

**A CONJECTURE OF SINGING CHINESE REPERTOIRE
WITH THE ITALIAN BEL CANTO TECHNIQUE**

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**Tese de Doutoramento em
Prática Vocal**

Nota: Mian CHEN

A Conjecture of Singing Chinese in

Italian

August 2019

August 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Since the first day of studying for a doctorate, this chapter was given to countless versions in my mind, but at this moment of writing, I feel too emotional to start.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Rosana Brescia and Prof. Sílvia Mateus.

Sílvia was the first person I knew in Lisbon. She also was the first one whom approved me to access the PHD program. Throughout the three years of the doctoral period, the confidence Sílvia gave me encouraged me to surmount the physical, emotional and psychological discomforts to achieve the successes especially on my singing. The opportunities Sílvia offered me helped me to get stronger in singing, what I am more grateful for is that her motherly care. I frequently felt home when she asked me for the subtleties in life. I will always remember the Christmas dinner with her and her students.

My academic supervisor, Dr. Rosana Brescia, the elegant, beautiful lady, a respectable, responsible and resourceful scholar, who has provided me with valuable guidance in every stage of the writing of the thesis. Without her enlightening instruction, impressive kindness and patience, I could not have completed my thesis. The idea of the QR Code is brilliant! Rosana's keen and vigorous academic observation enlightens me not only in this thesis but also in my future study.

Tiago Amado Gomes, my best friend ever, the vital person to my research! With all my heart deepest, thanks! Mariana Godinho, thanks for your excellent playing.

A very special thanks to Phoebe Haines and Juliet Petrus. Your academic and

practical experiences are crucial to my research. I could not make it without your help.

The very important people whom I have to give my best thanks are Marco Brescia, Yu Jiang, Shu Jun Lv and Qing Xie. Your beautiful recitation are the shining jewels of my thesis.

I want to thank all my singing teachers who have helped me to develop the fundamental and essential academic competence and performing skills: Prof. Liren Zhang, Boiko Zvetanov, Prof. Svilen Raychev (National Academy of Music "Professor Pantcho Vladigerov", Sofia, Bulgaria), Prof. Haobin Lv (Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chengdu China), Prof. Rowena Cowley (Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Australia).

I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Jorge Matta, Dr. Paulo Ferreira de Castro, Dr. Isabel Pires, Dr. Manuela Toscano for your kindness professional guidance and help.

I shall extend my thanks to Francisco Gama, Frederico Figueiredo and all the staff of Doctoral and Music Science Department of FCSH, NOVA University of Lisbon, for their kindness and help. My sincerely appreciation to Francisco Sasseti, Prof. Carlos Marecos, José Cedoura, Dr. Ana Arriaga and all the teachers staff and friends from the Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa for your help and the support you offered.

Also, I'd like to thank my classmates, the colleagues of the Doctoral program, Dr. Daniel Sanches, Dr. Leonardo Feichas and everyone who offered me excellent experiences and the best accompaniment for my performance.

Thanks to the 录音专家 (Recording Expert) and Yong Zhang, the technology

supplier.

To all my friends in China and Portugal, thanks for your supporting all these study years, I love you all.

To Mom and Dad, you are the most important people in my life always, I'm happy to make you proud of me. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: Singing diction, Chinese repertoire, Italian language, Phonation, Articulation

This research intends to show how Chinese contemporary vocal works can be sung with the western lyrical singing technique, focusing on the pronunciation of the Italian language: The way of dealing with Chinese vowels and consonants in the pronunciation of articulation refers to the rules/principles of that presented in Italian language. The subject was inspired by Dr. A. Hirt's lecture about singing English like Italians in 2011. In terms of rationality, to convey a sense yet also to approach the maximization of the rules of phonation (vowels) and articulation (consonants), researchers hypothesize that Chinese language (Mandarin) can be pronounced like the Italian language but in the setting of singing. This study will take into consideration from pieces of literature about singing technique to teaching, from viewpoints about articulation (in singing) of performers, to recordings and videos. We Believe it's necessary to import(impart) knowledge about the singing of Chinese phonetics and linguistics, compared to Italian, the most traditional language for singing and the original language of a considerable number of masterpieces on what regards vocal repertoire, since they have been evolving from two completely families of languages.

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1 INTRODUCTION

To preserve the nature of delivering the musical message via lyrics effectively and correctly, while following the rules of articulation, could the regulation of Italian pronunciation be applied to Chinese vocal performance? Several correlations have to be formulated, considered, and confirmed.

1.1 Languages in singing

Vocal art is a combinate art formed by music and language. Chinese professionals have named the vocal art as 声乐 (Sheng Yue). This term can be divided into 声 (Sheng), standing for sound—specifically, the sound of the voice and the words—and 乐 (Yue), for music. It is not just the spirit of the musical composition but the main tool for singers to sculpture the roles. Melodic integrity is necessary, but it must be accompanied and guided by the text. Indeed, while the must-have capabilities of any eligible singer hoping to study with a teacher include the ability to uphold a reasonable standard of singing skills, including breathing, phonation, resonance, and timbre, another significant technique that commands great weight and cannot be ignored is articulation in singing.

1.1.1 The likelihood of coalescent word and music

Expression of music and words can be considered to be time-based movement. The four physical properties of sound—pitch, length, timbre, and intensity—do not exist independently. On the contrary, they are mutually dependent upon one another in any type of musical performance. Time is the prerequisite carrier to complete the integration

of these four properties. The perceptual elements of music, besides the four, which include melody, harmonic structure and texture, are also presented in the time lapse; even the experience of hearing and appreciating music is entirely dependent on the time lapse. By talking about the fundamental mode of music, primarily we talk about time, the most elemental component. Music exists through the elapse of time, which determines its very existence. The same is true of spoken language.

Similar to music, language exists through sound, which provides the prosodic features. The pattern of manifesting these prosodic features contains physical properties such as pitch, length, colour, and intensity, just as for music. With language as with music, there seems no way to communicate meaning without the flow of time, and the associations continue through the concepts of a minimum structure, phrases in music, and the pauses and grammar in language. These shared physical properties make possible the capacity for discussing a coalescence of language and music.

With regards to content, the words dominate music for it has whole being with the pitch, metre, and accent of language. Simultaneously, music demarcates the words: the aesthetic pleasure of the music is paramount, and it must not be disturbed by a text that is too dense or too spare, by phrases that are either too long or too short, or by awkward-sounding or uncommon words. In vocal art, the logic advancing the lyrics and music must be almost identical, so that the emotional expression is able to coincide with the content, proceeding from a beginning through an elaboration, a climax, and a conclusion that together produce a satisfying whole. These elements result from a complementary flow, which ensures that there is coalescence of the parts.

1.1.2 The inevitability of coalescent word and music (in the vocal art)

What music itself doesn't have is the semantic function. Although it is easy to discern that a piece of melody is happy (jovial) or not, or that it has an obvious character of a familiar area, music cannot describe things conceptually. Even in programatic music,

which comes closest to the portrayal of images and ideas—for example, listeners might say that Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 sounds like the knocking of destiny, or they might respond to the vivid depiction of a flying hive in Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Полет шмеля* (“Flight of the Bumblebee”), or they might conjure the play of light and flames in Debussy’s *Feux D’Artifice*—the music is a kind of *chiaroscuro* rather than a literal portrayal. In these examples, music only simulates concepts or objects. In a word, what music is doing is delivering an abstract idea. Only through language—words with music—can the abstraction of music be clear.

Unlike any other kind of musical forms, a cornerstone of vocal art is that the flowing of music always accompanies the rolling out of words. That relationship between music and language must be unbreakable. Vocal art expresses immanent conceptions and emotion by having the aid of language, which explicitly relates to time, space, and human beings with their joy, suffering, and the full range of emotions. With music and text, it is not an “and/or” situation but an amalgamation, which creates a kind of new elixir. As Susanne Langer (1957)¹ pointed out, the elixir of vocal art incomparably expands the descriptive power of music; in this way memory remains concrete in the form of pictures (by language) after the music itself (time) has passed by. The human vocal register is narrower than the range of most instruments, and the human voice is not as complicated as what instruments can do, but if language is neglected, vocal art will lose its premier function and its distinction when compared to other musical forms.

¹ S.K. Langer, *Problems of art: Ten Philosophical lectures* (New York: Macmillan Coll Div, 1957) In *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures* (pp. 75–89). New York, NY: Macmillan Coll Div.

1.2 The two languages

The Chinese and Italian languages belong to two completely different language families. As we mentioned before, the music style is unlike to each other, the relationship between music and language in Chinese vocal art has its unique characteristics. To understand this, the present study starts with the Chinese language itself and the degree to which Chinese language and music are bound together.

Chinese is divided into Sino-Tibetan languages, which are characterised by being monosyllabic. This means that the basic unit of speech perception is monosyllabic, and the smallest element of grammar, the morpheme, is also monosyllabic². The characteristics of monosyllabic pronunciation in Chinese are summarized by Liu (2006).

There is not any stress in Chinese pronunciation because all the characters are monosyllabic. In addition, it alike the length and intention of each syllable are almost the same, the effect is like reading in a chorus. This coincides with the correct pronunciation required in Mandarin: Zi Zheng Qiang Yuan, which means clear articulation and a mellow and full tune. Equality of all syllables caused not for elision, contraction, incomplete plosion, reduced, linking and assimilation.

However, the features of pronunciation are for the daily speaking of Chinese, and whether they could be applied to singing will require further textual research.

In the Italian language, which belongs to the Romance group of the Indo-European family, a relatively large number of words are multi-syllable. The vowels of Italian do not contain the tail vowel³; which contributes to the reputation most commonly spread in music schools and conservatories that Italian is one of the most suitable languages

² N. Qian, "Xian Dai Han Yu De Te Zheng, The Characteristic of Modern Chinese Language," *Chinese Language Learning* 58 (1990)

³ The terminal sound (vowel or nasal consonant) of certain compound vowels, as is the case for [o] in [ao] and [ng] in [iang].

for singing. In China, it is frequent that lyric singing students start with Italian art songs such as *Caro mio ben* and spent most of their career performing Italian repertoire. This is the main reason we chose to use the Italian language as our major linguistic reference on what regards the western lyrical singing technique.

There are seven major characteristics of Italian pronunciation:

1. Almost all Italian words end in vowels (except for loanwords). There is no reduction of vowels, even for unstressed ones. The end vowel have to be clear and unambiguous sounding, even in a long, multi-syllabic word. Clipped tones or elision are forbidden. Examples include the words *fortunatamente*, *industrializzazione*, *considerevole*, and *otorinolaringoiatria*.
2. In functioning to deliver the Italian language, the muscle tone of the organs involved in pronunciation is stiffer than during the delivery of English and other Germanic languages.⁴ This frequently causes English speakers to fall prey to a slackness in pronunciation. Correspondingly, the vowels' shape in Chinese are not as wide as that in Italian. However, in the thesis mentioned above, the pronunciation required for Mandarin is *Zi Zheng Qiang Yuan*⁵ (Figure 1-1).

⁴ A. Hirt, "Why are We Taught to Sing English Like Italians? Disambiguating Vocal Pedagogy for Teachers" (Paper presented at Advanced Interdisciplinary Research in Singing: "With Voices-We United!", Canada, July 2011).

⁵ Y. Liu, "Han Yu Fa Yin Gui Lv Dui Ying Wen Fa Yin De Ying Xiang, The Effective on English Pronunciation from Chinese Phonation Articulation," *College English (Academic Edition)* 3, no. 1 (2006). This means clear articulation and a mellow and full tone.



Figure 1-1 Zi Zheng Qiang Yuan

3. When pronouncing Italian vowels, the shape of the lips shows an appreciable change. For instance, “*o*” and “*u*” require a circular lip shape, “*a*” and “*e*” use a natural opening, and “*i*” *has to be flat*. The requirements for lip shape in Italian are strict.
4. There are voiced and voiceless consonants in Italian, and the pronunciation of consonants have to be very clear. (e.g. *ca*, *ta*, and *pa*),
5. Italian incorporates the unique apical trill “*r*”.
6. There are no nasal vowels like in French. Every syllable is smooth and fluid.
7. The accent in Italian is mostly on the penult syllable, for example, *sole*, *scaffale*, and *spettatore*. The exceptions are accents on the antepenult—*musica*, *titolo*, *difficile*—or on the ultima (e.g. *però*).
8. Could the two languages, which belong to different families and have a considerable amount of differences, meet the qualifications for correct phonation and transparent articulation in singing?

1.3 Principal contradiction and subproblem

It has not been even a century since Bel canto⁶ was introduced into China; in fact, it has been only thirty to forty years, since the regular audiences got used to attend recitals with western lyrical repertoire. To Chinese people, Bel canto is absolutely a foreign culture. In the present work we use the term Bel canto to refer to the western lyrical singing technique of Italian influence, not to describe a specific period in music history of the stylistic characteristics of a determinate repertoire. Intercultural communication deserves ratification and appreciation. Nevertheless, significant communication has to

⁶ The term ‘Bel canto’, along with a number of similar constructions (‘Bellezze del canto’, ‘Bell’arte del canto’), have been used without specific meaning and with widely varying subjective interpretations. It did not take on special meaning as a term until the mid-19th century; ‘neither musical nor general dictionaries saw fit to attempt definition until after 1900’ (Duey). Even so, the term remains ambiguous and is often used nostalgically in its application to a lost tradition. Generally understood, the term ‘Bel canto’ refers to the Italian vocal style of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the qualities of which include perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and agile and flexible delivery. More narrowly, it is sometimes applied exclusively to Italian opera of the time of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. In either case, ‘Bel canto’ is usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful, and speech-inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular. Wagner himself decried the Italian singing model that was concerned merely with ‘whether that G or Ab will come out roundly’ and proposed a German school of singing that would draw ‘the spiritually energetic and profoundly passionate into the orbit of its matchless Expression’ (*Prose Works*; Eng. trans., London 1894, iii, 202; iv, 238). While to some, therefore, Bel canto became the lost art of beautiful singing—so that in a conversation that took place in Paris in 1858, Rossini is reported to have inveighed against the decline of the traditional Italian singing with the words, ‘Alas for us, we have lost our Bel canto’—to others (e.g. J. Hey, *Deutscher Gesangunterricht*, Mainz, 1885) it took on the pejorative meaning of vocalization devoid of content. Similarly, the so-called German style was both heralded and derided. In a collection of songs by Italian masters published under the title *Il Bel canto* (Berlin, 1887), F. Sieber wrote, ‘In our time, when the most offensive shrieking under the extenuating device of “dramatic singing” has spread everywhere, when the ignorant masses appear much more interested in how loud rather than how beautiful the singing is, a collection of songs will perhaps be welcome which—as the title purports—may assist in restoring *Bel canto* to its rightful place’. An entry in Grove Music Online explains a further historical complication:

The term ‘Bel canto’ rapidly became a battle cry in the vocabulary of Italian singing teachers (e.g. Ricci), and the concept became clouded by mystique and confused by a plethora of individual interpretations. To complicate the matter further, German musicology in the early 20th century devised its own historical application for ‘Bel canto’, using the term to refer to the simple lyricism that came to the fore in Venetian opera and the Roman cantata during the 1630s and 40s (the era of Cesti, Carissimi and Luigi Rossi) as a reaction against the earlier, text-dominated *stilo rappresentativo*. This anachronistic use of the term was given wide circulation in Robert Haas’s *Die Musik des Barocks* (Potsdam, 1928) and, later, in Manfred Bukofzer’s *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York, 1947, pp. 118ff). Since the singing style of 17th-century Italy did not differ in any marked way from that of the 18th and early 19th centuries, a connection can be drawn; but the term is best limited to its 19th-century use as a style of singing that emphasized beauty of tone in the delivery of highly florid music. —Grove Music Online (Jander & Harris, 2001)

be established with respect to both the home culture and the understanding of a foreign culture; otherwise, it is impossible to share the achievements of both cultures, and in fact the conflicts caused by preconceived misconceptions will even grow and spread. There has indeed been a debate in Chinese music schools about singing: the argument of traditional singing and Bel canto. The problem stems from a lack of intercultural communication. Whether Bel canto stands for a single criteria was and still is the core of the controversy. The validity of the achievement of culture or of art is consequentially limited by time and space, the function of value scale is to be cashed only under the limitation. The common sense of cultural/artistic research should not be neglected.

Over the centuries, the technique involved in Bel canto singing, such as breathing, phonation, and resonance, was subject to the influences of different geographic areas, times, and cultures. Innovation and development are to be expected over four hundred years of the Italian lyric singing tradition. The localization of Bel canto has always been a sign of the establishment of all vocal schools with a vital criteria: the degree of fusing with the local language. For Bel canto to successfully permeate China completely, fusion with the Chinese language is a barrier that must be bridged. For China, what is more significant is to sing Chinese songs with Bel canto technique, thus proving the artistic value of native music works; only then, the Chinese cultural heritage can be unveiled to the non-Chinese speaking countries.

1.3.1 Singing formant: a standard for phonation (vowels), a criterion for articulation (consonants)

A scientific basis for judging sounds has been established after studying the working principles of various organs and muscle tissues in the human phonation system through

anatomy and physical acoustics. This provides another way to judge voices aside from the evolution of methods and subjective aesthetic consciousness.

[The] effects of the resonances of the vocal tract are to produce a peak in the spectrum of the output of the harmonics which are closest to the true resonance. This ensures that the spectrum always has the same general outline as well as the sameness in quality in a range of sounds with different fundamentals. (Fry, 1979)

The formant is the most palpable mark for the human ear to recognize sound. Each vowel has at least two formant frequency ranges. By observing the formants, Sundberg (1997) discovered that every human has four or five formants. The peaks for four of them are at around 500Hz, 1500Hz, 2500Hz, and 3500Hz. A fifth one is deemed to be vital for singing and was labelled as Ring by Vennard (1967), with its peak between 2800Hz and 3200Hz.⁷

The insertion of an extra formant between the normal third and fourth formants would produce the kind of peak that is seen in the spectrum of a sung vowel. Moreover, the acoustics of the vocal tract when the larynx is lowered is compatible with the generation of such an extra formant. It can be calculated that if the area of the outlet of the larynx into the pharynx is less than a sixth of the area of the cross-section of the pharynx, then the larynx is acoustically mismatched with the rest of the vocal tract: it has a resonance frequency of its own, largely dependent of the remainder of the tract. (Sundberg, 1977)

Generally, the range of sound produced by a symphony orchestra is between 587Hz – 4200Hz, which is much lower than the frequency range of the highest sound capable of being produced by the human voice. The acoustic range to which humans are most

⁷ Meribeth A. Dayme, *Dynamics of the Singing Voice* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2009).

sensitive lies between 2000Hz and 3200Hz, in this period, a penetrating voice with an extra peak between 2800Hz and 3200Hz on the spectrum phonated by a well-trained singer⁸ is apparently stronger than the orchestra. This explains why an excellent tenor can be heard by the last row accompanied by an orchestra.

The singing formant is at an optimal frequency, high enough to be in the region of declining orchestral sound energy but not so high as to be beyond the range in which the singer can exercise good control. Because it is generated by resonance effects alone, it calls for no effort: the singer achieves audibility without having to generate extra air pressure. The singer does pay a price, however, since the darkened vowel sounds deviate considerably from what one hears in ordinary speech. (Sundberg, 1977)

One saying in the vocal profession in China is that singing is putting vowels in music. This indicates that the phonation of vowels plays a crucial role in the vocal art. The singing formant mentioned above is actually the ultimate aim of vowels' phonation, which happens to coincide with the requisite of Chinese singing: a mellow and full tone.

The emergence of the singing formant can be enormously profitable to professional singers. It is a positive standard to judge whether singers are well trained. In training and performance, whether the vowel pronunciation standard is ruined by articulation deserves more attention.

1.3.2 The conflict between Bel canto and Chinese (so-called)

Singing can be seen as purposeful expression. The major part of the expression of the content of a song is undertaken by the lyrics; thus, clear articulation is obligatory.

⁸ For a soprano, the range may be 2500Hz to 4000Hz.

This discussion about articulation is in fact about consonants under the prerequisite of reaching the singing formant by vowels.

As a singing style from the West, Bel canto is an indispensable part of the world's vocal art. In the past century, the development of Bel canto in China, among all other forms of vocal art, has been thought to be insoluble in Chinese because its phonation skills, which requires opening the throat, are contrary to Chinese phonation, which is mostly in the front part of the oral cavity. The bias toward vowels in Bel canto causes a deficit in phonating consonants. The Chinese vocal profession has been searching for a solution since the “土洋之争 *Tu Yang Zhi Zheng*” which means rivalry between Chinese traditional singing and Bel canto in the 1950s⁹.

Guo (2016) thought that features of the Italian language made Bel canto singing unsuitable for Chinese songs. He took consonants, vowels, and dealing with tones as support this idea. He stated three reasons for the obstruction of vowels: the differential of the extent of opening the oral cavity creates different timbres in each language; the duration of vowels before rhyming¹⁰ differs widely; and the two languages have unique metres.

In terms of the characteristics of Chinese and Western languages, Chinese characters are forms of signifiers. Chinese is a monosyllabic language without phonetic symbols (each character matching one syllable). According to Chinese phonology, the vowels and consonants of Chinese¹¹ and Western languages have little in common. In Western languages, vowels and consonants are in denomination of phonemes; each sound can only represent one phoneme. Further, in Chinese, characters are consonants and vowels

⁹ Liu and J. Guo, "Min Zu Chang Fa Yu Mei Sheng Chang Fa De Peng Zhuang Yu Jie He -- Cong Tu Yang Zhi Zheng Dao Duo Yuan Hua Fa Zhan, The Collision and Uniting of Bel canto and Tradition Sing -- From the Rivalry to 165 Diversification," *Music Life* 7 (2009).

¹⁰ The end of the pronunciation of the characters with nasal consonants-tail. (eg. Chang [tʂʰaŋ])

¹¹ They are called *Sheng Mu* (initial consonant of a Chinese syllable) and *Yun Mu* (simple or compound vowel of a Chinese syllable). Together with other languages mentioned in this study, they are called vowels and consonants.

contain more than one phoneme. In Western languages, the position of vowels and consonants is flexible, while in Chinese vowels are more likely to be led by consonants. Finally, Bel canto singing features a polysyllabic continuum of words in phrases, which is different from Chinese traditional singing, where characters play a vanguard role in dominating passages.

In terms of skilled vocal production, Chinese articulation is thought to be more complex than Italian, due to the higher position of the larynx. The front part of the oral cavity (middle front part of the upper palate) is closely linked when a clearer sound of consonants is needed. The phonating of Italian vowels requires a wider opening of the oral cavity and lower larynx; the mechanism of articulation moves relatively naturally to the middle part of the palate. This also explains why Italian phonation of vowels produces enough space in the oral cavity and pharyngeal cavity for gaining adequate singing resonance, but it is criticized as obscuring the articulation of consonants.

1.3.2.1 The Eco Singing

The CCTV Young Singers Grand Prix¹², held for the first time in 1984 by China Central Television (Figure 1-2) which is directly managed by the government, is the major national vocal competition. Every two years, it was successfully conducted 15 times till 2013.

青歌赛经过多年的实践和不断创新，已成为弘扬民族艺术、普及音乐知识、发现和推出声乐人才、引领和推动中国声乐事业发展繁荣的重要平台，极大满足了广大人民群众的艺术生活需求，为中国歌坛输送了许多优秀音乐人才。青歌赛历届选手中的优秀选手许多现在都已经成为了中国顶尖的歌唱家。

After years of practice and continuous innovation, the young singer's competition

¹² (Anon, n.d.) CCTV 青年歌手电视大奖赛 (中央电视台声乐比赛)

has become an important platform for carrying forward national art, popularizing music knowledge, discovering and launching vocal talents, and leading and promoting the development and prosperity of China's vocal music industry. It has greatly met the needs of the people's artistic life and has provided many excellent music talents for the Chinese music circle.

It is unquestionable that many of the winners have become great singers even worldwide, and they have supported the backbone of Chinese singing and entertainment in the past 30 years. Like a notebook, the competition recorded every step of Chinese singing after the reform and opening up.



Figure 1-2 The 1st CCTV Young Singers Grand Prix, 1984

Since the second contest in 1986, the young singers Grand Prix was set up in three departments in accordance with the singing styles: “美声唱法(Bel canto)”, “民族唱法(Nazionale Cantante)” and “通俗唱法(Popular Singing).” The live broadcast was carried to the whole country. Thus, "Popular Singing" in China has been considered

legal. Popular songs from Taiwan diffused in the mainland of China in the 1970s, were once forbidden for obscene intention. Yearly torpid popular singers and songwriters emerged from “half-underground” and made a huge step forward. From then on, Bel canto, Canto nazionale, and Popular were the three main divisions of singing in China.

“美声唱法”, means Beautiful Voice interpreted into English. The name is from Italian “Bel canto,” Competitors are required to perform arias and art songs, similar to Lied, Melodie, Canzone or so on of Western countries. The art songs were all written by Chinese musicians since the 1980s.

“民族唱法”, is called “Canto nazionale” in Italian or “National Singing” in English, which is a singing style that serves mostly contemporary Chinese songs.

In 2006, the twelfth CCTV Young Singers TV Grand Prix gained focus from all over China with a brand-new action. Surprised by the fact that the observance which has lasted for 20 years had been broken, Chinese musicians surrounded by various voices and those who were concerned about this singing competition showed great interest in the new system.

A new group in addition to “Bel canto,” “Nazionale cantante,” and “Popular singing,” called “原生态唱法” “Eco Singing” which is the original territorial singing in the name of a Chinese minority was set up for competition. A great wave of praising and doubting engulfed the country.

1.4 Chinese Vocal Arts Are Being Sang

1.4.1 Chinese contemporary Bel canto artists

In order to find out whether Italian pronunciation can be applied directly to singing Chinese songs, this thesis selects singing examples from contemporary Chinese Bel canto singers—those who are still active in the field of Bel canto in China, who are teaching and researching with academic authority—as the research subjects. Qualification for selection of these research subjects is gained by achievements in global singing contests, presenting numerous solo concerts and operatic roles, and having won international reputations for singing skills and idiomatic foreign lingual pronunciation in Bel canto. Singing in their mother language and being well accepted by Chinese audiences are also essential considerations. In other words, these Chinese contemporary Bel canto singers have triumphed in three areas: phonation of vowels, Chinese articulation (consonants), and musical interpretation.

