

YANGQIN'S LOCALIZATION PROCESS IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to study the development and localization process of the yangqin. Through a multi-method approach combining literature review, interviews, and field observation, this research investigates how this foreign instrument was transformed into an integral component of Chinese national music. The findings reveal that the yangqin's localization represents a paradigm of aesthetic-driven ontological reconstruction. Key mechanisms include structural modifications for tonal adaptation, the invention of performance techniques such as "rolling tone" and "trembling bamboo" to embody Chinese aesthetic principles, the emergence of distinct regional schools, and the symbolic renaming that solidified its Chinese identity. The study demonstrates that successful cultural integration requires not only technical adaptation but, more importantly, aesthetic innovation and institutional support. These findings offer valuable insights into cross-cultural musical exchange and contribute to the theoretical framework of cultural adaptation.

Keywords: Yangqin, Localization, Cultural Adaptation, Process Development

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INTRODUCTION

As a core instrument in Chinese traditional music, the development of the yangqin reflects the complex dynamics of cross-cultural musical exchange. Its journey from a foreign instrument to a national symbol raises a central question: how are musical instruments absorbed, adapted, and recreated within new cultural contexts. The yangqin was introduced to China's coastal regions through the Maritime Silk Road during the mid-Ming Dynasty, and its initial introduction met the growing demand for secular music in the commercializing society of that time (Zhou Jingbao, 2010). However, its inherent structural and tonal characteristics were fundamentally rooted in non-Chinese musical systems, which posed a core challenge for its integration into a tradition that values flowing melodies and subtle tonal nuances—that is, the aesthetic of "linear thinking."

The subsequent localization of the yangqin was driven by the interaction between folk artistic practices and systematic, top-down institutional reforms. In the twentieth century, against the backdrop of the New Culture Movement and state-led efforts to improve national music, the transformation of the yangqin gained crucial momentum. During this period, scientific improvements expanded its range, redesigned its pitch arrangement to suit Chinese modes, and optimized its tone, collectively promoting its evolution from an accompanying instrument to a solo and orchestral voice (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009). At the same time, performers created unique techniques such as "rolling tone" and "trembling bamboo" to imitate the delicate subtlety unique to Chinese music (Xiang Zuhua, 2002).

Although existing academic research has sufficiently documented the historical trajectory, technical evolution, and stylistic differentiation of the yangqin, these studies are often confined to isolated disciplinary perspectives. A critical gap lies in the failure to deeply understand the synergistic mechanism driving its thorough localization—namely, the dialectical relationship between bottom-up folk adaptation and top-down professional reform (Zhang Boyu, 2016). Furthermore, the semiotic meaning behind its identity transformation from "foreign qin" (洋琴) to "yangqin" (扬琴), within the broader context of modern Chinese nation-building, requires deeper theoretical elaboration.

Therefore, grounded in the aforementioned background, this study aims to employ a combined approach of historical, ethnographic, and analytical methods to systematically examine four core dimensions of the yangqin's localization process: the specific pathways of its structural modifications and technical innovations; how these technical changes reflect and serve the aesthetic principles of Chinese music; the stylistic diversity formed through the practices of different regional schools; and finally, how the interaction between top-down institutional reforms and bottom-up folk practices collectively accomplished the identity reconstruction of the instrument from "foreign qin" to "yangqin."

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Academic research on the localization of the yangqin in China has yielded substantial findings, laying a solid foundation for this study. Scholars acknowledge that the localization of the yangqin represents a creative transformation driven by both cultural aesthetics and modern ideologies (Li Lingling, 2018). Upon closer examination, however, current research perspectives remain somewhat fragmented, often concentrating on specific domains through isolated disciplinary lenses without establishing a comprehensive interpretive framework that connects all dimensions.

In the field of historical research, scholars have extensively explored the pathways through which the yangqin was introduced to China and its relationship with the socio-cultural contexts of the Ming and Qing dynasties. By employing theoretical frameworks such as cultural diffusion and material culture studies, researchers have outlined the instrument's transmission

via the Maritime Silk Road. Through textual analysis of historical documents such as the Qing Bai Lei Chao (Classified Anthology of Qing Anecdotes), they have demonstrated how this foreign instrument initially served the entertainment needs of urban elites and literati in commercial centers like Guangzhou before gradually permeating folk musical genres (Xiang Zuhua, 2002; Zhou Jingbao, 2010). These studies have effectively illustrated the instrument's geographical dissemination and initial social acceptance. Nevertheless, deeper analysis is still required regarding the yangqin's interaction with twentieth-century modernizing intellectual currents—such as the influence of the May Fourth Movement on redefining "guoyue" (national music)—and how these ideologies directly shaped the agendas of instrument reformers.

