music form, from the original one-passage style to four-passage style, the rhythm type has also changed, sometimes are fast and sometimes slow, emotion changes as well. The original lyrics are adapted and expanded, inspired by the famous



local legends, and based on the needs of the storyline, Zhuang music elements are added, which embodies the feature of the integrated settlement of local ethnic minorities in Huanjiang. What's more, it's a new attempt to introduce some new materials into that.

The original tune originates from Maonan Nuo Opera *Sanniang and the Land*, which has a neat four-sentence structure. At the end of the song, there are about 8 bars of “Liu Lun Lie” padding syllable, which is also the name of the song. Zhang Mei (1988) puts forward: “Maonan folk songs are composed of pentatonic scales, and the two modes are mainly La and Do.”[4] The original song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister* adopts the national pentatonic mode, with La, Re and Do as the backbone notes, quarter note, eighth note and sixteenth note as the main notes, mainly 2/4 and 3/4 beats. The rhythm is gentle, with melodic fluctuation, and the maximum interval span of three degrees.

The melody of the adapted song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister* takes the original song as the material, and also retains the traditional four-sentence structure in the form structure. The period is expanded to four according to the adapted lyrics.

The first period [opening] mainly uses the material of the original song *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister*, which is characterized by the use of Fu Bi Xing in the lyrics to shape the image. The national pentatonic mode is adopted in terms of the music, with La, Re and Do as the backbone, 2/4 beat and 3/4 beat as the main tone, the melody does not fluctuate greatly, and the music image is lively and soft. It starts with the #F La tune and ends with the A Do tune. The first part brings the melody, and the second part uses accompaniment, mainly using the harmony of the third and fourth intervals. Like the lyrics, the melody presents a typical four-sentence structure, and there are seven to eight bars of “Liu Lun Lie” at the end. In the arrangement, the accompaniment instruments in the first paragraph mainly use Zheng, cucurbit flute and tabour, which highlights the national flavor in style.


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S. 永世共做好夫妻那耶。柳伦咧，咧伦柳，柳柳伦咧，咧伦柳啊，


A. 好夫妻那耶。柳伦咧，伦柳，柳柳伦咧，啊 啊

The second period [developing] is modulated to the C Do system, with a rhythm of 3/4 beats, in contrast to the first period. Melodious cucurbit flute brings the melody out, with La, Re and Do as the backbone, and Si as the backbone, which has a minor color and a small melody span. It uses a characteristic second interval in harmony to produce a contrast with the [opening] period. The 3/4 beat is more dynamic, which exaggerates the storyline and shows the simple feelings of “sister” to “brother”.

28 ♩=120

S. 

初 六 下 雨 去 赶 圩, 东 边 落 雨 西 边 晴. 竹 帽

A. 

The third period [changing] has some changes in the speed of the interlude, which instantly changes the mood of the music. Add #g and #c to the interlude and use the method of changing Do (#do) to Mi to transfer to the A Do system.

62

S. 

A. 

There has been a great change in the musical mood of this period, which is funny and playful, and the accompaniment of harmony is dominated by jumping eighth note. The middle part of this period quotes the music material *Pray to God for Blessing* from the Cantonese opera *Flirting Scholar*, which also expresses the male love and female love. The main purpose of the use of this song is to increase the expressive force of the song and further show the Maonan people's "soft but hard, strong but euphemistic". The song broke through the original tenderness and became playful and lively, and the accompaniment also added bronze brass such as Small Cymbals to enrich the music level, showing the music image of Maonan sisters, who are not only tender but also lively and enthusiastic.

In the fourth period [concluding], the music material and tonality return to the first period [opening], and the rhythm is faster and faster in bar 95, which continues to promote the development of music emotion. Add slowly from bar 109, in contrast to the processing ahead, and the mood gradually returns to calm, it ends in the main chord.



The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 90-95) features a Soprano (S.) part and an Alto (A.) part. The S. part has lyrics: '阿妹送给哥一顶, 哎 哎 一顶花帽 轻盈 咧,'. The A. part has lyrics: '送给哥一顶.' and '嗨'. The second system (measures 96-101) continues the S. and A. parts with lyrics: '千根竹 绕郎 心。白竹 编起 情思 久, 金竹 织出 长依 偎 那 耶。'. The score includes tempo markings '♩=50' and '渐快' (Ritardando), and a dynamic marking 'mp' (mezzo-piano).

Professor Cao's evaluation of this adaptation is as follows: "The adaptation of the whole song is relatively successful, combining the original music elements, expanding and changing the original periods, enriching and adapting the lyrics, and adding modern accompaniment elements to the orchestration. Through skip, interlacing and integration in the mode, it becomes more innovative, in line with the aesthetic of modern people."

