

# Research on the Integration of Modern Rock Music and Chinese Folk Music: Taking Tan Weiwei as an Example

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## Abstract

The purposes of this study were: This study focuses on the phenomenon of the integration of modern rock music and Chinese ethnic music. Taking Tan Weiwei as a typical case, it explores the aesthetic characteristics and cultural values of this integration. By analyzing the paths of technical integration and the mechanisms of cultural expression, it reveals the innovative transformation model of traditional music elements in the contemporary context, providing a theoretical reference for the inheritance of ethnic music and the creation of modern music.

Methods: Qualitative research methods are adopted, combined with musical morphology analysis, field surveys, and in-depth interviews. Five representative works of Tan Weiwei, such as "A Shout of Huayin Laoqiang" and "The Night in Ulaanbaatar", are selected and deconstructed from technical dimensions such as rhythmic patterns, mode applications, and orchestration strategies. At the same time, humanistic features such as the translation of cultural symbols and the innovation of narrative perspectives are examined. Data are collected through on-site observations, interviews with fans, and audience feedback. Manual coding tools is Create structured tables, classify and enter data according to preset themes and dimensions, conduct statistics and filtering, and clearly present data distribution.

The results are as follows.

Through the triple mechanisms of "technical grafting - cultural translation - value reconstruction", Tan Weiwei has achieved the modern activation of the genetic elements of ethnic music. While retaining the traditional core, her works, through the reconstruction of rock rhythms, the integration of electronic timbres, and the female narrative perspective, have created a new musical form that combines cultural distinctiveness and a sense of resonance with the times. This integration model provides a feasible path for the living inheritance of ethnic music and the localization of modern music.

**Keywords:** Modern Rock Music; Chinese Folk Music; Tan Weiwei; Music Integration; Cultural Identity

## Introduction

Research background.

In the context of the sweeping wave of globalization and the convenience of information dissemination, the music field has been profoundly influenced. Different cultures frequently communicate and collide, and modern music has entered a new stage of development, constantly evolving through cultural integration and conflict. As Ge (2023) points out in *The collision between tradition and modernity*, Tan Weiwei achieved a groundbreaking integration of Huayin Laoqiang (a national intangible cultural heritage) and rock music through her

performance "Give You Some Color" on the The Voice of China program. This cross-disciplinary practice provides a new paradigm for the modern dissemination of traditional music. Chen, F. J. (2019). further emphasizes that music integration in the new media environment must center on "singing," activating traditional cultural genes through technological reconstruction. Wang et al. (2013) also observed in their study of Sichuan opera rock that modern reinterpretations of traditional opera elements require balancing cultural authenticity and contemporary resonance—a principle aligned with Tan Weiwei's creative philosophy. Modern rock music, as a typical representative of Western modern music, with its strong rhythm, bold way of expression, and unique stage performance style, has won a large number of fans worldwide. Centered around the electric guitar, bass, and drums, it creates a passionate and powerful sound effect. The lyrics often focus on personal emotions, social criticism, and a rebellious spirit, serving as an important musical carrier for young people to release emotions and express themselves. According to Cheng, L. -x. (2009), the development of Chinese rock music has been influenced by both Western rock traditions and the unique cultural context of China, leading to a distinctive style that blends Western rock elements with Chinese cultural characteristics.

Chinese folk music, on the other hand, is a cultural treasure of the Chinese nation, carrying thousands of years of history. From ancient work chants to the distinctive folk songs and ditties in various regions, it is rich in local characteristics. Each musical note condenses the life wisdom, customs, and emotional memories of the local people, like a vivid historical and cultural scroll, comprehensively recording the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and the emotions and ways of life of the people.

However, under the strong impact of modern Western music, Chinese folk music is facing unprecedented challenges in modernization. The modern fast - paced lifestyle and diverse entertainment options have led to a continuous decline in the younger generation's attention to traditional folk music. Moreover, the commercial operation mode and popular elements of Western music have greatly squeezed the space for the inheritance and development of traditional folk music. In such an environment, how to inherit and develop Chinese folk music has become an important issue urgently needed to be solved in the music industry.

At the same time, although modern rock music is loved by the younger generation in China, restricted by market aesthetics and commercial factors, it faces huge pressure in terms of innovation and localization. With the continuous improvement of the audience's music aesthetic level, they have put forward higher requirements for the innovation of rock music. They are no longer satisfied with the traditional rock style and expect to hear works that integrate different elements and have a unique style. Commercially, the music industry's commercial operation mode requires works to have high market potential and commercial value, meaning that rock music needs to consider the public's acceptance and actual market demand while maintaining its own characteristics. Therefore, finding a balance between innovation and commercial success is a severe challenge for every music artist.

