

## THE BEAUTIFUL MIAO MOUNTAIN: THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CREATION FROM MIAO MUSIC CULTURE IN GUIZHOU

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### Abstract

"The Beautiful Miao Mountain" is based on the Feige tune (Flying song), the Feige of the Miao ethnic group in southeastern (Qiandongnan) Guizhou. It is a folk song with the characteristics of the Miao people in Guizhou with a long history. They live in the mountains, and singing is one of their daily communications, disseminating information, and expressing emotions. Because the two sides of the singing sing opposite each other across the mountain, the voice is soft and inaudible unless shouting. Let the other party hear the singing content, so the "Feige" of the Miao people is sung with an authentic voice, has solid penetrating power, and is more infectious, was born. This research aims to study Miao Fei Ge music in Guizhou and create a contemporary music creation from Miao Music Culture in Guizhou. The research has employed qualitative research methods and creative research methods to conduct research. In "The Beautiful Miao Mountain", the researcher used some elements of miao folk songs to create the music composition, used the violin vividly imitates the twists and turns of the human voice and the natural sounds of insects and birds in the early morning of Miaoling. It uses bright and cheerful Feige to describe the beauty of Miao Village in the early morning. It expresses the happy life scene of the Miao people. Using the violin to play the Miao Feige represents the human voice, a new fusion of national folk music and Western musical instruments, and an innovative form of contemporary Miao culture, which can improve the social awareness of national folk music. Another innovative performance of Miao music will also better promote the development of Miao music in Guizhou.

**Keywords:** The Beautiful Miao Mountain, Feige (Miao Flying Song), Violin,  
Contemporary

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## 1. Introduction

The Miao is an ancient ethnic group scattered all over the world, one of the largest settlements of the Miao is in Qiandongnan, Guizhou, where they now live (Zhao Xionggu, 2013). Miao Feige (Miao Folk Song) is the traditional music of Jianhe County and Leishan County in Guizhou Province and one of China's national intangible cultural heritages. Due to historical wars, migration, and other reasons, the Miao people mainly live in the lofty mountains and mountains of Leigong Mountain and Wuling Mountain. This area has high mountains, dense forests, ravines, and crisscrossed traffic. Singing is one of Miao's daily communication, disseminating information and expressing emotions. Because the two sides of the singing sing opposite each other across the mountain, the voice is soft and inaudible unless shouting. (Zhang Jin, 2015) Let the other party hear the singing content, so the "Feige" of the Miao people is sung with an authentic voice, has solid penetrating power, and is more infectious, was born. The Feige is clear and high-pitched, with significant ups and downs in the spin, and they jump up and down continuously, giving people a sense of edges and corners, and the rhythm is free and stretched. The rhythmic characteristics of indulgent shouting on the deep Miaoling (Pang Ying, 2020) The unique historical and geographical environment enables the Miao people to have their unique language, culture, and musical expression. Miao Ge incorporates the way and thinking of Miao people and nature. Among them, the tones of "535" and "b3" are the characteristic tones of the Miao Fei Ge, which profoundly express the character of the Miao people (Zhang Jin, 2015) In "The Beautiful Miao Mountain", the violin and the Feige combine perfectly together. The violin uses bright and cheerful Feige to describe the beauty of Miao Village and vividly imitates the natural sounds of insects and birds in the early morning of Miaoling. It expresses the different scenes of the happy life of the Miao people.

## 2. Research Objective

2.1 To study Miao Fei Ge music in Guizhou.

2.2 To Create a contemporary music creation from Miao Music Culture in Guizhou.

## 3. Research Methodology

The research employed qualitative research methods and creative research methods to conduct research. All data were collected from literature data and fieldwork methods; questionnaires, independent interviews, and observations. Study and analyze Miao History and Culture in Guizhou, Miao Music, Music Theory, Violin

Techniques, and Analysis, related research, and creative works. By classifying the literature and the collected materials, I extracted useful information, conducted detailed research and induction, and finally created contemporary music through Guizhou music culture.

