

## **Historic Value of the Music Creation of Shaanxi Erhu works and Positive Influence of Shaanxi Erhu on the Development of Erhu Art in the Yu and Qin schools**

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**Abstract:** The paper discusses the modern popularity of Erhu, initially, in order to engage its importance that is embedded within the crevices of Shaanxi Erhu traditions. Embarking on journey of genesis and evolution of the music creation elements and characteristics in Shaanxi, the paper observes the practices of the Qin Erhu school. Notably, this tradition still inspires the modern musicians who have been successfully reviving the past. The paper also discusses the characteristics of music creation and elements of concepts in the Shaanxi Erhu music in order to understand the significance and weightage of its content, style and cause for popularity. The author reviewed resources in the knowledge network, library, and other pertinent places before summarising and condensing the most recent mainstream academic papers connected to erhu. The Central Plains Culture in Henan and the Sanqin Culture in Shaanxi serve as prime examples in this respect, since their folk operas, linguistic accents, and ideological and cultural implications all had a significant impact on the development of this kind of musical instrument locally. In the development of Erhu's work in China, several tones have been remixed and reproduced. Majorly the Erhu work is based on the adaptation of norther Shaanxi folk songs. And the dialect of Shaanxi also enhances the quality of Erhu's work. Melody of Shaanxi Erhu compositions fluctuates greatly. Shaanxi Erhu works are charged with nationalistic spirit while praising the heroes of the past, we realise how local Erhu music is deeply entrenched in the living traditions of the culture.

**Keywords:** Erhu, Erhu Art; Shaanxi Erhu, Shaanxi Culture; Northern Shaanxi; Development of Erhu Art

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Music is a kind of art form that does not need prior knowledge for

appreciation in many cases. While in some cases, it does expect classical knowledge to understand the rhythm. Preferably, it connects with anybody who has the capability of hearing. And over the millennia, the discovery has led to the invention of several instruments, whether it is percussion, string-based or any other format that results into a variety of sounds. With wisdom, knowledge and curiosity, mankind began to naturally compose these sounds to develop a piece that would inspire their conscience. With civilisation, the styles also began to differ, distinguishing them from folk to tribal to urban to contemporary. However, the common sensorial element of listening and relishing continued to innate and human. The bow and string instruments have been a part of several ancient civilisations from the east to the west of the globe. Hence, when we discuss the double-stringed instrument of Erhu from China, we may find several similarities to various other musical instruments from other civilisations and regions.

The regional variations and eventual varied narratives differ in their identities. The single-stringed to multiple-stringed instruments have generally been a part of classical music, folk traditions and tribal music. And, in them the methodology of which has evolved over time. Subsequently, over a period of time, a style related to a particular region began to be identified as schools. How did these schools operate and what were the reasons for their proliferation? These schools were recognised with certain characteristics of compositions. Shaanxi Province, historically called Qin, and Henan Province, commonly known as Yu, are two separate regions in China, each possessing distinctive geological and cultural attributes. Shaanxi Province, located in the northwest region of China, is widely recognized for its abundant historical significance and cultural legacy. Xi'an, the capital of various Chinese dynasties such as the Qin and Tang dynasties, is widely recognized as the birthplace of Chinese civilization. From a geographical perspective, Shaanxi exhibits a wide range of landforms, including as the loess plateau, mountains, and fertile plains. The province is also host to the renowned Terracotta Army, an archeological marvel originating from the Qin Dynasty, which serves as a testament to the historical importance of the region. Shaanxi is renowned for its unique gastronomy, particularly its flavorful and substantial dishes like Xi'an's renowned hand-pulled noodles and roujiamo (Chinese hamburger). The province is known for its vibrant heritage of traditional music, dance, and theater, which includes the famous Shaanxi Opera (Hu & Liu, 2023; Li, 2024). Conversely, Henan Province, situated in the center region of China, is distinguished for its expansive flatlands, rivers, and significant historical sites. Henan, formerly known as Yu, has had a

significant impact on the development of Chinese history and culture. It is the origin of ancient Chinese dynasties such as the Xia, Shang, Zhou, and Han. Henan province is also the location of the Longmen Grottoes, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its extensive collection of Buddhist statues and carvings. These artifacts are a testament to Henan's rich religious and cultural legacy. Henan is renowned for its cultural heritage, specifically its traditional Chinese martial arts, notably Shaolin Kung Fu, which originated in the province's Shaolin Temple. The cuisine of Henan is distinguished by its varied flavors and ingredients, which are influenced by its central position within China (Chen, 2012).

Overall, Shaanxi and Henan provinces have made substantial contributions to China's history and culture. However, they possess distinct geographical characteristics, historical heritages, and culinary customs that set them apart and make them culturally diverse. Due to the special role and important position of Erhu in Qin Opera, the music style of Qi-School Erhu absorbs a lot and draws lessons from the melody and style of Qin Opera, making Qin-school Erhu music known as a genre with a strong regional style among the many Chinese Erhu genres. In China, the Erhu was expanded through two important schools viz. . Yu school and Qin school. The evolution of both schools considerably varied. However, it was the Qin school that became crucial in promoting the Shaanxi Erhu works. Shaanxi is one of the oldest civilisations and northern Shaanxi The primary sources of Qin School Erhu music consist of local folk opera genres such as Qin Opera, Wanwan Opera, and Meihu Opera. These musical compositions exhibit characteristics of being audacious, unrestrained, refined, and kind (Stock, 1993). Throughout history, the Erhu has endured the effects of wind, frost, rain, and snow, and has played a significant role in promoting Chinese civilization globally. It has also greatly contributed to the development and preservation of the Yu School Erhu style, particularly in the realms of opera music and dialect. Simultaneously, Yu-school Erhu music assimilates the culture of the Central Plains, incorporating several artistic components to ensure its constant rejuvenation and sustained prosperity within the vast realm of Chinese traditional culture (Youssef & Webster, 2022).

Characteristics of music. The melody consistently embodies the distinct regional essence of the Sanqin country. Qin Opera has included the performance techniques of another musical instrument in terms of performance approaches (Zhou et al., 2022).