With the development of the times, modern music genres have become increasingly diversified, and styles such as electronic music, hip - hop music, and R&B have emerged continuously, making the task of protecting and inheriting Chinese folk music even more arduous. Integrating folk music elements into the framework of rock music has become the direction explored by many music creators. In this integration process, creators need to retain the essence of traditional culture, such as the national spirit, cultural connotation, and unique artistic charm contained in folk music, so that it still shines brightly in modern society. They

also need to show the innovation of modern music, using modern music production techniques and popular music elements to reinterpret and innovate traditional folk music to meet the aesthetic needs of contemporary audiences, which is the core issue faced by music creators. Tan Weiwei, as an outstanding representative who actively explores in the field of music integration, her works provide rich materials for the study of the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music.

### Significance and purpose of the topic

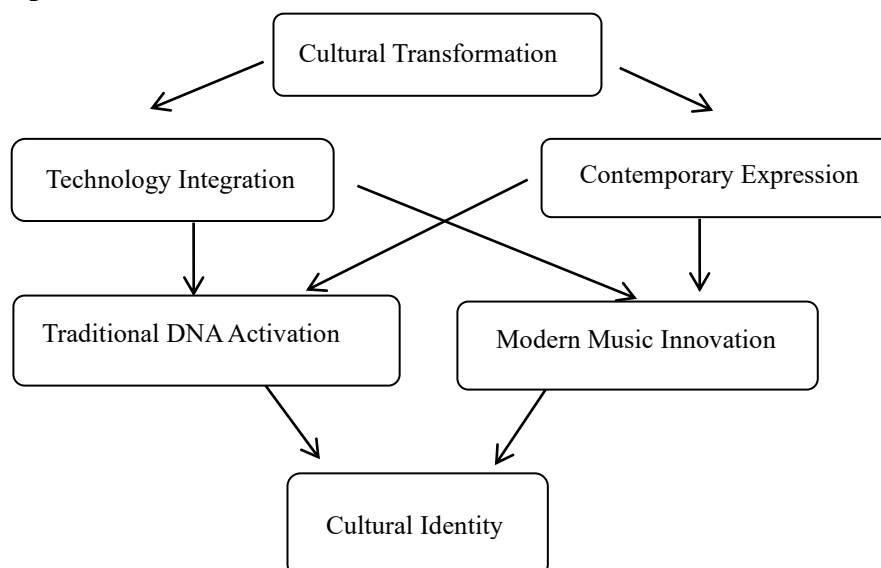
Chinese national culture is extensive and profound, and the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music, as a part of it, has added a glorious page to the treasure house of Chinese national culture. Tan Weiwei's works, with their long - standing history, unique geographical location, and ecological environment, have formed simple folk customs. The wisdom of countless folk artists has condensed into a folk song culture with strong local ethnic characteristics, making her works even more mysterious. The traditional culture of a nation never stops evolving, so the inheritance of folk song culture is of great significance. Only through continuous promotion and singing, attracting more people to participate, can the traditional culture of this nation be carried forward. As Fang, G. -y. (2009) pointed out, maintaining and developing Chinese folk music in modern China is not only a cultural necessity but also a way to preserve the unique identity and heritage of the Chinese nation in the face of globalization.

Currently, the study of the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music is very weak and has not yet received widespread attention in the academic community. Against this background, this paper thoroughly studies the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music from the perspective of music aesthetic features by analyzing Tan Weiwei's works. Through further research and analysis, the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music can be inherited and carried forward, integrated into the content of the construction of a harmonious society, and passed down from generation to generation.

### Objectives

To study the aesthetics of the integration of modern rock music and Chinese folk music, taking Tan Weiwei as an example.