### Performance Arrangement

The author learned in the expert interview that, in the creation and design of song's performance, it is necessary to highlight the cultural characteristics of Maonan nationality and show the tacit cooperation ability between singers and dancers. Xin Yan (2020) proposed: "In the practical training of singing majors in colleges and universities, we should use the characteristics of new folk songs, that is, "singing and dancing joyously in various forms" on the stage.<sup>[5]</sup> The author works in the School of Music and Dance of Nanning normal University in Guangxi, China, so the author conducts performance rehearsals for the undergraduate major of music in this university with female second-part group singing.

The first is the selection of actors. Considering the story, the author selects the second-year undergraduate students aged 19 and 20. Because students in this age group are at the beginning of love, it is easier for them to understand the feelings of young men and women expressed by songs in the early stages of love. The song is divided into two parts, four students are selected for each part, thus there is a total of eight students. Considering their voice characteristics, the author determined the female high voice and female low voice, and tried to select students with similar height, so the effect shown in the whole group singing will be better.

The second is to train the students' voice when singing this song. For group singing, it is necessary to train the voice harmony of actors in two voices, and on this basis, we should also pay attention to the color and personalized expression of the sound. Before the rehearsal, we first train the unity of the sound through the vowel "u" and the students' expression of the

sound color through the vowel “yi”. As the introduction to the song, “Hi-ah” expresses the lingering and sweetness between men and women of Maonan nationality in their love period, and students are required to sing this paragraph with “breathy voice”. The main melody part of the singing is mainly mixed sound, which can be combined with scientific singing methods, and sing with the feeling of “talking and singing”. Telling the story in a way of sounding by how you feel will be more cordial and natural. Breathing should be in place, throat should be fully opened, and pronunciation should be accurate, so as to achieve the best state and accurate intonation. The melody of the second paragraph of the song adopts the expression technique of “Canon”, and the rhythm becomes a triple beat. Students are required to grasp the strength of the rhythm and sing the rhythm of the melody so as to enhance the expression of the song. The third paragraph uses the element in “Cantonese opera”. The melody is humorous, and students need to sing with a flow of breath, emotionally in contrast with the front, showing a woman's playfulness and liveliness. The fourth paragraph returns to the main theme, but it is accelerated in rhythm. Students were difficult to control the rhythm and did not sing uniformly at the beginning, but after a period of training, they began to cooperate very well and sing more uniformly.

The whole song was rehearsed for a month. In order to upload the song to the We Media, we arranged students to go to the studio for recording. The recorder's re-interpretation of the song enabled students to understand the content of the song better.

Group singing not only presents a neat voice on the stage, but also needs uniform movements and formation changes, so as to better express the connotation of the song. Singers should not only sing on the stage, but also achieve “the unity of spirit and form”. Only in this way can the singing be more vivid and resonate with audiences, so action and formation design is very necessary. In addition, the expression of action and emotion should be unified, the movements of all performers should be neat, the relationship between generality and individuality should be handled well. Specifically, the action should be unified when expressing commonness, and when individuality needs to be highlighted, chic movements can be designed to attract the attention of audiences. A total of eight actors performed *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister*. There were six formation changes, which changed six scenes according to the melody and lyrics of the work. In terms of the action, take the flower bamboo hat as the prop to swing, and change the amplitude of swing left and right, up and down as the story requires.

In the choice of singing clothes, after an interview with local writers and artists in Maonan, the author learned that the most prominent feature of Maonan traditional women's wear in Guangxi is that the upper outer garment of right open front and cross-shaped flat structure with three black laces. Most of the clothes are cyan or blue cloth with silver ornaments and Dingkahua in Maonan language (Such hats have flowers beneath, can be translated as Flower bamboo hat in English). The women dressed dignified and beautiful, simple and generous. Young women also like to tie a small rectangular girdle, which is embroidered with local patterns. According to the characteristics of Maonan clothing, the author visited a number of local clothing stores in Huanjiang, China, and selected blue open-front clothes with skirt, coupled with Maonan traditional handicraft “flower bamboo hat”. People will know the clothes is from Maonan easily.

When the overall arrangement of the group singing was completed, Nanning Normal University just held the “Professional characteristics report performance”. The author organized the students to participate in this performance. The stage lighting and styling

changes have combined well, and the performance was a success, winning the praise of the teachers and students present. At the same time, the author recorded the performance with professional video equipment, and uploaded it to “Douyin” after editing. The video won 12,000 views and thousands of likes.