While we discuss the bowed instruments, in China, it is observed as a central Asian involvement in not only production but also in

popularisation. It was the Mongol dynasty who moved over the Asian continent with an objective of expansion, getting introduced to a variety of cultural objects. China, since the ages, has been researching the theory of Erhu and its method of performing. However, the research continues to be entwined in its vague essence and is yet to be perfected. Over contemporary times, the systematic methodology attached to the performance, and their genres and emergence of the same has quantified an amountable material. At the same time, the research also focussed on the differentiation and typology of the styles and schools. It has also focussed on classifying various artists. Such academic achievements have made it possible to chart a route towards the contemporary Erhu composers (Hu & Liu, 2023).

It was noted by Lu Rirong in the essay "The Characteristics and Performance Techniques of Shaanxi Style Erhu" that China is a multiethnic nation with a sizable population and a big area, and the regional traditions are highly distinct. Different erhu performance styles are organically constructed to incorporate these rich natural resources as a result of the impact of dialects, traditions, and musical culture (such as opera, folk ballads, rap, etc.) generated by the working people of China throughout the centuries. Numerous erhu compositions in the Shaanxi style that I've written have been published, including "Fanhu Tune," "Rhapsody on the Theme of Qin Cavity," "Harvest Road," "Joyful Qin River," "Picking Flowers," and "Letter of Heaven." Other works by other comrades have also been made available. Other works by other comrades, including "Narrative of Weibei" by Zhang Huaide, "Narrative of Orchid" by Guan Ming, "Chang'an Social Fire" by Zhao Jiping and Lu Rirong, "Qin Feng" by Jin Zhong, etc., were also published. They all took inspiration from the voluminous and vivid Shaanxi opera music. The Qin School Erhu style has a close connection to its native folk music (mother tone), particularly with the Qin opera music, traditions, and folklore, as Niu Miao Miao points out in her essay "Qin School Erhu Style from Qin Opera Music". From the Western Zhou through the Tang dynasties, thirteen dynasties called Shaanxi, the ancient Qin area, their capital, leaving a rich cultural legacy of music behind, including court music, religious music, Chang'an's old music, opera music, and folk music (Wu et al., 2008). The music of the Qin area has evolved a specific style that is different from that of other regions due to its historical traditions, location, and the Qin character, language, and philosophy. Wu Shuxi notes in the essay "The Geographical Distribution of Henan Opera" that Chinese opera is a complete art form with a rich existential and aesthetic history that has assimilated the essence of excellent

literature and art. Local opera from Henan is a significant component of Chinese opera and contains a broad range of unique elements. Local operas have specific local colours since they are created on the "soil" of the local community and blended with local party, music, and dance idioms. The blossoms of Chinese local opera are vying for each other as they grow, giving rise to the circumstance where the three big operas overlap and a number of smaller operas are combined on the Central Plains (Ferreira da Silva, 2023). Henan local opera comes in a wide variety (Wang, 2020). This eventually traced the knowledge and the lineage of Yu and Qin schools. Such academic and informal research by academicians and the artists have been pivotal in improving the significance of the Erhu in China and the world. In ancient times, the trading and feudal communities from the ancient periods like Warring and Spring have inspired several schools of thought. This included Taoism, Confucianism and later theories which impacted the rule in China. These thought processes were important in changing the views of the local patrons to support varied art forms, whether it was visual or performing or theatre. Today, Erhu is a national musical instrument. But it was first used as an accompanying musical object in the Henan Opera bands in the late 1930s. It served as the role of support and has simultaneously progressed along with the Henan Opera (Huehns, 2000).

Tracing a slice of the history of Erhu and the method of performing it, the paper discusses the significance of Erhu in China. It will also discuss the history and evolution. From etymology to the progression, Erhu's lineage of practice and transition has traversed from the ancient to the modern. It is notable to observe and study that how various reasons have been important in spreading about this national musical instrument. However, the major reason behind its development has been the Shaanxi culture. Eventually, the discussion focuses on the Shaanxi culture and the Shaanxi Erhu music. While the paper understands the significance of the Shaanxi Erhu through its characteristics and musical elements, it identifies that how Shaanxi culture has been crucial in developing the Erhu works in China. It is the inclusion of regional, folk customs and nationalistic elements in the production and conception of musical creations that Erhu finds its way into revivalism. The schools have been redundant but the second creations of original Erhu works have been instrumental in reviving the traditional method of Erhu music production. Subsequently, the fame of Erhu's work in China was spearheaded by the famous voyagers and eventually modern musicians Figure 1 and Figure 2.

The paper arrives at the main junction of the topic and that is how the

Shaanxi Erhu works were important in generating a positive influence over the development of Erhu work in China. Overall, it focuses on the artistic value of music creation and performance of Shaanxi Erhu and the positive influence on the development of Erhu Art in China.



**Figure 1:** Blind Erhu Player in Australia

([https://music.msu.ac.th/pluginfile.php/22156/mod\\_page/content/11/60012060004](https://music.msu.ac.th/pluginfile.php/22156/mod_page/content/11/60012060004))



**Figure 2:** The Classical Erhu- a Two Stringed Bow Instrument  
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erhu#/media/File:Erhu.png>)

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The ancient Chinese records mention that, according to etymology, the Erhu is an instrument that was introduced by 'hu', who were the barbarians of the north and west. It is also derived from the traditional term called

hugin, which means that hu means barbarian and gin implies string instrument. Interestingly, er means two and hence Erhu a contemporary word would imply a two-stringed instrument adopted from the northwestern zone of barbarian antiquity.

Erhu is also worldwide known as a fiddle, due to it being a minimal stringed instrument. Erhu is also compared with violin although it functions in a different way. Interestingly, the various communities in Chinese minority races have their version of the fiddle. Eventually, the Erhu has gained immense popularity. Erhu is one of the national identities of China's cultural traditions in music and performing arts (Xi, 2019).