Liao Changyong's *Yang Guan San Die (Tristesse at the Yang Guan pass - Tunes of Guqin)*¹³—客舍青柳色新—provides an example. It can be clearly heard that when touching the character 柳^{liǔ}, Liao rapidly turns to the vowel [u], exactly the same as in Italian [u], with the consonant [l] and the middle vowel [i] gliding but definitely recognizable. This is quite different from daily spoken language, where the duration of the middle vowel [i] and the end vowel [u] are equivalent, or perhaps the middle one is a bit longer than the end vowel. However, the articulation of the character 柳^{liǔ} does not cause any misunderstanding. The matter of rhyming is also discussed in Chinese traditional vocal forms such as Jin Ju (Chinese opera) or recitation. The pronunciation of the same character in the identical song performed by Fan Jingma¹⁴ demonstrates

¹³ C. Liao, "Yang Guan San Die," podcast audio, January 1, 2012.

¹⁴ J. Fan, "Yang Guan San Die," podcast audio, August 12, 2008. .

another possibility which is much closer to speaking. Additional examples will be provided below.

Several conditions should be rigorously considered when studying singing in the mother language: Is Italian phonation of vowels appropriately applied in Chinese? If yes, are the demands of clear articulation (consonants) and accurate conveyance of the text also met?

1.4.2 Foreigners singing Chinese

José Carreras released in 1999 a studio album titled *Pure Passion*. The Chinese art song *Sorrow of the Red Beans (Hong Dou Ci)* was chosen as the song for the Asian version. In 2013, Carreras performed the Chinese art song *From Afar*¹⁵ on the New Year's concert held by China Central Television.

一首只有 16 句歌词的短歌竟赢来观众 3 次热情的掌声。这位歌唱大师的演唱不仅让观众赞叹他对中文咬字的清晰，更赞叹他对音乐的深情处理，有如草原上的牧歌一样婉转动人。

*A short song with only 16 phrases has won three enthusiastic applause from the audience. This master's singing not only made the audience admire his clarity of Chinese characters, but also praised his affectionate handling of music, which is as graceful as pastoral songs on the grassland.*¹⁶

¹⁵ 《在那遥远的地方》*From Afar*, created by the Chinese composer Wang Luobin in 1939. A foreigner's premiere was launched in 1943 in Shanghai by the American singer Paul Robeson. Wang Luobin, the composer of the song, won the UNESCO "Special Contribution Award for Cultural Exchange Between East and West" in 1994

¹⁶ L. Bing, "Master Carreras sings a Chinese song: From Afar," 新浪娱乐首页_娱乐新闻_新浪网, last modified January 1, 2005, <https://ent.sina.com.cn/2005-01-01/0915616572.html>.

This was not the first time Carreras has performed a Chinese song in public. As early as 1998, José Carreras, Plácido Domingo and American Jazz singer Diana Ross sang the finale at the Transcentury Sound Concert in Taipei, China.

Coincidentally, Domingo in the 2009 Glamor China Nest Summer Concert and in his concert in Shanghai, jointly performed the Kangding Love Song twice with Chinese folk singer Song Zuying.

当晚观众的热情感染了多明戈，在全场的呼唤声中，他第5次返场，这次他牵着宋祖英的手登上舞台。当《康定情歌》的音乐声响起，观众席上响起掌声。多明戈用中文和宋祖英对唱了这首歌，他的中文发音不是特别标准，但其幽默风趣的表演，引来全场笑声不断。一曲结束，掌声久久不绝。

That night, the enthusiasm of the audience touched infected Domingo, in the call of the audience, he returned for the fifth time. When the music of Kangding Love Song sounded, applause broke out in the audience. Domingo sang this song due to Song Zuying in Chinese. His Chinese pronunciation is not particularly standard, but his humorous performance attracted constant laughter from the audience. The end of the song, the applause was endless.¹⁷

In 2012 and 2014, The !SING International Young Artists Festival held two successful summer sessions in Beijing by the headquarters of the Confucius Institute (Office of Chinese Language Council International/Hanban) and the Asian Performing Arts Council (APAC), with a founding mission to introduce Mandarin as a lyric language and Chinese vocal music as an emerging genre to the mainstream music world. More than twenty young Bel canto singers from the United States, Italy, Canada, and elsewhere performed several Chinese contemporary arias and art songs¹⁸. Reportedly,

¹⁷ "Song Zuying joins hands with Domingo to sing Kangding Love Song is the most popular," 163, last modified September 26, 2009, <https://ent.163.com/09/0926/04/5K42VN5F00032KMI.html>.

¹⁸ F_129, "I Sing Beijing' Transcends Cultures - People's Daily Online," English--People's Daily Online, accessed April 14, 2020, <https://en.people.cn/90782/7912510.html>.

a third session is underway.¹⁹ On the night of 14th October 2017, at the Mary B. Galvin Hall of Northwestern University, U.S.A, a concert called Our Friends—Chinese Art Songs was presented by Bravo Music Chicago. American soprano Julia Metzler and baritone Jose Rubio sang *Wo Ai Ni, Zhong Guo (I Love You, China)*, *Huang He Song (Ode to The Yellow River)*, and other works²⁰. The singers were praised for their standard pronunciation of Chinese, with clear articulation and a mellow and full tone.

活跃在美国歌剧舞台的朱莉娅·梅茨勒献上的一曲《我爱你，中国》，字正腔圆。听众如果闭上双眼，难以发觉这是出自外国歌唱家之口；何塞·罗维奥在高歌《黄河颂》之前，用中文朗诵了一段歌词，气宇轩昂。

The song I Love You, China presented by Julia Metzler, who is active on the American opera stage, is perfectly clarity, if the audience closes their eyes, it is difficult to realize that this is from a foreign singer; Before singing the song "Ode to the Yellow River", Jose Rovio recited a paragraph of lyrics in Chinese fervently.²¹

Forged an indissoluble bond with China, Phoebe Haines and Juliet Petrus still sing Chinese art songs on the stage of China and all over the world.

Phoebe has appeared as a featured artist in a number of musical programmes on Jiangsu TV, and China's premier channel, CCTV, including 诗词中国 2019, 世界听我说, and many more. Phoebe was honored to sing for the CSSAUK Chinese New Year Gala at Sadler's Wells Theatre in January 2019, and hosted the 2020 Chinese Embassy Gala at Central Hall, Westminster.²²

¹⁹ "iSING!SUZHOU 2018 Guo Ji Qing Nian Ge Chang Jia Yi Shu Jie Lai Le, iSING SUZHOU 2018, International Youth Vocality Gala is Coming", 2018.

²⁰ "Zhong Guo Yi Shu Ge Qu Yin Yue Hui: Zhong Mei Ge Chang Jia Lian Mei Cheng Xian, Concert of Chinese Art Songs: Presented by Chinese and American Singers", 2017.

²¹ "中国艺术歌曲唱响美国密歇根湖畔," last modified October 16, 2017, https://www.sohu.com/a/198276721_267106.

²² "Phoebe Haines," n.d.

Phoebe Haines shared with the author her process and difficulties of learning to sing Chinese songs:

When I first began learning repertoire in Chinese, I would say that it took me slightly longer to memorize than European-language repertoire, purely because I had little understanding of grammar, word order, poetry, and literary references in Chinese. As I gained a better understanding of the spoken and written language, my ability to memorize has improved exponentially, and now I learn Chinese repertoire just as quickly as European-language repertoire. I now speak more Chinese than I do Italian, for instance. So, for me, the memorization process is no different.

I think that an understanding of the poetic forces and subtext are particularly important in Chinese song repertoire. Singers of European-language repertoire may already be aware of certain cultural references (in terms of literature and folkloric traditions) within the Western operatic and art song canon. However, we won't necessarily know about the cultural and literary heritage represented in Chinese art songs. In Hong Dou Ci for example, Liu Xuean's melody is well-known, but it seems to me that Mandarin-speaking audience members respond very strongly to the lyrics. Cao Xueqin's words are arguably as familiar to Chinese speakers as William Shakespeare's are to UK audience members; for this reason, an extremely sensitive rendering of this text is required from the singer, regardless of their native language.

Most importantly, from the perspective of non-native singers, she affirmed to a certain extent the conjecture of this thesis and the significance and direction of continued research:

The Author:

Q5, Do you think it's possible that singing Chinese in/with Italian pronunciation rule?

Phoebe Haines:

I do, broadly, although I think that certain syllables may require their own pronunciation rules or phonetic characters (sounds such as 'zhi' and 'ge' which aren't found in the Germanic and Romance languages).

Juliet Petrus accepted a scholarship from the Confucius Institute to study Chinese at Shanghai Tongji University in 2014. While studying in Shanghai, Petrus successfully held her first solo Chinese song concert, and then held more in the next years. When it comes to the accuracy and authenticity of Western Bel cantos in interpreting Chinese songs, Juliet is the one who is the best among them.

Since 2014, Juliet has joined with Chinese art director and piano accompanist Qiu Yi. The pair of University of Michigan students decided to work together to promote Chinese art songs. In 2015, they recorded "A Great Distance," their first album featuring Chinese art songs, classical and modern compositions. More exciting is that the album "A Great Distance" also included two art songs created by American composer John Duke and John Alden Carpenter; the English lyrics are translated from ancient Chinese poetry.

Juliet Petrus described the process of learning Chinese language and Chinese songs in more detail from a technical perspective and expressed her great enthusiasm for Chinese culture and music, while once again affirming the value and direction of this study:

The Author:

Q5, Do you think it's possible that singing Chinese in/with Italian pronunciation

rule?

Juliet Petrus:

Yes, in some cases. With a handful of exceptions, Chinese is made of of phonemes that are found in other lyric dictions, including Italian, French and German, Czech and even English. Not all sounds are in Italian, but some are. Italian is also known to be a 'bright' language, the placement of sounds often quite forward, as in Chinese. The difference is again the lip rounding.

It is necessary to sometimes disengage from parts of the spoken language (the tones, the lateral mouth position) in order to achieve the legato. But it is possible.²³

A larger audience was introduced to Chinese vocal works performed by Western singers in a standard concert setting, which affirmed the artistic value of Chinese songs.

In the case of phonation, where technique must be above reproach, the phenomenon of foreigners singing Chinese songs deserves more attention. Are non-Chinese singers who are used to Western vocal style able to deliver the correct content of vocal works via precise articulation of Chinese? Their success in this area is crucial for the globalization of Chinese vocal works, for the broad acceptance of this music as a new force, and for putting this music in the service of Bel canto.

Troubles occur when Western vocalists singing Chinese songs—as in the example of José Carreras—are subjected to scrutiny. Solving these troubles, so that Chinese songs can be successfully sung in Italy and elsewhere, is crucial.

²³ Appendix C

1.4.3 Chinese songs based on ancient poetry and contemporary Chinese art songs

In studying Chinese and Western singers, it is important not to neglect the lyrics of Chinese songs.

Classical Chinese is a kind of written language mainly based on spoken language in the pre-Qin period in ancient China. Over time, the difference between classical Chinese and spoken language has gradually expanded. Classical Chinese is based on allusions, parallelism, and strict rhythm, involving strategy, poetry, ci, qu, eight-part, parallel prose and other styles. Compared with vernacular Chinese, the advantages of classical Chinese lie in the meticulous of characters, subtle meaning, and graceful writing working well together, which is why many art songs are composed using classical Chinese lyrics. Xu Shu in 2002 compiled a volume, *Selected Artistic Songs of Ancient Chinese Poetry* (Huacheng Publishing House) (Figure 1-2) which contains 100 new or existing art songs with the lyrics of ancient Chinese poetry of the Tang or Song dynasties. The obvious shortcoming of classical Chinese is that it is difficult to understand and popularize. Classical Chinese is a terse language; a single character often stands for multiple words or even multiple meanings. Classical Chinese and vernacular text are also very different in terms of the order of the grammatical components of the sentence. To understand classical Chinese precisely needs proper training. When singing art songs with classical Chinese lyrics, performers are required to pause accurately in phrases and find the keywords in the sentences in accordance with the flowing of the music.

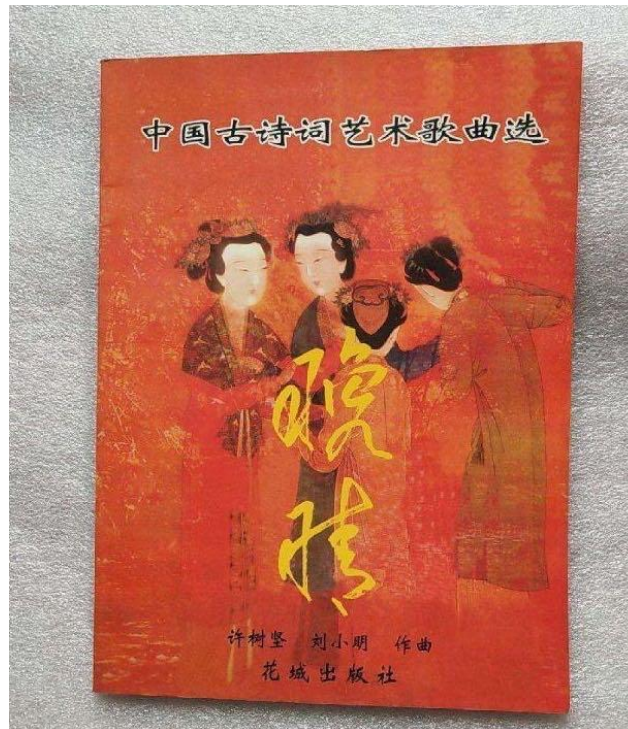


Figure 1-3 Xu (2002)

Modern vernacular Chinese refers to the written language that is based on modern Chinese spoken language. After the May Fourth New Culture Movement in 1919, vernacular Chinese took the place of classical Chinese and became the mainstream for writing, which caused a slow decline in the use of classical Chinese. Vernacular Chinese is much plainer than its precursor, and it has broadly absorbed Western lexical resources and grammatical structures to be capable of conveying vivid, harsh, rough, and rich expressive force. Chinese songs that do not use ancient poetry as lyrics are written in vernacular Chinese. Vernacular Chinese causes fewer problems in understanding because it is China's dominant language.

1.4.4 The vowel *umlaut* in singing

Proper execution of Bel canto requires a high unity of timbre. This includes not only the unification of the timbre, volume, and position of the vowels but also the unification

of these elements in different registers. "Close" skill is advocated in the high register, which is quite different from that in the other two zones in terms of muscle function and sound production. An example is the *umlaut*²⁴ of Italian vowels in the high register. In order to unify the timbre of the medium and high register and smoothly cross the bridge area, the singer is required to strengthen the support of the diaphragm so that the voice fully extends through the head cavity. The vowel *umlaut* is the mixing of [o] and [u] with the other vowels. Lilli Lehmann emphasized the vital role that head resonance plays in the uniform symmetry and expansion of sound registers in her *How to Sing* (2011). Some vowels are fixed, as [a] in Father or [ʌ] in Up. Bunch (2009) thought that

A singer who makes a conscious effort to maintain the same vowel color throughout the range by monitoring that vowel aurally, actually produces for the hearer an uneven quality of vowel as she/he moves through the various registers of the voice. What the listener hears in such a voice as it ascends or descends the scale changes in quality which, when exaggerated, sound as if a different person begins to sing in each register or in different areas of the range. (Bunch, 2009)

This explains the necessity and rationality of the vowel *umlaut* in singing. In terms of the specific operation method, this means that the singer needs to allow pharyngeal space for the sound by having a high soft palate and a comfortably low larynx. (Bunch and Sonninen, 1977)

As mentioned above, in the process of singing, the appropriate expansion of the pharyngeal cavity together with the reasonable shading of vowels are able to bring positive effects, such as unity of timbre, volume, and phonating area in the high register.

²⁴ A subtle expansion or shrinking of the oral cavity for achieving the requirements during singing (e.g. High notes).

Could it be denied that this skill is applicable to singing in all languages, including singing in Chinese?

1.5 Hypothesis

This study has two hypotheses:

In singing, Italian pronunciation (vowels and consonants) can be transplanted into Chinese. This will be tested by analysing a series of frameworks of Chinese characters.

In singing, the technique of the Italian vowel *umlaut* can be fully used in the singing of Chinese vocal works without affecting the basic requisite of clear pronunciation.

1.6 The definition, focus, and guiding idea

1.6.1 Definition and guiding theory

This study first targets Bel canto; issues in Chinese traditional singing will not be considered or examined. Secondly, the study is undertaken with regard to Chinese and foreign singers and educators who have already solved the main technical problems of phonation.

Theoretical guidance for vocal music production used in this research is provided by M. A. Bunch²⁵ (Figure 1-3), on the basis of anatomy. Italian pronunciation rules are used as the research reference. Other Bel canto schools, such as the German school, the French school, and the Russian school, are also referenced but do not form part of the theoretical basis.

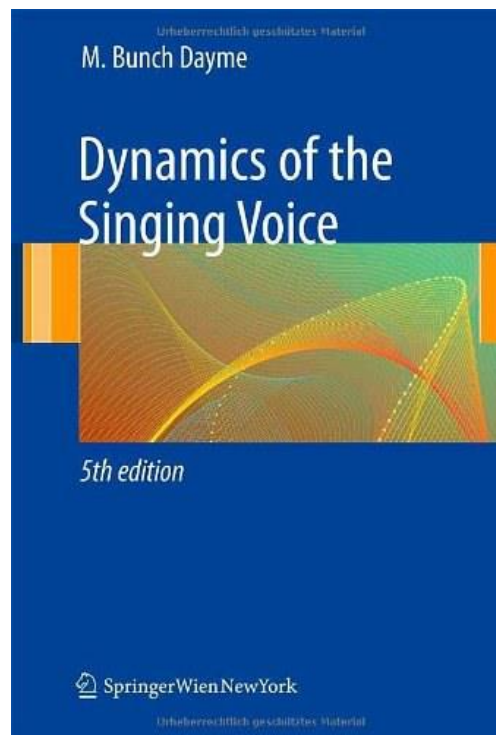


Figure 1-4 Bunch (2009)

²⁵ Meribeth A. Dayme, *Dynamics of the Singing Voice* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2009)

1.6.2 Analysing articulation in the overall consideration of musical phrases

Originally in classical music, lyrics come to prevail over melody. Vocal music took predominance in both sacred and secular music in the Middle Ages. Music was composed for the recitation of poems, such as in Gregorian chant. In the Baroque period, music was mainly composed for specific musical genres such as opera, oratorios, and cantatas. Operas and art songs produced in the Classical and Romantic periods and then into the 20th century were invariably built on mature literary works. The integrity of literature, endowed with musical soundness by composers, produced an organic whole that could be presented as a work of art to the audience.

The fact that works of art have been handed down for thousands of years and still remain meaningful for modern audiences affirms the fruits of the combination of language and music. But a failure in musical execution could potentially ruin the integrity of the literature. And the integrity of literary works must be reflected in exemplary vocal production. Concretely, when a literary work is accompanied by melody, the punctuating and pauses must be logical for expressing relatively complete meaning; a so-called musical phrase functions like a sentence in written language. One sentence or one musical phrase is certainly not sufficient to form a written article or a musical work, however, they do have the ability to deliver a few, at least, implication.

2 This study on articulation in singing will avoid the use of single Chinese characters or Western words as samples, and excessive pursuit the elements over quantified and controlled in training and singing, turn to the utility techniques availing to the singers, educators, and those being educated. By grounding the analysis on phrases and complete musical

**works, the research will try to produce solutions to problems
that can be extended and generalized.**LITERATURE REVIEW

Before proposing the topic of “singing Chinese repertoire with the western lyric singing technique”, the researchers consulted a large amount of literature research. Relevant work within the musical profession includes the perspectives of phonetics, Bel canto techniques, aesthetics, and musical/vocal history. Most of these views come from the Chinese side, but the research perspective of Western scholars has enlightened the idea and direction of the project.

2.1 Hirt (2011)

A lecture named “Why Are We Taught to Sing English Like Italians? Disambiguating Vocal Pedagogy for Teachers” was given by A. Hirt at the Advanced Interdisciplinary Research in Singing "With Voices-We United!" conference held on July 2011 on Prince Edward Island, Canada. The title triggered the thoughts of singing Chinese with the pronunciation of Italian vowels.

By the introduction of how the old Italian composers served the musical purpose, which was heroic songs sung with *basso continuo*, Hirt (2011) pointed out that the way of notating loose, imprecise narrative using staff notation had a lineage of understanding in both musical form and language structure. Hirt (2011) thought that understanding both the structure of language and music is the key to understanding the

musical notation. And this is primarily why the Italian language, more than other European languages, is deemed to best match singing²⁶.

In the denomination of an exhalation, by determining the number of volume pulses or syllables can be produced with one breath, Hirt (2011) proposed that Italian and French are syllable-timed languages while English is a stressed-timed language. With syllable-timed languages like Italian, speakers do not reduce the duration or volume of unstressed syllables; rather, their utterance benefits the volume and the length of the entire phrase. This is why Hirt (2011) indicated that

Singers should strive to increase the volume of unstressed syllables if they are on stage and performing to a good number of people.

In 1982, Gino Bechi was invited to present lectures to the China National Symphony Orchestra. Bechi said that every single word, every vowel, should always be on a high position or the audience will sense too much effort or laboriousness. Bechi mentioned that the vowel that linking the following word is better to be interpreted as a syllable, no matter whether it is stressed or unstressed. The theory of Hirt (2011) and Bechi (1982) on being easily heard by the audience in a full hall beyond the orchestra matches what was previously mentioned about the fifth formant initiating by Sundberg (1977) and sustained by scholars such as Bunch and Sonninen²⁷

In Hirt's (2011) opinion, syllable-timed languages like Italian naturally allow one's tongue to be lax and move to a velar position, which is deemed to be profitable for singing because of the non-neglect of the pronunciation of the unstressed vowel. As one of the criteria for judging the suitability of languages for singing, the duration and

²⁶ A. Hirt, "Why Are We Taught to Sing English Like Italians? Disambiguating Vocal Pedagogy for Teachers" (lecture, Singing and Education, University of Otago, NZ, Canada, July 22, 2011). P1

²⁷ M.A Bunch and A. Sonninen, "Some further observations on covered and open voice qualities," *NATS BULL* 34, no. 3 (1977) P1

volume of unstressed vowels in a phrase of Chinese songs will be evaluated in the following text.

Because English is classified as a stress-timed language, having an utterance different from Italian, Italian vocal exercises are not applicable to this language. English-speaking singers can't directly use the different features/formulae of Italian vocal exercises²⁸. If we can conjecturally say that English speakers have language-imposed disadvantages for singing, just, we can also say that tailor-made vocal exercises can remedy these defects so that these singers can come as close as possible to correct Italian singing style. In other words, the purpose and result of doing English vocal exercises are to make English singers sing in the Italian way. Further, by conquering the innate flaw, English speakers can equal Italian speakers in singing proficiency, and they can then use the same Italian vocal exercises with equal effect. If English speakers can do so, how about Chinese speakers?

²⁸ A. Hirt, "Why Are We Taught to Sing English Like Italians? Disambiguating Vocal Pedagogy for Teachers" (lecture, Singing and Education, University of Otago, NZ, Canada, July 22, 2011). P3

2.2 Present research

Even since Bel canto was introduced in China, there have been non-stop arguments about singing Chinese songs with Bel canto technique or the Sinicization of Bel canto. The focal points of the controversy are always the conflict of articulation in Chinese and Italian. A summary of Chinese vocal artists' long experience is that the lateral opening of lips and elongating the staying of vowels makes articulation clearer and more affable. However, since Bel Canto is sung in Italian, a language with pronunciation easier than Chinese, which is why vertically opening lips achieve the maximum volume and fullness possible. Yuan (2015) held the view that if Chinese singers practice the vocal exercises exactly as do Italian singers, although the volume and resonance can be easily proved, but would be lack of the legibility of consonant even the whole character. This view was affirmed by Zhou (2009), Ren (2014), Jia (2016), and Guo (2016). Most of this group disapproved of using Italian vocal practices directly for Chinese singers; nevertheless, a few of them proposed concrete new methods for training Chinese singers in the Bel canto style.

Zhou (2009) who presented a group of scholars (Wang, 2008; Ren, 2014; Yuan, 2015; Jia, 2016) devised vocal exercises for singers of Chinese traditional singing style to train for using Bel canto practice to fit Chinese songs. Specifically, the method comprises 五音(Wu Yin, Five Sounds) for singing consonants, 四呼(Si Hu, Four Exhalations) for singing vowels, and 十三辙(Shi San Zhe, Thirteen Metres). This singing method has been put into practice in various traditional Chinese vocal art institutions such as Jin Ju (Beijing Opera), or *Hebei Bangzi*, since the Ming and Qing dynasties. There is no bibliographic record about this, but knowledge has been inherited through oral tradition. It has served Chinese traditional vocal art for over a hundred years as a default occupation standard. There is no specific and practical research on applying this skill into Bel canto singing style or the suitability of this Chinese articulation skill for Bel canto techniques. Zhou (2009) mentioned that when singing

Chinese songs in Bel canto style singers should apply Chinese articulation skills, but is a lack of detailed practical methods for mixing the two or pragmatic vocal exercises for matching them.

Alternative sounds (Dong, 2007; Hu, 2008; Sun, 2011) are used for Italian vocal practice in daily vocal training. In these scholars' opinion, the radical element of any language is the five vowels (a, e, i, o, u). In any language, any transmutable pronunciation of monophthong or diphthong is based on the five root vowels. Italian vocal exercises present the pronunciation of these vowels that is most suitable for singing, which also is the under structure of vowel articulation in singing in any language. The problems with the pronunciation of consonants when singing Chinese songs in the Bel canto way involve personal customs or the inherent sounds of a nationality. Amending the articulation of singing native songs is about the adjustment of consonants' sonification rather than inventing new exercises that might bring in side effects to the orthodox vocal training for vowels.

There have been no vocal practices or developmental procedures especially adapted for Chinese within the educational institutes or amongst teachers specialized in Bel canto. In most cases, subjects such as the position of vowels in the oral cavity and the umlaut of vowels in different registers occupy the main field of singing vocalization research. These debates deserve study and performance in the root languages of Bel canto itself, but there is a specific lack of solutions with regard to the Chinese language.

