

# Research on Music Creation Techniques and Cultural Identity from the Perspective of Chinese-Western Integration

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**Abstract:** Against the background of deepening global cultural integration, the integration of Chinese and Western music has become an important trend in contemporary music creation. Taking the perspective of Chinese-Western integration as the entry point, this paper explores the integration path of music creation techniques, analyzes the core role of cultural identity in integrated creation, points out the problems existing in the integration process such as rigid grafting of techniques and imbalance of cultural connotation combined with contemporary creation practice, and puts forward targeted optimization paths. It aims to provide theoretical reference for contemporary Chinese-Western integrated music creation and promote the diversified development of music art and the construction of cultural identity. The research shows that the effective integration of Chinese and Western music creation techniques needs to be based on the core of both cultures and realize the unity of technical innovation and cultural expression, so as to better convey cultural value, strengthen national cultural identity and promote cross-cultural music communication.

**Keywords:** Chinese-Western Integration; Music Creation Techniques; Cultural Identity; Cross-Cultural Communication; Music Innovation

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## 1. Introduction

Driven by the wave of globalization, cultural exchanges between China and the West have become increasingly frequent. As an important carrier of cultural communication, music integration creation has become a bridge connecting different cultures. There are significant differences between Chinese and Western music in technical aspects such as scale, harmony and rhythm, and they have their own characteristics in cultural connotation. How to realize the organic integration of techniques, while adhering to cultural authenticity and constructing cultural identity, has become an important issue facing contemporary music creators. Focusing on music creation techniques and cultural identity from the perspective of Chinese-Western integration, this paper sorts out the current situation and path of integrated creation, analyzes the internal relationship between technical integration and cultural identity, and discusses optimization strategies to help the high-quality development of Chinese-Western integrated music creation and highlight the vitality of music art in the context of multiculturalism.

## 2. Cultural Foundations and Technical Differences of Chinese and Western Music Creation

### 2.1 Cultural Core and Creative Technique Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Music

Traditional Chinese music is rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese traditional culture, carrying the aesthetic concepts of Confucianism's "music is connected with politics" and Taoism's "great sound is faint", highlighting the core pursuit of "artistic conception construction" and "emotional expression", and its creation techniques have distinct national characteristics. In the use of scales, it is based on the pentatonic scale, focusing on the grace and fluency of the scale, and conveying emotions through subtle changes in pitch. For example, the glissando and harmonic tones commonly used in guqin music highlight the ethereal and distant artistic conception. In terms of rhythm techniques, free rhythm is mostly adopted, emphasizing "form is scattered but spirit is gathered", not bound by fixed beats, and conforming to natural rhythm and emotional ups and downs. For example, the rhythm of Jiangnan silk and bamboo music is flexible and changeable, reflecting the flavor of life and humanistic feelings. In melody creation, it focuses on the lyricism of a single line, and the melody trend is consistent with the tone of

language and natural rhythm. It mostly adopts techniques such as repetition and variation to strengthen emotional expression. In addition, traditional Chinese music pays attention to the uniqueness of musical instrument timbre. The clarity of pipa, the grace of guzheng and the depth of erhu have all become important carriers for conveying cultural connotation in creation. The use of techniques always revolves around cultural expression, highlighting the spiritual core of national culture.

## **2.2 Cultural Heritage and Creative Technique Characteristics of Western Music**

Western music originated from ancient Greek and Roman cultures. After the development of the Renaissance, Classicism, Romanticism and other periods, it has formed a systematic and rigorous creation system. Its techniques focus on logic and standardization, and its cultural connotation highlights humanistic spirit and rational thinking. In the use of scales, it takes the heptatonic scale as the core, emphasizing the harmonic function of the scale, and creating different emotional atmospheres through the conversion of major and minor scales, such as the brightness and vitality of major scales and the sadness and depth of minor scales. In terms of harmony techniques, Western music has formed a complete harmony theory, focusing on the collocation and progression of chords, and enhancing the sense of hierarchy and three-dimensionality of music through the combination of triads, seventh chords, etc., which is one of the core techniques that distinguish Western music from traditional Chinese music. In terms of rhythm techniques, Western music adopts fixed beats, focusing on the regularity and logic of rhythm, and constructs the rhythmic beauty of music through the change of beats and the combination of rhythm patterns. For example, the sonatas of the Classical period have a rigorous and orderly rhythm, reflecting the beauty of reason. In terms of musical form structure, Western music has formed standardized structural forms such as sonata form and rondo form, focusing on the integrity and logic of the structure, and the use of techniques serves the construction of musical structure and the accurate expression of emotions.