#### **4. The Subject of the Piece**

“The Beautiful Miao Mountain” is the music presentation of the life scene of the Miao people and the happy life of the Miao people, and “The Contemporary Music Creation from Miao Music Culture in Guizhou” is an innovation of the Miao traditional music interpretation -- the vocal music songs with instrumental music, the original national folk music with international violin performance. We should not only retain the characteristics of loud, loud, and loud of Miao flying songs, but also reflect the elegance and simplicity of the violin in the performance -- It is a development and breakthrough of Miao music culture, but also a test. Using the violin to play the Miao Feige represents the human voice, a new fusion of national folk music and Western musical instruments, and an innovative form of contemporary Miao culture, which can improve the social awareness of national folk music. Another innovative performance of Miao music will also better promote the development of Miao music in Guizhou.

#### **5. Miao of Guizhou**

A long-standing ethnic minority, the Miao are scattered all over the world and are one of the fifty-six ethnic minorities in China. The Miao people of Guizhou have a long cultural history, dating back 5,000 to 6,000 years to the time of the Yanhuang legend. However, for historical and war reasons, they have undergone five major migrations (Shi Chaojiang, 1995) Now, located in the southeast of Guizhou Province, Xijiang Qianhu Miaozhai is the largest gathering place of Miao people in China and even the world.

The Miao boasts their language, as well as a long history of music and dance. The Miao loves to sing and dance, while music is the way and means by which the Miao people express their lives and emotions and are highly skilled.

#### **6. Miao Feige**

As one of the national intangible cultural heritages of China, the Miao Feige (Miao folk song) is a traditional music of Jianhe County and Leishan County, Guizhou Province. It is a form of Miao song sung by the real voice, which is highly penetrating and infectious. Miao Feige is clear and high, and the spinning method of big ups and

downs, more continuous jump up and down, give people a sense of angular, the rhythm is free and expansive, frequently with a few dense notes followed by a sudden release and an arbitrary extension, showing the rhythmic character of standing in the high mountains and deep valleys of the Miao mountains and shouting. The "535" and "b3" tones are characteristic of the Miao flying song, giving a deep expression of the character of the Miao people.

Miao Feige is one of the forms of Miao songs, with distinct ethnic characteristics. It is very personalized, different people sing different styles. Miao Feige has various singing forms, such as unison singing, solo singing, and duet singing. It is an authentic original ecological singing method, which generally adopts the dialect of Miao dialect and natural singing methods. In the process of singing, it has no accompaniment, strong original ecological characteristics, and ethnic local characteristics (Wang Linna, 2018)

## 7. On-the-spot investigation

To conduct a deeper study on Miao customs and culture, the researchers also conducted field visits to Qian Tao Miao Township, Huaxi District, Guiyang City, Guizhou Province; Jianshan Miao Village, Jianba Town, Suiyang County, Zunyi City, Guizhou Province; and Shibing County, Qiandongnan Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province. Respect for the current Miao life status, customs, culture, music, and other aspects of the in-depth understanding.



Figure 1 the Life of Miao people

Source: Hui Jiang

## 8. The Violin

For more than 300 years now, the violin is one of the most important instruments in Western music since the 17th century, it is the main instrument in the modern orchestra string group. Because of its beautiful tone, wide range and strong expression force, and its voice line is close to the human voice, the violin has been in

a prominent position and has been favored by people since its birth from the day that it was born. The violin can be ensemble and played alone, for centuries, famous composers from around the world have written a large number of classics for the violin and the violinist injects the soul, it makes the playing art of the violin more and more exquisite. (Xuan Qinfeng, 2020)

## 9. Violin playing skills

One of the most important stringed instruments, the violin has a delicate emotional expression and a singing tone that is highly expressive and infectious. It is capable of playing both lyrical melodies and passionate, virtuosic rhythms (Li Jie, 2015) The use of the violin, the closest instrument to the human voice in instrumental music, to play the Miao flying songs is not only an innovation but also because only the violin can show the singing human voice subtly.

“The Beautiful Miao Mountain” is based on the Miao Feige tune, which circulate in Qiandongnan, Guizhou, and is arranged based on the folk songs, preserving the original style characteristics of the Feige as much as possible in terms of tuning, utilizing transposition, rhythmic changes, and simulating birdsong to develop the piece significantly. In the music, some glissandos and overtones are utilized in the violin performance to represent the natural sound of birdsong in the morning of the Miao hamlet, while drumstick bowing and bow striking is used to represent the bright and joyful life of the Miao people during the festival.