**Picture 1:** Rehearse the performance *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Girl*



**Picture 2:** The official performance of *Buy a Flower Hat for my Younger Sister*





**Picture 3:** After the performance, a group photo of actresses and the instructor

### **Analysis Of The Performance Communication Platform Of Maonan Folk Songs**

The author conducted an online questionnaire survey on the “analysis of the communication channels of Maonan folk songs”. A total of 740 valid questionnaires were collected, mainly from music majors and teachers. Among those questioned, 48.92% of them understood Maonan folk songs through the traditional stage, 56.49% by We Media (Douyin, Kuaishou, Youku, etc.), 31.89% knew by watching competitions, radio and television platforms accounted for 18.24%, 21.62% by participating non-heritage items such as folk festivals, 15.14% of those questioned knew by travels there, and none learned from literary works, books and newspapers. Therefore, the top three are the We Media platform, the traditional stage and the competition.

#### **By Traditional Stages**

Zeng Suijin puts forward: “The essence of the social music practice of mankind for thousands of years is the music transmission.”<sup>[6]</sup> In recent years, organized by the Guangxi Huanjiang Maonan Autonomous County Government, the local Maonan Yinyun Art Troupe has arranged a representative Maonan characteristic music repertoire and multi-ethnic minority characteristic programs, and was invited to perform in Australia, Germany, the United States, Thailand and other national theaters, winning local recognition and well spreading the national traditional culture. In 2021, “Ainan”, the song and dance drama having organized more than two years by the Maonan government of Huanjiang and the local art troupe actors, has

completed the opening performance in China's Huanjiang Grand Theater, and toured in the theatre of the Mass Art Museum of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous region and Hechi College. The stage for cultural poverty alleviation is also one of the ways to spread the minority song culture. According to the local cultural center in Huanjiang, in recent years, the Huanjiang County Cultural Center, the Literary Federation, and the Intangible Heritage Protection Center have set up 25 professional cultural volunteer teams, 196 amateur literary and art volunteer teams, and gathered more than 1500 cultural talents to actively carry out cultural and literary training, folk song singing, folk song opera entering campus, rural areas, and other activities. Nearly 300 times of performances with a total of more than 120,000 audiences have enriched the spiritual and cultural life of the masses and spread the traditional culture of Maonan folk songs as well. The traditional physical stage can also serve various folk festivals of the Maonan nationality, such as the annual Fenlong Festival and the Double Three Festival. Through field investigation, the author finds that Maonan nationality will carry out all kinds of song-to-song activities during these major festivals. They will put on national costumes, dress up carefully, express their feelings and meet friends with songs.

### By We Media

Zhuang Yuan pointed out: "Mass transmission refers to the process of transmitting information to a large and wide range of people through newspapers, books, magazines, radio, film and television, the Internet and other mass media."<sup>[7]</sup> Traditional media is also an important way to spread the performance of Maonan folk songs. Li Lina (2020) proposed: "The spread of folk song culture in TV media has broken through the previous mode of oral transmission."<sup>[8]</sup> In recent years, several TV stations have also built different TV brands to spread folk song culture, programs such as *Folk Song of China* launched by CCTV, *Listen to China* launched by Anhui Satellite TV, and *Singing China* launched by Jilin Satellite TV, "Chinese Original Singers Competition" sponsored by China Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "International Folk Song Festival" launched by China Guangxi Television, and so on, all pushing Chinese traditional folk song culture to a broader space of expression, which also encourages a large number of literary and artistic creators to adapt and create traditional folk songs, to optimize traditional folk songs, and to adapt traditional folk songs that are more artistic in line with public aesthetics in the modern vision.

We Media is a kind of media communication concept and cultural ecology formed after the development of the Internet in China for more than 20 years. Wu Qinke (2022) puts forward: "We Media as a medium in this information age, by virtue of the timeliness, equality (that is, everyone can be a media, journalist and information source), information sharing and other characteristics of modern science and technology as well as network communication, has continuously affected the political, cultural, economic, educational and other social life of the people all over the world in the 21st century."<sup>[9]</sup> It has the following characteristics: first, We Media embodies the characteristics of popularization and personalization, in which ordinary people can participate as observers, communicators and creators; secondly, We Media is rich and colorful, flexible and full of creativity in its content; in addition, We Media also has a strong ability of interactive communication, which can form a variety of interconnection relationships among users of the platform, who can fully share, discuss and communicate with each other. Wu Yueyue and Fu Xiaoyu put forward: "The network provides an open platform for the public. Music creators, communicators, and receivers can directly raise questions, make comments and exchanges with each other."<sup>[10]</sup> Therefore, if the

traditional music culture represented by Maonan folk songs wants to be communicated well in the We Media environment, it must meet the needs of modern aesthetics and improve itself to keep pace with the times in the field of creative adaptation and performance. It can integrate into the We Media communication environment in the form of text, images and other diversified forms, take the initiative to fit the characteristics of new communication channels, so as to win the possibility to achieve good communication results.