## **2.3 Cultural Causes of Differences in Chinese and Western Music Creation Techniques**

The differences in Chinese and Western music creation techniques are essentially caused by the differences in their cultural backgrounds, ways of thinking and aesthetic concepts. Chinese traditional culture takes "harmony between man and nature" as the core, focusing on the harmonious unity between man and nature, man and society. This way of thinking is projected into music creation, forming the technical characteristics of freedom, flexibility and emphasis on artistic conception, emphasizing the integration of music with nature and emotions, not pursuing the standardization of techniques, but focusing on the natural expression of emotions. Confucian culture emphasizes the educational function of music, and Taoist culture pursues the ethereal artistic conception of music, which together shape the technical characteristics of "emphasizing meaning over form" in traditional Chinese music. Western culture takes rationalism as the core, focusing on logical thinking and formal beauty, emphasizing the accurate grasp and standardized expression of things. This way of thinking is reflected in music creation, forming the technical characteristics of rigor, system and emphasis on form, focusing on the standardization and logic of harmony, rhythm and musical form, and pursuing the perfection of musical form. In addition, the language habits and lifestyles of China and the West also affect the development of music techniques. The tone changes of Chinese language affect the melody trend, and the logic of Western language affects the construction of harmony and rhythm. These factors together lead to significant differences in Chinese and Western music creation techniques.

## **3. Practical Paths of Music Creation Techniques from the Perspective of Chinese-Western Integration**

### **3.1 Integration Practice of Scale and Melody Techniques**

Scale and melody are the foundation of music creation and the core entry point for the integration of Chinese and Western music techniques. Contemporary creators mostly adopt the method of "taking the essence and complementing each other" to realize the organic integration of the two, retaining national characteristics while integrating Western elements. In the use of scales, creators often combine the Chinese pentatonic scale with the

Western heptatonic scale, creating a unique musical atmosphere through the grace of the pentatonic scale and the richness of the heptatonic scale. For example, in the soundtrack of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", composer Tan Dun takes the Chinese pentatonic scale as the melody framework and integrates the harmonic color of the Western heptatonic scale, making the melody not only have the ethereal artistic conception of traditional Chinese music, but also have the sense of hierarchy of Western music, realizing the perfect integration of scale techniques. In melody creation, on the one hand, it retains the lyricism and single-line characteristics of traditional Chinese melody, and draws on Western melody techniques such as leaps and modulations to enrich the expressiveness of the melody; on the other hand, it combines the logic of Western melody with the artistic conception beauty of Chinese melody, such as integrating the regularity of Western classical melody with the grace of Chinese folk songs to create a melody with both Chinese and Western characteristics. In addition, creators also pay attention to the combination of melody and cultural connotation, and convey the common emotions of Chinese and Western cultures through the integration of melody techniques, making the melody not only have national recognition, but also be understood and accepted by cross-cultural audiences, realizing the unity of technical integration and cultural expression.

### **3.2 Integration Practice of Harmony and Rhythm Techniques**

Harmony and rhythm are the keys to shaping the sense of hierarchy and rhythmic beauty of music. The integration of Chinese and Western harmony and rhythm techniques is an important breakthrough in contemporary Chinese-Western integrated music creation, and its core is to realize "complementation between China and the West and combination of advantages". In the integration of harmony techniques, it breaks the single dominant mode of Western harmony and combines the harmonic thinking of traditional Chinese music with Western harmony theory. Although traditional Chinese music has no systematic harmony theory, it has natural harmonic elements, such as the harmonic superposition of guqin and the timbre harmony of folk music ensemble. Creators combine these elements with Western functional harmony and atonal harmony to enrich the expressiveness of harmony. For example, in "Butterfly Lovers", composer Chen Qigang takes Chinese opera arias as the core and integrates Western modern harmony techniques, setting off the emotions of opera arias through the color changes of chords, making the harmony not only have the three-dimensional sense of Western music, but also retain the ethereal artistic conception of traditional Chinese music. In the integration of rhythm techniques, it combines the free rhythm of traditional Chinese music with the regular rhythm of Western music. On the one hand, it draws on the regularity of Western fixed beats to provide support for the free rhythm of traditional Chinese music and avoid excessive looseness of rhythm; on the other hand, it integrates the flexibility of traditional Chinese rhythm to break the rigidity of Western rhythm, such as combining the free rhythm of Jiangnan silk and bamboo music with Western jazz rhythm to create a rhythm type with both rhythmic beauty and national characteristics. In addition, creators also pay attention to the correspondence between rhythm and cultural connotation, and convey the rhythmic characteristics of different cultures through the integration of rhythm techniques, realizing cross-cultural emotional resonance.