## 10. The pentatonic scale

In the piece, Beautiful Miao Mountain, the traditional Chinese music theory of the pentatonic scale will be used.

As its name implies, the pentatonic scale is a scale of five tones arranged in pure fifths, starting with the Gong and ending with the Yu, in the following order: Gong - Shang - Jiao - Zhi - Yu, in Chinese notation: "1 2 3 5 6". In pentatonic notation, it is as follows:



Figure 2 The pentatonic scale

Source: Jiang Hui

The pentatonic scale is distinguished from the heptatonic scale by its lack of chromatic (minor second) intervals, which is referred to as the 'pentatonic scale without semitone' or the 'whole-tone pentatonic scale' (Ma Xiaoyu, 2019)

### 11. Music Interpretation

“The Beautiful Miao Mountain” is a musical performance with instrumental performance, singing, and dance. The work seems to tell a love story, but in fact, the love story shows the Miao people's life, farming, marriage, festival celebration, and other contents. In the process of singing the flying song, the rich feelings of the Miao people are conveyed and expressed. Throughout the performance, the author played six pieces of music created and adapted from the Miao flying songs, while the rest of the pieces were sung and played by the Miao singers and musicians. In the music works, the violin performance will be the whole music series together, she is like a leader, leading the audience through the Miao from morning to night day daily paintwork, marriage, celebration activities scene, immersive to understand the local conditions and customs of the Miao people, life customs and spiritual outlook. At the same time, in the whole work, in addition to the violin part, and the singing part of the author also as much as possible to retain the original ecological characteristics at the same time, with some adaptations to modern music style, and adjustments, the purpose is to let more people accept Miao music, hope to give the characteristics of the era in music.

### 12. Story Line

The morning sun in Miao village is shining brightly, with birds' twitter and the fragrance of flowers. Ah Mei and a few friends went out to the river, playing and singing while washing clothes. The girls' song attracted the boys doing farm work on the side, Ah Mei also saw her missing lover Ah Hao, two lovers cannot help but say love to each other...After working, the young people went to the square of the village to attend this year's harvest celebration. The celebration was lively and grand. In the celebration, everyone sang, danced and played Lusheng (Chinese wind instrument), singing and laughing...When the celebration was over, night fell and people dispersed, Ah Mei and Ah Hao also said goodbye. After a day of hustle and bustle, the Miao village was restored to its former tranquility...

### 13. Music analysis

According to the storyline, the music structure is divided into three parts: the introduction, the middle, and the ending.

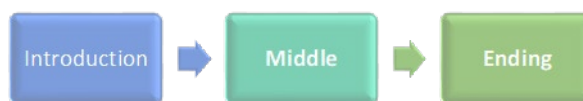


Figure 3 the Music Structure

Source: Jiang Hui

In the introduction, violin Solo Miao Feige depicts the beautiful scenery of Miao village in the morning. The violin played clean, clear, and bright as if the sun shone through the leaves in the morning. With music describing the Miao village in the sunrise east, everything is awakened by the sun thriving scene beautiful scene. The bamboo flute is joined, and the violin plays alternately, changing the Miao flying song, just like the singer singing, the rhythm is freely relaxed. The Feige is one of the most characteristic tunes of Miao music. As long as the Miao Feige rings, the audience seems to be in the Miao ridge in the morning, as if to hear a beautiful Miao girl, is gently waking up the sleeping mountain with her beautiful song (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 the Music score of Miao Feige

Source: Jiang Hui

This piece of music is melodious, the melody is very large, and female singing uses the form of true and false sound conversion. So in this period of performance, to better show the characteristics of the Miao music and charm, the violin by changing the pitch-free conversion, and joining the "Glissando (Slide sound)" play, through the Glissando, a good connection between sound and sound, vividly restore the Miao Feige of the most characteristic of the "drag". The use of this performance skill not only shows the charm of the Miao Feige but also adds a gentle and charming charm to the Miaoling in the morning. As we know, the violin is the closest instrument to the human voice. The performance of the violin better restores the original voice of the unaccompanied Miao Feige, making this piece richer and more charming.