Since Erhu is related to folk stories, the material used to make an Erhu is used from animal or reptile hides, which include either horse or ox or python. These stories are significant concerning the mythology and culture of China. They relate to the origin of Erhu, where in the locals and communities consider this instrument as their own creation and not an imported or influenced object. According to their belief, it is an indigenous instrument. Ancient Chinese courts regularly invited foreign musicians, their repertoires and musical instruments from their neighbouring dynasties or locations.

The literature mentions several versions of theory regarding the origination of these fiddles but none confirm the origination of Erhu to these cultures and moved eastwards. This also projects that Erhu has been present before the documentation of history has begun. Also, the written records in China run before the dynasties of the Mongols, Zhuang and Miao. Hence, the review confirms that Erhu is a recent method of deriving a modern name of Erhu from the ancient hugin. And the presence of hugin dates back to times before the Tang dynasty. Especially, it is as mentioned in the poems written by Cen Shen 715 - 775, Bai Juyi 772 – 846 and Liu Yuxi 778 – 842 Zhou, 1987 (Stock, 1993). But bow and single or double-stringed instruments prevailed with a greater significance in ancient and medieval China.

While discussing the performance or performing technique of the modern Erhu, it is quite much resembling the technique of the violin. For example, performers would use the tip of their fingers to play the string tied to the staff. Hence, it produces a piece of music that resembles the style of Western classical music. Over the years the treatment of and acceptance by the public towards Erhu has been transformed and met with a high form of encouragement. Musical thinking also changed rapidly with modern settings and China opening up to the west of the globe. Virtuosity and aspects of special changes were adopted. These changes were resulted

due to the annihilation of imperialism in China.

Hence, the design of the instrument and construction of the object have become centrally regulated instead of following redundant policies. With the advancement of the technology, the music production also progressed. The research around the musical folk traditions increased to subsequently focus on one of the coveted instruments the Erhu. Hence, music conservatories that were established became a ground to support musicians, who were keen on practising Erhu. Consequently, the instrument of Erhu became a discussion in the Western discipline of music research too. Standardization of performance style worldwide eventually came to appear to have been the most immediate and essential result of this policy (Yang, 2022).

## 2.1 Features of Erhu

We have been discussing about Erhu. Hence, let us understand the basic idea of Erhu, its structure and the way it is utilised to create melodious and rhythmic music. The Erhu comprises a long stick, which is vertical and known as the main neck. At the top of this neck are two big turning pegs. At the bottom, it has a small resonary body or also called a sound box. The sound box is covered with python hide on the front side. Two strings are struck between the pegs and the base with a small loop string around the neck. Strings also hold tightly a minute wooden bridge.

The unusual features of Erhu make it a different musical instrument as compared to others. The beautiful and melodious sound produced is due to the vibration through the python skin and the process of bowing. The strings are stopped from vibrating by pressing and touching the neck. The two strings are very close to each other. The inner string is tuned to D4 and the outside string to A4. The range is stretched to the limit of three and a half octaves.

## 2.2 The Fame of Erhu and its Second Creation

The fame of Erhu has been sustained by the cultural thinkers of the past as well as the contemporary musical creations. And hence it has been well-known throughout the globe. The simplicity of the two-stringed instrument entwined with complex emotions is and was a character of the Erhu that charmed and attracted everybody who got introduced to the same. Among many who were drawn to try this music was Marco Polo. Marco Polo became an enthusiast of Erhu, after listening to a performance by Mongol warriors. However, it was banned by the authorities upon



observing its prevalence among peasant communities. Western writers mostly wrote about the Chinese literati in the first half of this century time. In his paper, “This instrument is reserved for street singers and mendicants who scrape it mercilessly”. Notably, in the past, it was also used by the blind to signal an approach from the enemy (Qiu & Chuangprakhon, 2023).

From the past to the modern times, the Erhu was devoted to the Henan region's local operas. One of the famous proponents was Mr Liu Tianhua, a modern China Erhu composer and performer. Mr Liu was responsible for developing and improving the standard of producing Erhu music. It was Mr. Liu who redeveloped the tuning method like that of the violin to harmoniously blend with other instruments. Since this development, the national musical instrument has not only upgraded but also touched the sky with its successful compositions. Mr Liu's diligence through a scientific method opened up several avenues, bringing the Chinese folk music to the global podium.

In addition to the timely changes in the production of Erhu music, the second creation also proved instrumental in its fame. But what does second creation mean? The second creation is a term that mainly depends on the recreation from the first stage of creation. Once the composition is made, the musician could also create the same with minute changes. These changes inevitably enhance the original creation. The second creation played an important role in uplifting and strengthening the life of the Erhu music works. However, it is important that the second creation retains the original quality of music and concept. Hence, the performer who engages in the second creation of the Erhu music must be knowledgeable of the subject and should have the capacity to improve only selected areas of the compositions. Therefore Erhu performers have to be well versed and possess mastery while engaging in second creation.

### 2.3 The music creation and performance of shaanxi erhu

Shaanxi culture is one of the oldest cultures in China. Emphasising local characteristics, the ethos of Shaanxi provinces and regional essence had become an important element in the music creation of Erhu practice. Also known as Qin culture, it was the northern Shaanxi that is well known for the folk traditional Erhu music. They resonated with natural phenomena such as living with wandering life, flowing clouds, and flowing water. It is interesting to note the statement made by Qiao Jian Zhong, the Chinese music scholar: “The formation of any art genre is not by one or two people or one or two works, it must have an ‘inheritance belt’ composed of several generations of artists, and it must have a series of representative repertoire

and the techniques and styles formed from it.”