In studies of the instrument's physical properties and artistic expression, academic research demonstrates a distinct empirical orientation, systematically documenting technical reforms from range expansion to the establishment of scientific tuning systems, all of which hold significant historical value (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009). However, such research sometimes overlooks the aesthetic motivations behind technical innovations. The internal logic connecting the pursuit of uniquely Chinese musical qualities like "yünwei" (artistic conception) with their technical realization warrants further theoretical exploration.

The yangqin developed various distinctive schools during its evolution, with existing research successfully demonstrating the regional diversity of yangqin art (Xiang Zuhua, 2002). By analyzing the artistic characteristics of different schools, scholars have revealed their profound connections to local cultural ecologies, providing important references for understanding school formation.

Research on identity transformation demonstrates stronger theoretical awareness. Placing the change in the instrument's name within the context of modern nation-building reveals the political and cultural significance behind its shift from "foreign" (洋) to "yang" (扬), studies on music and identity construction provide theoretical support for understanding the cultural strategies underlying this renaming (Zhang Boyu, 2016). Studies on music and identity construction provide theoretical support for understanding the cultural strategies underlying this renaming. Nevertheless, existing scholarship has paid insufficient attention to how this new identity was received and applied in specific practical contexts.

In summary, existing literature collectively presents a detailed yet not fully integrated academic picture. Within this context, this paper employs the theoretical framework of cultural "integration and selection" (Zhang Boyu, 2016) to examine the interplay between "top-down" institutional reforms and "bottom-up" folk practices, aiming to reveal the deeper mechanisms behind the profound transformation of the yangqin's cultural identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1) Literature Research Method

The researchers conducted comprehensive searches using online databases, systematically collect and sort out the following types of documents: first, records in historical books of successive dynasties regarding the introduction and early application of the "yangqin"; second, relevant meeting minutes, reports, journal articles, and monographs since modern times, especially those from the musical instrument reform movement in the 20th century. Through the identification, cross-verification, and analysis of these documents, a historical framework and factual basis for the sinicization process of the yangqin are constructed.

2) Interview Method

This study employed in-depth interviews to gather firsthand information and tacit knowledge not documented in existing literature. Through purposive sampling, three key categories of respondents were selected: experts long dedicated to instrument reform (Professor Liu Hanli), representative inheritors of regional schools (Professor Qian Weihong and Teacher Lin

Shiyan). The interviews primarily revolved around three core dimensions: first, the decision-making process and technical pathway selection in instrument reform; second, the aesthetic concepts and artistic pursuits behind performance technique innovations; third, the stylistic characteristics of regional schools. Through in-depth interviews with these key informants, rich oral historical data and tacit knowledge were obtained.

3) Observational Method

This study employs systematic field investigations and video documentation to obtain direct research data. The researchers visited institutions such as the Yuehai Musical Instrument Museum and the Art and Documentation Center of the Chinese National Academy of Arts, focusing on examining representative physical specimens of the yangqin from various historical periods held in their collections, and meticulously recorded their evolutionary trajectory. For the video analysis, representative performance recordings from the 1950s to the present were selected for cross-era comparison. Particular emphasis was placed on examining how performance techniques and musical interpretation methods have progressively developed a mode of expression aligned with the "linear thinking" characteristic of Chinese musical aesthetics from the 1950s onward.

RESEARCH RESULTS

1) Motivations for the Localization of the Yangqin

1.1) The Historical Development of the Yangqin

The developmental trajectory of the yangqin in China reveals a complex process of cultural negotiation and adaptation. According to documentary sources, this instrument was introduced to China's coastal regions through the Maritime Silk Road during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties (Zhou Jingbao, 2010). Our analysis of historical documents indicates that clear records of the "foreign qin" (洋琴) already appear in Qing dynasty texts, showing its initial circulation among treaty ports and literati circles (Lin Cuiqing, 2013). During this period, the yangqin gradually spread from coastal areas to the interior, beginning to emerge in local musical genres such as Guangdong music and "Jiangnan sizhu", demonstrating initial adaptation to local musical practices (Gui Xili, 1999).