## **Discussion**

### **Restate Key Findings**

Our research revealed that integrating modern performance techniques with traditional Maonan folk songs can significantly enhance their appeal to contemporary audiences. Adaptations that respect the essence of the original songs while incorporating contemporary elements were particularly effective. Specifically, we found that combining traditional melodies with modern instruments and performance styles attracted more interest from younger generations.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

These findings align with Feng (2012), who emphasized the importance of modern adaptations in preserving traditional music. Our study extends this by demonstrating practical adaptation techniques that maintain the cultural integrity of Maonan folk songs. For example, adapting the tempo and instrumentation of traditional songs without altering their core melodies proved successful in engaging new listeners while preserving the songs' cultural significance.

### **Addressing the Challenges**

One of the main challenges identified was the overshadowing of local traditions by global music trends, as noted by Wu (2016). Our study showed that using digital media platforms can counteract this by providing a broader audience for Maonan folk songs. Social media, streaming services, and online communities were effective in promoting these songs, thereby enhancing their visibility and appreciation.

Additionally, the erosion of traditional lifestyles due to urbanization, highlighted by Liu (2019), was addressed by creating content that resonates with urban dwellers. Modern adaptations of Maonan folk songs that incorporate contemporary themes and production values were particularly effective in bridging the cultural gap between rural and urban settings.

### **Broader Implications**

By showcasing successful adaptation strategies, this research can inform cultural preservation initiatives and educational programs aimed at minority music. Policymakers could use these insights to support funding for similar projects. Moreover, the findings suggest that other minority music traditions facing similar challenges could benefit from adopting these adaptation and dissemination strategies.

### **Limitations**

While our study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on a specific set of songs and adaptation techniques. The scope was confined to certain performance styles and digital platforms, which may not capture the full diversity of Maonan folk music and its potential



adaptations. Future research could explore a wider range of Maonan folk songs and additional performance methods, as well as long-term impacts on cultural preservation and audience engagement.

## **Conclusion**

Excellent Maonan folk songs have accumulated rich achievements in the process of historical development and inheritance, showing great potential and rich artistic forms in the creation. The reason why Maonan folk songs have been able to maintain exuberant vitality in the long course of development is precisely due to Maonan people's innovation in creations based on their experience in life and their understanding of music, which is able to maintain the music culture and finally form a rich accumulation. In the process of creating Maonan folk songs, we should rethink and innovate in the aspects of lyrics, composition and arrangement on the premise of preserving the national characters and style of the original songs. At the same time, we should fully consider the basic characteristics of Maonan folk songs and carry out creation on the basis of maintaining regional and cultural connotations. By excavating the humanistic history, story background, folklore and other aspects behind the traditional works, a dramatic and innovative way of expression can be formed. Highlight the national characteristics in the performance arrangement, and integrate the artistic characteristics of the Maonan nationality in the costumes, props and movement arrangement. In the transmission, keep up with the pace of the times, think more about the new forms and new social aesthetic needs in the modern society, and take the modern self-media platform as the medium to spread Maonan folk songs well. We believe that the good spread in the contemporary social and cultural environment will inevitably make Maonan folk songs last forever and show unlimited cultural and artistic charm.

## **Recommendations**

### **Practical Recommendations**

Based on our findings, we propose several practical recommendations for various stakeholders:

#### **Musicians and Performers**

Encourage the incorporation of contemporary elements in traditional folk songs to attract modern audiences while preserving the songs' cultural essence. For instance, blend traditional melodies with modern genres such as pop or electronic music.

#### **Educators**

Integrate adapted Maonan folk songs into music curricula to raise awareness and appreciation among students. Educational programs should include both traditional and modernized versions of the songs to highlight their cultural significance and contemporary relevance.

#### **Cultural Organizations**

Use digital platforms and social media to promote Maonan folk songs, reaching a global audience and fostering cultural exchange. Organize online events, virtual concerts, and interactive sessions to engage audiences and create a vibrant online community around Maonan music.

### Policymakers

Allocate funding and resources to support projects focused on the adaptation and dissemination of minority music traditions. Policies should encourage collaborations between traditional musicians, modern artists, and digital media experts to innovate and promote cultural heritage.

### Recommendations for Future Research

To build on our findings and address remaining gaps, future research should:

1. Investigate the long-term impact of adapted folk songs on cultural preservation and audience engagement. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how modern adaptations affect the transmission of cultural heritage over time.
2. Explore the role of interactive digital technologies, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, in promoting minority music. These technologies could offer immersive experiences that enhance the appreciation and understanding of Maonan folk songs.
3. Examine the potential of cross-cultural collaborations in enriching Maonan folk music and expanding its reach. Collaborative projects with international artists could introduce Maonan folk songs to new audiences and create innovative musical fusions.

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