### **3.3 Integration Practice of Musical Instrument and Timbre Techniques**

Musical instruments and timbre are important carriers of music expression. The integration of Chinese and Western musical instruments and timbre techniques can enrich the expressiveness of music, realize the visual and auditory collision of Chinese and Western cultures, and is an important path for Chinese-Western integrated music creation. In the use of musical instruments, creators often adopt the way of "matching Chinese and Western musical instruments", combining traditional Chinese musical instruments with Western musical instruments, giving play to their respective timbre advantages and creating a unique sound effect. For example, in national orchestral works, Western string instruments such as violin and cello are added to enrich the sense of hierarchy of the orchestra; in Western symphonies, traditional Chinese musical instruments such as pipa and erhu are integrated to add national characteristics. In the erhu concerto "String of the Heart", composer Tang Jianping takes the erhu as the core solo instrument, accompanied by a Western orchestra. The depth and grace of the erhu set off the grandeur of the Western

orchestra, which not only highlights the charm of traditional Chinese musical instruments, but also gives play to the expressiveness of the Western orchestra. In terms of timbre techniques, it draws on Western timbre shaping techniques, such as orchestration and synthetic timbre, to innovate the timbre of traditional Chinese musical instruments while retaining the national characteristics of traditional timbre. For example, the timbre of guzheng and guqin is processed through electronic technology to retain their original charm and have a modern sense; it draws on the timbre control techniques of Western musical instruments to enrich the timbre expression of traditional Chinese musical instruments and realize the integration of Chinese and Western timbre techniques. This integration not only enriches the sound effect of music, but also realizes the collision and integration of Chinese and Western cultures, conveying the charm of multiculturalism.

#### **4. Construction of Cultural Identity and Practical Dilemmas in Chinese-Western Integrated Music Creation**

##### **4.1 The Core Role of Cultural Identity in Chinese-Western Integrated Music Creation**

Cultural identity is the soul of Chinese-Western integrated music creation, determining the direction and value of integrated creation. Its core role is reflected in three aspects: first, it provides guidance for technical integration and avoids rigid grafting of techniques. Chinese-Western integration is not a simple superposition of techniques, but an organic combination based on cultural identity. Only by basing on their own cultural identity can we accurately grasp the core connotation of Chinese and Western cultures and realize the unity of techniques and culture. For example, Chen Qigang's creation has always taken Chinese traditional culture as the root, and taken Western techniques as the carrier of cultural expression. His works not only have the rigor of Western techniques, but also convey the philosophy of Chinese culture, which is essentially the technical integration led by cultural identity. Second, it strengthens the dissemination and inheritance of national culture. Chinese-Western integrated music creation is an important way for the external dissemination of national culture. Through technical integration, it integrates traditional Chinese music culture into the world music context, allowing the world to better understand Chinese culture, and at the same time enhancing the cultural confidence and identity of the nation. Third, it promotes cross-cultural communication and understanding. Cultural identity includes not only the recognition of one's own culture, but also the respect and understanding of heterogeneous cultures. Chinese-Western integrated music creation realizes the dialogue and resonance of different cultures by exploring the common emotions of Chinese and Western cultures, and promotes the in-depth development of cross-cultural music communication. Integrated creation lacking cultural identity will only become a pile of techniques, unable to convey cultural value, and difficult to gain the recognition of the audience.