### Conceptual Framework



## Methodology

**Content Scope:** This study focuses on the integration of modern rock music and Chinese ethnic music, with Tan Weiwei's works serving as typical cases for in - depth analysis. Five representative works, including "A Shout of Huayin Laoqiang", "The Night in Ulaanbaatar", "Xiaojuan", and "If There's an Afterlife", are selected for research from two dimensions: musical techniques and humanistic features. At the musical - technique level, aspects such as rhythmic patterns, mode applications, and orchestration strategies are analyzed in depth. Similar to Li, Y. X. (2023) study on the commonalities between Qinqiang opera and rock singing, this research finds that Tan Weiwei's works integrate operatic vocal techniques with the raspy intensity of rock (e.g., the Huayin Laoqiang vocal treatment in "Give You Some Color"). This technical hybridity shares methodological similarities with Wang et al.'s (2013) innovative practices in Sichuan opera rock. In terms of humanistic features, the translation of cultural symbols and the innovation of narrative perspectives are emphasized. Additionally, a lyric - text analysis is incorporated. Songs like "Tan Moumou" from Tan Weiwei's album "Tan Moumou" and "3811" from the album "3811" are selected. The analysis is conducted from the perspectives of lyric themes, language styles, emotional expressions, and the integration with music. "Tan Moumou" was released in 2010. The lyrics of this song show Tan Weiwei's experiences and mental state in a self - mocking and straightforward way. By analyzing themes such as her reflection on her past and her perseverance in her dreams, we can explore the emotions conveyed through the combination with the rock style. "3811" was released in 2020. The lyrics revolve around the lives of ordinary people. In terms of language style, it uses expressions close to real life. In terms of emotional expression, it subtly shows the tenacity and warmth of ordinary people. We analyze how it integrates with ethnic - music elements to present unique cultural connotations.

**Regional Scope:** The research is not limited to a specific region. The musical - element integration in Tan Weiwei's works involves multiple regions. For example, "A Shout of Huayin Laoqiang" incorporates Huayin Laoqiang, a traditional folk music from Huayin, Shaanxi, showing the regional - cultural characteristics of Shaanxi. "The Night in Ulaanbaatar" is adapted from a Mongolian folk song, reflecting the grassland culture of the Mongolian ethnic group. It covers ethnic - music elements from different regions, presenting a cross - regional musical - integration feature.

**Time Scope:** The time frame of this study is six months from January 2025 to June 2025.

**Population Scope:** The interviewees of this study are a fan of Tan Weiwei, a rock musician, and a Chinese folk music lover, a total of three people.

### Interview Design

To address the research objectives, 10 semi-structured interview questions were designed (see Appendix A), covering dimensions such as technical integration, cultural expression, and audience reception. Validity testing (Appendix B) was conducted through expert reviews and pre-tests to ensure the questions' relevance and clarity. The interviewees included fans of Tan Weiwei, rock music enthusiasts, and traditional ethnic music lovers.

### Research Tools:

**In-depth Interviews:** Interview questions were designed to explore technical integration, cultural expression, and audience reception. The interview schedule was validated by three industry experts to ensure scientific rigor.

**Text Analysis:** The musical scores and lyric texts of Tan Weiwei's selected works were

analyzed to examine the application of musical techniques and the connotation of humanistic features.

Audience Feedback Collection: On-site observations at concerts and the collection of audience comments from online platforms were conducted to comprehensively understand the audience's acceptance of the musical integration in his works.

The validity and reliability of the research tools were verified through expert reviews and pre-testing, ensuring the robustness of the research design.

## Results

Against the backdrop of the globalization wave and the convenience of information dissemination, the music field has undergone profound changes. Music from different cultural backgrounds frequently communicates and collides, driving modern music into a new stage of development, where cultural integration and conflict have become important forces in music evolution. As a typical representative of Western modern music, modern rock music has won a large number of fans worldwide with its strong rhythm, bold way of expression, and unique stage - performance style. Centered around the electric guitar, bass, and drums, it creates a passionate and powerful sound effect. The lyrics often focus on personal emotions, social criticism, and a rebellious spirit, serving as an important musical medium for young people to release emotions and express themselves. In China, the development of rock music has been influenced by both Western rock traditions and the unique Chinese cultural context, forming a distinctive style.

At the same time, Chinese ethnic music is a cultural treasure of the Chinese nation, carrying thousands of years of history. From ancient work chants to distinctive folk songs and ditties in various regions, it is rich in regional - cultural characteristics. Each musical note embodies the life wisdom, customs, and emotional memories of the local people, vividly recording the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and the emotional lives of the people. However, under the strong impact of modern Western music, the modern - development of Chinese ethnic music faces severe challenges. The modern fast - paced lifestyle and diverse entertainment options have led to a continuous decline in the younger generation's attention to traditional ethnic music. The commercial operation mode and popular elements of Western music have also significantly compressed the space for the inheritance and development of traditional ethnic music.

In such an environment, integrating ethnic - music elements into rock music has become a direction explored by many music creators. Tan Weiwei, as an outstanding representative actively exploring in the field of musical integration, her works provide rich materials for the study of the integration of modern rock music and Chinese ethnic music. This study analyzes Tan Weiwei's works to explore the aesthetic characteristics, cultural values, and realization paths of this integration, aiming to provide theoretical references for the inheritance of ethnic music and the creation of modern music.