So far, there is no official record of any musical education institute or personal teacher using vocal exercises especially aimed at singing Chinese using Bel canto practices. Writings in the scholarly literature that discuss articulation in Bel canto focus on the fact that the same vowel has to be in a different position according to the requirement of the text language, or the deformation of vowels in a different register. All such works benefit Chinese singers who sing Western musical works, but there is a

lack of attention on the so-called contradiction of Bel canto techniques and Chinese articulation, not to mention a possible solution.

2.3 Liu (2014)

Similar research by Liu (2014) is of great importance for this study. The contrast in pronouncing vowels in Italian and Chinese has been proceeded for clarifying his stand for the less suitability of Chinese for singing than Italian that by Yuan's (2015) school. By dint of Lei's (2008) *Diagram of International Phonetic Alphabet Vowel's Pronunciation*²⁹ and *Tongue Position of Mandarin Vowels' Pronunciation*³⁰, Liu analysed the differential in tongue position and the shape of the oral cavity when speaking Chinese and Italian. Two important conclusions were summed up, as follows.

On the situation of the monophthong, the sung pronunciation of Chinese vowels is generally similar to Italian. Analogical inference can be found in Zhou (2009), Li (2010), and Guo (2016). In a study of Zhou Xiaoyan (1917-2016)³¹ (Figure 2-1), one of the earliest Chinese Bel canto singers and teachers, Tao (2009) indicated that Zhou's opinion about Chinese monophthong pronunciation is to get close to Italian vowels. This conforms to current daily education in China. Therefore, Liu (2014) put his research concentration on the pronunciation of the diphthong.

²⁹ L. Lei, *Ge Chang Yu Yan De Xun Lian Yu Biao Da*, The Training and Expression of Language in Singing (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publish House, 2008), P35-58

³⁰ L. Lei, *Ge Chang Yu Yan De Xun Lian Yu Biao Da*, *The Training and Expression of Language in Singing* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publish House, 2008) P35-58

³¹ "Zhou Xiaoyan," last modified November 10, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Xiaoyan.



Figure 2-1 Maestro Zhou Xiaoyan (1917-2016)

Yu (2000) defined the pronunciation of the Chinese diphthong as the resonance caused by the umlaut of the oral cavity and tongue position from one vowel to others. Liu (2014) made further efforts by using a particular example, [zhuang]³², where the pronunciation of the diphthong is sequentially from [u] to [a], then a final [ng] of very short duration. Although the movement of the phonating of each vowel has to be considered as an entirety, the subtle differences of duration, which are so ephemeral that one cannot even make a complete pronunciation of the vowels, does exist. In singing, given the musical requirements, the stays are always elongated. The dismemberment of the entire phonating directly caused the inaccuracy of Chinese characters.

³² Chinese phonetic alphabet. Refer to Appendix.

Constructively, Liu (2014) put forward a design of a vocal practice especially for the Chinese diphthong that originated with his vocal teacher, Xinyu Li³³. In the three classifications of Chinese diphthong and the vowels followed by consonants that are unique to the Chinese language, Liu (2014) provided a detailed manner of articulation based on analysing the duration of each vowel as stressed or not, illustrated by the figures of the trajectory of phonating the umlaut with Lei's (2008) design.

In Liu's (2014) conclusion, Italian vocal exercises for monophthongs can be directly applied in Chinese daily teaching and training as the foundation of singing. However, there is a necessity to develop special exercises for Chinese diphthongs. Liu's (2014) study was built on the foundation of data and many case studies, so it is truly helpful in giving tips to singing teaching in China. Even if Chinese teachers and students undergo a long period of study and practice on the pronunciation of each vowel and transforming them for singing Chinese songs accurately, there is nothing that helps Western singers in singing Chinese songs. For instance, when José Carreras was invited to perform a Chinese song in China, in 2013, how long was he expected to prepare for the performance? Was it long enough to analyse the accurate duration of each vowel or the process of vowel transformation of each character, and then be trained as long as Chinese singers are, just for the one song?

The issue of singing Chinese in Italian style is not only for Chinese singers, but also a matter, hopefully, of having Chinese songs be well accepted and widely performed. This study is on finding a highly practical method for singing Chinese songs easily.

³³ Xinyu Li, dramatic tenor, the director of the vocal department at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music.

2.4 The integration of Bel canto and Chinese National Singing

The evolution and development of “Chinese national singing” is based on the mastery of Bel canto techniques in Chinese vocal music circles. Before drawing lessons from, transplanting, and integrating Bel canto techniques, it is important to understand national singing, which is quite different from Bel canto in terms of timbre, resonance, breathing, and the use of relevant muscles. Studying the use of Bel canto's articulation on Chinese art songs, it is impossible to circumvent the transformation and development of national singing in the Chinese profession

Hao and Wang (2010) and Yang et al. (2018) proposed that vocalization techniques (breathing, phonation, resonance, articulation) are inseparable, so that when studying one, the impact of changes in others cannot be ignored. For example, it is mentioned that because Bel canto and Chinese national singing have different requirements on vowel pronunciation position, a difference between light and dark timbre is caused; it is also pointed out that the pronunciation position and timbre tendencies at different pitches also have different requirements for articulation. Na (2017), in a research perspective on the requirements of the articulation of Bel canto in several European languages and that of Chinese national singing, explained the great differences between the two singing styles in terms of language and culture. Further, Zou (2013) pointed out that because in Bel canto, the consonant is produced from the vowel's voice position, reaching the high pitches may sacrifice the clarity of the consonant, thus merging and darkening the vowel sound, while the oral form of Chinese national singing is always "wild". The pronunciation of each Chinese character is clearly and strictly required, which conforms to the differences of the traditional Chinese character articulation rules. Dong (2003) argued that there is no fundamental conflict between the articulation of Bel canto and Chinese. That incompatibility arose is only an inadequate understanding of the specific technique of Bel canto or an inappropriate application. Dong also stated that it is better to focus more on the commonality between Italian and Chinese than to

over-emphasize the accusation that Bel canto singing of Chinese songs causes the songs to lose their national flavour.

After a brief analysis of the pronunciation process between Italian and Chinese, Guo (2007), Kang (2010), and Shan (2011) argued that the technical requirements for fully conforming to Chinese phonating are contrary to the technical specifications and aesthetics of Bel canto. It is necessary to achieve the artistic specifications of Bel canto in all aspects, and to act in accordance with the aesthetic principles and technical methods of Bel canto when singing in this style. Zeng (2012) and Gao (2014) fully affirmed the relevance of the articulation technique by the so-called national–Bel singing style which was born after the integration of Bel canto with national singing. However, more discussion focusing on the relevance and fusion of national singing and Bel canto has clearly stated that Chinese songs should conform to the traditional law of Chinese words (Zhang, 2006; Lin, 2007; Ou, 2011; Li, 2013; Lin, 2013; Zhou, 2013; Zhang, 2013; Li, 2014; Luo & Wang, 2014; Zhao, 2014; Li, 2016; Wang, 2016; Xia, 2017). Zhu (2018) is the only writer who explicitly proposed that the introduction of Bel canto has made up for a "deficiency" in Chinese national singing, which is related to “slow initial consonants, maigre finals and heavy tails”.

2.5 More words about Eco Singing



Figure 2-2 Eco Singing Gold Award Winner, 12th CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix
2006

Huaixiu & Huaifu, Lee, from Yunnan Province, China

Plenty of researchers have given their own opinions about the relationship of Eco Singing and Chinese National Singing. The mainstream of the discussion stands on the idea that Eco Singing is the root of Chinese National Singing, according to the ancient origin of Chinese singing (Li, 2006³⁴; Pan, 2016³⁵; Si, 2010³⁶; Yang, 2014³⁷; Zhang, 2007³⁸). Another sound put their eyes on the techniques of phonation: the way of

³⁴ S. Li, "'Dissociation' and 'rooting', a thinking caused by Eco Singing and National Singing," *Chinese Music 2* (2006)

³⁵ M. Pan, "'原生态唱法'与'民族唱法'关系之探究 The study on Eco Singing and Chinese National Singing," *The School Newspaper of Jilin University of Arts*, 2016

³⁶ Y. Si, "A study on the relationship between Eco Singing and National Singing," (master's thesis, Shaanxi Normal University, 2010).

³⁷ J. Yang, "Research on development of 'Original Ecosystem' and 'Academism' Folk style singing," *Journal of Nanning Polytechnic* 19, no. 2 (2014)

³⁸ C. Zhang, "A Study of the Accepting the Relation at First the Ecosystem Sings Method and Chinese National Sings Method," (master's thesis, Henan University, 2007).

continuing and the stage of displaying, to define that Eco Singing and National Singing are two completely system of singing (Chen, 2014³⁹; Ding, 2008⁴⁰; Wei, 2010⁴¹).

One angle focused on the “TITLE” are drawing eyes, they think National Singing which is mixed with Bel canto is supposed to be corrected, to be “China Singing” for giving the name “National Singing” back to Eco Singing (Ding, 2009⁴²; Li, 2006⁴³; Pan, 2007⁴⁴; Wang, 2004⁴⁵; Zhang & Zhang, 2004⁴⁶).

The doubt about comparability of Eco Singing is also discussed in the vocal field (Bai, 2006⁴⁷; Wang, 2012⁴⁸; Wan, 2013⁴⁹; Yin, 2006⁵⁰). Most of the criticism affirmed the positive role of the CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix in generalizing Eco Singing but held back about the comparability to each other in this group.

Which one represents “National”? The definition of the name “National Singing” was offered by Baidu Encyclopedia, which is the most commonly used source, accepted by the academics of Chinese singing with the following paraphrase:

是由中国各族人民按照自己的习惯和爱好, 创造和发展起来的歌唱艺术的一种唱法。民族唱法包括中国的戏曲唱法、说唱唱法、民间歌曲唱法和民族新

³⁹ L. Chen, "Talking About the similarities and differences of Eco Singing and National Singing," *Music Space* 277 (2014)

⁴⁰ Q. Ding, "Develope Neck and Neck -- Will National Singing be crushed by Eco Sining?," *Times Literary* 11 (2008)

⁴¹ Y. Wei, "The thinking about National Singing and Eco Singing," *Arts Exploration* 24 (2010)

⁴² Y. Ding, "The Rationalisation of Naming "Chinese Singing.", " *An Hui Wen Xue* 11 (2009)

⁴³ S. Li, ""Dissociation" and "rooting", a thinking caused by Eco Singing and National Singing," *Chinese Music* 2 (2006)

⁴⁴ G. Pan, "Doubt the name of "National Singing" and "Eco Singing", " *Art Education* 3 (2007)

⁴⁵ L. Wang, "Thoughts About Promotion of Chinese Singing Arts," *Journal of An Hui Institute of Education* 22 (2004)

⁴⁶ H. Zhang and Z. Zhang, "A Research into Chinese Canto," *Journal of Guilin Teachers College* 18 (2004)

⁴⁷ Y. Bai, "On the Eco singing method of CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix," *Arts Criticism*, 2006

⁴⁸ L. Wang, "Thouts about Eco Singing in CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix," *The World of Music* 7 (2012)

⁴⁹ L. Wan, "Thoughts Caused by the Cancellation of Eco singing in CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix," *Musical Creation* 11 (2013)

⁵⁰ Y. Yin, "Thoughts Caused by the Eco Singing from 12th CCTV Younger Singer Grand Prix," *People's Music* 7 (2006)

唱法等四种唱法。

It is a genre of singing art created and developed by the Chinese people of respective ethnics according to their own habits and hobbies. The Canto nazionale was formed by Chinese opera singing, speaking singing, traditional singing, and national new singing.

民歌和民歌风格的歌曲带有浓郁的地方音调，在演唱时如能用方言更能表达其内容与色彩，但是地方语与汉语普通话的总规律是相同的，因此用普通话来演唱也是行得通的。在风格处理上北方民歌要豪放悍犷一些的特点，南方民歌则要委婉灵巧的特点，高原山区民歌要高亢嘹亮一些，平原地区民歌要舒展自如一些。

Folk songs or songs with the style have strong regional tones, it is better singing in dialects to express the real color. It can be singing in Mandarin for the sharing the language rule. Songs from the North are crude, while songs from the South are much more dexterous. Songs from the mountains are resounding while songs from plain area are more stretching.⁵¹

The origin of Chinese national singing can be traced back to the matriarchal society of 6,000 B.C. It is created from physical labour and daily life. The *Dan Ge*, a short poem/song from the Huang Di period, which is recorded in *Wu Yue Chun Qiu*, and *Work Songs* recorded in *Huai Nan Zi*, are considered the embryos of Chinese national singing. They are mostly crying out and yelling.

After the Twenty-First Century B.C., China entered the slave society, the period of the Western Zhou Dynasty, and the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period. According to the *Book of Songs*, there were 305 folk songs, which were divided into three categories: "Wind," "Elegance," and "Ode." Under the "Wind" category, there are

⁵¹ (Baikē.baidu.com, 2018)

15 folk songs, mostly from the north. “Elegance” songs are generally from literati and nobilities, many of which reflect social reality and sympathy for the working people and reveal the internal contradictions of the ruling class. Most of the “Odes” are ancient "sacrificial songs." The rich content made the “Wind” the essential songs of the Book of Songs, inheriting from the themes of love, labour, customs, satire, fairy tales, and so on. The songs can be performed as a solo, duet, or with vocal accompaniment⁵².

It is impossible to recover the true sound of ancient China because only the lyrics can be seen from ancient literature. There are no inherited musical scores since the invention of metric tablature at the end of 19th century because of the oral transmission of inherited songs. The intentional intensive collecting, arranging, documenting, and publishing were actualized in the New China period since 1949. There are multiple names of national songs in history, such as *XiaoQu*, *LiQu*, *XiaoLing*, *SuQu*, *ShiCi*, and so on. In Ming and Qing, people used Mountain Songs as the name of all kind of national songs⁵³.

The Canto nazionale/National singing displayed in the CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix was especially targeting the singing style and songs after 1949. Three stages of the development of present Chinese National singing are considered⁵⁴:

During the 1940s and 1950s, National Singing was fully occupied with natural voice, which is natural, fine, and smooth, obviously with the features of folk songs. The historical background and other objective factors made Chinese National Singing place particular stress on “Speaking,” the way phonation was mixed with plenty of elements from Chinese Traditional Opera/Drama.

⁵² (中国新媒体信息网 CCIA, 2014)

⁵³ (Anon, n.d.) 中国民歌_百度百科

⁵⁴ Y. Liu, "浅析民族唱法的基本特征 The Essential Feature of Chinese National Singing," *Literature Life* 8 (2012)

Singers in the 1960s and 1970s mastered the integrity of performance with emotions and skills. In the traditional opera/drama style, the custom of the real voice was broken with the opening up of the throat, overdubbing with falsetto for a rounded and flowing voice that went through the body.

Since the 1980s, Western singing skills pervaded the whole country. Based on the methods of National Singing in the last stage, singers and teachers “reformed” it with Western singing technique, advanced in both Chinese singing with clear articulation, flexible breathing, and nightingale voice and Western singing with unified register, a wide range, and mixed-voice technique. The obvious benefit is supporting the singers to sustain an aria with dozens of pages from the Operas that were written for Chinese National Singing. The Chinese vocal music circles call it the new generation of Chinese National Singing. The National Singing style has its own training system and standards to be judged because of its background in Western technique. It is quite similar to coloratura or leggiero tenor.

On the most glorious stages of China, such as the four-hour long live broadcasting Spring Festival Gala Evening on every Chinese New Year’s Eve, songs written by contemporary Chinese musicians and performed with the Chinese National Singing style always lead the vocal music.

Obviously, “National Singing” with the explanation from Baidu Encyclopaedia and National Singing in the CCTV competition or the present Chinese main stages are not the same thing: A traditional one with an ancient origin and a new one reformed artificially with Western elements.

In 2006, the CCTV competition pushed the traditional Chinese singing style on the stage with a new name: Eco Singing, while maintaining the name “National Singing” for the fixed singing style.

Referring “Eco Singing” From Baidu Encyclopaedia:

它最初源自于我国民间极少数人的口中，但分布广泛。它的发声原理是新生儿的哭声，该哭声的发声位置恰恰是在人体的胸腔，于是原生唱法就成为了人类唯一的原自然声发声方法。……总体上说是最接近民族、民间的没有经过太多修饰的一种唱法，它是民族唱法的初形和起源。

*It roots from nongovernmental people a very few but wide spreading in China. The principal of phonation is neonate's crying: chest resonance. That made the Eco Singing the one and only singing method that natural and un-artificial.*⁵⁵

One of the most famous Chinese singers, Li Guyi⁵⁶, who is considered to be the inaugurator of Chinese National Singing (the new style), defined Eco Singing as follows:

最初我们界定的原生态唱法，是未经学校学习的、原始的唱法就叫原生态，但现在很多来比赛的原生态是经过包装的，那么这个名字还成立吗？还有，说起原始，到底原始到什么程度，这也是很难界定的。

*At first, the original singing method that we defined was the original singing method that had not been studied in school, however, a lot of the original ecology of the competition has been packaged, so does this name still hold?*⁵⁷

According to Li, it doesn't matter whether the position is high, or how the breathing is done. Skills should not be considered in judgment.

Three most significant characteristics of Eco Singing could be summarized:

⁵⁵ (Anon, n.d.) 原声态唱法_百度百科.

⁵⁶ Refers to 3.3 Research samples No.9.

⁵⁷ X. Zhang, "李谷一对青歌赛提出质疑：包装的也叫原生态？," Chinanews, last modified March 27, 2008, <https://www.chinanews.com/yl/ytcf/news/2008/03-27/1204087.shtml>.

1. Ethical and civilian. It comes from China that is formed of 56 nations. There are voices expressing emotions or demonstrating normal life from each of the nations. Some of them might like each other because they are part of the same region, but they are substantively different from their national roots.

2. Un-decorated and un-artificial. It is the instinctive phonation when people were born. It is defined to be a style/method of singing attributed to the outcome of the voice.

3. It existed since the emerging of each single nation in ancient China and the unchanged circumstance lasted till now.

The name “Eco Singing” was borrowed from natural science and describes a kind of natural model, found since 2004 at the Folk Song Challenge in Zuo Quan, Shanxi province⁵⁸. There are questions from scholars whether it could be taken into the realm of culture and art, or not? It would be possible to define it as “National Traditional Singing.”

What could not be ignored when talking about singing style is songs. What serves Eco Singing style in an era when people did not recognize that it is an art form? Referring to *Wu Yue Chun Qiu* and *Huai Nan Zi*, crying and yelling in some specific time for example when working and flirting were considered to have been Eco Singing. Then when these sounds happened to match some kind of tuning system, it does not make sense to the singers at all, they are just melodies. Based on ancient recordings, after being collected and rearranged, a huge number of songs were produced. Some of them were made into song cycles such as the famous “Jasmine Cycle,” “Lullaby Cycle,” “Seeing My Lover Boy Off,” and “Mountain Songs.” These collected works were not made academically for Eco Singing but just for people to sing. Although it can be sung with Bel canto for which indeed there are precedents, Eco Singing is no-doubt the best

⁵⁸ X. Wang, "Talking About Eco Singing," *Art Education* 4 (2008)

way to express their original colour. There are records of the earliest tablature of China, which appeared around the Han dynasty. In 2006 the traditional singing style was put on the stage with its new name. There are not any records of compositions especially produced for Eco Singing.

Back to the division of Bel canto, Canto nazionale, and Popular Singing, in 2013, the fifteenth Young Singer Grand Prix cancelled the Eco Singing competition part. However, the discussion about Eco Singing and its inside-comparability seems to be everlasting.

The different voices focus on two arguments beside the agreement as following:

1. What is the relationship between National Singing and Eco Singing? Which one is the real Chinese national singing style?

2. Can Eco Singing be compared to anything else?

CCTV 第十二届青歌赛的“原生态唱法”比赛，虽然未冠以民歌演唱的定语，实际上却是民歌的比赛。如果要以“原生态唱法”命名，还应当包括我国丰富多彩、形式多样的民间音乐的各种类型，除了民间歌曲外，还有民间戏曲演唱、民间曲艺（说唱）演唱。它们都有原生形态的演唱环境和独特唱法。

The competition of Eco Singing is in fact the contest of singing Chinese national songs although it was not in the name of Chinese National Singing. Whereas the living environment and unique singing style, the Eco Singing should've contains various art form such as singing in local opera/drama and local speaking-singing.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ "原生态唱法_百度百科," 百度百科_全球领先的中文百科全书, last modified 2012, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%8E%9F%E7%94%9F%E6%80%81%E5%94%B1%E6%B3%95/1827371?fr=aladdin>.

The original folk songs served by Eco Singing are the root of national vocal music works. Critically, the original folk songs do not belong to the realm of art due to it is plain, deliberate modifications or artificially⁶⁰ It is a singing gradually formed by local people according to their customs and territory. This tradition continued from the elderly to their children, and even to their grandchildren. Basically, it is the way everyone in that territory sings. A champion singer of the CCTV contest called So Lang Wang Mu sang some Tibetan folk songs about/from the mountains or prairie that she sings every day with extreme vivid individuality, and she is well accepted by the public for showing the true face of Eco Singing. Folk songs and Eco Singing are those traditional, plain and life oriented.

As one of the main singing styles in China so far, National Singing dominated the name “National” since the 1940s. This is the one official singing method of China to sing Chinese vocal works beside Bel canto. Voices trained with increasing Western singing skills serve traditional Chinese songs, which were sung by Eco Singing in the old time. What benefits the singing style (National Singing) most are those songs written by present Chinese musicians. A number of the present Chinese compositions are themed with patriotism, loyal to the party, soldier’s sacrifice, and so on. These songs are taking charge of the singing style shining at every stage from the city centres to the villages.

As an implicit rule, at the final round of the CCTV Young Singer Grand Prix, it is necessary to sing a new Chinese song, which is unpublished or non-public-performed to win a prize. It is clear that Canto nazionale/National Singing is a style of singing that is based on Western phonation and resonance, serving Chinese articulation only. In the name of “national” sharing folk songs with Eco Singing, Canto nazionale/National

⁶⁰ X. Zhang, "李谷一对青歌赛提出质疑: 包装的也叫原生态? ," Chinanews, last modified March 27, 2008, <https://www.chinanews.com/yl/ytcf/news/2008/03-27/1204087.shtml>

singing emphasizes more on present political intentions. It can be seen as Western singing in disguise, or it can be called *Party Singing*.

In musical educational institutes, students learning in the department of “National Singing” are trained in the system of scientific method of phonation and the art of processing interpretation of exaggeration. Opuses they sing every day are collected and rearranged folk songs, in addition to present Chinese songs with mixed voices. These products are certainly good for demonstrating artistry, and they belong to stage performance. Differently, the emphasis of Eco singing is on the song itself or the mood when people sing. Vocal skills are the last thing to be considered.

Although the traditional singing style finally got a name in the beginning of 21st century apparently Eco singing existed since B.C. and remained the way of making vocal music so far. Works serving Eco singing are accumulations of thousands of years of daily life and labour. Some of them were shared by National Singing after the 1940s, however, this did not change their original colour: they belong to everyday people, without any political purpose.⁶¹

People were confused when the competition put Eco singing on the stage to see which singer is better. The National singing style has its own training system and standard to be judged because of its background in Western technique. More or less, it is quite like a coloratura or leggiero tenor. Singers do not have languages discrepancy sharing practical unanimity cultural background.

The demarcation of Eco Singing in music has to be discussed. All the elements such as the division of history into periods, qualities, origins, and so on, have to have a scientific basis. The art value is certainly different between that of a 1,000-year-old

⁶¹ "原生态唱法_百度百科," 百度百科_全球领先的中文百科全书, last modified 2012, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%8E%9F%E7%94%9F%E6%80%81%E5%94%B1%E6%B3%95/1827371?fr=aladdin>.

song or of a 100-year-old song—of a totally unchanged song or an artificial work. There are questions from experts whether a trained singer or a pre-packaged singer can be considered for Eco Singing. A rigorous demarcation is imperative to protect and maintain the characteristics of Eco Singing.

About the inside-comparability of Eco Singing group, I pointed out that Eco Singing should focus on demonstration but no comparability in the last competition. We have several nations and huge accumulations of folk arts with giant diversity in languages, phonation, or skills. For example, a Mongolian long tune, a Xinjiang Twelve Mukamu, and a Zang folksong are not comparable due to their distinct origins.

People think that the Eco Singing style is such a way without training; it is an aboriginal way of making sound by oral transmission to the next generation. However, one can consider that Eco Singing has extremely high technical content, which is rarely copied by professionals. The unique high technique makes the singing with a strong, distinctive individual colour that rarely exists in vocal art. It is quite for exhibiting.⁶²

Eco Singing is not with a oneness in many ways. Eco Singers are individuals in languages, accents, musical system, and performance. These differences are just right for the characteristics of each nation; they are the essentials of Eco Singing. Back to the competition, there is no reasonable standard and scientific method to judge the advantages, or it is radically an unnecessary impossible mission.

The name of the so-called “National Singing” in the CCTV competition and in the present industry is not able to cover the practical national singing of China because of its artificial and Western background. It is more like a fresh spring in the long river of evolution of this multinational country with a political appeal. It is more about the

⁶² X. Zhang, "李谷一对青歌赛提出质疑: 包装的也叫原生态? ," Chinanews, last modified March 27, 2008, <https://www.chinanews.com/yl/ytcf/news/2008/03-27/1204087.shtml>

politics than the nations. The style of art demonstrates political inclusiveness and sub-classification for an external appearance. The practical words National Singing in musicology has to be fulfilled with folk songs (Eco Singing) and other art forms, dramas, and the modern National Singing. That makes the name used in the contest and the industry a narrow antonomasia. It seems for National Singing, “Chinese Singing” is more reasonable, which is a term that has been suggested. In vocal music, it is justifiable to change the term *National Singing* to *Eco Singing*.

In the future, perhaps we can consider holding a contest in each nation. For the circumstance of large area and underpopulation of some nations, folk songs and their inheritance are in imminent danger. The solution is apparently not practical. More sadly, the comparison in each nation does nothing to demonstrate and promote folk songs to the world.

This chapter involves the emergence and development of Eco Singing in China. The singing method is in the way of vocalization, and the enunciation is comparable to Chinese National Singing. It is closely related to the introduction of Bel canto technique.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the methodology and relevant approaches adopted in the present research. This chapter will explain the research philosophy, approaches, and strategies, and why the methodology has been adopted. At the same time, the constraints associated with data collection and the limitations of the work will also be discussed.