Erhu music by Shaanxi musicians reflects a local style of temperament and features of the regional population of northern Shaanxi. One could easily deduce the local customs and cultural attributes from the elements of music creations and performances. Narrative in style, the stories in the recitation disclose several ethnic and ecological concerns of the timeline and dynasty. In several cases, the musical and creative elements depict a formidable relation to the topography and ecological attributes that connect with history, culture and ethnological phenomena. While we understand the Shaanxi Erhu music, it is essential to study its characteristics and creation elements to step-by-step realise the significance of the inherent folk traditions. This process of deriving the essence will also give us a progressive idea of the modern-day Erhu practice.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

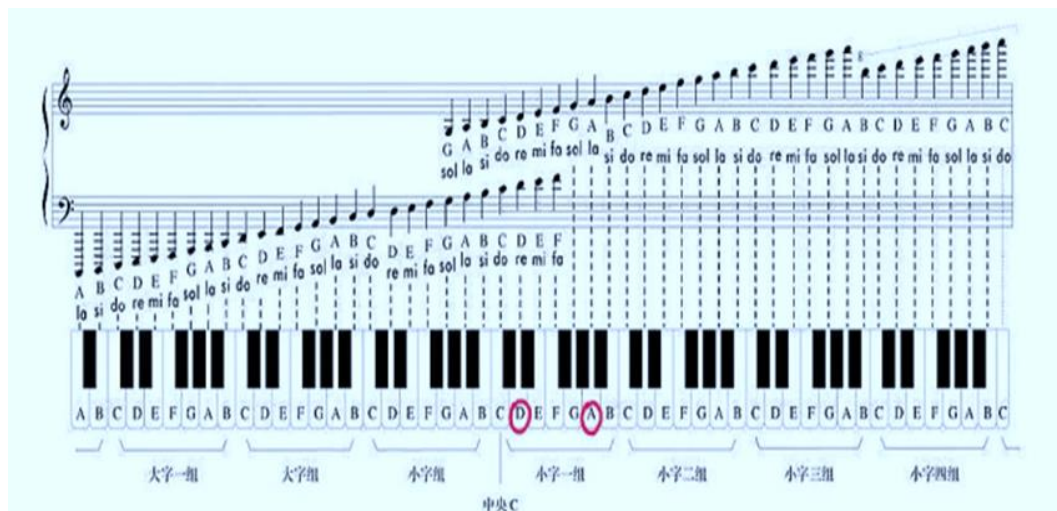
To disentangle the influence of music content and the playing instruments on listening test results, the experiment was designed from the following perspectives. Instruments. We chose the Erhu, one of the Chinese traditional instruments, and the violin, one of the Western classical instruments, as variables in our perceptual experiment, considering their tuning, range, and sounding principles (they are both bowed-string instruments).

Performance To minimise the performance differences of Erhu and violin performers, all unique playing techniques (including vibratos and trills that sound differently on the Erhu and the violin) were excluded. Instead, we simply kept common bow techniques that could hardly be identified between the two instruments even by professionals. Both performers were asked to perform exactly according to the musical sheets with tempos and beats. Personal performance styles were minimised as well since they could also affect the results.

#### 3.1 Tuning

The D-A string is the standard for the Erhu's tone. That's piano notation for "d 1" on the inner string and "a1" on the outer string, the latter being the recognised world tone. The distance between the inner and outer strings is guaranteed to be exactly five. Tuning the strings involves rotating the peg below, pulling and listening while tuning, and gradually adjusting the outer string to a pitch equivalent to the normal sound. Next, they

should turn the upper peg in the same direction to tune the inner string to a standard pitch of d1 Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** The Red Circles on the Left and Right Indicate the Pitches of the Inner and Outer Strings, Respectively.

([https://ss1.bdstatic.com/70cFvXSh\\_Q1YnxGkpoWK1HF6hhy/it/u=3710552732,1864200327&fm=26&gp=0.jpg](https://ss1.bdstatic.com/70cFvXSh_Q1YnxGkpoWK1HF6hhy/it/u=3710552732,1864200327&fm=26&gp=0.jpg))

The D key is the 1 and 5 string. The D key, often known as the string (1, 5), is a frequently utilised tone while performing on the Erhu. The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5 stand in for the first position's empty string, first finger, second finger, and fourth finger, respectively. 5 represents the empty string, 6 represents the first finger, 7 represents the second finger, and 8 represents the third and fourth fingers.

High notes 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspond to the outer first, second, third, and fourth fingers in the second position, whereas high notes 4, 5, and 6 represent the inner first, second, third, and fourth fingers. High notes 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspond to the first, second, third, and fourth fingers, respectively, when played in the third position. High note 5, high note 6, high note 7, and double high note represent the outside first, second, third, and fourth fingers, respectively.

In playing the Erhu, sometimes called the String (bass 5, 2), the G key is a frequently played tone. Bass 5, Bass 6, Bass 7, and Bass 1 stand in for the inner empty string, the first finger, the second finger, the third finger, and the fourth finger, respectively, in the first position. Empty string in the beginning, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for the first, second, third, and fourth fingers, respectively.

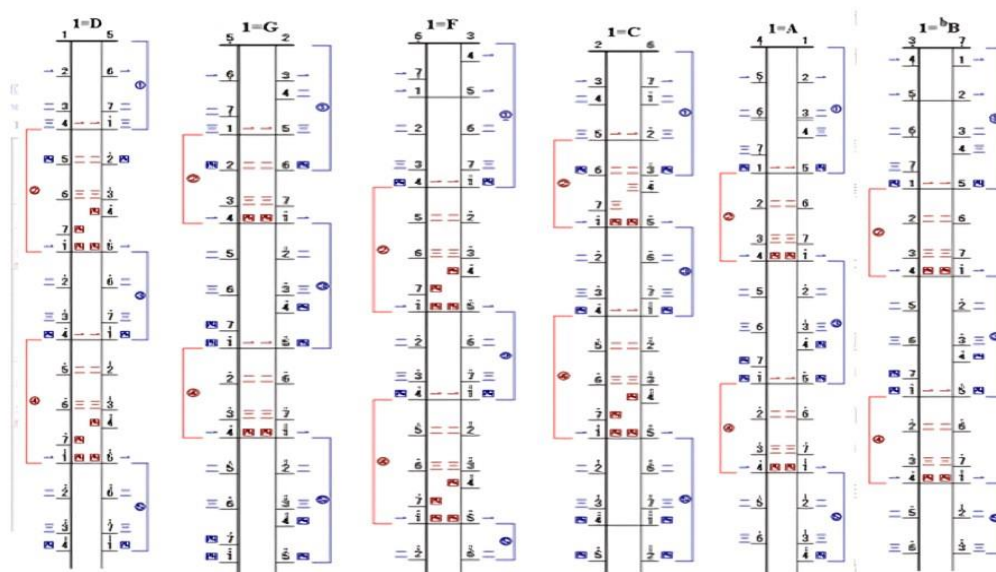
The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspond to the innermost, middle, and ring fingers, respectively, in the second position. High note 1 corresponds to the tips of the first, second, third, and fourth fingers. High notes 1, 2, 3,

and 4 correspond to the first, second, third, and fourth fingers, respectively, when played in the third position. Outer first, second, third, and fourth fingers are 5, 6, 7, and 1 for high note 1, respectively. Press the F key for the third bass string in the lowest register.