In the middle, the violin played four flying songs of the Miao nationality, among which three were the most important, which showed different life scenes: 1. "Youfang



song" showing the love scene of the Miao youth, 2. The "Labor song" of the Miao people's labor scene, 3. Show the Miao people dance "Dance song".

In every village in the Miao area, there is a "Youfang square" -- this is the favorite place for the local young men and women. When the night falls or the slack time rests, the young men and women in the village will be invited to the square to gather, make friends, and sing. If they meet their favorite lover in the square, they will convey their love and express their hearts with songs. From this, it is not difficult to see that the Miao people are very good at expressing emotions, the enthusiasm of the nation. Miao love song is a kind of regional five-tone scale folk song with a unique melody, with a falling and broad tone, long and graceful, relatively free rhythm, beautiful melody, and delicate and moving emotion.

The researchers adapted and created the "Youfang song" melody after absorbing the elements of the Taijiang region love songs. Although the instrument performance has no lyrics, "love" has become the core of musical expression. This piece of music is mainly emotional expression, melodious melody, graceful melody as if a pair of men and women in the mountains and deep valleys tell each other, echo each other, and miss each other mood. Suggest that although Ah Mei is playing in the laundry and washing with her sisters, but in the heart missing her lover Ah Hao, is eager to meet with him. From section 1 to section 26, the violin and bamboo flute are played alternately, imitating the love song of the Miao Feige, one side is the male and the other, the female, alternately duet. In this part of the performance, the violin used a lot of "Legato" (several notes were played in a bow), which reached the breath as coherently as possible, as if the Miao men and women were singing and chanting affectionately across the mountains. The Vibrato also increased, increasing the ups and downs of inner activities and the performance of emotional changes (see Figure 5). In the 27 sections of the paragraph, two instruments play together, suggesting that the hero and heroine gradually agree and understand each other through communication. This piece of music not only expresses emotion, indicates the development of the later plot later, but also plays a role of connecting the past and the next in the whole music (see Figure 6).



Figure 5 the Music score from "Youfang song"

Source: Jiang Hui





Figure 6 the Music score from “Youfang song”

Source: Jiang Hui

To show the expression of the labor field scene, we created and adapted a “Labor Song” according to the Miao folk song tune in southeast Guizhou province and the Miao song "Drunk Miao Township". The piece of music is mainly divided into two parts: section 1 to 8 is the first part, and section 8 to 22 is the second part. The first part is mainly to show the scene of the Miao people's work, and a melody with a strong rhythm is selected for the music. The tune is inspired by the Miao folk songs in southeast Guizhou province. This tune is often used by young men and women to play, tease each other, or praise, but the rhythm is relatively slow. But here we adjusted the rhythm a little faster, set to 80 / minute, first to match the speed of labor hoe, and then this speed is easier to show the sense of power when labor. For this reason, the violin changed the lyrical way of playing the bow before by hitting the bow, and the lower part of the bow is selected near the root of the bow. The notes played are full of power and crisp. In this way, the whole music is not only full of rhythm but also full of power. The listener can not only feel the strength and firmness of the working people when they work but also feel the vigorous vigor and exuberant energy of the young people. In the background of the music, the boys’ performance of the "hoe" in the eyes of the audience suddenly vivid up (see Figure 7).



Figure 7 the Music score from “Labor Song”

Source: Jiang Hui

The second part suddenly becomes broad and lyrical compared to the first part. The creative inspiration mainly comes from the singing of praises to Miao Township in “Drunken Miao Township”. Miao music is good at expressing emotions by using scenery. Music in these lyric expresses two feelings: on the one hand, it is the emotion between Ah Hao and Ah Mei's lover; on the other hand, is the Miao people's love for their hometown. Miao is a bright character, clear love and hate of the nation, so the expression of emotion is very clear and sufficient, both the love for lovers and love of hometown, are expressed very fully, so in the creation of this paragraph, continuous use of several 3 and 4 long, is to fully express the overflow of emotion. The violin plays the whole bow from the bow at the front bow root and pays special attention to the maintenance of the strength at the bow change, to reduce the trace of the bow change and maintain the continuity and extension of the breath. This choice of playing skills is like free and emotional singing in the mountains, and the inner emotion is abundant and full (see Figure 8).