The research aim for this dissertation is to find the possibility of singing Chinese songs in Italian style, and more specifically, to try to prove that Chinese songs can be phonated in the manner of singing of the Italian language, for both vowels and consonants. Obtaining information from study models/objectives and support from the literature is a vital concern for reaching accurate results. Based on the data collected, a theory about teaching non-native singers to sing Chinese songs will be made. To a large extent, the methodology determines the results of a study. Therefore, it is crucial to choose and run the appropriate research methods effectively in order to answer the research question and meet the research objectives.

3.2 Question and hypotheses

On the premise of the affirmative about the conjecture that, in singing, the pronunciation of vowels and consonants can be applied to Chinese articulation, three hypotheses are proposed:

1. The phonating position of vowels in Italian is appropriate to Chinese (monophthong and diphthong finals) when singing. Thus, Italian vocal exercises satisfy the needs for training and performance in China.

2. The neglect of sounding consonants in Bel canto needs to be proved, and if it proves to be false, the claim that Bel canto is inappropriate to singing Chinese songs seems invalid.

3. The length on the stressed vowels when singing polysyllabic words in Italian, especially those vowels following by nasal consonants [n] and [m], can be compared with the situation arising from nasal vowels in singing Chinese (vowel umlauts).

If these three hypotheses are proved to be feasible, the proposition is considered established.

Pinyin/Chinese phonetic alphabet: The key tool and important object

The scheme of the Chinese phonetic alphabet (CPA) is “Pinyin romanization, also spelled Pin-yin, also called Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, Chinese (Pinyin) Hanyu pinyin wenzhi (‘Chinese-language combining-sounds alphabet’), system of romanization for the Chinese written language based on the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect of Mandarin Chinese.”⁶³ The CPA is based on the principle of phonemic Pinyin, which adopts the Latin alphabet. Since the 1580s, fourteen schemes for the pronunciation of

⁶³ *Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Pinyin romanization." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 25, 2011. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pinyin-romanization>.*

Chinese have contributed to CPA, which was promulgated by the Fifth Session of the First National People's Congress, 11 February 1958. The initial consonants were proposed in six drafts that included work by Matteo Ricci⁶⁴, Martino Martini⁶⁵, Liu Mengyang⁶⁶, Huang Xubei⁶⁷, Liu Shanji⁶⁸, and *Latinized New Writing*⁶⁹. The vowels were summarized in eleven proposals by Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault⁷⁰, Martino Martini, Robert Morrison⁷¹, Joseph Edkins⁷², Thomas Francis Wade⁷³, Séraphin Couvreur⁷⁴, Calvin Wilson Mateer⁷⁵, Zhu Wenxiong⁷⁶, Huang Xubai, and *Gwoyew Romatzyh*⁷⁷. The concept of vowel syllabication was taken from Matteo Ricci, Robert Morrison, Thomas Francis Wade, Liu Shanji, and *Gwoyew Romatzyh*. CPA results from the wisdom of generations of both Chinese and Western people. The United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in September 1977 affirmed a resolution on the spelling of geographical names in China with CPA, and it has become the most common way to transcribe them in English⁷⁸. CPA is not

⁶⁴ Shih, J. Hsing-san. "Matteo Ricci." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 2, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Matteo-Ricci>.

⁶⁵ [Martino Martini \(1614-1661\)](#), Italian Jesuit missionary, cartographer, and historian, mainly working on ancient Imperial China. —Wikipedia

⁶⁶ Liu Mengyang (1877–1943), scholar in the late Qing era, author of *A Discussion on Phonetic Alphabets* (n.d.) and *Zhong Guo Yin Biao Zi Shu, The Book of Articulation of Chinese Characters* (1908).

⁶⁷ Huang Xubai, author of *La Ding Wen Yi Jie, Latin Conjecture* (1909).

⁶⁸ Liu Shanji, author of *Xin Hua Zi* (1914).

⁶⁹ [Latinxua Sin Wenz is a historical set of romanizations for Chinese languages, although references to Sin Wenz usually refer to Beifangxua Latinxua Sin Wenz, which was designed for Mandarin Chinese. Distinctively, Sin Wenz does not indicate tones, under the premise that the proper tones could be understood from context.](#) —Wikipedia

⁷⁰ [Nicolas Trigault \(1577–1628\)](#), Walloon Jesuit, and a missionary in China. —Wikipedia

⁷¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2019, January 01). *Robert Morrison*. Retrieved Mar. 22, 2019, from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Morrison>.

⁷² [Joseph Edkins \(1823–1905\)](#), British Protestant missionary who spent 57 years in China, 30 of them in Beijing.

⁷³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2018, August 21). *Sir Thomas Francis Wade*. Retrieved Mar. 22, 2019, from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Francis-Wade>.

⁷⁴ [Séraphin Couvreur \(1835–1919\)](#), French Jesuit missionary to China, sinologist, and creator of the EFEO Chinese transcription. —Wikipedia

⁷⁵ [Calvin Wilson Mateer \(1836–1908\)](#), a missionary to China with the American Presbyterian Mission. —Wikipedia

⁷⁶ Zhu Wenxiong (1883–1961), pioneer of Chinese character reform, author of *Jiang Su Xin Zi Mu, The New Letter of Jiang Su* (Beijing, 1957).

⁷⁷ [Gwoyew Romatzyh](#) (National Language Romanization, 1928), is a system for writing Mandarin Chinese in the Latin alphabet. —Wikipedia

⁷⁸ [Pinyin](#). —Wikipedia

only in daily use domestically, but it is also convenient for international communication. Since it was issued in 1958, the effects and applied range of CPA have reached further than intended; it has become a tool for learning Chinese and promoting Mandarin, and it has completely demonstrated its rationality and practicability. Through the legitimacy gained by official adoption, CPA has become the bridge of modern culture for the past sixty years. Indeed, it has taken on the function of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for Mandarin Chinese in the areas of cultural exchange, promotion of Chinese language, and related teaching.

Chinese characters are pictographs, which means they are symbols indicating more than simply images, and they add meaning to articulation. The purpose of the generation of characters is different from the root of Latin languages.⁷⁹ Foreigners are not able to pronounce Chinese characters accurately at first sight because there are no familiar elements to point the way. Therefore, when first gaining access to Chinese, CPA is a vital foundation and key. More meaningfully, CPA renders characters alphabetic to fit the perceived comfort of Western people, simplified to the utmost from professional phonetics symbols (IPA) to Latin letters. This simplification is another important reason that CPA is more widely circulated than IPA.

The greatest benefit of CPA is its convenience in directly connecting Chinese to Western languages. The comparison and analysis of languages is unified in Latin letters. The text of the Chinese vocal works chosen for this conference-recital will be notated in both CPA and IPA, and the performance design will be proposed following the analysis of pronunciation for music.

A breakthrough in the articulation of Bel canto in Chinese could be expected upon evidence of the effectiveness of singing Chinese by Italian vocal pronunciation rules.

⁷⁹ Chinese characters are ideographic, while characters in Latin languages indicate sound representation.

Outside of helping foreigners how to sing in Chinese, this would also offer the potential for multiple choices of sound making in native-language singing.

In addition to being a key research tool to transform Chinese characters from ideographic to phonetic Latin form, Pinyin is also an important research object in this study. The pronunciation of Chinese characters expressed by the Pinyin and IPA system will be analysed and compared with Italian, showing the important commonalities and differences between the two languages.

Besides the description of the pronunciations in written forms and symbols, each of the examples given in this study provides a Chinese standard pronunciation. The voicers who read these examples have all been granted a Grade 1 or higher level of the Putonghua Grade Certificate issued by the State Language Commission, indicating that they are capable with standard phonetics, correct vocabulary and grammar, and natural tone and smooth expression in reciting and talking, and make only rare mistakes in pronunciation and intonation. The total score loss rate is less than 8% in the test. With this certificate, they have satisfied the professional criteria for performers and dubbers, broadcasters and hosts, and teachers of film, drama, radio, and television performance. Their recordings ensure the accuracy and reference value of the sample pronunciation of this study. These readings are stored with QR codes that are embedded in the text, which can be scanned by appropriate devices (such as smartphones) and applications⁸⁰ to obtain the reference pronunciation. This extends the function of written systems such as IPA and Pinyin for pronunciation and makes up for their descriptive deficits.

⁸⁰ A QR code scanning application can be downloaded from <http://www.i-nigma.com/Download-i-nigmaReader.html>.

3.3 Research subject and samples

The statement of the research is “singing Chinese repertoire with the Italian lyrical singing technique”, it can be Chinese people singing their own language or more in a breakthrough, Western singers’ chosen.

For over seventy years, Chinese musicians and scholars have studied the fusing of Bel canto and the Chinese language. There is an extensive literature about this issue and associated controversies that have laid the foundation for this study. Theories in regard to singing Chinese songs have been established by famous musicians or educators, discussed by Jin (2008, 2011, 2015)⁸¹, Pan (2003)⁸², Zou (2015)⁸³, and others. These works establish a theoretical basis and have exhibited findings on Chinese people singing in their own language with Bel canto technique. As an antecedent and sustained procedure of a qualitative research, the documental research method takes advantages than the others and benefits the study efficiently. Unfortunately, there are no research works on foreigners singing Chinese songs, which is why evidence from audio/visual materials is rare.

⁸¹ Jin Tielin, Manchu, a musician of the People's Republic of China, a famous singer and vocal educator. Many outstanding singers and vocal performers have been cultivated in his teaching. His students have won more than 70 awards in national vocal music competitions and several provincial and municipal awards. He is now the honorary president of the College of Music and Recording Arts of the Communication University of China, and has launched the Jin's singing method. (<https://wanweibaike.com/wiki-金铁霖>)

T. Jin, *Jin Tielin Sheng Yue Jiao Xue Wen Ji, Jin Tielin's Collected Works of Teaching Vocal Art* (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2008)

T. Jin, *Jin Tielin Sheng Yue Jiao Xue Fang Tan Lu, Interview on Jin Tielin's Vocal Art Teaching* (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2011)

T. Jin, A. Zou, and D. Hao, *Zhongguo Sheng Yue Tan Suo Yu Chuang Xin: Jin Tielin Cong Jiao 50 Zhou Nian Lun Wen Ji, The Exploration and Innovation of Chinese Vocal Art: A Symposium of Jin Tielin on 50 Anniversary of Teaching* (Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2015)

⁸² N. Pan, *Sheng Yue Shi Yong Zhi Dao, Practical Guidance for Vocal Music* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2003)

⁸³ B. Zou, *Ge Chang Xue: Shen Xiang Ge Chang Xue Ti Xi Yan Jiu, Study on the Singing System of Shen Xiang* (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2015)



Figure 3-1 Prof. Jin Tielin

As a juxtaposition to the theoretical review, the case study is a strongly persuasive method that can directly demonstrate how singers (both Chinese and non-Chinese) sing Chinese songs. Singers with international influence are chosen as the sample of the study. Their recordings and public performances provide the basis to determine whether they exhibit a unique or a shared style of articulation. Details about these singers' credentials and international reputations are provided Below.

Sample No. 1. Liao Changyong, baritone. 1st prize, French International Toulouse Singing Competition, 1996⁸⁴; 1st prize, Queen Sonja International Music Competition, 1996⁸⁵; 1st prize, Operalia, The World Opera Competition, 1997⁸⁶. He was a featured soloist in concert with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra with Queen Sonja of Norway in attendance.⁸⁷ Liao has played the roles of Count di Luna in Verdi's *Il trovatore* at the Kennedy Center with Placido Domingo (Washington National Opera, 2000⁸⁸); Enzo in Verdi's *Attila* with the Opera Orchestra of New York (Carnegie Hall,

⁸⁴ "Chinese student wins Toulouse Int'l Voice Competition". *English.news.cn*. September 12, 2010.

⁸⁵ Q. Zhang, "Verdi's 'Rigoletto' goes minimalist," *China Daily*, 2007

⁸⁶ R. Turnbull, "China's First Lady of Opera," *The New York Times*, 2010

⁸⁷ "Classical," *News of Norway*, 1997.

⁸⁸ "[Washington Opera: Il Trovatore](#)". *Kennedy Center Performance Archives*. Retrieved November 12, 2015.

2001⁸⁹); Captain Israele in Donizetti's *Marino Faliero* (Carnegie Hall, 2002⁹⁰); the Japanese Prince in Tan Dun's *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* (Dutch National Opera, 2003); and Renato in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* (Michigan Opera Theater, 2003⁹¹). Additionally, he was the soloist baritone in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra⁹².



Figure 3-2 Liao Changyong

Sample No. 2. Yunus Dilbèr, soprano, has been called the "Philomela of China", in reference to the Athenian King Pandion I's daughter, who, according to legend, turned into a nightingale. In 1987 Dilbèr finished her master's degree at the Central Conservatory of Music, China and promptly joined the roster of the Finnish National Opera, later adding a position with Sweden's Malmo Opera. She twice won the Birgit Nilsson Stipend, in 1997 and 1998⁹³. Dilbèr won the silver prize of the first Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition in 1984 while she was still a student. Roles she performed include The Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Rosina

⁸⁹ A. Tommasini, "Opera Review; A Neglected Donizetti With A Heroic Doge," *New York Times*, 2002

⁹⁰ A. Midgette, "OPERA REVIEW; Early Verdi With All Stops Out," *New York Times*, 2003

⁹¹ D. Calamia, "Michigan Opera Theatre begins season with 'A Masked Ball'," *Pride Source*, 2003

⁹² S. Kyo, "Review: Carmina Burana," *Time Out Hong Kong*, 2010

⁹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dilber_Yunus

in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Lisa in Bellini's *La sonnambula*, Adina in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Marie in Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*, Lucia in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Oscar in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, Olympia in Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Sophie in Massenet's *Werther*, a Flowermaiden in Wagner's *Parsifal*, the title role in Stravinsky's *Le rossignol*, Zerbinetta in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Lauretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.⁹⁴



Figure 3-3 Yunus Dilber

Sample No. 3. Fan Jingma, tenor, has won 1st prize in the men's group of the BBC Singer of the World in Cardiff, 1987; Silver medallion of the Rosa Ponselle International Vocal Competition, New York, 1988; and 1st prize in the Opera Index Vocal Competition, New York, 1991. His operatic roles have included Don Carlo in Verdi's *Don Carlo*, Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Edgar in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Prince Ramiro in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Rudolf in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Pinkerton and Goro in Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*, Cavaradossi in Verdi's *Tosca*, the title role in Gounod's *Faust*, Lenski in

⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dilber_Yunus

Tchaikovsky's *Евгений Онегинъ*, Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, and Don Jose in Bizet's *Carmen*.

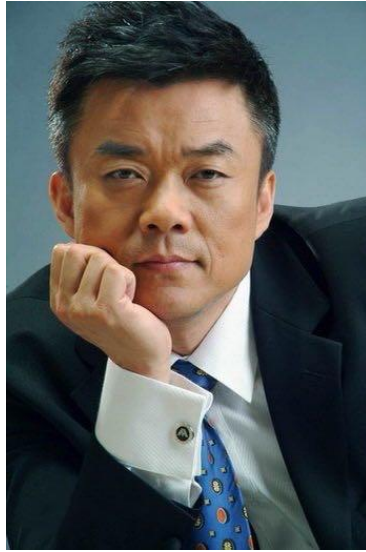


Figure 3-4 Fan Jingma

Sample No. 4. José Carreras, tenor, made his debut on the operatic stage at 11 as Trujamán in de Falla's *El retablo de Maese Pedro* and went on to a career that encompassed over 60 roles, performed in the world's leading opera houses and in numerous recordings. Carreras is also known for his humanitarian work as the president of the José Carreras International Leukaemia Foundation (La Fundació Internacional Josep Carreras per a la Lluita contra la Leucèmia), which he established following his own recovery from the disease in 1988⁹⁵

Sample No. 5. Yin Xiumei, soprano, graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, in 1983, majoring in opera. She is well accepted and Beloved for singing Chinese songs by the public as the representation of Bel canto since the 1980s.

⁹⁵ "José Carreras," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified August 6, 2003, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Carreras

In her artistic career, she has won the highest prize for singers awarded by the country on many occasions. Yin's singing is known for clear articulation and abundant emotion.



Figure 3-5 Yin Xiumei

Sample No. 6. Diana Damrau, soprano, has been called “the leading coloratura soprano in the world” by the *New York Sun*. She has been performing on the world’s leading opera and concert stages for two decades. Her vast repertoire spans both lyric soprano and coloratura roles, including the title roles in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (La Scala, Bavarian State Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House), *Manon* (Vienna State Opera, Metropolitan Opera), and *La Traviata* (La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Opéra National de Paris, and Bavarian State Opera) as well as Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* (Metropolitan Opera, Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, Royal Opera House). The soprano has performed her signature roles at the Metropolitan Opera and has been featured in broadcasts in HD in cinemas worldwide. She has also made seven role debuts at the Metropolitan Opera since her own debut there as Zerbinetta in 2005. Highlights have included new productions of *Rigoletto* (Gilda), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina), *Le comte Ory* (Adèle), and *Les pêcheurs des perles* (Leïla). Other engagements have included the title roles

in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Traviata*, *Manon*, *La Sonnambula*, and *La Fille du Régiment*. She was also the first singer in Metropolitan Opera history to perform the roles of Pamina and Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*) in different performances of the same run.

Sample No. 7. Foebe Haines, mezzo-soprano, has vocal qualities that have been variously hailed as ‘extraordinary’ (*The Times*), ‘silvery’ (*The Evening Standard*), ‘impressive’ (*The Los Angeles Times*), and ‘opulent’ (*Sunday Times Culture*). MHaines studied at the University of Cambridge, where she obtained a Double 1st, completing her MMus and Fellowship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She was a SING! Beijing Young Artist in 2016 and 2018; a HMUK Supported Artist in 2016 and 2018; a two-time grant winner of The International Opera Awards Foundation, in 2013-15; an Opera Works Trainee at English National Opera in 2014-15; a Salzburg Festival Young Artist in 2014; and a Britten-Pears Young Artist in 2014⁹⁶.

Sample No. 8. Wu Bixia, soprano, is deemed to be the individual who mastered both Chinese traditional singing and Bel canto. She tops the Chinese Bel canto field today. She won the first prize of the 8th Bilbao International Singing Competition in 2000, second prize and the Best Soprano in the 4th Moniuszko Vocal Competition in 2001, and second prize in the 12th International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2002.

她的声音具备包容性，拥有超出一般歌手的声音条件，能够横跨民族、美声两大唱法。她具备征服听者的感染力，歌曲的难点能被她化解得轻松自如。

Her voice has the inclusiveness, has the sound condition which surpasses the ordinary singer; can span the nationality, Bel canto two big singing methods. She has the appeal of conquering listeners, and the difficulties of songs can be easily

⁹⁶ "About Me, Phoebe Haines," PHOEBE HAINES, MEZZO SOPRANO, last modified 2021, <https://phoebehaines.co.uk/about.html>

*solved by her.*⁹⁷



Figure 3-6 Wu Bixia

Sample No. 9. Li Guyi, soprano, a veteran of Chinese national singing and popular singing, “A Stage Actor/Actress” title owner, recipient of State Council Special Allowance, one of the World Outstanding Celebrities 1988. Li Guyi’s *Xiang Lian, Uptown Love* published in 1980, has been known as "the first popular song after the reform and opening up"⁹⁸.

李谷一的歌声轻巧甜美，行腔婉转流畅，咬字清晰讲究；她的演唱不仅保持了民族特色和韵味，同时借鉴了西洋唱法的技巧，形成了中西合璧、独树一帜的现代新民歌演唱风格。

Li Guyi's singing is light and sweet, graceful and fluent, and her articulation is clear and exquisite. Her singing not only maintains the national characteristics and charm, but also uses the western singing techniques for reference, forming a modern new folk song singing style with a combination of Chinese and Western

⁹⁷ F. Dai, "Wu Bixia: Ta Ben Shen Jiu Shi Yin Yue, Wu Bixia, The Music Herself," 新浪娱乐首页_娱乐新闻_新浪网, last modified 2002, <https://ent.sina.com.cn/c/i/2002-07-08/90591.html>

⁹⁸ ("关注 | 湖南人的骄傲！袁隆平、李谷一获表彰！“改革先锋”100 人名单公布" 2018)

*culture.*⁹⁹

她独特的气声技巧，是带有先锋意味的大胆尝试。

*Her unique air sound technique is a bold attempt with avant-garde significance.*¹⁰⁰



Figure 3-7 Li Guyi *Xiang Lian*, 1983

⁹⁹ (Rong, 2009)

¹⁰⁰ ("关注 | 湖南人的骄傲！袁隆平、李谷一获表彰！“改革先锋”100 人名单公布" 2018)

3.4 The Analyses and Practicability Test

Four Chinese songs are selected, for the major reason of having been sung by at least two of the artists mentioned above. The songs are *红豆词* *Hong Dou Ci* (*Sorrow of the Red Beans*)¹⁰¹, *阳关三叠* *Yang Guan San Die* (*Tristesse at the Yang Guan Pass - Tunes of Guqin*)¹⁰², *我住长江头* *Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou*, and *教我如何不想她* (*How Can I Bear Not Missing*). These four songs contain both literary Chinese (*Hong Dou Ci* and *Yang Guan San Die*) and modern Chinese, and their lyrics are from ancient China¹⁰³ to the 1970s. This longevity is a testament to the artistic value of the songs. Diverse musicality and utterance make the songs appropriate to the study as the testing tools. Comparisons will be made among the samples as to the duration of vowels, the stresses in the phrases, the pronunciation of consonants, and more minutiae such as the process of the umlaut of the vowels.

Although these examples successfully meet the criteria for comparison, the practicability of the theory has to be proved through the singing itself. *Yang Guan San Die* (*Tristess at the Yang Guan Pass*) will be chosen to examine the feasibility. As mentioned above, the language of this song is classical Chinese, which is much more complicated in delivering information by single characters than is contemporary Chinese. Singing the song in a way that accurately conveys the meaning with the theory from the conjecture is no doubt a measurable way to test the practicability. Specifically, for instance, it can be sung in two different ways for the character 柳^{liǔ}—as Liao (Italian

¹⁰¹ The name appeared in Carreras's record *Pure Passion* (international version), released in 1999.

¹⁰² "Yang Pass," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified January 16, 2009, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang_Pass

¹⁰³ There is no record of the year of composition for *Yang Guan San Die* (*Yang Pass*).

way) or Fan (traditional Chinese way), in the following phrase:



Figure 3-8 Music 1

The purpose of sounding the character in two ways is to make sure that the character 柳 in the phrase won't be misrecognized as 理由 (reason) or 礼物 (present) or 里欧 (Leo, the name). The two articulations are used not for trivial reasons such as artistic license, but so the word 柳色 conveys the exact meaning for listeners: the colour of the willow. Since the entire bar is distributed just for the three characters with three tones—柳色 (the colour of the willow) and 新 (fresh)—and the character 柳 occupies the first strong pitch with a quarter, the writer prefers Fan's shorter way (Chinese) for easier listening. However, because this phrase repeats three times in the song with progressive emotions, the singer is required to express the situation of being progressively more drunk and also more filled with regret at having to part he more hate to part. That made the change a reasonable choice. Liao's model (Italian) showed the sadness of parting and getting more drunk than in the previous section. The switch of articulation is not necessary but gave the singing greater possibility for musical display. In fact, most listeners will not pay attention to the articulation of individual characters. A smart variation may wave away the boredom caused by the immobile repeats.

During this phase of the research, the researcher has had the privilege of getting in touch with two foreign singers. Through email interviews, answers for some meaningful questions were requested in regard to the personal view of the singers.

Examples of these questions include: the procedure of learning a Chinese song; the auxiliary tools of learning a Chinese song; how long they spent learning the song until performance; their personal feeling about learning a Chinese song—why and how they were introduced to the specific song and any difficulties in learning or performance.

These problems involve detailed descriptions and personal feelings of foreign singers in learning Chinese songs, which added more humanistic, individual, and spiritual elements to this study. The main significance of this lies in restoring the original intention of this study: starting from the singer's needs and feelings, rather than just staying at the level of pure natural disciplines such as language and phonetics. The materials collected from the interviews will be provided as an appendix to this study.

So far, there are few recordings of Western singers singing Chinese musical works. This circumstance limited the number of research samples. It also means that the existing examples are precious and valuable. The expected information received from the singers will be limited, which means the email interview can't be used as the main data or information for the purpose of argumentation. Also considering the international reputations of the singers, the email interviews are restricted and cannot be used as a research method for large-scale operations. However, the theoretical research and the practical performance of the experiment will be discussed in the next session in terms of offering reliable data for the results.

3.5 An interesting attempt

An interesting idea was inviting a foreign singer who has no Chinese experience to study and sing the song *Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou*, anonymously. Nothing more than learning the music and the Chinese phonetic alphabet offering was involved. The singer was asked to spell and read the characters based on Italian pronunciation rules and what is additional in Chinese. Pronunciation from the foreign singer have been compared with a standard version from a native singer. The accuracy of articulation and meaning provided strong and persuasive evidence in terms of singing Chinese in the Italian style.

The experiment was conducted in April 2019 at Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa. The singer is a baritone in his early thirties with more than fifteen years of Bel canto experience. He is capable of performing in solo recitals and in stage roles in several languages. He has no Chinese background at all.

The song *Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou* was chosen because it has a simple melody and moderate characters in the text. A version of this song as research sample No. 6 has been compared with the other samples.

The procedures were the following:

The music score of the song, having the text marked with both CPA and IPA and the English translation, were delivered to the singer at least ten days before the first training day.

Training day 1: after more than ten days of knowing the music (without text), the singer spent two hours learning the Chinese text with the assistance of the researcher.

Training day 2: three days after training day 1, there was a 30-minute rehearsal with piano accompaniment, followed by another hour for articulation correction, and a final 30 minutes of rehearsal.

Recording & questions: after four hours of training, the singer performed the song with piano accompaniment. Several questions were asked, identical to those in the email interviews.

Step 4 were audiotaped by Voice Memos using an iPhone XR. The audio data then was transferred to a disk together with all other research material. A diary of all steps of the experiment was provide a contemporaneous record that would be submitted with the dissertation. Analysis was discussed in Section 4.5

As the role of the teacher for helping the singer to learn a Chinese song, the researcher recorded impressions of the whole process. Questions included: What was the most difficult part of teaching a foreigner to sing in the researcher's language? What took longer to make the singer understand? Was there something that the singer could not achieve in terms of sounding like a native Chinese speaker?