The F key is also often used while playing the Erhu. The String (bass6, 3) is another name for this instrument. The first position's bass notes are 6, 1, 2, 3, and 4. These correspond to the empty inner string, first finger, second finger, third finger, and fourth finger, respectively. High note 1 is played on an empty string, then the first finger, then the second finger, then the third finger, and finally the fourth finger.

The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 stand for the innermost fingers of the first, second, third, and fourth hands in the second position. The first finger, second finger, third finger, and fourth finger on the outside of the hand are used for high notes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The inner first finger, second fingers, third fingers, and fourth fingers are represented by the first, second, third, and fourth highest notes in the third position, respectively. Each of the outermost fingers is assigned a different note value, from high note 5 to high note 6 to high note 7 to double high note 1 figure 4.



**Figure 4:** The Picture of Six Comm on Tones

([https://ss1.bdstatic.com/70cFvXSh\\_Q1YnxGkpoWK1HF6hhy/it/u=565386064,134707715&fm=26&gp=0.jpg](https://ss1.bdstatic.com/70cFvXSh_Q1YnxGkpoWK1HF6hhy/it/u=565386064,134707715&fm=26&gp=0.jpg))

#### 4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAANXI ERHU MUSIC

Among many, the two primary and fundamental characteristics of Shaanxi Erhu music are Opera style and regional characteristics of the

customs and methods of living of the local population. Each of these characteristics is incorporated into the creation of the Shaanxi Erhu music. Let us understand how these styles over time become an innate nature of Erhu music production.

#### 4.1 The Opera Characteristic in Erhu Music by Shaanxi

Shaanxi is an originating place of Chinese opera, and the music production of opera is the part of local population's lives. The opera style eventually got infused into the Erhu music too. Notably, it matched with melody made by Erhu, wherein it is attributed with free rhythm and pronunciation that is sonorous and melodious. Over time, the opera influence grew over the Erhu methodology. One of the examples is the Qin Qiang Opera which influenced the inception of the Qin Erhu School. The western province of China and its music production also had influence over the Qin dynasty in the past. This process imparted the knowledge of narration and storytelling with emotions that are now one of the identities of Erhu music. It was known as the Western melody. Some of the resources from which Shaanxi Erhu derived its contingent material were Hua Guxi Opera and Qin Qiang Opera. Especially, the integration and incorporation of the qin qiang opera style into Erhu had the greatest impact. The artists like Lu Rirong and Zhao Zhenxiao made Erhu works in the style of Qin opera. The tradition goes back to the ancient times of the Qin dynasty which was situated around Yellow River and follows long traditions of integrating the local nuances in the music production of Erhu. This has given a unique identity to the artistic style of Shaanxi Erhu (Stock, 1993).

##### The Incorporation of Regional Narrative and Features in Erhu Music

Shaanxi Erhu music is identified by a particular characteristic of narrating the regional events, social phenomena, biographical treatises and several local nuances that enhance the connection to the populace. One of the examples of such Erhu music is *Guerillas Under Hengshan* by Xin Tianyou which is one of the representative tracks. In the 1930s, the agrarian revolution caused people to make Shaanxi Erhu music with traditional folk songs. These songs were charged with communist tendencies which were identified with the Red Army guerilla revolution.

Yet another historical tale related to the Erhu music production is the narrative of a location called Yanan. It is one of the oldest civilisations in China, spanning 5,000 years, wherein the tomb of Xuan Yuan lays. In modern times, Yanan continued to be of political importance for the central Red Army and the base for the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Over many years, the location has observed a series of political events

created and destroyed, which comprise the Anti-Japanese War, the liberation war, the rectification movement, the mass production movement, and the seventh national congress of the CPC. The nature of such events provides us with a piece of information about the atrocities that have shaped the resilience attitude of the Yanan locales and locals. Hence, the self-reliant spirit, seeking the reality amidst the inhumane events became a source of inspiration in the making of the music in Erhu. Subsequently, Yanan was also named the most prominent cultural and historic city by the council of the state in 1982 (Huehns, 2000).

Many Shaanxi works display a revolutionary spirit since the province was an administrative home to several dynasties. The resource of social phenomena within the Erhu works implemented an additional enhanced quality that bonded with common men. One of the excellent Erhu works is *The Red Army Brother regression*, which expressed an image of local ordinary people from northern Shaanxi, sending off their army for another venture. We shall now understand the significant elements in the making of the Shaanxi Erhu music. To keep note, the characteristics and the music elements mentioned in this paper notify the significance of Shaanxi works, eventually telling us their role in the development of Erhu Art in China.

#### 4.2 The Musical Elements in the Shaanxi Erhu Works

Although we learned about characteristics, the musical elements in terms of the concept provide us with the detail of the emotions embellished in the Erhu compositions.

#### 4.3 Narratives from Life

Music since ancient times has been a product of the inspiration of life. Hence, music whether it is narrative or abstract takes its cues from the living tradition and life of the common and political. Erhu, being primarily, a narrative based on life in its all varieties became a harbinger of the events. Especially, in the case of Shaanxi, it became a lyrical document to trap the memories in the fossil of music. Famous examples of such Erhu kinds of music are “Shaan xi Opera Theme Capriccio”, “Lan hua hua Ballad” and “Xi kou emotion”.