The early twentieth century marked an important transitional period for the development of the yangqin. Historical documents confirm that the New Culture Movement promoted the trend of "national music improvement," with musicians represented by Zheng Jinwen and Liu Tianhua incorporating the yangqin into their reform vision. The establishment of the "National Music Improvement Society" in 1927 signaled the beginning of a conscious stage in yangqin reform. This period primarily focused on exploring range expansion and pitch adjustment, laying the foundation for subsequent systematic reforms (Wang Yaohua, 2005).

The 1950s and 1960s were a critical stage in the development of the yangqin. Reformers represented by Yang Jingming established the "horizontal-fifth, vertical-second" pitch arrangement system, greatly enhancing the efficiency of performing traditional Chinese repertoire (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009). Simultaneously, a group of artists emerged who created classic works for the yangqin, enriching its solo repertoire. Historical records show that the formal entry of the yangqin into the Central Conservatory of Music in 1956 marked the establishment of its professional status, with systematic textbook compilation and teaching methods gradually being perfected.

Since the reform and opening up, yangqin art has shown a trend of diversified development. Combining analysis of museum collections with interview data reveals that the characteristics of various regional schools have become increasingly mature. The subtle slides and vibrato of the Northeastern yangqin, the powerful and vigorous style of the Sichuan yangqin, and the light and flowing manner of the Guangdong yangqin have all been further developed. The expansion of international cultural exchanges has brought the Chinese yangqin to the world stage, while

a new generation of performers actively explores modern compositional techniques and performance forms based on inheriting tradition.

Today, the yangqin has completed its localization process, transforming from an initially foreign instrument into an indispensable component of Chinese national music. Historical records and scholarly literature collectively demonstrate that its developmental journey not only reflects the evolution of the instrument itself but also represents the trajectory of modern Chinese musical culture, showcasing the enduring vitality of traditional art in contemporary society.

1.2) The External Impetus of Modern National Music Ideologies

Historical documentation (Wang Yaohua, 2005) shows that the early twentieth-century social transformations provided a crucial opportunity for the Sinicization of the yangqin. The rise of the New Culture Movement prompted the music community to reconsider the relationship between tradition and modernization, making "the improvement of Chinese music" a shared goal among musicians of the time. Against this historical backdrop, the yangqin, recognized for its potential for refinement, became a focal point in the modernization reform of traditional Chinese instruments.

Around the May Fourth Movement, a group of visionary musicians began systematically exploring paths for reforming national instruments. The founding of the "National Music Improvement Society" in 1927 explicitly advocated "adopting the essence of our native traditions while embracing external trends" (Feng Guangyu, 2008). Interviews with instrument reform experts confirmed that the yangqin, with its broad range and strong harmonic capabilities, was identified as an ideal vehicle for realizing this vision. During this period, preliminary scientific modifications were undertaken, including initial expansions of its range and rationalization of its tone arrangement.

After the 1950s, yangqin reform entered a substantive phase. Specialized instrument reform teams were established to carry out systematic scientific modifications (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009). The instrument's range was gradually expanded to over four octaves, significantly enhancing its expressive scope. Our interviews with reform participants highlighted that the most critical breakthrough was the establishment of the "horizontal-fifth, vertical-second" tone arrangement method, a system notably refined by instrument reform pioneer Yang Jingming during the 1950s, greatly improved the efficiency of playing traditional Chinese musical works. Through these systematic reforms, the yangqin successfully transitioned from a folk instrument to a professional one. This reform process reflects the practical explorations of modern Chinese musicians under the concept of "Sino-Western fusion," providing valuable experience for the modernization of other national instruments. Driven by external ideological trends, this reform movement endowed the yangqin with a new identity, making it an indispensable component of China's national music system.

2) Reform of Structure and Innovation of Techniques

2.1) Nationalization of Structural Reform

As evidenced by both academic literature (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009) and our observation of instrument collections, the most fundamental transformation in the development course of yangqin in China is reflected in the nationalized reform of its physical structure. The systematic reform based on acoustic principles and performance practice has completely changed the physical properties of the instrument, enabling it to fully meet the expressive needs of Chinese music in terms of range, pitch position and timbre.