3.6 Boundedness

What the research focus primarily is the instantaneous practicability for singing in Chinese, elements such as the utterance in daily speaking out of music and singing, tones of foreigners or accents that can be ignored because of the movement of melody won't be taken into account in the research. The solution proposed is based on consideration for those who are new with the Chinese language or for Chinese singers who have confusion on specific phrases or pronunciation of characters. The possibility and feasibility of the subject are based on studies from the literature, a case study (email interviews), and the experiment mentioned above. This means that data generated by scientific instruments, such as data on the duration of syllables, will not be so strict as the research in phonetics; however, theoretical data and specialized vocabulary are vital to this research.

Because of length restrictions, additional samples or experiments cannot be included. An additional limitation is that this study is exclusively aimed at Mandarin¹⁰⁴, the official Chinese language, so that dialects commonly used in provinces of China—even those that circulate worldwide such as Cantonese or Southern Fujian Dialect—are not included in the research. Italian language¹⁰⁵ pronunciation used in this research does not incorporate pronunciation from specific dialects, such as the Neapolitan dialect.

¹⁰⁴ "Mandarin Chinese," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified October 1, 2001, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandarin_Chinese

¹⁰⁵ "Italian Language," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified May 9, 2001, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language

4 ANALISIS and RESULT

Music is borderless, but singing is bound by language. Languages provide the boundaries, not simply the identifying flavours - they bring a background of literature and culture. For professionals in musicology, knowledge of foreign languages provides potential for the stage and the singer's own personal development.

The literary works of Italy, as the cradle of Bel canto, are vital treasures of the world's vocal arts. Standard written Italian in daily use today is rooted in the language of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Petrarch and Boccaccio from the 14th century, with an accent from Tuscany. Although officially classified as the language of the country in 1861, it took almost 150 years for Italian language to be written up as the official language in the Constitution, which took place in April 2007. Due to its even distribution of vowels and consonants - most words end with a vowel, but there are no independent vowel phonemes - Italian is considered one of the languages most suitable for singing. Because the origins of Bel canto date to the end of the 16th century, which is earlier than the unification of the language, it has been suggested that the Italian language was born to serve music¹⁰⁶.

Simulation or imitation is common when starting to learn a new language, and this is also the case with singing. Simulated singing allows access to other languages, giving the singer a chance to master vocabulary and memorize phrases; indeed, that is how master singers are capable of learning more than four languages. The ability to learn multiple languages is not something that every student possesses, however, and most new singers or students cannot invest the same time and energy - which should go into their musical life - into mastering several languages as those whose concentration is on languages alone. To efficiently learn a new musical piece in a foreign language, a good

¹⁰⁶ "Italian is a Language Built to Be Sung," Melofonetica, last modified May 16, 2018, <https://www.melofonetica.com/italian-is-a-language-built-to-be-sung/#>

start might be to use a method of sight spelling for an unfamiliar language. In the 19th century, English and French linguists created the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which can be applied to most Western languages. The IPA system is a unified set of symbols based on the Latin alphabet that indicate the pronunciation of consonants and vowels from different languages so that they can be correctly pronounced at sight. Vocal arts have also benefited from this system, because singers can easily learn masterpieces in languages they do not know.

Although the Chinese linguist and musician Zhao Yuanren proposed the Tone Letters¹⁰⁷ in 1930 to supply the function of IPA for Chinese pronunciation, this system

¹⁰⁷ Chao Tone Letters: A series of [iconic](#) tone letters based on a [musical staff](#) was devised by [Yuen Ren Chao](#) and adopted into the [International Phonetic Alphabet](#).^[1] Previously the contour had been drawn without the staff, making the height of the tone difficult to read.

Combinations of these tone letters are schematics of the [pitch contour](#) of a tone, mapping the pitch in the letter space and ending in a vertical bar. For example, [ma˥] represents the mid-dipping pitch contour of the Chinese word for horse, 馬 / 马 *mǎ*. Single tone letters differentiate up to five pitch levels: ˥ 'extra high' or 'top', ˥˥ 'high', ˥˥˥ 'mid', ˥˥˥˥ 'low', and ˥˥˥˥˥ 'extra low' or 'bottom'. No language is known to depend on more than five levels of pitch.

These letters are most commonly written at the end of a syllable.^{[2][3]} For example, [Standard Mandarin](#) has the following four tones in syllables spoken in isolation:

Tone name	Tone letter	Chao tone numerals	Tone number	Traditional Chinese	Simplified Chinese	Gloss
High level	ma˥	ma ⁵⁵	ma ¹	媽	妈	mother
Rising	ma˥˥	ma ³⁵	ma ²	麻	麻	hemp
Low dipping	ma˥˥˥	ma ²¹	ma ³	馬	马	horse
High falling	ma˥˥˥˥	ma ⁵¹	ma ⁴	罵	骂	scold

However, they are sometimes written before the syllable, in accordance with writing stress and [downstep](#) before the syllable. For example, the following passage transcribes the prosody of [European Portuguese](#) using tone letters alongside stress, [upstep](#), and downstep in the same position before the syllable:^[4]

[u ˥˥˥˥vẽtu ˥˥˥˥nɔrtu kumu˥˥so ɐ su˥˥˥˥prar kɔ ˥˥˥˥mũite ˥˥˥˥lfurɨ | mɐʃ ˥˥˥˥kũẽtu maɪʃ su˥˥˥˥prave | maiz ˥˥˥˥vɨ ˥˥˥˥zẽtu si ɐkɔʃ˥˥˥˥ gava suɐ ˥˥˥˥kɐpɐ | ɐ˥˥˥˥tɐ ˥˥˥˥kiu ˥˥˥˥vẽtu ˥˥˥˥nɔrtu ˥˥˥˥ʃtɨu]

O vento norte começou a soprar com muita fúria, mas quanto mais soprava, mais o viajante se aconchegava à sua capa, até que o vento norte desistiu.

[Diacritics](#) may also be used to transcribe tone in the IPA. For example, [tone 3](#) in Mandarin is a low tone between other syllables, and can be represented as such [phonemically](#). The four Mandarin tones can therefore also be transcribed [má, mǎ, mà, mǎ]. (Note that these conflict with the convention of [Pinyin](#), and so in this case IPA diacritics may be confusing. In pinyin these would be transcribed mǎ, má, mǎ, mà respectively)

is still rarely used for Chinese either inside or outside China, because the foundation of Zhao's theory was Cantonese, which is a dialect of Guangdong, the province of China having the largest number of expatriates. The pronunciation of Cantonese is completely different from Mandarin, the official language of China, so Zhao's system is not helpful for Chinese speakers or foreigners learning and speaking Mandarin. Works of art in the Chinese language are isolated because the characters do not indicate anything about pronunciation to foreigners until they are mapped out through the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (CPA or Pinyin), a system that simply and conveniently suggests the pronunciation of Chinese characters with Latin letters. This has allowed Chinese operas and vocal works to gain entry onto the global stage, revealing their beauty to the world.

Modified Chao tone letters

Sinologists sometimes use reversed Chao tone letters to indicate [tone sandhi](#), with the IPA left-facing letters on the left for the underlying tone, and reversed right-facing letters on the right for the surface tone. For example, the Mandarin phrase *nǐ* [ni˥˥] + *hǎo* [xɑo˥˥] > *nǐ hǎo* [ni˥˥xɑo˥˥] would be transcribed: [ni˥˥꜀꜀xɑo˥˥] – Wikipedi

4.1 The Initial Consonants of CPA and Consonants in Italian

From the perspective of phonetics, the shame of singing Chinese with Bel canto sounds – as though “there is something in the oral cavity” that is unrecognized when singing foreign language pieces – is caused by a lack of attention and weight on the initial consonants in the language link. Most Chinese characters are pronounced with the syllable formed by a consonant lead and a final or final group. The 21 consonants in CPA are all able to lead syllables; they are also called initial consonants or in Chinese phonetics, the “prefix”. Essentially, this is similar to the way that Italian words all end in vowels. The clearness of the initial consonants will directly affect the quality of singing in terms of articulation.

The classification of consonants is built on the position of sounds made in mouth. These depend on 11 touchpoints in the mouth, that may or may not move; these include the four classes of labial, coronal, dorsal and laryngeal, as well as the sound-making activities that include nasal, stop, sibilant/non-sibilant affricate, sibilant/non-sibilant fricative, approximant, tap/flap, trill, lateral affricate/fricative, lateral approximant and lateral tap/flap (Figure 4-1). The purpose of this study is to determine the common ground and key differences between Chinese characters and Italian words via IPA and CPA.

Place →	Labial			Coronal					Dorsal			Laryngeal			
	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Linguo-labial	Den-tal	Alve-olar	Post-alveol-ar	Retr-oxflex	Pala-tal	Vela-r	Uv-ular	Pharyn-geal/epi-glottal	Glo-ttal			
Nasal	<u>m</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>ɱ</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>ɳ</u>	<u>ɲ</u>	<u>ŋ</u>	<u>ɴ</u>					
Stop	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>ɸ</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̟</u>	<u>d̟</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>ɟ</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>q̟</u>	<u>ʔ</u>
Sibilant a					<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̟</u>	<u>d̟</u>	<u>t̠</u>	<u>d̠</u>					

<u>fricative</u>				<u>s z</u>		<u>ʒ ʒ</u>						
Non-sibilant	<u>pɸ</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>tʰ</u>	<u>dʰ</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>ʔ</u>
affricate		<u>β</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>ʧ</u>	<u>ʨ</u>	<u>ʤ</u>	<u>ʥ</u>
Sibilant <u>fricative</u>					<u>s z</u>	<u>ʃ ʒ</u>	<u>ʂ ʐ</u>	<u>ʐ ʐ</u>				
Non-sibilant fricative	<u>ɸ</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>
<u>Approximant</u>		<u>ɸ</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̪</u>
<u>Tap/flap</u>		<u>ɸ</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>θ</u>	<u>ð</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̪</u>
<u>Trill</u>	<u>ʙ</u>	<u>ʙ</u>										
<u>Lateral</u> af fricate					<u>t</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>q</u>	
Lateral fricative					<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>t̪</u>	<u>d̪</u>	<u>ʧ</u>	<u>ʨ</u>	<u>ʤ</u>	<u>ʥ</u>
Lateral approximant					<u>l</u>	<u>l</u>	<u>l̥</u>	<u>l̥</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>
Lateral tap/flap					<u>l</u>	<u>l</u>	<u>l̥</u>	<u>l̥</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	<u>ʎ</u>

Figure 4-1 Consonants (Pulmonic)

The primary feature of the pronunciation of Chinese characters is that there is one syllable for a single character. The syllable can have an initial consonant, or only the

final or diphthong. For the consonant part, only the articulation of initial consonants will be discussed. Unlike Italian, the pronunciation of initial consonants in Chinese is matched and divided in two groups according to the same Latin letters (Figure 4-2):

GROUP 1				GROUP 2			
CPA	<u>IPA</u>	ITA	IPA	CPA	IPA	ITA	IPA
<i>b</i>	[p]	<i>b</i>	[b]	<i>k</i>	[k ^h]	<i>c/q/ch</i>	[k]
<i>p</i>	[p ^h]	<i>p</i>	[p]	<i>h</i>	[x]	<i>h</i>	∅
<i>m</i>	[m]	<i>m</i>	[m]	<i>j</i>	[tɕ]	<i>g</i>	[dʒ]
<i>f</i>	[f]	<i>f</i>	[f]	<i>q</i>	[tɕ ^h]	<i>q</i>	[k]
<i>D</i>	[t]	<i>d</i>	[d]	<i>x</i>	[ɕ]	<i>sc(i)</i>	[ʃ]
<i>T</i>	[t ^h]	<i>t</i>	[t]	<i>zh</i>	[ʈ]		
<i>N</i>	[n]	<i>n</i>	[n]	<i>ch</i>	[tʂ ^h]	<i>ch</i>	[k]
<i>L</i>	[l]	<i>l</i>	[l]	<i>sh</i>	[ʂ]		
<i>G</i>	[k]	<i>g</i>	[g]	<i>r</i>	[ʀ] ([ʀ ~ z])[a]	<i>r</i>	[r]
<i>S</i>	[s]	<i>s</i>	[s]	<i>c</i>	[tʂ ^h]	<i>z</i>	[ts]
<i>Z</i>	[tʂ]	<i>z</i>	[dʒ]	<i>w</i>	[w]	<i>u</i>	[u]
<i>V</i>	[v]	<i>v</i>	[v]	<i>y</i>	[i], [y]	<i>i</i>	[i]

Figure 4-2 Two Groups of Initial Consonants

Group 1 includes the consonants in Italian and Chinese that share pronunciation or have inconspicuous differences.

In Chinese, the letters m, f, n, l, s, z and v¹⁰⁸ are pronounced exactly the same as in Italian. This can be directly applied to characters¹⁰⁹:

māmā fó zǔ nú lì sǎ bō zú zú
 妈妈 ;佛祖 ;奴隶 ;撒播 ;足足

Mother, Buddha, Slave, Sowing, Enough to



QR Code 1 [a]

According to IPA symbols, the sounds of b/p, d/t and s/z differ slightly (Figure 4-1). This is explained below in a comparison to the sounds of the letters in English (Figure 4-3):

CPA	IPA	Explanation
<i>B</i>	[p]	unaspirated p , as in spit
<i>P</i>	[p ^h]	strongly aspirated p , as in pit
<i>D</i>	[t]	unaspirated t , as in stop
<i>T</i>	[t ^h]	strongly aspirated t , as in top
<i>G</i>	[k]	unaspirated k , as in skill
<i>K</i>	[k ^h]	strongly aspirated k , as in kill
<i>S</i>	[s]	as in sun
<i>Z</i>	[ts]	unaspirated c , similar to something between suds and cats ; as in suds in a toneless syllable

¹⁰⁸ Letter V as consonant is only listed in the chart, there are no character has the V as initial consonant.

¹⁰⁹ Under the situation in singing, the tunes are ignored for now.

¹¹⁰ Scan for Standard Pronunciation

Figure 4-3 Aspirated or Unaspirated Consonants

Normally, the letter “P” in “spaghetti” is thought to be [b] in Chinese ears, the same as with the English word “spy”, but not the word “suppose”. The following chart lists the common Italian letter aural misrecognitions among Chinese speakers (Figure 4-4).

Words	ITA	ENG	CHN
Spaghetti	[spa'get.ti]	[spə'geti]	[sba'gedi]
Pie	[pai]	[pai]	[p'ai]
Studente	[stu'dente]	['stju:dnt]	[sdju:dent]
T-shirt	['ti:ʃɜ:t]	['ti:ʃɜ:t]	['t'i:ʃɜ:t]

Figure 4-4 Misrecognitions

These misrecognitions are due to the fact that, in Chinese, the stop/plosives are distinguished only by whether or not they are aspirated, while in Italian they are distinguished by whether or not they are voiced. Because all consonants in Italian are not aspirated, to Chinese ears, the Italian “b” and “p” and “d” and “t” are too close to each other to distinguish (Figure 4-5).

Plosions	ITA IPA	CHN IPA	CPA
B	[b]	[p]	b
P	[p]	[p ^h]	p
D	[d]	[t]	d
T	[t]	[t ^h]	t
G	[g]	[k]	g
K	[k]	[k ^h]	k

Figure 4-5 Confusion Marks

Figure 4-5 shows the advantages of indicating plosives by CPA or IPA for Mandarin initial consonants to facilitate correct pronunciation despite the habit of misrecognition.

<i>Q</i>	[tʰ]	<i>ci/ce</i>	[ʧ]
<i>C</i>	[tʰ]	<i>z</i>	[ts]
<i>Zh</i>	[ʒ]		
<i>Ch</i>	[tʰ]		
<i>Sh</i>	[ʒ]		
<i>R</i>	/ɹ/		

Figure 4-6 Consonants Don't Exist in Italian

The letters “j”, “k”, “w”, “y”, “x” and “h” are not used in Italian, but they exist in the family of Latin languages, so people know them and the sounds they represent quite well. According to CPA, “j” is very close to Italian “g(i/e)”; “k” often matches “c”, “q” and “ch”; “x” is felt to be like “sc(i/e)”; while “h” is retained in Italian, just adding aspiration. The “h” in the English word “hotel” [həʊ'tel] and [x] do not appear different to Chinese people. The CPA “q” is equivalent to Italian “c(i/e)”, while “c” in Chinese is equivalent to “z” in Italian. Although these visual differences appear in the textbook, in terms of sounds, these differences are not apparent. The consonants mentioned above are not stunted in the usual way of articulation by Western people.

In CPA “r”, unlike the Italian trilling “r”, is more like the English “r” in “read” [ri:d]¹¹²:

rè rú rì
热 ;如 ;日
[ɹ] [ɹu] [ɹ]¹¹³



QR Code 3 [r]

¹¹² [No equivalent in English, but similar to the r in reduce, but with the tongue curled upward against the top of the mouth \(i.e. retroflex\). – Wikipedia](#)

¹¹³ Refer to the following part: The Integral Syllables

Isolating the initial consonants away from those of Western people in CPA, lead to the following three (Figure 4-7), which are listed to compare the flat-tongued version for easy memorization.

<i>Zh</i>	[tʂ]	<i>z</i>	[ts]
<i>Ch</i>	[tʂʰ]	<i>c</i>	[tʂʰ]
<i>Sh</i>	[ʂ]	<i>s</i>	[s]

Figure 4-7 Cacuminal/Retroflex Consonants

For the letters “z”, “c” and “s”, it is necessary for the tongue to move towards the sharp edge of the teeth, but with “h”, the tongue curls to the palate slightly. The linguistics called it cacuminal.

According to the summarization of Global Chinese Accent, Chinese Speech Errors of Italian¹¹⁴, the table following displays nine nodi consonants that might be difficult for speakers of Italian speaking Chinese (Figure 4-8). Seven of them are followed by the vowel i [ɪ]/[ɨ], which rarely shows up in Latin languages. There is no Latin letter that easily conveys the pronunciation of i [ɪ]/[ɨ], so CPA gathers them as one group called the “integral syllables” – as the solution for the nodi.

CPA	IPA	MIS-	CPA	IPA	MIS-
R	[r]	[r]	x	[ɛ]	[ʃ]
z	[ts]	[dz]	zh	[tʂ]	[ʧ]
c	[tʂʰ]	[tʃ]/ [k]	ch	[tʂʰ]	[ʧʰ]
J	[tɕ]	[tʃ]	sh	[ʂ]	[ʃ]
q	[tɕʰ]	[tʃʰ]			

Figure 4-8 Nodi Consonants

The target of Bel canto was to serve Opera in an age without the amplification equipment currently used in concert halls. It was and is the primary goal and criteria for

¹¹⁴ Designed by Qian, n.d.

the vocal technique to deliver the voice to every corner of the house, in a way that is dependent on brilliant breathing skill and that maximizes the use of resonance. Curiously, the sound created by a strong, professional Bel canto singer is weaker than the crying of an infant. The enormous volume created by a small body shows how the infant breathes and phonates naturally and instinctively, which might be the most efficient method. To unprofessional adults, thoracic abduction without autonomous control is difficult to accomplish. In phonetics research, consonants are the most notable phonating by adults and infants. Babies cry only with vowels, with wide-open mouth and aspiration unencumbered. Consonants, to form the meaningful words, cut off the flow of air. The duration of this interdiction vacillates in the singing state by interrupting the vibration of the vocal cord, which limits volume. That the volume made by lions, tigers or dogs is extremely full relative to their physique leads to the same theory: they are not stopped by consonants.

4.2 The Finals and Vowels

To reduce the burden brought by consonants and avoid locking the glottis, singers need to focus on the vowels that are easily controlled and can be relied upon in singing.

Generally speaking, vowels in Italian are more exaggerated and direct than those in Chinese or other languages, which makes it easier to pronounce words in speech or singing,, which leads to a confident volume and timbre.

4.2.1 Pure five

From the very beginning, the professional system of training and performance for Bel canto has never departed from the pure five vowels of Italian. That is to say, the Italian pure five are the mould of vowels for singing and almost every Latin language contains the five (Figure 4-9). To sing Bel canto successfully requires that the pure five be extremely close to Italian, no matter where the singer is from.

ITA	IPA	FRENCH	GERMAN	ENGLISH	CPA/Character
a	[a]	a, <i>patte</i>	a, <i>alles</i>	a, <i>father</i>	a/ <i>ma</i> , 啊/妈
e	[e]	e, <i>les</i>	e, <i>eben</i>	e, <i>bet</i>	<i>ye/yue</i> , 叶/月
i	[i]	i, <i>si</i>	i, <i>Italian</i>	i, <i>mediocre</i>	<i>yi</i> , 一
o	[o]	au, <i>saut</i>	o, <i>originell</i>	o, oval/ <i>aw</i> , <i>law</i>	<i>wo</i> , 我
u	[u]	ou, <i>coup</i>	u, <i>universität</i>	u, <i>fruition</i>	<i>bu</i> , 不

Figure 4-9 Pure Five

4.2.2 Finals

There are six simple finals in CPA: “a”, “e”, “i”, “o”, “u” and “ü”. Others finals consisting of diphthongs are based on these simple six. There is no rigorous classification of the finals. According to the width of oral cavity when sounding, the CPA finals were divided into three groups: single finals, diphthong finals and nasal finals (Figure 4-10).

Single Finals	a [a]	ia [ia]	ua [ua]	
	o [o]		uo [uo]	
	e [ɛ]			
	e [e]	ie [ie]		üe [ve]
	er [ɐə]			
Diphtho ng Finals	ai [ai]		uai [uai]	
	ei [ei]		u(e)i [uei]	
	ao [au]	iao [iau]		
	ou [ou]	i(o)u ¹¹⁵ [iou]		
Nasal Finals	an [an]	ian [ien]	uan [uan]	üan [vən] ¹¹⁶
	en [ən]		u(e)n [uən]	
		in [in]		ün [vn]
	ang [ɑŋ]	iang [ian]	uang [uaŋ]	
	eng [ɛŋ]	ing [in]	(u)eng [uən]	
			ong [oŋ]	iong [ioŋ]

Figure 4-10 Finals

¹¹⁵ “i(u)o” is written as “iu”, “u(e)l” is written as “ui”, “u(e)n” is written as un, “(u)eng” only follows “w”, written as “weng”.

¹¹⁶ “üe/üan/ün” are written as “ue/uan/un”

4.2.2.1 Single Final

The finals with one vowel only or beside media vowels are “i”, “u” and “ü” (Figure 4-11).

Single Finals	i [ɪ]、 [ɿ]	i [i]	u [u]	ü [y]
	a [a]	ia [ia]	ua [ua]	
	o [o]		uo [uo]	
	e [ɤ]			
	e [e]	ie [ie]		üe [ye]
	er [ɐə]			

Figure 4-11 Single Finals

The single finals “a”, “o” and “u” are in full accord with the three in the pure five. They do not change at all at any time, and the pronunciation is as it appears on the page. The other vowels require further explanation.

ā	mā	mā	wǒ	bō	chū	chū	jí
啊	妈妈	我	播出	初级			
Ah,	Mother,	I/Me,	Broadcast,	Primary			



QR Code 4 [a, o, u]

When “e” is the single final, the pronunciation is classified into three categories:

First, following a media vowel such as “i”, “u” or “ü”, it is sounded as [e], the same as the “e” in the pure five. For example:

yè yuè bié nüè
 叶 ;月 ;别 ;虐
 [ie] [iye] [pie] [nye]
 Leaf, Moon, Don't, Abuse



QR Code 5 [e]

Second, standing on its own or following a consonant, it is sounded as [ɤ]. There is no such sound in Italian. Judging from its widespread use, only Mandarin Chinese has this sound among the official languages of all countries. As far as Chinese auditory habits are concerned, it is quite like [ə] in square or [ə] in bird in English:

jī è chè dǐ zhè lǐ
 饥饿 ;彻底 ;这里
 [ɤ] [tɕ'ɤ] [tɕɤ]
 Starve, Completely, Here



QR Code 6 [ɤ]

Third, there is an exclusive sound “e” in the one and only syllable in CPA: “er” is [ɐ] / [a] – this is also the only syllable ended by the consonant “r” in CPA:

èr ér ěr
 二 ;儿 ;耳
 [ɐə]
 Two, Son, Ear



QR Code 7 [ɿ]

The pronunciation of “i” as the single final has two types:

The first “i” is a buzzed continuation of the consonant following z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh- or r-.¹¹⁷

zìjǐ	cí	yì	sī	yí
自己	;词义	;司仪		
[tsɿ]	[tɕi]	[tsʰɿ]	[si]	[i]
Self,		Acceptation,		Emcee
zhīchí	zhī	shì	shì	chī
支持	;知识	;试吃		
[tʂɿ]	[tʂʰɿ]	[tʂɿ]	[ʂɿ]	[tʂʰɿ]
Support,		Knowledge,		Taste



QR Code 8 i

When “i” is coordinated with “z”, “c”, “s” and “r” or “zh”, “ch” and “sh”, this is voiced as [ɿ] and [ʅ], needs to be learnt as an entire syllable.

In all other situations, “i” is sounded [i] as in the pure five (Figure 4-9).

The sixth single final, ü, does not exist in Italian or the pure five. The pronunciation is [y], which is essentially the same as the French u [y]:

¹¹⁷ Pinyin - Wikipedia. Refer to the following part: The Integral Syllables.

lú	nǚ	yú	jú	qù	xū
驴	女	鱼	菊	去	需
[ly]	[ny]	[y]	[tey]	[te ^h y]	[ey]
Donkey,	Female,	Fish,	Chrysanthemum,	Go,	Need



QR Code 9 [y]

The letter “ü” has special rules for writing and may be difficult for foreigners to recognize, as will be described Below.