#### 4.4 Opera Stories

As discussed in the previous caption that Shaanxi music picks up from the life of the locals, Shaanxi music also is inspired and adapted by dramatic opera stories. Since opera is a performing art, it develops the performance

style development of Erhu music made in Shaanxi. Having profound influence, the major works of Erhu are influenced by the Qin opera style. For example, the work “Shaanxi opera Theme Capriccio” and “Mei hu Tune” which participated in the fourth “Shanghai Spring” competition, received great appreciation. From then on, Erhu art began to grow under the Influence of Shaanxi opera music, excellent Erhu works full of qin charm were regularly produced. These works include “Qujiang Chant” and “Pick the Flowers” by Mr. Lu Zhirong, “Lan Hua Hua Ballad” and “Xi Kou Emotion” by Mr. Guan Ming etc (Zhu et al., 2004).

#### 4.5 Local Folk Customs

Shaanxi Erhu music's fame is due to its achievement in a very short period of time. This is because of the great resource pool of folk customs from where the compositions are made. The quiet and ethereal quality of the Shaanxi generation of scholars has added a deep and strong sense of elemental inclusion in the Erhu music style. Erhu culture is the main substrate of the music thought of Chinese cultural and traditional transitions. In addition, the performance done by thousands of creative practitioners has been intoxicating the generation of fans. The music creation of the Erhu work in the Shaanxi region has influenced the Waist drum practice, which is a well-known folk practice in Yanan, Hengshan and Mi zhi in the Yu link regions

#### 4.6 National Spirit

As we discussed the location of Yanan as a major political location in China, we understand the sense of national spirit that prevails within the Chinese communities. This sense of agony and nationalism was eventually channelled into the musical works. Erhu being one of the pivotal instruments and music forms became a mode of the document as well as an expression for nationalistic sentiments. For a long time, Shaanxi as a historical region has accumulated national ethos in style and features which augmented the precipitation of the national spirit. Making these forms of music infectious and full of fervour for the common, it resulted in the development of Erhu music. Mainly it praises the national heroes and the bright and brilliant sport of Shaanxi's nationalistic fervour.

### 5. RESULTS

Shaanxi Erhu art's artistic values span over time and hence its musical

creation and performance adapting from the local style of opera and daily routine has become eternal. It has been everlasting enough to become an inspirational tool to remix and retune new compositions. This narrates the influence of Shaanxi Erhu as a major source of the development of Erhu art in China.

In the 1980s and '90s, the Erhu's career development showed a major revivalistic progress. The ancient Qin School Erhu was revived and redeveloped in these decades. During this period the Erhu art was developed mainly through its playing techniques via regional characteristic style. Loud in nature Qin-style Erhu was quite prominent. It was influenced by the practice of the Liu Tianhua School. The Tianhua practice considers traditional values and performs in a simple musical style. In addition, Erhu has multiple methods of tumbling, pressing, shaking the bow, sliding and rubbing, which results in a performance technique with artistic value. Hence, it stands out from among the various genres with the circle and community of Erhu and other forms of music in China.

"Yinping," "Yangping," "Shangsheng," and "Qusheng" are the four phonemes that make up standard Mandarin Chinese, the variety most often spoken in China. These four classes of phonemes are also the basis for the development of the Henan dialect. However, the pronunciation of some nouns is quite different from Mandarin. Table 1 shows that this Henan opera libretto has significant phonological differences from Mandarin Chinese. The funny nature of the Henan people is shown, for instance, by the fact that the letters "Ge" and "Bian" in Mandarin are pronounced as Yinping, but as Yangping in Henan dialect (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison Table of Mandarin and Henan Dialect Phonology

Men"								
Liu	Da	Ge	Jiang	Hua	Li	Tai	Pian	
Mandarin	/	\	—	v	\	v	\	—
Henan Dialect		\	\	/	\	\	/	v /

Source: Compiled by this Study

According to (Table 1), the melody and tone of the text in this piece of Yu opera are generally congruent with the Henan dialect. Hua Mulan's desire to serve in the army in lieu of her father is further emphasised by the Henan dialect interpretation, which features the persistent and sonorousness of the Henan people. Many works in the regional style include Henan dialect, which serves as a decorative flourish.

Culture of the Central Plains is anchored, welcoming, and varied. Through the years, it has been baptised by wind, cold, rain and snow; it has



helped spread Chinese culture across the globe; and it has served as a vital link in the chain of transmission for the Yu-School Erhu tradition. Similarly, the music of the Yu-School Erhu responds to the Central Plains culture by constantly renewing it and incorporating new aesthetic aspects, allowing it to thrive in the vast sea of Chinese traditional art.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Influence of Sanqin Culture on the Qin-school Erhu Style

According to historical accounts, the academic word "Sanqin" first originated around the time of the peasant rebellion that marked the end of the Qin Dynasty. The capital of the Qin State was Xianyang, and Xiang Yu, the ruler of Chu, sent his forces there to commit a slaughter. Zhang Han, the ruler of Di, oversaw Shangjun, also known as "Sanqin," after the fall of the Qin State and the death of Qin Prince Ying, who was worshipped as King Yong. To the east of Xianyang, to the Yellow River, Sima Xin was enthroned as the emperor of Sai. Because of this historical event, the region around Guanzhong and northern Shaanxi has been known as "Sanqin" ever since (Yang & Sun, 2022). Strictly speaking, the Guanzhong region, northern Shaanxi area, and southern Shaanxi area of Shaanxi Province are all referred to as the modern Sanqin territory. The modern southern Shaanxi region is closer to Sichuan in terms of geography, hence it is not considered part of the Sanqin homeland from a cultural historical perspective. The Bashu culture is more strongly associated with the meaning of its cultural framework than the Sanqin culture, which is also described in this study. Qinqiang, Daoqing, storytelling, folk songs of northern Shaanxi, and other musical art forms are all represented in the growth of the territory of the Three Qin Dynasties, as are the regional stylistic features. The Sanqin culture will unavoidably seep into the Qin-school Erhu style, which is characterised by the same high-pitched passion, roughness, and lack of restraint that is typical of Qin Opera. The Qin local dialect has the same clear and beautiful language, deep and simple voice, and distinctive upright character as the Shaanxi people.