##### **4.2 Construction Paths of Cultural Identity in Chinese-Western Integrated Music Creation**

In Chinese-Western integrated music creation, the construction of cultural identity needs to be based on the principles of "adhering to authenticity, respecting differences and bidirectional integration", and realized through multiple paths. First, adhere to the authenticity of national culture, explore the cultural connotation and spiritual core of traditional Chinese music, integrate national cultural elements into all links of creation, and avoid being assimilated by Western culture. Creators should deeply learn traditional Chinese music culture, grasp the cultural implications behind pentatonic scales, traditional melodies, musical instrument timbres, etc., and integrate the aesthetic concepts of Confucianism and Taoism into the use of techniques, so that the works highlight national characteristics. For example, Tan Dun's "Tea Sutra" takes Chinese tea culture as the core, and conveys the harmony concept of Chinese traditional culture through the integration of Chinese and Western techniques, strengthening national cultural identity. Second, respect the differences of Western culture, rationally draw on Western music techniques, avoid blind worship of Western culture, deeply understand the cultural connotation behind Western music techniques, and realize "making foreign things serve China". Creators should understand the historical and cultural background of Western music, grasp the cultural implications of techniques such as harmony and rhythm,

and combine them with Chinese cultural connotation to realize the bidirectional adaptation of techniques and culture. Finally, explore the common emotions of Chinese and Western cultures, such as love, peace, longing, etc., and convey common humanistic values through technical integration, realizing cross-cultural emotional resonance, which not only strengthens national cultural identity, but also promotes the understanding and tolerance of heterogeneous cultures, and constructs a multicultural symbiotic cultural identity system.

#### **4.3 Practical Dilemmas of Cultural Identity in Chinese-Western Integrated Music Creation**

At present, in the process of constructing cultural identity in Chinese-Western integrated music creation, there are still many practical dilemmas, which restrict the high-quality development of integrated creation. First, the disconnection between technical integration and cultural expression. Some creators over-pursue the use of Western techniques and ignore the transmission of national cultural connotation, leading to the lack of cultural soul in works, the problems of "technique piling" and "form over content", and it is difficult to form effective cultural identity. For example, some works simply splice Western harmony with Chinese melody, lacking the exploration of the cultural connotation of both, unable to convey national cultural value, and difficult to be recognized by the audience. Second, the imbalance of cultural identity. Some creators either over-emphasize national culture and exclude the reasonable reference of Western culture, leading to the lack of modern sense of works and difficulty in adapting to cross-cultural communication; or over-cater to Western aesthetics and weaken national cultural characteristics, leading to the loss of national recognition of works, the emergence of "homogenization" and "westernization" tendencies, which is not conducive to strengthening national cultural identity. Third, the difference in audience cognition. Different audiences have different cultural backgrounds and aesthetic levels, and their understanding of Chinese-Western integrated music is also different. Some audiences find it difficult to understand the cultural connotation behind technical integration, leading to poor cultural communication effect of works and difficulty in realizing the wide transmission of cultural identity. In addition, the lack of creative talents and the deviation of market orientation have further aggravated the dilemma of cultural identity construction, which needs to be solved in a targeted manner.

### **5. Conclusion**

Chinese-Western integration is an inevitable trend of contemporary music creation, and its core is to realize the unity of technical innovation and cultural identity. There are significant differences in creation techniques between Chinese and Western music. These differences originate from their different cultural backgrounds and aesthetic concepts. The essence of technical integration is cultural integration, which needs to be based on the core of both cultures to realize the organic combination of techniques such as scale, harmony and musical instruments. Cultural identity is the soul of Chinese-Western integrated music creation, which not only provides guidance for technical integration, but also strengthens the inheritance of national culture and cross-cultural communication. Its construction needs to adhere to the authenticity of national culture, respect the differences of Western culture, and explore common humanistic values. At present, Chinese-Western integrated music creation still faces dilemmas such as the disconnection between techniques and culture and the imbalance of cultural identity. Creators need to establish a correct concept of cultural identity, deeply explore the connotation of Chinese and Western cultures, and realize the unity of technical integration and cultural expression; at the same time, strengthen the training of creative talents and guide the healthy development of the market to promote the high-quality development of Chinese-Western integrated music creation. In the future, Chinese-Western integrated music creation should adhere to "upholding integrity and innovation", rationally draw on excellent Western techniques on the basis of adhering to the authenticity of national culture, convey multicultural values, not only strengthen national cultural identity, but also promote cross-cultural music communication, and highlight the diverse vitality of music art.

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