4.2.2.2 The Diphthong Finals

There are many polysyllabic words in Italian, and each letter as an element has to be sounded. The word *teatro* [te'atro], for example, is formed of three syllables: te- [te], -a- [a], tro [tro]; the word *barbiere* [bar'bjɛ.re] is formed of three syllables, too: bar- [bar], -bie- [bjɛ] -re [re]. The word *aggiudicatrice* [ad.đ̌zu.di.ka'tri.tʃɛ] has six syllables: ag- [ad], -giu- [đ̌zu], -di- [di], -ca- [ka], -tri- [tri], -ce [tʃɛ]. The pronunciation of Chinese characters, no matter whether they are formed with a single final or diphthong final, are all sounded as single syllables, and this is the biggest difference between Chinese and Italian – or any other Western language. The vital meaning of CPA is spelling Chinese characters with Latin letters. Although the characters are all sounded in one syllable, each letter that constructs the pronunciation has to be sounded as it is in Italian – that is how we understand the pronunciation of one Chinese character as one syllable in an Italian word. The mutes in Italian like “h” in “gh” / “ch”, *chiavare* [kja'va.re] or “i” in “ci” / “gi”, *giaggiòlo* [dʒad'dʒɔlo], do not exist in Chinese characters.

Considering that media vowels do not count as elements of CPA in Chinese teaching, the finals formed by two single finals are called diphthong finals (Figure 4-12).

Diphthong Finals	ai [ai]		uai [uai]	
	ei [ei]		u(e)i [uei]	
	ao [au]	iao [iau]		
	ou [ou]	i(o)u [iou]		

Figure 4-12 Diphthong Finals

It is clear from the table above that all diphthong finals can be spelled in Italian except “ao” [au]. In writing, the abbreviations “ui” and “iu” are used instead of “uei” and “iou”.

See the following examples:

kāikǒu léi bào biǎo jiù yōu xiù tuí fèi
 开口 ;雷暴 ;表舅 ;优秀 ;颓废
 [k^hai] [k^hou] [lei][pau] [piau] [tɕiəu] [iəu] [ɕiəu] [t^huei][fei]
 Onset, Thunderstorm, Uncle, Excellent, Decadent



QR Code 10 Diphthong

4.2.2.3 Nasal Finals

The finals ending with “n” / “ng” are called nasal finals (Figure 4-13).

	an [an]	ian [iɛn]	uan [uan]	üan [yɛn] ¹¹⁸
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¹¹⁸ “üe/üan/ün” in written are simplified as “ue” [ye] / “uan” [yɛn] / “un” [yn], except when following “n” / “l”.

Nasal Finals	en [ən]		u(e)n [uən] ¹¹⁹	
		in [in]		ün [yn]
	ang [aŋ]	iang [iaŋ]	uang [uaŋ]	
	eng [əŋ]	ing [iŋ]	(u)eng [uəŋ]	
			ong [oŋ]	iong [ioŋ]

Figure 4-13 Nasal Finals

There are no nasal vowels in Italian, although some syllables in Italian are quite similar to front nasal finals:

ān		Entrare 来	
Andiamo 安静		[en'trare]	[pən]
[andjamo]	[an]	Enter	Original
Go,	Silent		
yǐn		wēn	
Indurre ;引用		Un 温暖	
[in'durre]	[in]	[un]	[uən]
Lead	Quote	One	Warm



QR Code 11 Ita - Chn

The sound n [ŋ] in Italian is also similar to the back nasal finals in CPA:

ángyáng	shì	bīng	gōng	kè	wén	wēng	yīng	xióng
昂 扬	; 士 兵	; 攻 克	; 文 翁	; 英 雄				
[aŋ][iaŋ]	[piŋ]	[koŋ]	[uən][uəŋ]	[iŋ][eŋ]				

¹¹⁹ The finals have “u” [u] the head don’t follow “j” / ”q” / ”x”.

Excited

Soldier

Capture

Literaturer

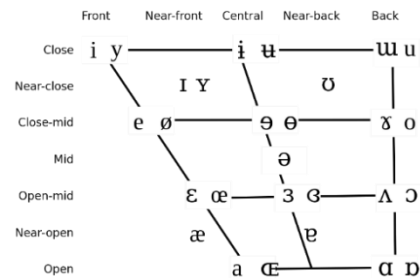
Hero



QR Code 12 [ɿ]

There is, however, an exception that must be noted: “ian” [iɛn]. The “a” in “ian” is sounded [ɛ], moving from the “a” in family towards the “e” family (Figure 4-14). With the width of oral cavity half reduced, it’s more like [iɛn] to [ian]:

yán	liǎn	mian
颜	;脸	;面
	xiàn	
	;现	
[iɛn]	[liɛn]	[miɛn] [ɛiɛn]
Face,	Cheek,	Noodle, Appear



QR Code 13 ian

Figure 4-14 Position of ian

Section 4.2 introduced the CPA finals, including classification, recognition and pronunciation. It is not difficult to discover that most pronunciations of finals and Latin letters in CPA coincide, while the exceptions “ian” [iɛn] and “er” [ɐɚ] are not similar to their letters, but must be memorized, along with the abbreviations of finals headed by “ü”.

The pronunciation of Chinese characters, whether composed of a single final or a diphthong final or a nasal final, is considered to be a whole together with the initial if there is. The pronunciation of a diphthong final only needs to slide the first phoneme

(mid vowel) rapidly to the second one, which may be a nasal vowel. Although in some art forms, such as recitation, drama or vocal music, there is a need to prolong the pronunciation, the duration of the key vowels should also remain in the reasonable range.

Another solution for the diphthong finals pronunciation is considering the initial consonants and the first vowel phoneme (mid vowel) as the new initial. For instance,

guāng
光 [kuɑŋ]



QR Code 14 [kuɑŋ]

Since the stressed vowel phoneme (key vowel) is always the second one “ang [ɑŋ]”, the initial consonant “g [k]” and the first vowel phoneme (mid vowel) “u [u]” are able to be aggregated as a new initial “gu [ku]”. Now the recognition is getting simpler as to a single final [ku + ɑŋ]. It must be mentioned that the pronunciation of the nasal final must be a whole, not a combination of a single final and consonants. Here for example “ang [ɑŋ]” has to be voiced monolithically, [ɑ + ŋ] is definitely unacceptable.

4.2.2.4 The Integral Syllables

Indeed, Chinese students are encouraged not just to memorize these exceptions, but all of the consonants and finals, including all of the CPA pronunciations that differ from Western languages (called the integral syllables)¹²⁰.

zhi chi shi ri; zi ci si;
[tʂʅ] [tʂʅ̌] [ʂ] [ʅ] [tsʅ] [tʂei] [sʅ]

¹²⁰ Generally refer to the initial consonants take a final without changing pronunciation. – Baidu

yi wu yu; ye yue yuan; yin yun ying

[i] [u] [y] [ie] [ye] [yan] [in] [yn] [iŋ]

Conveniently, the last row of the chart contains syllables having “y” and “w” as initial consonants with the indicated corresponding finals. These obey the rules of spelling.

4.2.2.5 Summary

Most Italian words end with vowels; the stressed vowels can be extended freely as necessary for singing; considering that Bel canto is older than Italian, there is a saying that the language was born to serve Bel canto.¹²¹ Based on the results of our analysis with CPA, we can comment on this supposition. Generally speaking, the pronunciation of finals is more complicated than that of Italian vowels. This complexity manifests in two aspects: first, pronunciation of finals is greater than that of Italian vowels, and second, in daily speech, the necessary width of the oral cavity when speaking Chinese is smaller than that required when speaking Italian. The complexity of Chinese pronunciation suggests that, compared with Italian, Chinese is not suitable for singing. This result happens to match the opinion expressed in Nan (2015): from the perspective of Western music, Chinese is not suitable for Bel canto singing, because:

(1) 汉语和意大利语元音的性质不同。意大利语中 *i - e - a - o - u* 五个元音收拢在一个系谱中, *e*、*a*、*o* 是从 *i* 到 *u* 的中间阶段, 五个元音性质相同。

汉语的元音群缺少如此高度的均一性, 特别是那些必须要紧咬臼齿才能发的

[i] 等音会使声带的位置上下移动, 不利于声带的平滑振动, 会产生出不一

¹²¹ "Italian is a Language Built to Be Sung," Melofonetica, last modified May 16, 2018, <https://www.melofonetica.com/italian-is-a-language-built-to-be-sung/#>

样的音质。而这些需要紧咬臼齿才能发音的元音意大利语中基本没有。

The nature of vowels in Chinese and Italian differ. The five vowels of Italian are grouped together in a pedigree, “e”, “a” and “o”, with the intermediate section between “i” to “u” sharing the same nature. The vowel group in Chinese lacks such high homogeneity, and some of the pronunciations of “i”, especially, have to be sounded with the molars clenched, which causes vertical reciprocation of the vocal cords and counts against their smooth vibration to create a discrepant timbre. Such sounds do not exist in Italian.

(2) 汉语的元音对发声的整体影响小。元音发音的音质刻意做出的成分少,基本上是由口腔形状决定的。通常情况下,亚洲人的口腔容积比欧洲人小,形状也浅。中国人在发汉语音时,很难达到充足的口腔容积,即使是发元音,音质也偏浅,不利于口腔共鸣的产生。在这一点上,与其说是两种语言之间的差异,还不如说是亚欧两个人种在口腔骨骼和肌肉解剖结构上的不同所致。

The finals also have less influence on the whole pronunciation than the vowels do in Italian words. The shape of the oral cavity determines whether the quality of the finals is deliberately reduced. Usually, Asians have smaller oral cavities, with shallower shapes than Europeans. It is therefore difficult to reach an adequate volume when speaking Chinese, even when the timbre of the finals is pale and light for oral resonance. It is not so much the difference between the two languages, as the difference of anatomy between Asians and Europeans.

Scholars such as Nan have therefore answered the question of whether the pronunciation of standard Mandarin Chinese is applicable to Bel canto: no.

4.3 The Vowels Umlaut in Singing

In the Introduction, this study listed examples of both Chinese and Western Bel canto singers singing Chinese vocal works featuring artistry and technique. The new derivative question is: how do they overcome the difficulties of the articulation of Chinese to sing in the Bel canto technique?

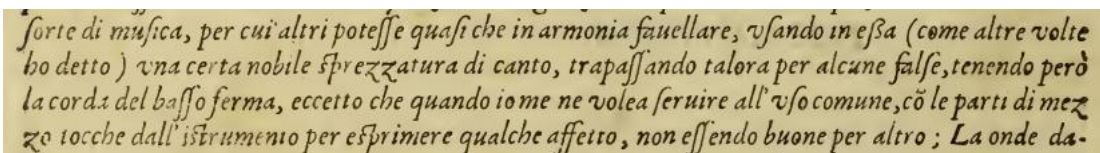
4.3.1 The Evolution of Articulation

The discussion above on CPA was based on the standard articulation of Mandarin Chinese, the official language of China. The occupations that achieve this standard include media anchors, radio hosts and actors, among others. This section focuses on whether these criteria are suitable for singing, and especially for singing Bel canto. In particular, would it be possible to apply the standard to Bel canto and what advantages and disadvantages arise that deserve more attention?

In 16th century Italy the Camerata Fiorentina Believed that music had become decadent and lifeless, and they tried to restore the lost glory of the music of ancient Greek drama and create a vivid art form combining poetry and music. This trend of thinking that lyrics go beyond harmonics and counterpoint reached its peak between 1577 and 1582, which directly affected Caccini and his creation.

In the preface of *Le nuove musiche*, Caccini showed his attempt to make a new form of vocal art with melody serving lyrics, not counterpoint. He clearly put forward the method of liberating poetry from dazzling music – that is, turning singing to reciting. The conception was based on Aristogenes, who proposed that speeches should be set as singing models, which was also the goal Caccini pursued. Some of the music in Caccini's work applied the same idea. Caccini strongly opposed the kind of polyphonic

music "...certa nobile speranza canto, trapassando talora per alcune false, tenedo pero la corde del basso ferma..."¹²² Caccini's elaboration that "the lyrics are the first to music, the rhythm comes next and the voice is the last" was the principle and theoretical basis of the Bel canto school's creation and singing.¹²³ He argued that it was necessary to pay attention to the syllables of the lyrics, emphasizing the clarity and flexibility of the voicing, and that one should avoid singing without rhythm or shortening the syllables and value, which would ruin the work fragmentation or any exaggeration. His vocal works with digital bass accompaniment, trying to be as perfect and clear as possible to express the metre and emotion of poetry, became an experimental preparation for the development of opera.



forte di musica, per cui altri potesse quasi che in armonia fauellare, usando in essa (come altre volte ho detto) una certa nobile sprezzatura di canto, trapassando talora per alcune false, tenendo però la corda del basso ferma, eccetto che quando io me ne volea seruire all'uso comune, cò le parti di mezzo tocche dall'istrumento per esprimere qualche affetto, non essendo buone per altro; La onde da-

In Caccini's opinion, lyrics dominate music, although neither of them exists alone. To create a melody that directly delivered the content of lyrics in a way that was easily understandable resulted in simplification, which developed into the recitative in opera. The criteria of composition focused on how to interpret the meaning of lyrics along with the flow of the music, and how to express the emotions by human voice as gracefully and elegantly as possible. The influence of the new music represented by Caccini and Monteverdi lasted to the end of the 17th century and resulted in the *opera seria* – the recitative. This was classified in two types: the first was the recitation of long dialogues or monologues that was accompanied by *basso continuo* and the second was for expressing complex emotions with orchestral accompaniment.

¹²² *Le nuove musiche* (Firenze: li Here di Giorgio Maescotti, 1602), P4

¹²³ J. Shang, *Phylogeny of European Vocal Music* (Beijing: China Radio Film & TV Press, 2009)

Vocal works in 16th and 17th centuries took lyrics as the core of the performance. To deliver the content of the text, the technique of articulation in singing laid particular stress on reciting. In operas, chunks of the recitative became principal. The parts that also indicated the histrionic strength of the work decided the differences in the articulation techniques in singing: works of the Renaissance and early Baroque required a smooth and unpretentious style – any exaggerated element that might perplex the audience was strictly opposed. This situation was blown apart by the extreme virtuosity in the da capo aria.

Following the guidance of musicians represented by Paisiello¹²⁴ and Cimarosa¹²⁵, Mozart returned to music the reputation it deserved in the 18th century. Musical performance was no longer for serving the lyrics only, but rather poetry became the offspring of music. Inspiration was the only thing Mozart took from the script. Roles and scenes broke away from the source and grew vigorously when Mozart endowed them with musicality, such that the audience was able to gasp the characteristics of the roles or the complicated plot even if they only caught the gist of the lyrics. Clear articulation no longer mattered as it did before, as the song lingered on specific syllables and beautiful convolution, with the whole resting on the needs of the music itself. Because of the lingering on certain syllables, it was possible to sustain notes higher than A to meet the needs of the music, and this articulation technique differed from the Bel canto style.

¹²⁴ Paisiello was one of the most successful and influential opera composers of his time. Most of his over 80 operas are comic and use a simple, direct and spirited style, latterly with sharper characterization, more colorful scoring and warmer melodies (features that influenced Mozart). His serious operas have less than the conventional amount of virtuoso vocal writing; those for Russia are the closest to Gluck's 'reform' approach. -- Concise Grove Dictionary of Music

¹²⁵ One of Cimarosa's strengths was the composition of witty and vivacious ensembles. *Il matrimonio segreto*, an ensemble opera in the style of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, is composed of eight arias, four duets, three trios, a quartet, a quintet and two finales featuring all six characters. -- Johnson Jennifer E and Gordana Lazarevich. "Cimarosa, Domenico – Works", Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press, 2001. Retrieved 21 November 2018

If the shape of the oral cavity is kept still when singing one word or a character ascending with music, this takes extra strength from the singing and can lead to locking up and deformation of the muscles and organs of the phonating system. The fundamental tone is, however, the pitch of the oscillating point with frequency, and there's no volume or timbre without overtone. To beautify timbre, increase volume and to sing flexibly in different registers, the proportion of head resonance must be increased. This in turn requires adjustment to vowels, making the umlaut necessary.

The peak of coordination and unification of lyrics and music was occupied by Wagner and musicians in the 19th century. Melodrama united music and lyrics, they “melt in each other” as a couple as musician and dramatist were reconciled in Wagner. Wagner himself wrote both the music and libretto, so he could ensure the relationship of all of the elements: music and lyrics, structure and motive, scenes and performance. A reciting-singing form was built to break the recitative/aria mode, and this required a clear articulation of every single word when the drama requires it. The advantages of articulation from both reciting and musically singing were raised to equal heights. Technique was essential.

4.3.2 Umlaut applying in Chinese Vocal Works

According to the disadvantages of pronouncing Chinese characters when singing summarized above: the pronunciation of finals is more variable than Italian vowels, which are immutable, so the solution has to be found from the oral cavity. Expansion of the oral cavity has to be an intention during singing. Italian exaggerates the voice vowels when speaking, as needed for singing because Bel canto needs more resonance. Specific to oral cavity is the mechanic of placing the tongue flat and raising the soft palate. When speaking Chinese, the finals are mostly voiced in the front half of the oral cavity. To expand the width of this when singing, it is practical to move the voice

position back to the molars. The effect is that the finals sound fuller, duller but easier: [a] is closer to [o] and [u], because of the opening of back oral cavity, while [e] is more palatalized than [a] due to the lifting up of the soft palate. When the distance of the molars is extended, the soft palate is raised, and [i] moves towards [y]. This deliberately deformed vowel is proportional to the pitch, which is part of daily training in Bel canto. Yang (2008) gave a detailed explanation of the rules for the umlaut of the five Italian vowels. Chao (2017) defined the starting of the umlaut at the voice shifting point, and when the voice shifting area is entered, the vowels have to be adjusted along with the different single pitch. This indicates that Chinese singers and researchers agree with the correctness and advancement of the vowel's umlaut in Bel canto.

Based on the practice of Western vocal works, it appears that articulation in singing is more exaggerated than in speaking, and this is even more apparent in the pronunciation of vowels. This exaggeration is caused by the tiny but audible umlaut that is supported and allowed by technique, language and aesthetics.

As Italian language serves Bel canto, the Chinese language is suitable for its own musical works. After decades of research and development, drawing on lessons from Bel canto technique, Chinese National Singing (hereafter referred to as National Singing), is a form only for Chinese songs. In terms of the technique of articulation, National Singing follows the ancient Chinese tradition of 以字行腔 (Yi Zi Xing Qiang), which means the character leads to the phonation. Taking the primary purpose of voicing each character extremely clearly, the other elements – including breathing, phonation and resonance – are all mastered by intention. The technique of National Singing is therefore more focused on the front of the oral cavity, taking the audible resonance as primary, with less strength. All of the features match the articulation of Chinese and provide the benefit faster delivery of the message; there are plenty of consonants, the voiced position is towards the lips and teeth, the open mouth has a small

width, and the finals sound flat. This appears to go against another requirement of singing from the traditional Chinese 字正腔圆 (Zi Zheng Qiang Yuan), which requires clear articulation and full sound.

This is part of the basic training for singers in China. The understanding from scholars concerns not only articulation and phonation, but also the relationship between words and phrases and the strength to grasp and moderate the emotions. There are three noteworthy practices for singing: first, 字正 – the correct and clear articulation of characters; second, 腔圆 – the oral cavity should be round for a full and soft timbre; and third, the articulation must obey the keynote of the piece: it does not stand alone. By understanding the operation of 字正腔圆 (Zi Zheng Qiang Yuan), it is obvious that this idea also meets the requirements of Western vocal works. Focusing on the character itself 字正 is especially in line with the aesthetic and articulation techniques in Caccini's period. While 腔圆 emphasizing the shape of the phonating organ and resonance cavity and the skill of lifting the soft palate and flattening the tongue – is also necessary for singing.

The date of the origins of 以字行腔 and 字正腔圆 are unverifiable, although they seem to be closer to Caccini's lyrics dominating theory. Although 字正腔圆 seems to be only a description of the status of organs during singing, which does not conflict with Caccini, the indication of dealing the relationship of the lyrics and music leads us to Wagnerian melodramas. As the reputation of the Beijing Opera has gained worldwide recognition – while advocating 以字行腔, which is also drawn upon by National Singing – the validity of the method of articulation in singing does not matter.

When the study focused on Bel canto, there was no doubt that 字正腔圆 was a part of it.

The generation of vowel umlauts exists only in Bel canto, but varies depending on which language is being used. The question of “how much” is essential, and the application must be appropriate. The degree to meet the comfort of the individual is unique, because it’s caused by the different characters of the languages and the individual singers. When the same Italian song is performed by Italian and Chinese singers, the singing is easier for the Italian because they only need to open a little more than how they speak, while also being able to use their native language. The Chinese singer, meanwhile, has to expand the oral cavity to the size of an Italian speaking, and then they must expand it further to meet or approximate the Italian singer for similar acoustic effects. This action brings more trouble and discomfort to the Asian singer. When singing in the Chinese language, however, the width need is not as big as when singing in Italian, but the extent of this depends on the recognition of Chinese language.

There are several examples of both Chinese and Western singers singing in Chinese that provide positive incentive for the ultra-high standard of accomplishment. The Chinese singers Yin Xiumei, Liao Changyong, Fan Jingma, Wu Bixia and Dilbèr Yunus are thought to be paragons of this industry. They perfectly display the style of Chinese vocal music works by combining their native language with Western singing techniques. The more estimable encouragements of Chinese music are from Western singers, as when José Carreras sang Chinese songs to high levels of excellence.

The next section analyses some of the recital tracks. Art songs from Italian and Chinese were chosen as research and practical samples.

4.4 Analysis on Specific Songs

The songs elected for the study adhere to certain principles. First, the song must be an art song, combining the creativity of poetry and music, as sung by solo voice with piano accompaniment. The text of all four Chinese art songs chosen for the recital include famous poetry from ancient or contemporary Chinese poets or linguists. The verses of these poets are focused on literariness, mellifluousness and concision. The elegant tone of the lyrics is rich in a musical nature. The melodies were written by contemporary musicians especially for these poems and retain the flavour of Chinese music. The features of the arrangement are visually in line with the Western craft of musical composition.

Second, as a goal of this study, one consideration for choosing the repertoire was that the songs would be easy for a foreigner to learn and sing. Two aspects are therefore given priority: fewer characters and simple pronunciation, which will help beginners gain access to Chinese singing.

The next section will discuss the repertoires, from the characters and music to the whole picture of the Chinese monochromes.

4.4.1 教我如何不想她 Jiao Wo Ru He Bu Xiang Ta, How Can I Bear Not

Missing (1920)

This is one of the earliest Chinese art songs. It occupies an important position and historical significance in the history of Chinese music and vocal music. The lyricist Liu Bannong (1891–1934) was a pioneer of the Chinese New Culture Movement, a writer, linguist, and educator, and one of the founders of modern Chinese linguistics. This poem was created during his study in France in 1920. In the style of love songs and

romantic personification, the poem expresses the sincere feelings of a son following a departure, in memory of the motherland, hometown, and relatives, as well as the wish for a bright future. In 1926, Zhao Yuanren (1892–1982), the famous linguist, pioneer of modern linguistics and music, composed a song with it, which was widely accepted for its harmonious rhyme and fluent language.



Figure 4-15 Zhao Yuanren

It is a required song in the current vocal music education system of China because of the simple lyrics and elegant melody. Another important factor in choosing this song is the possibility of obtaining the audio that the creator, Zhao Yuanren, himself sang. Although Zhao Yuanren was not a Bel canto singer, even singing has never mentioned in his biography, as a linguist, phonologist, and the composer of this poem, Zhao's interpretation of the text was highly subtle. His pitch and articulation are full of Chinese folk flavour, with decorative elements such as portamento in traditional Chinese singing.



QR Code 15 Zhao Yuanre

The second version of this song was recorded by the famous singer Li Guyi, who was

hailed as the founder of China's new generation of Chinese national singing¹²⁶. Li Guyi's singing career started with Fengyang Huagu¹²⁷, a traditional Chinese folk drama. On the basis of a folk singing inheritance, Li Guyi has made bold artistic innovations in Chinese national singing, building a unique style by marrying skills from Bel canto¹²⁸.



QR Code 16 Li Guyi

The third sample comes from the famous Chinese baritone, Liao Changyong. He interprets this art song in his native language with perfect Bel canto techniques. This study took his singing as the standard benchmark.



QR Code 17 Liao Changyong (Jiao Wo)

The last sample is from the mezzo-soprano Phoebe Haines. In iSing Suzhou 2018, Haines sang this song as a sample of a Westerner singing in Chinese. It will thus be

¹²⁶ G. Li, "教我如何不想他, Jiao Wo Ru He Bu Xiang Ta, How Can I Bear Not Missing," podcast audio, September 28, 1996

¹²⁷ It is a kind of traditional folk performing art that integrates music and singing and dancing, with the speaking-singing and singing in this folk art generally Believed to be formed in the Ming Dynasty ("Fengyang Huagu (Quyí Art)—Baidu," 2019).

¹²⁸ X. Wei, "Li Guyi De Ge Chang Yi Shu Te Dian, The Artistic Characteristics of Li Guyi's Singing," *Da Wu Tai*, 2014, xx

compared with the previous three versions.



QR Code 18 Phoebe Haines (Jiao Wo)

By comparing the four versions, the following observations can be made:

First, in terms of a Chinese song sung by Chinese, what's known is that Zhao Yuanren was not a professional singer, Li Guyi is a national singer, and Liao Changyong is a Bel canto singer; the last two are professionals. According to the theory of this study, the technical requirements of the three singing styles/methods are completely different. The most obvious manifestation was the opening of the mouth when singing: the volume of the oral cavity of speaking is smaller than that for Chinese national singing, which is smaller than that of Bel canto. The following audio shows the three singers' pronunciation of the word in the first sentence of the song, "天上".



tiānshàng

天 上 [t^hiɛn][ʃaŋ]



QR Code 19 Tian Shang

Figure 4-16 Music 2

It is clear that Zhao Yuanren's pronunciation was close to daily spoken language. Without the use of vocal techniques, the timbre sounds pale; a lack in movement and resonance made it wither. However, his singing did not undergo any artistic exaggeration and vowel umlaut, and obtained a high degree of recognition. The oral cavity of Li Guyi was significantly larger than that of Zhao Yuanren when singing, and she acquired a more feminine and dreamy timbre. The appropriate use of singing technique made her singing not too flaunting on resonance but more amiable. Liao Changyong's singing embodies the technical features and timbre of Bel canto incisively and vividly; compared with the previous two version, the volume of the oral cavity was bigger, which brought the inclusive round articulation—round and powerful, with moderate brightness. For the voicing of 上^{shàng} [[ʃaŋ], the quicker rhyming was chosen, and the vibrato of the back-nasal final [aŋ] was well controlled, which made Liao's singing particularly legato and relaxed.