### 6.2 Connotation and Features of Sanqin Culture

After the fall of the Qin Dynasty, during the zenith of Sanqin culture and the heyday of the Tang Dynasty, it became abundantly evident to the landlord class that they could not consolidate power in their hands via force alone. The early Sanqin culture was developed when theories like Zhiyi

were integrated into state government and merged with the authoritarian authority of the Legalists.

After centuries of growth and development, the city now known as Xi'an was formerly known as Chang'an during the Han and Tang dynasties. It was an important location for cultural exchanges and learning between the East and the West via the Silk Road. Time passed, however, and China entered the Song and Yuan Dynasties, during which the southeast became the political, economic, and cultural centre of the country. A branch of the Silk Road, known as the Maritime Silk Road, developed along the southeast coast. After that point, the Sanqin Culture began to deteriorate. Author infers, based on induction and review of relevant material, that Sanqin culture evolved with many traditional Chinese cultural and ideological elements.

### 6.3 Art of Erhu Performance in Qin Opera

Chinese Bangzi Opera includes the subgenre known as Qin Opera. The resilient and unpretentious nature of the people who called the territory ruled by the Sanqin Dynasties home is well reflected in the thunderous and heroic opera music of Qin Opera. Qinqiang music consists of singing music and accompanying music, with the latter being further subdivided into "Wenchang" and "Wuchang" for the instruments used. Fast, soft, and slow tempos predominate in wenchang. Wuchang has a distinct rhythm and the accompanying instruments are primarily made up of percussion instruments; this works in tandem with the on-stage actions of Qin opera actors to achieve the goals of portrayal, character development, and conflict reflection.

In literature, the erhu is most often found as a Qin Opera accompaniment. Its broad range and mellow, subtle sound make it an essential instrument for Qin Opera. One of the three accompanist instruments in Chinese opera (the other two being the Banhu and the Sanxian, a three-stringed plucked instrument), it plays the primary instrument in numerous operas and performs the main melody of the whole opera. When discussing the use of baoqiang instruments in opera, this is usually what is meant. Depending on the type of music being performed and the dramatic developments taking place in the opera, it not only serves as an accompaniment instrument for the singer's accompaniment, interval, and other melodic interludes, but also for the main tasks of solo, ensemble, or lead performance. It reveals the role of the encased instrument as a crucial component of operatic accompaniment. The band that plays during contemporary Qin Opera is always evolving

alongside it. An Erhu unison group of about 10 persons will be added to play a portion of the tune to make up for the Erhu's lacklustre loudness. Since the Erhu plays such a pivotal part in Qin Opera, the musical style of Qi-School Erhu borrows heavily on the Qin Opera's melodies and techniques, distinguishing it as a distinct regional style among the various Chinese Erhu subgenres.

#### 6.4 Relation Between Qin Opera Music and Qin-School Erhu.

Qinqiang music has deeply influenced the style of Qin-school Erhu performing arts, and its grand, free and easy stage effects have not impacted the development direction of Bangziqiang operas in the history of Chinese opera development.

According to Cheng Zhijie (2012), the Erhu is a crucial part of the Qin Opera Orchestra as an accompanying instrument (Chen, 2012). Even though it's a supporting part, the function it performs is essential and cannot be filled by any other instrument. To play Qinqiang music successfully, however, one must be exact while collaborating with Banhu and when collaborating with actors so as to not overwhelm the other. The Qin Opera, Wanwan Opera, Meihu Opera, and other regional folk operas serve as the backbone of the Qin School Erhu's repertoire, revealing the genre's inherent bravado, freedom, and delicacy. The distinctive qualities of the tune always represent the robust regional flavour of the Sanqin country. Its performing skills have been adapted from those of the Banhu, another musical instrument used in Qin Opera. Long-span slides and jump slides are only two examples of the many ways music may be processed; other techniques include switching between handles while maintaining the same sound and using various fingers, pressing strings with open fingers in predetermined locations, and so on. These sets of procedures are mostly derived from Banhu playing methods or the traits of the Qin Opera melody style.

The degree of artistic achievement and the sophistication of the audience's understanding of art are both growing as time goes on. Many opera composers and performers, in response to the evolution and transformation of the modern period, have produced a plethora of new Qin School music and new Qin Opera. These new works, developed from the foundation of preserving the old musical style, are not only the legacy and progression of classic operas, but also vigorously encourage the ongoing development of the Qin School Erhu, giving the instrument many personas on stage. The musical vitality of the Erhu has been unleashed in the land of Sanqin via the integration of Qinqiang accompanying

instruments and stage solo instruments.

### 6.5 Qin-School Erhu Style Set off by Shaanxi Dialect

One of the most distinctive aspects of Shaanxi folk music is the use of the northern Shaanxi dialect. The usage of regional languages in folk songs and Qin School Erhu compositions helps to humanise and simplify them. Dialects develop in tandem with the landscape of a region and are the result of the people who live there and their way of life. The Loess Plateau and the straightforwardness of the local culture give the northern Shaanxi dialect a rugged masculine beauty that complements the more feminine qualities.

There is a certain allure to the way the front and back nasal sounds are articulated in the northern Shaanxi dialect. For example, the northern Shaanxi dialect reads "ying" for the sound of the nasal at the back of the throat, therefore the characters "qin" and "yin" are pronounced "qing" and "ying," respectively. There is a wealth of overlapping terms in the Northern Shaanxi dialect as well. Words like "Lukoukou," "Shui Lingling," and "Xiaohexi" are commonplace examples of the sensitivity and humour of the locals in northern Shaanxi. Therefore, the emergence of these repetitions while singing northern Shaanxi folk songs further enriches the cultural meaning of northern Shaanxi folk songs.

This original method of persuasion captures the genuine spirit of folk tunes from northern Shaanxi. Another distinctive feature of the northern Shaanxi dialect is its usage of line characters. In northern Shaanxi folk ballads, line characters like "Ouch," "Hey," and "Hey Yier" are common. Lining words are often meaningless filler used to improve the overall texture and metre of folk songs by filling in the spaces between melodic and rhythmic phrases.