Tan Weiwei, born on October 8, 1982 in Zigong City, Sichuan Province, graduated from Sichuan Conservatory of Music, female singer and first-class actor in Chinese mainland.

### **Conclusion**

Tan Weiwei's musical works perfectly integrate modern rock music with Chinese traditional ethnic music through their unique styles and profound connotations. Her songs not only celebrate the grandeur of nature but also convey the warmth and strength of humanity. From the boldness of "Huayin Laoqiang Shout" to the tenderness of "If There's Another Life" and the tranquility of "Ulaanbaatar Night," Tan uses music to interpret the harmonious beauty between nature and humanity. Incorporating traditional ethnic elements into modern music not only preserves cultural heritage but also provides contemporary music with new dimensions, making it more diverse and culturally rich. This fusion of tradition and modernity has become crucial for the sustainable development of Chinese music in the global context.

### **Discussions**

An aesthetic analysis of the fusion of modern rock and Chinese ethnic music in Tan Weiwei's works reveals that this cross-temporal dialogue represents not merely an innovation in musical form but also a reconstruction of cultural identity within contemporary contexts. As Xu Guangyi (2019) argued in *The National Spirit of Chinese Rock Music*, after over three decades of development, Chinese rock music has shifted from superficial imitation of Western styles to profound localization. Tan's creative practice exemplifies this trend: through "Huayin Laoqiang Shout," she merges the high-pitched vocalizations of Shaanxi traditional opera with rock rhythms, preserving the indigenous characteristics of ethnic music while infusing modern expressions. This "traditional core + contemporary shell" model aligns closely with Xu's concept of "comprehensive nationalization from ideology to form."

Liu Chong (2023) further emphasizes in *The National Spirit of Chinese Rock Music* that such fusion faces dual challenges of cultural decoding and contemporary translation. Tan's "Ulaanbaatar Night" skillfully resolves tensions between Mongolian long-tone singing and rock narratives through the interplay of morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) and electric guitar,

corroborating Liu's strategy of "cross-media translation of cultural symbols." This translation is not a simplistic collage of elements but, as Li Kun (2016) analyzed in *Integration of National Music Elements and Rock Music*, is rooted in deep morphological compatibility—pentatonic scales in ethnic music and triadic structures in rock inherently overlap. Tan's melody design in "If There's Another Life," which organically combines Yunnan folk music's linear phrasing with rock's driving rhythms, empirically validates Li's hypothesis of "horizontal melody-vertical harmony complementarity."

Significantly, these fusion practices are reshaping the global dissemination dynamics of Chinese music. The "cultural self-awareness" emphasized by Xu (2019) is fully manifested in Tan's international performances, where her works maintain ethnic identity while gaining aesthetic recognition from global audiences through modern arrangement techniques. Liu's (2023) dialectical unity of "localness and globality" is realized in Tan's profound exploration of ethnic music's cultural DNA and its contemporary reconstruction, offering a vital reference for establishing Chinese music's subjectivity in the global cultural arena.

#### **knowledge gained from research**

Research indicates that the aesthetic characteristics of the fusion between modern rock and Chinese ethnic music in Tan Weiwei's works demonstrate unique artistic charm. This integration is deeply rooted in the natural environment, social traditions, and cultural identities of the ethnic music's birthplaces. The melodies, rhythms, and lyrical content of Tan's songs not only reflect the rich cultural heritage of Chinese ethnic music but also incorporate the dynamic and innovative elements of modern rock. This fusion not only preserves the traditional essence of ethnic music but also injects new vitality into it, enabling resonance with contemporary audiences. The study emphasizes the importance of this integration in maintaining cultural continuity and enhancing the global appeal of Chinese ethnic music.

#### **Suggestions**

To further advance the integration of modern rock and Chinese ethnic music, creative research must be conducted based on in-depth understanding of cultural, historical, and traditional contexts. Music creators should explore the historical backgrounds and cultural significances of ethnic music to identify unique elements that can seamlessly merge with modern rock. This approach not only enriches the creative process but also ensures the final works resonate with both traditional and contemporary audiences.

Additionally, thorough studies of the structural characteristics of ethnic music scores are critical. Analyzing rhythmic patterns, harmonic structures, and melodic progressions in these scores can provide valuable insights into how traditional elements can be effectively integrated into modern music production techniques. This analysis will help maintain the authenticity of ethnic music while enhancing its appeal through contemporary adaptations. This dual focus on cultural depth and structural innovation will pave the way for more profound and meaningful fusions between modern rock and Chinese ethnic music.

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