This difference was also evident in the modal particles, “啊” appearing several times in the song.



QR Code 20 [a] in singing

Figure 4-17 Music 3

The sound effects of the three versions are quite different. The difference of mouth space can be easily heard. Even the position of the sounds in the oral cavity were clearly distinguished: Zhao's voice was close to speaking, and nasal speech was applied for

musicality. The phonating point of Li Guyi sounded more forward, with her mouth horizontally open and the labial angle raised slightly to a smile. The tender and light timbre was caused by relaxed phonation. Liao sang with standard Bel canto technique: round mouth space, full and unified timbre, with strong inner power.

Among the three editions of this song, the most obvious difference was in the character "夜" [ie]. It can be pronounced by combining letters, just as in Italian. Concurrently, it is on a relatively higher "e" of a small three-degree ascent, with distinct outcomes caused by different singing styles.



QR Code 21 [ie] in Singing

Figure 4-18 Music 4

As mentioned above, the three versions can be regarded as daily conversational speech, Chinese national singing, and Bel canto. The character "夜" is quite different among the three singing styles. Daily speech can be clearly heard without any deliberate modification. The national singing method has obvious lateral opening technical movements. The phonating point on the treble was more forward, feeling almost at the tip of the nose, with the resulting sound as bright as metal lustre, and there was an apparent Chinese dramatic timbre. Bel canto has a slight sense of swallowing, and it intentionally conceals the brightness of the treble so that the tone there is not so abrupt and deliberate. Immediately after the voicing, it relaxes, and more vibrato appears, making the music smoother and more coherent. The study took Zhao's speaking as a

standard way of pronunciation. Li Guyi's articulation was even more exaggerated in the original action, as Bel canto undoubtedly involves a slight deformation of the vowel. The vowel umlaut was more evident in the case of Chinese national singing and Bel canto processing of the diphthong finals; this was the case, for instance, with the character “^{liú}流” [liou].



QR Code 22 [liou] in Singing

Figure 4-19 Music 5

Li Guyi's articulation was in full compliance with the technical requirements of traditional Chinese vocal music; it is obvious that the rhyming process was heard. During the rhyming of the "^{liú}流" [liou], the dynamic picture of "water flow" was vividly displayed. Liao Changyong has taken an entirely different way of sounding the character without jeopardizing the meaning delivery. Details are provided in the analysis of the next song.

By studying the examples of the three native singers, it is possible to talk about singing Chinese art song specifically, with various ways of articulation required by different singing styles/genres. No visible devastating effect was involved with the artistic expression or identification of the text. The manner of articulation required by the singing styles/genres involves the vowel umlaut.

Now it is necessary to clarify whether a native Bel canto singer's articulation affects the artistic and lyrical meaning. On this issue Haines's version provided a rare sample

for this study: will foreign Bel canto singers, without a background in Chinese, master the problem when singing Chinese songs?

What was clearly heard in Haines's singing was a reduction of the sounding of some initial consonants. An example is from the first phrase, at 00:18 飘^{piāo}[p^hiau] and 00:21 微云^{wēiyún}[uei][yn]. According to the IPA system, the initial consonants of “微云”, [u] and [y], take the sounds of vowels, so it is not unduly harmful when they are reduced. The initial consonant of “飘”, p [p^h], is known as an “explosive consonant”, demanding strong aspiration to be distinguished from the “un-explosive” or “un-aspirating” consonant b [p]. The reductions are also considered as symptoms of “acclimatization”. It is actually an instance of ignoring or slashing of the “aspiration” action. The action of “aspiration” or “explosion” is accomplished by the lips. When singing with Bel canto, the vowels are the focal points which need more movement in the back of oral cavity, and it could happen that the lips become passive, lacking the “aspiration” or “explosion”.

The same occurred at 00:42 了^{liǎo}, 01:07, 01:17 恋^{liàn}, and 02:09 流^{liú}. In the chapter that discusses the Pinyin system, the outcome indicated that the initial consonant “l” is exactly the same as “l” in Italian. Referring to Haines's singing, it is more reasonable that the sound of the initial consonant “l” is closer to a short double consonant “ll” in Italian.

Overall, Haines displayed excellence in her singing, reaching all requirements of art songs, and also clearly conveying the meaning of the lyrics. Her performance is well accepted by a native audience. This is a good example of how Bel canto technique is capable of performing Chinese art songs.

4.4.2 阳关三叠, Yang Guan San Die, Yang Guan Triassic (Ancient)

阳关三叠 (Yang Guan San Die, Yang Guan Triassic) is excerpted from The Wei Cheng song, also called the Send-off of Yuan'er Assuming to Anxi, by the poet of Wang Wei (701–761) of the Tang dynasty. It was written on seeing his friend Yuan'er assume the role of alderman of Anxi. The song was composed soon after the text was created in Tang, because of the simple language and vivid images of the feeling of saying goodbye. It became famous for the theme of farewell and was widely circulated.



Figure 4-20 Send-off of Yuan'er Assuming to Anxi

The text gives excellent practice for the pronunciation of the final “e”. As mentioned above, there are three pronunciations of “e” in CPA, and all of them appeared in the text. Here three versions of the song from different Chinese singers are offered as samples for comparison on the articulation:

chéng	chén	kè	shè	sè
渭	城朝雨浥轻	尘,	客舍青青柳	色新。
[təəŋ]	[təən]	[k ^h ʅ]	[ʂʅ]	[sʅ]
	èr	chén	shén	
感怀, 思君十	二时	辰,	谁可相因日驰	神。
	[əə]	[təən]		[ʂəən]

Here three versions of the song from different Chinese singers are offered as sample to be compared on the articulation:

Version No. 1 is from Yin Xiumei's recording in 2006¹²⁹. Sharing a very similar reputation for incorporating Chinese national singing and Bel canto with another Chinese singer, Wu Bixia. Yin is very good at singing Chinese songs and is well known for her mellow Bel canto voice. This Bel canto voice sounds completely inconsistent with the Chinese traditional pentatonic style in this work. Yin's version is a full version of the poem.



QR Code 23 Yin

Version 2 is by Liao Changyong in 2012¹³⁰. Liao's version can be said to be the one that totally insisted on the Bel canto way, in both technique and flavour. With the same piano accompaniment as Fan's version, the whole song presents a different solemn and heavy atmosphere, which is distinguished from Fan's vintage and solitary.



QR Code 24 Liao Changyong (Yang Guan)

Version 3 is from Fan Jingma¹³¹. Although Fan has an international reputation as a singer, he chose a very traditional style to sing this song. Compared with the two previous versions, Fan's rendition was closer to reciting. The reciting is brighter than

¹²⁹ ABC (Int'l) Records, 2006

¹³⁰ (阳关三叠, Yang Guan San Die, 2012)

¹³¹ (阳关三叠, Yang Guan San Die, 2008)

the music, which means it's maybe the origin face of this old piece.



QR Code 25 Fan Jingma

Ideally, if all the native singers strictly follow the CPA, there should be no differences on the same words. However, one must here discuss the different pronunciations of “e” in nasal finals. In both the front nasal final “en” and the back-nasal final “eng”, the pronunciation of “e” is indicated as [ə] by IPA in the description of CPA in Wikipedia. They are, however, different. In the front nasal final “en”, “e” sounds like [e] to [ɛ] (the volume of the oral cavity is between the two), but it sounds like [ɣ] in the back nasal “eng”. The voiced positions and width of the oral cavity for [e], [ə], and [ɣ] are displayed as in the chart of vowels, but the difference in actual pronunciations of “e” in “en” and “eng” are distinct in Liao Changyong at 00:10 ^{chén} 尘, 00:36 ^{rén} 人¹³², 01:20 ^{zhēn} 珍, 02:30 ^{chén} 辰, 02:57 ^{shén} 神, and 04:47 ^{shēn} 伸. Liao sounded every character which has the single final “en” in a very special way: a smaller oral cavity voiced “e”, close to a French [e] in mes, then a fast close to the nasal end [n].

Taking the character ^{zhēn} 珍 as an example, three phonations of this sound zh[tʃ]-e[e]-n[n] can be heard. Comparing Fan’s version at 01:15 and Yin’s version at 02:16, the researcher picked up the following phrase to display the differences of how they voiced “en”. Figure 19 shows the differences in the order of Fan, Yin, and Liao.

¹³² The other two repetitions are not counted.



chén

辰 [tʂʰən]

QR Code 26 [tʂʰən]



Figure 4-21 Music 6

Following the theory presented in this study, Liao’s way was typical of [en] according to the Western habit of hearing and speaking Chinese, while Fan’s [ən], as well as Yin’s have a wider space of the oral cavity on the final but immediately softening the articulation; this can be heard from Yin’s 人^{réⁿ} at 01:26. The Chinese articulations of Fan and Yin are more fitted for the habit of Chinese ears. The same character, with three right ways of voicing with different volumes of the oral space, brought different flavours of singing. This comes from the vowel umlaut, the technique of Bel canto. Although some native listeners might say that Liao’s articulation is a bit strange, or it might be said to be “tough-bitten”, it is reasonable for all Chinese to understand.

The speech and stress of sounding Chinese are precipitated by the character 柳^{liǔ}, as the strongest pitch is in its bar and the phrase.



liǔ

柳 [liou]



QR Code 27 [Liou] in Singing

Figure 4-22 Music 7

Here [l], the consonant, has exactly the same pronunciation as Italian, while iu [iou] is a diphthong stressed on [ou]. According to the chart of Diphthong Finals (Figure 13), the final “iu” is the abbreviation of “iou”. Figure 20 shows three versions of this phrase, in the order of Fan, Yin, and Liao.

We can hear that the last one, Liao’s version, is pretty close to the Italian: when the consonant [l] was touched, the singer rapidly turned to the vowel [u] with the middle vowel [i] gliding, but definitely recognizable. However, if this character is sounded accurately, the stressed phone is [ou]. Does that mean Liao’s articulation is wrong? The writer thinks that if the sound gives the right message and voice, it is correct, although there would be some dissenting voices. The first recording is from Fan, which is more like spoken Chinese: it gives a longer duration to the middle vowel [i] that is almost equal to the stressed vowel, which is [ou]. It can be deemed that Yin’s version is an enhancement of Fan’s: the middle vowel [i] is accentuated more than the gentleman’s, with [ou] almost passing by. This is the opposite way of dealing with this final “iu” as done by Liao, but still, it makes sense to a native listener. The comparison of the three versions could also be related to the previous song, with the analysis of the character “流”^{liú}. The same difference can be heard on the character “酒”^{jiǔ} by Liao at 00:28, Fan at 00:26, and Yin at 01:18.

This phrase appears three times in the song with progressive emotions, following three toasts, and the singing is supposed to be heard as though in stages from consciousness to drunkenness. If this character is sung exactly the same each time, the song will be boring due to lack of variety in the mood. An asymptotic pronunciation of this character was therefore chosen.

In order to well express the original flavour of the song, Fan adjusted forward the phonating position of singing. He also deliberately diluted the traces of Bel canto articulation, so that remaining on the finals and long tones do not stay a long time on a vertical opening; it is more inclined to the feeling of speaking. It is lighter and brighter than Liao's version, maybe caused by the diversity of the voice parts. In the processing of treble, what is clearly heard is Fan's normative Bel canto singing skills: abundant breath support, reasonable volume, active resonance cavity, and graceful amount of vibrato: 02:07 ”感^{gǎn}怀^{huái}”. Such typical Bel canto techniques did not break Fan's intention of conveying the ancient and solitary overall feeling in his singing, but made the farewell landscape vivid.

If Fan's singing is a traditional Chinese ink painting, then Liao's singing is a typical oil painting: the entire work has revealed the solemn aesthetic feeling of Bel canto aesthetics. “Massy” is the main feeling he endowed to the work, although this may be a reference to a completely different work, *Largo al factotum*, which has been his signature since 1996.

Liao has successfully revealed the commonalities of Chinese to everywhere in the world in terms of the content and emotion of this work: separation and sadness, carried by the melody, and defined by a general sense only. Singing itself is almost beside the point. This confirms the sayings “Music without borders” and “The nation is the world”. Chinese themes can certainly be expressed in oil paintings, Chinese unique ingredients can deservedly be presented in Western cuisine, and so yes, Chinese art songs of course deserve Bel canto.

In contrast to the two different flavours shown by the gentlemen, Yin's singing blended the skills and styles more gently. Her version, though full of emotion, is not aggressive. Her singing, as with a friend in warm candlelight, brought the listeners back to the emotional communication without bothering about technique or musicology.

These three native singers' recordings illustrated that the diversities of articulation are allowed to exist in the same singing style/genres when they do not impede the delivery of message and phonation. The same method of singing may also have subtle technical differences (how much the vowels are unlauded), which has no negative impact on timbre, style, genre, or artistic performance. The singers' selections create a number of wonderful entry points for the interpretation of the same work, showing the different personal characteristics of the singer, and extending the possibility of recreation for the work itself. This demonstrates the different understanding and application of the vowel umlaut, a Bel canto technique, in singing Chinese art songs, and achieves positive results with different voices.

4.4.3 红豆词, Hong Dou Ci (1943)

红豆词, “*Hong Dou Ci*” is part of the *女儿酒令*, “*The Lady Drinkers' Wager*” song by Jia Baoyu, the leading boy from the novel *红楼梦*, *The Dream of Red Mansion*, one of China's four great masterpieces, written by Cao Xueqin (1715–1763). This song is about a marrow-deep love that makes a boy depressed, weeping endless tears of blood. The lovesickness causes him to become sleepless, lose his appetite, and ignore his needs. Within the structure of the novel, it was supposed to be a song, and Liu Xuean (1905–1985) composed music for this poem in 1943.



Figure 4-23 Liu Xuean (1905–1985)

The lyrics of the song have an outstanding characteristic: they are highly condensed. Like the two songs above, the lyrics are in classical Chinese. In the novel, the poem comes after the changeless melody of drinking games and was built on musical features such as rhythm so that the text is full of musicality and the characteristics of song. The composer commendably utilized the musicality of the lyrics, having the melody flowing with the tune.

The plosive group “b” [p] / “p” [p^h] appears in the same phrase, which also contains the initial consonant “d” [t]. These sounds need to be voiced clearly so they can be distinguished from each other.

dībù	pāo	dòu
滴不尽相思血泪	;抛红	;豆
[ti] [pu]	[p ^h au]	[tou]

The design of the song focuses on the rhyme “ou” [ou]. Each sentence ends with the phoneme [ou] taking two beats. The stressed final includes the character ^{pāo}抛 [p^hau], which is the “o”. This final has to be sounded in a typical oral cavity, although it could be slid a little, referring to the Shuai Tune from traditional Chinese opera. The double-beat characters will be treated with smooth airflows and transitions to the other pitch.

It is an exquisite art song where high volume should always be avoided. The characters expressing actions or things need to be articulated with care, which means the singer has to know the meaning of the characters. Some of the words are rather archaic, so it is necessary to determine these for correct pronunciation before singing.

An excellent singing model is from Wu Bixia (Sample No. 1¹³³) a Chinese soprano, who is a master of both Bel canto and Chinese national singing.



QR Code 28 Wu Bixia

Western singing technique and Chinese flavour are perfectly combined in her singing. In this song, Wu Bixia presented a traditional Chinese flavour feast: extremely bright and exquisite timbre infinitely close to the voice required by traditional Chinese opera; however, it can also be deemed as perfect coloratura. The ingenious and delicate singing gave full expression to the details of each pronunciation incisively, but also found the intersection of the two singing styles.

Sample No. 2 is from the maestro of Bel canto of this time and all time, José Carreras¹³⁴. In the Asian version of his 1999 album *Pure Passion*, the song *Sorrow of the Red Beans* was a special bonus track released only for the Asian market. The maestro's transcendental singing provided the song with a spiritual feature that it never had: the operatic. Taking the *The Dream of Red Mansion* as an opera, the song *Hong Dou Ci* is an aria for the male lead. It is an excellent model for all Bel canto singers on how to focus on the vowels during singing, even if it is a new language. However, there are still mistakes, by the standard pronunciation rule, on the pronunciations such as the flat cocky¹³⁵.



¹³³ From Liu Xuean's Centennial Birthday Commemorative Concert, Beijing, 2015.

¹³⁴ 红豆词, Sorrow of the Red Beans, 1999.

¹³⁵ Cacuminal or flat retroflex.

QR Code 29 Jose Carreras

The third sample is performed by Phoebe Haines¹³⁶. It can be easily felt that Haines spent quite a long time on studying the language and the song. She sang this song with a very normative mezzo-soprano voice. It is clearly heard that the music hall is filled up with the resonance of every pronunciation. Together with the vertically open back oral cavity, the presentation features a very identifiable Bel canto timbre which is strong, moist, and deep.



QR Code 30 Phoebe Haines (Hong Dou Ci)

In discussing the Chinese articulation of native singers, it is hard to say which one is right according to the textbook, because everyone is. Here the study has picked three samples of singing the song, and one of them from the native singers could be the standard and the object of imitation by foreign singers. Referring to this absolute standard, the study is expected to determine the difficulty of singing Chinese by non-native singers.

There are phrases that foreign singers have done very well, such as Carreras's 开不
完春柳春花满画楼 (00:40–00:48) and 咽不下玉粒金波噎满喉 (01:05–01:12).
Haines also executed this phrase splendidly (00:55–01:21). According to the CPA, it can be seen that all the characters in this sentence are formed with simple consonants,

¹³⁶ At Jinji Lake Concert Hall, Suzhou Arts and Culture Centre, August 2018, as part of SING! Festival.

which means no cacuminal (zh, ch, sh) or confusing consonants (t/d, x/s, q/ch) or single finals.

Several clear errors can be detected in the performances of Carreras and Haines, which can be divided into two types: those that do not affect the message delivery, and those that do.

Most of the mistakes Carreras made, such as the confusing of consonants, belong to the first type. He sounded 相^{xiāng} as [sian] (00:35), 泪^{lèi} as [le] (00:38), and 瞧^{qiáo} as [tʂhiau] (01:14). These confusing consonants are most difficult to be sounded accurately for foreigners; however, to a certain extent they do not impede understanding. The mis-sounding such as 逗^{dòu} to [t^hou] (00:39) and 更^{gèng} to [kəŋ] are unacceptable, for there are other characters with these pronunciations.

Another palpable mistake is failing the cacuminal. Carreras sounded the following characters with a flat tongue instead of a turned-up tongue: 睡^{shuì} (00:49), 瘦^{shòu} (00:51, 01:20), 愁^{chóu} (01:00), 展^{zhǎn} (01:22), 遮^{zhē}, 住^{zhù} (01:27), and 山^{shān} (01:48), but the voicing of 春^{chūn} (00:42) was perfect. In fact, in some areas of China, such as Sichuan province in the southwest and Hunan province in the middle, some locals when speaking Mandarin fail on the cacuminal because of their dialect, without affecting the message delivery; however, this is still unaccepted in standard Mandarin. Because Mandarin is the official language of China, it has strict standards of pronunciation. Although dialectically accented Mandarin is often heard in the entertainment media, it is forbidden in news broadcasts by the government. Here the language in singing is narrowed down to art songs only sung by Bel canto, those are not created based on the regional folks. The only allowed articulation is standard Mandarin, which all Chinese people are required to study from pre-primary school year until they are eighteen years old.

Because the recording by Phoebe Haines was from a live concert¹³⁷ and it was not high fidelity, so it must be tested in a view of an audience. Haines made three main mistakes in her articulation. Firstly, for the characters 雪 (00:33) and 柳 (00:41), she voiced the middle vowel too slowly, without a clearly ended last phoneme. The pronunciation of each character has to be one complete sound but not formed by several phonemes. The study analysed how Liao Changyong sounded 柳. Although the pronunciation of the character was divided apart to be tested, they still considered as an entirety. Still, it did not appear to jeopardize the meaning but instead was an apparent foreign accent. Secondly, Haines mis-voiced the consonant “sh” to “ch”, as heard on 睡 (00:47) and 纱 (00:49)¹³⁸. These two kinds of mistakes seriously harm the message delivery. However, Haines sounded the consonant “ch” accurately on 春 (00:41).

The following audio clips show the same phrase sung by three singers in the order of Wu, Carreras, and Haines. Focus on the character 遮, which contains the hard [tʂ] and [ʃ]. Besides the retroflex initial consonant, the vowel [ɤ] impeded the opening of the resonance cavities.



恰似 遮不住的青山 隐 隐，

zhē

遮 [tʂɤ]

QR Code 31 [tʂɤ]

Figure 4-24 Music 8

¹³⁷ Red Bean Poem performed by Phoebe Haines, 2019.

¹³⁸ Repeated listening shows that the problem may also be caused by a technical flaw in the recording.

Here Wu Bixia's performance is offered as the standard for Chinese national singing. She performed it at a slightly slower speed, which benefited the articulation. Taking this as a model, we can hear José Carreras's mis-voicing of the retroflex initial consonants "zh" and "sh", and the [ɣ] was sounded like [e], while Haines executed all of them well in the Bel canto way: vertical opening and large oral space. This also shows the timbre and resonance from the perspective of Chinese national singing, a Bel canto tenor, and a mezzo-soprano.

4.4.4 我住长江头, Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou, The Yangtze Love (1930)

Bu Suan Zi. Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou is a song poem by Li Zhiyi (1048–1117) which was selected for the *Three Hundred Song Poems*. The Chang Jiang, the Yangtze River, is the impediment that creates distance between lovers. The deep love is seen from the simple words of the narrative, and repeated sentences are used to provide a folk-song-style structure. The music was created by Qing Zhu (1853–1959), a vital composer in the contemporary era of China.



Figure 4-25 Qing Zhu (1853–1959)

Qing Zhu was known as the pioneer creator of Chinese art songs. He wrote the very first Chinese art song, *Da Jiang Dong Qu*, in the summer of 1920 while he was an

overseas student in Germany. The composition techniques of Qing Zhu were affected by Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf, while his thinking was influenced by Expressionism and Idealist philosophy. Qing Zhu thought that the literal meaning should be as significant as the tonal patterns in classical Chinese poetry when composing, and that the setting of the melody should obey the pronunciation principles of recitation. The song *Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou* takes the flowing of the Yangtze River as the melodic progression, which suggests the flavour of Chinese folk songs, reveals the lovers' hearts, and is well Beloved by the Chinese public.

The text of 我住长江头 (*Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou*) contains many characters with initial consonants such as “z”, “zh”, “c”, “ch”, “s”, and “sh”:

cháng	cǐ	zhī	sī	shí
长 江	;此水	;只愿	相 ;思	何 ;时
[tɕiaŋ]	[tɕʰ]	[tʂ]	[s]	[ʂ]

The difference in the pronunciation of these consonants is clear, as is the reason why Chinese educators use them as a group for children to study.

The two sounds of “i” in this song are prominent:

rì rì sī	sī yì
日 日 思 君	相 ;思 意
[ɹ] [ɹ] [s]	[s] [i]

The final [i] of the integral syllables, has unique voices that have to be memorized by heart. This song helps understanding.

Because of the rhyme of the first two phrases, the finals “ei” [ei] and “ui” [uei] need special care for remaining on the specific vowel.



Figure 4-26 Music 9

The pronunciation of the character ^{shuǐ}水 is indicated in IPA as [ʃuei]. As mentioned before, each character is considered one syllable and one only, and this one occupies the whole bar with two equal pitches and a piano mark (Figure 18). The action of taking the mark should be conducted so the pitch and beat decide the understanding of this character. Based on the principle of the sounds of the characters, on the first beat of the first pitch of the bar, the sound of this character has to be completed. The remaining three beats and the change of pitch take place as the sound change continues from [e] to [i], but closer to the primary stressed vowel [e]. The progress of the [e] towards [i] is natural and inconspicuous in one syllable. It would be incorrect to close the oral cavity to the close final [i] prematurely; this should occur after the third beat of the bar—or even later, just before the end of the sound. The same difficulties appear for the end character of each verse on different finals.



Figure 4-27 Music 10

One might say that the previous song did not demonstrate Bel canto style. For this one, samples were selected from two sopranos, Dilbèr Yunus¹³⁹ and Diana Damrau¹⁴⁰.



QR Code 32 Dilbèr Yunus



QR Code 33 Diana Damrau

Both recordings are from live concerts.

By comparing these two performances, it is clear that Damrau did excellent work with Chinese articulation. Her singing could have been taken for that of a native singer except for the characters 思^{sī} (00:19) and the last 相^{xiāng} (01:49) with a clear tail [g]. It is very interesting that she voiced 此^{cǐ} (00:30) and 似^{sì} (00:45) perfectly. What is inexplicable is that 思^{sī} and 似^{sì} share the same pronunciation, but the singer voiced one of them well but the other with a foreign accent.

It appeared that the biggest problem for Damrau was the pronunciation of 愿^{yuàn}. On three repetitions the character was never delivered successfully. In this audio the initial appearance and the three repetitions are heard.



¹³⁹ (我住长江头 Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou, Dilbèr Yunus, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ (我住长江头 Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou, Diana Damrau, 18/11/2017, Guangzhou Opera House, China, 2017.

yuàn

愿 [yan]



QR Code 33 [yan]

Figure 4-28 Music 11

The IPA indicates that in the pronunciation of this character [yan], the initial phoneme is [y], as French “u” distinguished from [u] in the Italian word “una” [una]. Damrau’s version sounded like [uan] which is the pronunciation of other characters, ^{wàn}万 or ^{wán}玩. There is no such saying in grammar, logic, or custom. This is a typical case of failed message delivery.

Besides the songs analysed above, the researcher watched or listened to a few other videos or audios of foreign singers singing Chinese art songs. The following difficulties for foreigners in learning and singing Chinese were found:

1. Nasal finals: The timing of the rhyme to the nasal tail and the un-muting of the final “g” were the two main indications of singing by a non-native.
2. Diphthong finals: the long duration of the middle vowels caused temporary confusion.
3. Initial consonants: the indeterminate voicing of initial consonants happened frequently.
4. The retroflex confusion of “zh”, “ch”, and “sh” ruined the textual meaning.
5. The reduction of the aspirated/explosive consonants changed the characters.
6. There were problems in identification for the final or initial final “ü” [y].

So far, through a literature study and case analysis, some answers were found for the research questions, pointing to positive results. To verify the practical significance and

operability of this conjecture, an attempt to consider all the features mentioned above was designed and conducted.