The expansion of range is the primary breakthrough of the reform. The traditional yangqin has a narrow range of only two octaves, which severely limits its musical expressiveness. Since the 1950s, musical instrument reformers have gradually expanded the range to more than four groups by increasing the number of strings, extending the body of the instrument and improving the distribution of string rows (Huang He, 2015). This evolution is clearly demonstrated in

specific models such as the "401 Type Modified Yangqin", which became a standard in professional circles. This reform has solved the problem of the lack of bass part of yangqin in national orchestras. The expanded range is sufficient to cover the range needs of most national instrumental music works, transforming yangqin from an accompaniment instrument into a solo instrument with complete expressiveness.

Experts have completely solved this problem through the "horizontal fifth and vertical second" pitch arrangement method. In this arrangement method, the horizontally adjacent pitches are in a fifth relationship, and the vertically adjacent pitches are in a second relationship, forming a pitch array layout with strong regularity. Performers can play smooth national-style melodies without difficulty, improves the performance efficiency and accuracy.

To meet the aesthetic requirements of mellow, full and resonant tones in traditional Chinese music, reformers replaced the original metal strings with steel strings of specific specifications added thickness. They increased the volume of the resonance box of the yangqin and optimized the internal sound beam structure, significantly enhancing the acoustic resonance effect. They improved the material and shape of yangqin mallets, adjusting the softness and hardness of the timbre by wrapping felt of different thicknesses around the mallet heads.

This series of structural reforms laid a solid material foundation for the subsequent development of yangqin art and also served as an exemplary case of the successful localization of a foreign musical instrument.

2.2) Creative Development of Performance Techniques

The most artistically valuable breakthrough in the sinicization process of yangqin is reflected in the creative development of performance techniques. These techniques not only improve the original performance methods but also are brand-new creations made in accordance with the aesthetic needs of Chinese music, greatly enriching the artistic expressiveness of yangqin.

Chinese music emphasizes the coherence and singability of melodic lines, yet the string-striking sound-producing feature of yangqin makes it difficult to express long-note lines. The development of the "wheel note" technique has solved the inherent limitation of yangqin's short sound duration. Interviews with senior performers revealed that, forming a dense and uniform stream of sounds that simulates the continuous effect of long notes. This compensates for the physical defect of the instrument itself, enabling yangqin to express the unique prolonged charm of Chinese music and providing technical support for performing song-like melodies.

The invention of the "trembling mallet" technique embodies the unique pursuit of "charm" in Chinese music. Performers discovered that by utilizing the elasticity of the mallet blades themselves and through the delicate control of the wrist, the mallets can continue to tremble on the strings after striking them, producing a pitch fluctuation effect similar to the "vibrato" of bowed string instruments. The subtle changes in sound waves greatly enrich the expressiveness of a single note, endowing the sound with a fluctuation feeling like "intonation and vibrato" and giving the music vivid emotional tension. Performers of different schools have also developed distinctive trembling mallet methods: some focus on the uniformity of frequency, while others emphasize the variation of amplitude, resulting in rich differences in artistic expression (Li Lingling, 2018).

The technique of "sliding and wiping notes" is obviously inspired by the glissandi of bowed string instruments and the tones of local languages. Field observations and interviews with representatives of different schools confirm that performers directly press the strings with their fingers and slide, changing the length of the strings to produce continuously changing pitches. This technique can simulate the ups and downs of human voice intonation and the unique glissando effects of local music, featuring strong stylistic characteristics. In schools such as the Northeast yangqin school, the sliding and wiping note technique has developed more abundant expression methods. By controlling the pressing force and sliding speed, it can express various artistic effects ranging from gentle and delicate to bold and rugged.

The creation process of these techniques fully demonstrates the wisdom of Chinese musicians. After deeply understanding the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese music, they have carried out creative transformation based on the instrumental features of yangqin. The development of each technique has undergone long-term practical exploration, and through the continuous improvement by generations of performers, a systematic technique system has finally been formed.

3) Formation of Local Stylistic Schools

Researchers' synthesis of documentary materials and interviews with representatives of local schools indicates that in the process of its dissemination across various regions of China, in the process of spreading across various regions of China, the yangqin has been deeply integrated with local folk music, gradually forming artistic schools with distinct regional characteristics (Xiang Zuhua, 2002). These schools also embody the aesthetic traits of local music cultures, demonstrating the diversity and richness of the yangqin's Localization process.

The Guangdong yangqin features a clear, bright tone and lively, brisk rhythms. This style is perfectly exemplified in the classic piece "Thunder in a Drought". Excelling in using dense "flourishing techniques" to adorn melodies. It incorporates decorative notes through agile mallet work, fully displaying a gorgeous aesthetic. Emphasizing the flexible use of mallets, it creates light and dark tonal variations by controlling the strength of string strikes, producing a "crystal-clear" sound.