Figure 8 the Music score from “Labor Song”

Source: Jiang Hui

The “Dance song” was created for the golden pheasant dance, the cheerful, violin, bamboo flute, and the Miao drum dance is adapted from the introduction of the section of the Miao Feige. But the pace has changed quite a lot. The rhythm of the introduction period is free, slow ~ fast ~ slow, while this period of rhythm is strict, fast, and uniform. The expression of emotion also changes from melodious, clear, and bright to happy and impassioned because of the change of rhythm. After playing a melody with the bamboo flute, the violin, and Miao drum are added accordingly, completing a process from far to near, from light to thick. The whole music adds a strong festive atmosphere with the addition of percussion music, while the violin and bamboo flute performance will fully show the joy of the festival. In this piece of music, the violin and bamboo flute also plays like the leader, gradually bringing everyone's sight from the affectionate environment of men and women in front to the cheerful scene of the Miao festival celebration, which also paves the way for the following celebration activities. The addition of the Miao nationality golden pheasant dance makes the festive atmosphere more intense. The difficulty of playing the violin in this section increases, because in the fast rhythm at the same time to retain the style characteristics

of the Miao Feige. This requires not only the accuracy of the sound that quickly transforms the position in the high-span sound area, but also make sure the Glissando natural performance. At the same time, in order to better express the freedom and strength of the dance in the music, this section is almost all the whole bow performance except for the last three bars. At the end of the song, the violin quickly rushed to the top of the overtone, which imitates the habitual shouts of the singers at the end of the Miao Feige, showing the joy and confidence of the Miao people, and well showing the crisp and agile character of the Miao people (see Figure 9).



Figure 9 the Music score from “Dance song”

Source: Jiang Hui

In the ending, the traditional theme of Miao Feige appears again. At the end of the performance, the Miao Feige is played the same as at the beginning again. The whole work echoes at the beginning and end, alternating between morning and night. Different from the beginning, the performance is more quiet and calm, the music slowly ends in a peaceful life, describes the quiet, and people return to their homes to sleep, which also indicates that a new day is coming... (see Figure 10)



Figure 10 the Music score from the ending

Source: Jiang Hui

#### 14. Suggestion

Through the history of the Miao (Miao customs and culture) understanding, the study and study of Miao music, the Miao flying song, and contemporary Miao music research and analysis, combined with the traditional Chinese music theory of the pentatonic scale, violin playing skills to create, create suitable contemporary aesthetic, with national characteristics of the violin playing music. Hope that through the music research-creation to achieve the following expectations: 1. A deeper understanding of Miao culture and Miao music. 2. Build a cultural bridge for the communication between the outside world and the Miao people. 3. Protect the traditional music culture of Guizhou Miao people in the form of music innovation. 4. To provide creative ideas for people who are interested in music and culture integration.

#### 15. Conclusion

The Feige is bright and high, the melody rises and falls greatly, and the rhythm is free and stretches freely, vividly showing the character characteristics of the Miao people. But if it is limited to folk songs, the people who love popular songs will not appreciate their style. If limited to vocal singing, the people who love music in the world will inevitably feel monotonous. Playing the Miao Feige on the violin of the Western classical instrument is a challenging thing and also a very creative thing. Feige in more forms of music is my desire to spread the music and culture in my hometown.

I take Miao culture and Miao music as the cornerstone and adapt some modern music elements based on retaining their original ecological characteristics. --This is a development and breakthrough of Miao music and will further broaden the breadth and depth of the outside understanding of Guizhou Miao people from the level of music. I hope that this innovation can open up a fresh path for future folk music researchers and provide a reference for contemporary music creators. I hope more that the combination of violin and Feige--two traditional classical music from East and West, is more conducive to spreading the music of the Miao Feige hidden in the mountains, to every corner of the world, and building a beautiful bridge for the exchange of world music culture.

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