We must return our focus to the Erhu performance of the Qin school. The tone largely determines the performing style of national instrumental music. It is also important to pay attention to the expression of tone while playing the Erhu, an instrument that can strongly restore the tone of people's voice, since behind every genre of music is a narrative. Excellent instrumental compositions may thoroughly explain musical topics in a narrative style, much as songs and operas can utilise language to describe musical meanings. For example, in Putonghua, there are four tones.

When playing the Erhu, it's important to carefully imitate each tone. In the context of the Erhu, the "straight" quality of a single tone might be interpreted as a sluggish long bow or a medium speed bow. It may convey the work's mood and is often mirrored in the music's narrative melody.

### Calm and peaceful scene

The second tone, "rising," may either refer to the ferocious bowing that concludes an Erhu performance or to the upbeat, rhythmic tune that evokes happy moments for the listener. The phrase "decline and rise" describes all three tones, which may be interpreted as referring to different gliding methods while playing the Erhu. Upslide, downslide, and leaping slide are all examples of performance methods that help humanise the instrument. It's unlike anything you'll hear from a western violin; the four tones "falling" might either refer to the bowing in an Erhu performance or the processing used to build up a tune and then abruptly bring it down. Characters' frustration, despair, and other feelings are generally acted out here. The dramatic portamento in might be read as "falling" as well (Wang, Y,2010).

Since the performance and processing skills of the Qin opera's accompaniment are intricately woven with the local dialect, it is clear that the Shaanxi dialect has a significant impact on the playing style of the Erhu from the Qin school. To provide the Qin School Erhu style a more robust local flavour via the sustenance of the Shaanxi dialect, this sort of creative approach that cooperates with each other has and responds with the performance style is necessary. It has also made significant contributions to preserving the traditional style of Chinese erhu playing by providing a wealth of musical resources and information on how to perform the instrument.

### 6.6 Positive Influence and Significance of Shaanxi Erhu on Erhu Works of China

Many traditional Shaanxi Erhu compositions have been revived by modern musicians, reviving the traditional into modern Erhu. This remarks the development of Erhu work through Shaanxi eru music creations and performances. One of the famous examples is red Army Brother regression, which was a traditional folk music of Shaanxi. Feng Jianxue, in 1977, the famous singer sang this Red Army track and revived the age-old cultural tradition. It was also selected by China News Film Factory. Shaanxi folk songs are closely associated with the dynasties' social production and practice. In the development of Erhu's work in China, several tones have been remixed and reproduced. Majorly the Erhu work is based on the adaptation of norther Shaanxi folk songs. And the dialect of Shaanxi also enhances the quality of Erhu's work. For this reason the melody of Shaanxi Erhu compositions fluctuates greatly, In addition, the rich timbre adds to the whole feel of the Erhu works.

Geopolitical changes in the Shaanxi since the augment of 1938 have also directed the political essence in the Erhu development, which eventually has been a part and parcel of not only common men but also modern-day musicians whose national fervour is at the apex. For example one of the modern-day songs adapted from an old Shaanxi local opera called *Wan Wan Qiang*. The music represents the Red Army's victory on their return from the field. It also describes a hearty welcome by the local public. Interestingly, the same is also adapted in the shadow puppetry of China, which is popular in Hualiang and the northern foot of Huashan mountain in Shaanxi province. The music is beautiful, and it narrates a return of pleasure post the dismay.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The effect of the distinct culture developed in the area is irreversible, shaping both the cultural milieu and the development of the Yu-school and Qin-school Erhu styles. The five millennia of Chinese culture include both "Central Plains Culture" and "Sanqin Culture." "Central Plains culture" is multifaceted, anchored, and welcoming. It has been baptized by wind, frost, rain, and snow throughout history, and it has been instrumental in spreading Chinese civilization throughout the world. It has also had a significant impact on the growth and transmission of the Yu School Erhu style, particularly in the areas of opera music and dialect. Simultaneously, Yu-school Erhu music responds to Central Plains culture, contributing many creative components to its ongoing revitalization and allowing it to thrive in the sea of Chinese traditional culture; the "Sanqin culture" is crucial to the Qin school's Erhu's growth. The dialects and opera music of the Qin area had a constant impact on the evolution of the Erhu of the Qin school. In contrast to "Central Plains Culture's" effect on Yu School Erhu, "Sanqin Culture" is also evident in the cultural legacy.

Erhu was used as a solo instrument in the early years of the 20th century. Later many amazing works were made and sold too. Subsequently, Shaanxi Erhu works since the past has a deep connection with locals. It had its relation with local life and local customs. It had been characterised by opera, poll geopolitical aspects like colour and other characteristics. All these elements became an important musical facet in the Erhu compositions. As we understand that Shaanxi Erhu works are charged with nationalistic spirit while praising the heroes of the past, we realise how local Erhu music is deeply entrenched in the living traditions of the culture. The

local customs could never be separated from the Shaanxi Erhu. Owing to these features and the narrativity, modern composers were attracted and gripped by the reality in the melody. Moreover, it was dynamic and diverse in its nature. After years of practice and an archive of infinite folk music with folk tales, Erhu eventually was lost in the vagaries of time. But it eventually got revived with the method of second creations by the modern composers. The reason behind it was a simple tendency of folk music that touched the chord of humanity irrespective of the place and community.

### 7.1 Future Implementations

The erhu styles of the Yu and Qin schools from a variety of angles, drawing on a substantial body of literature in the hopes of producing a study finding that is satisfying. Further investigation into the future of erhu education in China, the legacy and evolution of erhu music, and the ways in which erhu music can naturally blend with various cultures will hopefully have some theoretical research value after examining the issues surrounding the erhu styles covered above. This study's innovative aspects Erhu music is a natural condition of existence due to its local (regional) features, the ethnicity of musical thought, the regional nature of the musical tones, and the legacy of musical culture.

### 7.2 Conflict of interest

No declaration required

### 7.3 Financing

No reporting required.

### 7.4 Peer review

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