Influenced by the gentle temperament of Wu-Yue culture, the Jiangnan Sizhu yangqin adheres to the style of "delicacy, density, lightness, and softness." The repertoire includes quintessential works like "Three Six". Emphasizing dialogue and resonance with other instruments. Its tone is mellow and soft, and it excels in using gentle rolls to express the tender charm of the Jiangnan water towns.

Shaped by Bashu storytelling art, the Sichuan yangqin boasts a unique performance form and a vigorous, unrestrained style. This character is powerfully conveyed in the composition "General's Command". It straightforward artistic personality through dramatic dynamic contrasts and rhythmic changes (Gui Xili, 1999). Focusing on melodic granularity and rhythmic tension, its firm string strikes generate a penetrating sound that aligns with the upright and bold character of the Sichuan people.

The Northeast yangqin inherits the heritage of cultural integration among multiple ethnic groups in Northeast China and has developed a unique technical system of "intonation, vibrato, glissando, and trill." It expresses solemn and desolate emotions through rich slides and glides, creates a distinctive rhythm via subtle variations in pitch, and reflects the unrestrained emotional traits of the Northeast people.

The formation process of these local schools reflects the historical trajectory of the yangqin's in-depth integration with the music cultures of various regions in China. The technique is central to the expressive impact of works such as "Yangko Dance". While maintaining the basic performance principles of the yangqin, each school has developed a unique technical system and artistic style according to local aesthetic needs, collectively forming a rich and colorful artistic landscape of yangqin art (Xiang Zuhua, 2002). This diversified development model has enriched the artistic expressiveness of the yangqin and provided a vivid example for us to understand the interactive relationship between the evolution of musical instruments and cultural ecology.

4) Complete Identity Transformation: From "Foreign Qin" to "Yangqin"

Archival research and interviews with senior educators reveal that the localization process of the yangqin in China was ultimately completed through a conscious, multi-faceted identity reconstruction, symbolized by the name change from "foreign qin" (洋琴) to "yangqin" (扬琴). This renaming was not a mere semantic substitution but a symbolic strategy proactively initiated by the Chinese music community, aimed at resolving the contradiction between the

instrument's foreign label and its highly localized reality (Zhang Boyu, 2016). Once the instrument's physical structure, performance techniques, and musical vocabulary had been deeply Sinicized, the inherent "foreign" (洋) identity in its name became incongruous. Consequently, the music community adopted the homophone "扬" (yang) as a replacement. This character vividly depicts the rising and falling motion of the hammers during performance and carries the profound implied meaning of promoting Chinese national music, thereby redefining its identity at the symbolic level from a "foreign object" to an "instrument of promotion."

This symbolic reshaping was solidified and disseminated nationwide through a series of top-down institutional developments. Following the renaming, the formal entry of the yangqin into the Central Conservatory of Music in 1956 marked the beginning of its professional education path. This was a key step in the institutionalized efforts at the national level to "improve national music" and construct a modern national music system (Wang Yaohua, 2005). These measures transformed the yangqin from an instrument spontaneously circulated among the people with regional variations into a member of "national music" with unified standards, suitable for inclusion in the professional teaching system, thus ensuring the legitimacy and heritage of its new identity from an institutional perspective.

The new identity ultimately gained vitality and broad recognition through bottom-up artistic creation and external dissemination. Performers and composers, actively responding to this cultural mission, created a large number of solo works for the yangqin, completely liberating it from its subordinate role as an accompanying instrument (Liu Yuening, 2019). These works, deeply rooted in Chinese musical aesthetics (such as "linear thinking" and "yünwei" [artistic conception]), fully explored the yangqin's artistic expressiveness as a solo and concerto instrument, demonstrating its indispensable value in the modern Chinese national orchestra. Finally, through the platform of international cultural exchange, the yangqin stepped onto the world stage as a "Chinese traditional instrument" rather than a "foreign instrument," completing the final step from cultural borrowing to identity consensus and marking the successful conclusion of its localization process.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Discussion

The core conclusion of this study is that the Localization of the yangqin was not a process of gradual improvement or assimilation, but rather a profound transformation driven by the aesthetic of "linear thinking," involving the creative reconstruction of the instrument's sonic ontology. The success of this "ontological reconstruction" critically relied on the dynamic synergy between top-down institutional reforms and bottom-up folk artistic practices.

Existing academic research has provided an important historical foundation for this process and generally interprets it as a natural progression of continuous "improvement" and "integration." Historians have clearly outlined its pathways of introduction (Zhou Jingbao, 2010), technical studies have meticulously documented the scientific process of its range expansion and pitch system reform (Zhang Xuesheng, 2009), and artistic research has systematically categorized the stylistic evolution of its regional schools (Xiang Zuhua, 2002). Together, these studies have constructed a macro-narrative of its transition "from foreign to Chinese," confirming its identity transformation from a foreign instrument to a national one. However, the aforementioned perspectives fail to adequately explain the fundamental internal driving force behind this transformation. The prevailing "improvement-assimilation" paradigm tends to view localization as an external adjustment in technique and style, overlooking a core contradiction: the inherent conflict between the yangqin's physical nature as a struck string instrument and the aesthetic demands of "linear thinking" in Chinese music (which pursues

flowing melodies and subtle tonal inflections). It is precisely by deeply engaging with this contradiction that this study develops a theoretical perspective distinct from previous research. The study finds that the transformation of the yangqin was essentially a creative revolution targeting its "sonic ontology." For instance, the development of the "lunyin" (rolling tone) technique to overcome the limitation of short note duration was not merely a technical improvement but a fundamental innovation that reconfigured the very mode of sound production, enabling it to express characteristically Chinese linear melodies. Similarly, the invention of the "chanzhu" (trembling bamboo) technique aimed to embed the unique fluctuations of "yünwei" (artistic conception) into its sound.

Therefore, this study does not negate the substantial historical research of previous scholars but, by focusing on the fundamental contradiction and dynamic mechanisms, demonstrates the depth and necessity of the "ontological reconstruction" theoretical perspective. It is this process of creative reconstruction that explains how the yangqin could transcend the physical limitations of a "foreign instrument," so thoroughly integrate into the aesthetic core of Chinese music, and ultimately complete its cultural metamorphosis. The journey of the yangqin's Sinicization thus stands as a paradigm of cultural fusion, revealing that genuine cultural integration requires confronting fundamental contradictions and achieving creative ontological transformation through the synergistic innovation of aesthetics and institutions.

Conclusion

Through a systematic examination and analysis of the localization process of the yangqin in China, this study finds that it represents a creative reconstruction shaped by both internal aesthetic demands and external socio-cultural forces. From its historical evolution, structural reforms, and technical innovations to the transformation of its identity, the core driving force behind its development has consistently revolved around how to deeply align it with the aesthetic essence of Chinese music.

The key mechanisms driving the successful localization of the yangqin include:

1) The synergy between top-down institutional reforms and bottom-up folk practices

Dynamic synergy is the core mechanism of localization. The state-led "National Music Improvement" movement provided a crucial institutional framework for the standardization, scientific refinement, and professionalization of the yangqin. The spontaneous technical creations and stylistic explorations by various regional schools in folk practices ensured that its reforms were deeply rooted in local cultural soil, forming a diverse artistic ecology.

2) Technical and structural innovations aimed at resolving fundamental contradictions

To overcome the fundamental contradiction between the "staccato" sound of the yangqin as a struck string instrument and the "linear thinking" aesthetic of Chinese music, fundamental innovations were made. Techniques such as the "rolling tone" (lunyin) invented to create sustained melodic lines, the "trembling bamboo" (chanzhu) developed to imitate vocal nuances, and the "sliding and wiping notes" influenced by local music genres and languages, were all fundamental innovations aimed at producing a "sonic quality" that conforms to Chinese aesthetics, greatly expanding its musical expressiveness.

3) The formation of regional cultural ecologies and stylistic schools

During its dissemination, the yangqin deeply integrated with local folk music, forming distinct artistic schools. The bright and ornate style of Guangdong yangqin, the delicate and soft style of Jiangnan sizhu yangqin, the bold and unrestrained style of Sichuan yangqin, and the richly expressive style of Northeast yangqin all reflect the shaping power of local aesthetic preferences on the instrument's style.

4) Complete identity reconstruction from material to symbol

The ultimate completion of localization is reflected in the comprehensive transformation of its identity from material technology to cultural symbol. By replacing the character "洋" (which

denotes "Western") with the homophonic character "扬" (meaning "to uplift" or "to elevate"), and achieving institutionalization within the professional music education system, the yangqin's cultural identity was thoroughly transformed.

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