4.5 An Interesting Attempt

The researcher prefers to name this an “attempt” rather than an “experiment”, because there is no known precedent for a Bel canto singer without a Chinese background learning to sing a Chinese art song entirely with the CPA instead of the IPA. In the educational steps of having learned their mother language with the CPA, when Chinese pupils engage with English as a second language, they always start with the IPA to indicate the standard English pronunciation. This means that two pronunciation systems are used. When some of them study Bel canto singing in their teenage years, their first attempt is usually the Italian song *Caro mio ben*. The common situation of learning this song in a third language is to use as a tool the CPA, the symbol system they’re familiar with, to mark the sounds. It is reasonable that familiar tools are more easily accepted than others that might be better tools but to which they are unaccustomed. The researcher believed that people from the other side of the world share the same experience. This is why it might be more common that western people learn Chinese with the IPA system, which made this attempt valuable.

What impressed the researcher in the beginning of the training is that the singer preferred to recognize Chinese characters with the CPA system instead of the IPA, which was also offered with the text (see Appendix). The accurate pronunciation of characters indicated with the IPA symbols were considered unknown, such as 尽 [tɛin], 相 [ɛiaŋ], and 思 [sɿ]. Even to a Bel canto singer, the symbols [tɛ], [ɛ], and [ɿ] are unfamiliar because they are extremely rarely used.

The first reading the text before learning was supposed to be the best and clearest evidence that Chinese pronunciation can be executed with Italian pronunciation rules, although not a hundred percent. As shown in the Appendix, several mistakes were made when the singer voiced the Chinese text entirely with his pronunciation experience from

Western languages. The mistakes were of two kinds: “empirical errors”, meaning mistakes caused by the speaker’s native language or languages familiar to him, and errors caused by complete ignorance.

For the back-nasal final “ang”, the right pronunciation is [aŋ], with the end consonant “g”; a part of the nasal tail “ng” is aperiodic. For Italian Bel canto singers, because Italian words tend to end with vowels, and the pronunciation experience of words ending with “ng” derived from Italian words containing “g”, such as *angelo* [ãngelo], it is easier to voice the “ang” as [ang], with “g” enunciated. This happens not only in Chinese, for the English word “wrong” [rɒŋ] is often mis-voiced as [rɒng]; and “thing” is often mis-voiced as [ting]. In this case, because the singer voiced ^{chángjiāng} 长江 [tʂʰaŋ][tɕiãŋ] as [tʂʰang] [tɕiãŋ] by nature of his Portuguese/Italian/Spanish background, it constitutes an empirical error.

[tʂʰ] indicates the pronunciation “zhe”, but most people, including Bel canto singers, are unable to execute this sound by seeing the symbol; this is considered to be a disadvantage of IPA in notating Chinese. When the symbols are not commonly used in Latin languages, the IPA has lost its universality. Users have no experience to rely upon, which produces mistakes. For example, in “zhe” [tʂʰ], the initial consonant “zh” is a retroflex sound, indicated in IPA by [tʂ]; however, this means nothing to readers who are not phoneticians. No one knows that it’s quite close to the English [dr]. The single final “e” [ɤ] is also very rare in Western languages.

The empirical errors could be solved by overcoming and revising inherent habits and experiences. Mistakes caused by ignorance can be solved by learning. For singers, the solution to both types of errors lies in memorization. Phoebe Haines told the researcher at the very beginning of learning Chinese that it took longer for her to memorize

Chinese songs than when learning Western repertoire. Juliet Petrus¹⁴¹ was distributed only three lines of her first Chinese repertoire, and she could have executed it simply by imitating the native singers' singing. (See Appendix.) The experience of these singers reveals the skills involved in the whole process of learning and using a new language quickly: memorization and more importantly imitation.

In fact, the singer's learning and memorizing of Chinese pronunciation in the next movement affirmed that Pinyin played a more positive role in notating Chinese pronunciation than did IPA. This experiment did not hang too much on remembering text by virtue. In the limited learning time (the effective duration that was possible for the study), the main approaches were teaching Pinyin and modelling reading, trying to make the singer master the pronunciation of the lyrics as quickly as possible, and achieving a performance level within two disconnected sessions (three hours in all). After one hour, the two types of mistakes mentioned above were almost solved. The singer's study of Chinese pronunciation ended the cognitive stage and entered the stage of discrimination: the sound of “j” and “ch” are like each other. The singer paused

¹⁴¹ American and Italian soprano, Juliet Petrus, is recognized for her effortless coloratura and is steadily making her mark as a versatile and captivating performer in the world of recital, concert and opera. Juliet was recently invited to sing at Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park in Chicago as part of the Great Lakes Music Festival 'Friend Lasts Forever' concert, celebrating the connection between Chinese and American music. Juliet made her second appearance at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, as part of the 2018 Asian Cultural Symphony Fall concert. In 2018, she began a six-year solo tour of China, in addition to her numerous appearances on Chinese TV. Later this season, she will debut the role of Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with M Glam Shanghai.

Petrus is in high demand in the United States and China as the leading Western interpreter of contemporary Chinese vocal music. She spent the summers of 2011 and 2012 with the acclaimed iSing Beijing program (now iSing International) working with famed Metropolitan-Opera bass, Hao Jiang Tian, and making her National Center for the Performing Arts debut in Beijing. This also led to her Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall debuts in 2013, as well as a tour of the US and Paris, France. In 2014, she made her Shanghai solo recital debut with a concert of Chinese repertoire with pianist, Fugen Wei. She also recently returned as a guest artist with iSing International making her concert debuts in Hangzhou and Suzhou. She recently made her Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall debut, and in summer of 2015, she made her solo debut with the Shanghai Symphony, under the baton of Yu Long. In fall of 2015, she released her first solo CD, *A Great Distance: A Collection of Chinese and American Art Song*, with pianist, Lydia Qiu. As a result of her devotion to the study of Chinese music and language, in 2014 she was awarded a Confucius Institute scholarship to study Mandarin at Tongji University in Shanghai, China. In 2015, she returned again to

several times before the characters " ^{chángjiāng} 长江 " [tʂʰaŋ][tɕiaŋ] to ensure accurate pronunciation.

The blur of “j” and “ch” confounded the researcher because there is supposed to be a clear distinction between the two by their extremely homologous sounds in Western languages, especially in English: “jerry” [dʒ] and “try” [tr]. This is also how the researcher explained the two sounds. However, at the end of the first session the singer did not mention the confusion when he was asked about the most difficult part in learning. 日 [rì], which was also deemed to be one of the toughest sounds in Chinese by Phoebe Haines (see Appendix), was thought to have bothered her once as well. The good thing is that in all the singing by non-natives referred to in this study, the sound of “日” was nearly perfect.

In the second study session, the singer reflected about singing in Chinese, mentioning the main difficulty of singing Chinese with Bel canto:

It's hard to sing in Chinese because every single character has to be trained as one syllable; however, in CPA or IPA it's not. Like Latin language, the pronunciation of Chinese characters can be indicated in roman letters, but the way of sound is different. The characters could be considered as the same as one syllable of Western words, but often, the sound itself contains more than one syllable (phoneme).

In singing, every character has to be sounded very clearly to form a phrase. It's quite different to Western language. When speaking or singing in Western languages fast, there is sometimes ambiguity on the non-stressed syllables. This made Chinese sound more serious.

The point is that when someone sings in Chinese the “serious” sound could be caused by Bel canto technical specifications. The “serious” refers to “字正” discussed in Section 4.3.2; specifically, it related to the clearness of the initial consonants, which is due to the distribution of the lips. Juliet Petrus talked about the major problem of learning Chinese, and one of her responses explicitly spoke of the difference in oral volume and shape between speaking and singing:

Chinese is a somewhat lateral language. The position of the mouth rarely is rounded. The impact on spoken language is that the sounds are “forward”, “bright”, “smiley”. However, singing, especially in an Italian-based Bel canto technique, asks the singer only rarely to have a rounded lip position, which affects everything from soft palate lifting to sound projection. I have had to find ways to marry this lip rounding, which acts to help resonance in singing with the language, with the lateral position of much of the spoken language.

One of Juliet Petrus’s performances provided strong encouragement for figuring out solutions to coordinating the lips and soft palate when singing Chinese¹⁴².



QR Code 34 Juliet Petrus

The breathing, resonance, timbre, and articulation all meet the technical requirements and aesthetics of Bel canto and the flavour of Kazakh folk song.

The most significant part of this study is the comparison of the versions of the same song by different singers. Section 4.4.4 compares two soprano versions of *The Yangtze Love* in their mother tongue and foreign languages. The unexpected finding is that,

¹⁴² Performance video, Mayila Variation (Kazakh Folksong), from YouTube.

besides both sopranos demonstrating the techniques of Bel canto (breathing, phonation, resonance, and aesthetics), Diana Damrau, the foreign soprano, can almost be taken for an authentic native speaker. Under the control of the information about the very limited and detailed process of learning Chinese songs by foreign Bel canto singers from the reference video/audio material used in this study, an interesting attempt was launched: to teach a foreign Bel canto singer who has no Chinese background to sing a Chinese art song. The outcome was recorded after two learning sessions. The following part will use the singer's recording to compare the two sopranos' versions (Section 4.4.4), and analyse their Bel canto singing skills, especially the articulation.

In the last section of this experiment, the singer sang the song three times in one hour. The researchers recorded all versions (result 1, 2, and 3).



QR Code 35 Result 1

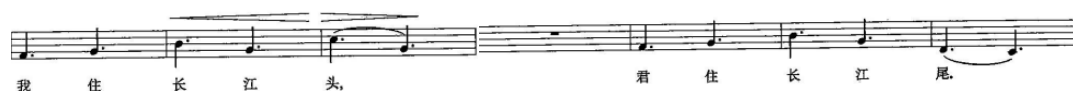


QR Code 36 Result 2



QR Code 37 Result 3

The three versions coincidentally reflected the result that the singer might be a foreigner. The identified place, which is one of the difficulties mentioned by foreigners in speaking/singing Chinese mentioned above, it is also the difficulties the singer encountered in the previous two learning sessions: ^{chángjiāng} 长江 [tʃʰaŋ][tɕiaŋ]. The following audio demonstrates an intuitive contrast with clips of singing “长江” in the sequence of Dilbèr, Damrau, and the research participant’s three iterations:



chángjiāng

长 江 [tʂʰaŋ][tɕiaŋ]



QR Code 38 [tʂʰaŋ][tɕiaŋ]

Figure 4-29 Music 12

Compared with Dilbèr’s standard pronunciation, Damrau and the experimental singer’s voicing are significantly different:

1. The foreign singer stayed longer on the vowel of the back-nasal finals, while shorter on the rhyming, which is the transition from vowel to consonant tail. This is due to Italian-based Bel canto singing style. When foreign singers get used to the way of Chinese pronunciation and find the “language sense”, such problems could naturally be solved. But of course, this has to be built on a significant amount of practice.

2. The rhyming movement is too strong and intentional, caused a blank over-long duration between the characters, that might harm the *legato* and the entirety. It also might bring out the mute “g” at the tail of the back nasal final (Damrau 01:48 ”^{xiāng}相 [ɕiaŋ]思意”). This problem could also be surmounted by daily practice.

Although native speakers could easily distinguish whether the singer is Chinese by the positions mentioned before, it does not jeopardize the delivery of the text. On the other hand, Dilbèr, as a Bel canto singer, did not forfeit the Bel canto feature when singing in Chinese: strong breath, reasonable oral cavity space, tender timbre, and perfect resonance. This proves once again that Bel canto singing technique can be fine-tuned in terms of the size of the oral cavity, the length of staying on the vowel, and

other details according to the requirements of different languages without affecting the timbre or effects created by Bel canto singing methods. The timbre or effects are not settled issues; they have reasonable room for adjustment. And this kind of slightly adjusting technique is the vowel umlaut.

The character “^{shí}时” [ʃɿ] is repeated six times in one song. In the first version of the experimental singer's singing, the “^{shí}时” [ʃɿ] at 00:42 was misinterpreted as he [hɿ], and the same mistake occurred at 01:46. The other four times, the singer pronounced it correctly. In the second version, the character “时” at 00:43 and 01:47 are incorrectly pronounced, and the other four are pronounced correctly; in the third version, only the pronunciation at 01:15 is unclear, but not wrong. It is not difficult to find that in the first two performances, the place where the error occurred is the same, and the third time, after the conscious correction, the error is avoided. The same thing happens on the character “^{xīn}心” [ɕin]. Similarly, it is a word repeated six times. The singer mispronounces the character at around 02:00 in each version, and the other pronunciations are correct. This indicates that the pronunciation of individual Chinese characters has been correctly mastered; however, when singing a musical phrase, there may be pronunciation errors (stumbles) that occur for various reasons. Such mistakes cannot be deemed to be caused by conflicts between Bel canto and Chinese.

5 Conclusion

By the supports of literatures and exist examples, we believe that it is possible to sing the Chinese repertoire with the Italian Bel Canto or western Lyric singing technique. An expected result of the research was that the pronunciation of vowels and consonants in the articulation of singing can be directly applied to singing in Chinese due to the analyses of documentary and cases. The change of singing in Chinese can be confirmed by the numerous examples provided in this thesis.

Ambiguously, this phenomenon is attributed to the Sinicization of Bel canto. Nevertheless, it is a massive subject of what and how to Sinicize Bel canto, or it's more important of the depth. It's a micro-segment of this massive subject, when scholar majority put their eyes on the skills of phonation and resonance etc., appearing to be seldom. By the understanding of results are often hiding in details, this research will benefit both the massive subject and the globalization of Chinese vocal works

5.1 Chinese singing Chinese.

The first conclusion of this study answers a key question raised in introduction section, whether Chinese is suitable for singing. The singing here actually refers to Bel canto technique. Another way to express: whether the Mandarin pronunciation meets the requirements of the articulation necessary to sing Bel canto.

The source of Bel canto, Italy has become a birthplace with a long and profound vocal tradition, which is inextricably related to the characteristics of the Italian language. The Italian language is clear, the sequence is uniform and rhythmic, and each sound is flat and honest. Almost all words end in vowels that not weakened. Based on these characteristics, in order to learn Bel canto, most people who are engaged in vocal music research will use Italian works for singing training worldwide. Instead of using amplifying devices to make audiences in every corner of the theatre hear beautiful

voices, it has become an important indicator of a singer. According to historical recordings, from the beginning of the last century to the modern singers, their singing has beautiful and clear pronunciation and articulation, where every syllable can be heard and understood. Therefore, in terms of the nature of the Bel canto technique and the core technical requirements, the unclearness is unacceptable.

Since the 17th century, Bel canto is recognized as the most scientific singing method in the world. It has also become the highest goal of singers in the pursuit of singing technique. In the course of its own development, it has produced interactions with different languages and cultural roots, and there have been different variations regarding the technique, such as the German, French or the Russian school of singing that belong to the broad category of what in China we know as Bel canto. But no matter which vocal singer, vocal works of various genres sung in different languages have the characteristics of clear and smooth words. From this point of view, in the process of “localization” of various languages and cultures, the Bel canto does not have the characteristics of being difficult to integrate and causing unclear pronunciation.

One view is that Chinese characters are not suitable for singing, and Chinese is not a language suitable for singing like Italian. The advance of Chinese Phonology tells us that from the monosyllabic hieroglyphics, to the analysis of Chinese characters in the Sanskrit by the end of the Han Dynasty, and the establishment of the Latin script for the Chinese characters in the period of the Republic of China, it was finally completed in 1958.

The Chinese Phonetic Alphabet system (Pinyin) was created, and it was clarified that the square characters were also formed by combining the initials (consonants) and the finals (vowels). Mandarin pronunciation has no complex consonants, majored with vowels, and tones existed in language. So that today's Chinese, Mandarin, is a sound combination language suitable for singing. The Chinese-Tibetan language family to which Chinese Belongs and the Indo-European Latin family to which Italian Belongs Belong to different language families, however, in the development of Chinese phonology, because the creation of Chinese Pinyin draws on the method of the Latin alphabet structure, the two are closely related. In summary, the notion that, Chinese is not suitable for singing, is not valid.

The above conclusions are obtained through literature and theory, as well as analysis of CPA/Pinyin. In the actual singing process, many Chinese Bel canto singers can sing both foreign songs and Chinese songs well. There are even many singers who live overseas in a non-Chinese language environment for a long time, they still enunciate clearly and smoothly when singing Chinese songs. One object of this research, Yunus Dilbèr, held a series of solo concert around China in 2002. In the same performance, she sang nearly twenty works of Chinese and Foreign Composers in Italian, French, Uyгур and Chinese. The choice of Chinese works is quite different: in addition to art songs, there are also folk songs with strong ethnic flavours, such as *小河淌水* and *曲蔓地*. Her singing is not only clear in articulation, but also full of charm. The researcher believes that the most important in her performance is that she is able to sing western and Chinese songs without losing each one's essence. Dilbèr gave a lesson at the Nanjing Normal University after her concert. When answering a question about how to sing both Chinese songs and western songs well, she said:

我没有刻意去调整发声的方法，只要保持声音的“通道”，唱外文可能“竖”一点儿，唱中文可能“前”一点儿，用什么语言唱它就在什么位置，不用你去想。

I didn't intentionally adjust the way I made my voice, as long as I kept the "channel" of the voice. Singing a foreign language may be more "vertical". Singing Chinese may be "forward". It's already there when you sing in a language, and you don't have to pursuing.¹⁴³

At least one vital message is noteworthy: Dilbèr has not been trained to sing in specific language. Her daily vocal practices are normally the same to any singing students all over the world with the pure five. Another answer to a question of this research surfaced: do Chinese vocal works need a customized training system? If you are singing Chinese vocal works with Bel canto, it's not necessary.

Because Bel canto has a technique called vowel umlaut which allowed the slight adjusting on the volume or movement of the oral cavity to adapt the articulating demands of different language and the characteristics of the ethnical music, in the condition of without switching the right phonating position, without reducing too much volume, without harming the healthy and beautiful timbre.

¹⁴³ D. Zou, "Cong San Zhong Chang Fa Dao Sheng Yue Yan Chang, Three Singing Methods and Vocal Music Performance," 26 (2006)

5.2 Western singing Chinese

Haines opens this session with a clear affirmative answer to the title question:

The Researcher: Do you think it's possible that singing Chinese in/with Italian pronunciation rule?

Phoebe Haines: I do, broadly, although I think that certain syllables may require their own pronunciation rules or phonetic characters (sounds such as 'zhi' and 'ge' which aren't found in the Germanic and Romance languages).¹⁴⁴

According to Zhou (2004), the main methods for foreigners to learn Chinese are: Pinyin, Contrast, and Demolition. Most of the students who are preparing to study Chinese in depth use the pinyin to speak before to write the characters. For them, Pinyin is “the first Chinese character”, and Chinese characters are the shape of Chinese.

It is much easier to learn from the transition from "the first Chinese character" to Chinese language. Zhou's (2004) discussion is consistent with the information gathered from the cases study and experimental data collected in this study.

The singing of several subjects in this study supported the presentation of the title. One of the key points that needs to be clarified is that singing Chinese works with Bel canto, especially by foreign singers, cannot be interpreted as the Sinicization or nationalization of Bel canto. It is not included in this research that the Chinese national singing drawing from or transplant Bel canto techniques. In this study, singing Chinese in Italian is only suitable for discussing the language barriers encountered by foreign singers in learning to access Chinese songs and how to overcome them quickly.

¹⁴⁴ See the appendix: Phoebe Haines

The interesting attempt conducted by the researcher also proved the practicability of the conjecture. The process of learning Chinese songs by experimental subjects fully proves the validity and accuracy of the Pinyin system. In the case of Pinyin and IPA are both marked on, when the lyrics were first obtained, the subjects actively proposed the willingness to know Pinyin, shortly the singer used pinyin to master more than 70% of the pronunciation. The following conclusions are proved in the trial:

1) The pronunciation of Italian vowels has a great reference for the pronunciation of Chinese vowels. As far as monosyllables are concerned, they are highly similar to Italian monosyllables in terms of technical movements. The pronunciation rules of Chinese diphthong finals lead to a great difference between them and Italian diphthong vowels or polyphonic pronunciation. However, the principle of rapid sequential pronunciation of single vowels still applies to most diphthong finals.

2) Most initials which also exist in western language are easily handle for the western singers.

The fact that Chinese pronunciation, is quite different from Western languages, is still the most troubling problem for foreign singers, there is no doubt that the familiar pronunciation in their background has become the motivation for them to enjoy learning Chinese songs.

Long (2012) and Suardi (2015)'s research conclusions shows that the major problem for Italian singers to start performing Chinese songs is the correct pronunciation of the initials “zh/j”, “ch/q”, “sh/x”; the un-aspirated voiceless consonants are also difficult to understand. These problems are not present only in the case of Italian speakers. Studies from Ai (2018), Zou (2017), Feng (2012), Chen (2011), Ye (2008) and Lu (1984) have shown that the difficulties mentioned above are applicable to most native speakers of Western languages. These problems are also mentioned in the case analysis and experiments in the previous paper. Among them, the most prominent problem is

the recognition of the sixteen Integral Syllables which has to be learn and remember by heart with several times repeated.

Many studies have listed the difficulty of learning Chinese are at least eight or more, including the retroflex initials mentioned above, the distinguishing of “j/q/x” and the aspiration of voiceless consonants. However, more problems do not come from the technical difficulties of pronunciation, but to the negative transfer of the mother tongue. The pronunciation of characters end with back-nasal final for instance. During the conducting of the attempt mentioned in section 4.5, on the first meeting the singer read the text just with Pinyin, mistakes on the back-nasal finals were caused by his native language custom. As Figure 27 showed, the last “g” of all the back-nasal finals were voiced by the singer’s native language speaking habit. It’s not a technique trouble but related just to the negative transfer of the mother tongue. The error disappeared immediately after it was corrected and did not recur in subsequent training and recording sessions. It has also been listed as a difficulty in the previous studies by other scholars. Similar negative transfer of mother tongue is also reflected in the pronunciation of the initial "h" which is often acquiesced mute by foreigners with a latin background. Simply put, the solution to this part of the error is to repeatedly establish the correct pronunciation until it becomes conditioned reflex.

Characters	Pinyin + IPA	Error
长江	chang jiang [tʃʰaŋ][tɕiaŋ]	[tʃʰaŋg][tɕiaŋg]
共	gong [koŋ]	[koŋg]
定	ding [tiŋ]	[tiŋg]
相	xiang [ɕiaŋ]	[ɕiaŋg]

Figure 5-2 Mistake of Nasal-Tails

Again, Juliet Petrus’s opinion is the solid answer to the study:

The Researcher: Do you think it's possible that singing Chinese in/with Italian pronunciation rule?

Juliet Peterus: Yes, in some cases. With a handful of exceptions, Chinese is made of phonemes that are found in other lyric dictions, including Italian, French and German, Czech and even English. Not all sounds are in Italian, but some are. Italian is also known to be a 'bright' language, the placement of sounds often quite forward, as in Chinese. The difference is again the lip rounding.

It is necessary to sometimes disengage from parts of the spoken language (the tones, the lateral mouth position) in order to achieve the legato. But it is possible.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ See appendix: Juliet Peterus

5.3 Further Thinking

The discussion on *Singing Chinese repertoire with the Italian Bel Canto technique*, should not halt at the technical level. During the current research, the researcher thought more about the evolution of aesthetics, the timeliness of standards, and the development of science and technology, whether if they can unify in the same space-time and in the name of the "art". The researcher thinks that obviously not. An old Chinese woman born in 1920s, who has no vocal training background in her life, is likely to prefer the singing style and effect in line with her age's aesthetics, which is the very natural singing style that thought to be backward or even totally wrong. What the professionals are good at is how to improve their expressive ability to meet the artistic requirements of their works, and even transcend to create new insights. The unprofessional general public is clearly not obliged to spend the cost to go hand in hand with professionals.

Music is an abstract art and related questions stand at different angles, One singing method/style, which was affirmed by science, may be rejected by aesthetics, and it may also have a diametrically opposite answer at a certain point in the future.

In this regard, this topic is carried out by a professional Bel canto singer, which is not perfect in itself. The fact that the researcher himself is Chinese cannot be changed, although this study has objectively considered the recognition ability of ordinary audiences to the greatest extent possible, so that what is irrefutable is the perspectives and viewpoints of Chinese speakers in the process of research.

Today, the scientific and high adaptability of Bel canto technique have been fully affirmed, and are constantly improving and perfecting, but it is not a singing method that is 100% adapted to every vocal art form. For example, Bel canto can express Chinese art songs with great completion, but it is not always able to control the local essence of folk music. Will the Bel canto technique ever surpass this issue? We do not have the answer. Will this technique ever serve every single language in the world with

the same level of accuracy and allow the performance of different styles of vocal music?

More research is needed to answer these questions.

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APPENDIX A: Training Diary of the Interest Attempt (Chapter 4.5)

Training day 1

10:30 – 12:30, 11 April, 2019, Library of ESML

Participants: Anonymous Baritone as the language learner; The research as the teacher

Tools: Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 11,

The Text of the song *Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou* as in the appendix.

10:30

The singer does not ask for the pronunciation rule of the whole CPA before learning the text. He directly read the text with the CPA marked above each character. Most of the sounds are correct. The mistakes made at the pre-reading are listed as below:

- 1, “zh/ch/sh” are asked for the pronunciation.
- 2, “j” and “ch” or “zh” are not easy to be distinguished.
- 3, “z” and “c” are not easy to be distinguished.
- 4, “ian” and “iang”, the front nasal vowel and the back-nasal vowel.
- 5, the “i” of “ri/shi/” are pronounced as [i:]
- 6, “x” [ɕ] is hard to be pronounced.
- 7, the “g” at the end of the back-nasal vowels are used to voiced.

The singer asked what are those under the characters. The research answered, it’s the sounds of the characters indicated in IPA. The singer affirmatively indicated that he does not understand most of them (IPA).

10:45

The researcher started teaching the pronunciation of the libretto by modeling reading and explanation with the figures.

Problem issued above No. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are solved successfully with accurate sounds

of characters.

The singer takes a while of figuring out characters with the cacuminal. Problem No.1.

The singer says that “j” and “ch” sounds familiar. Problem No.2.

11:45

In all eight phrases as all of the libretto are completed learning.
Fifteen minutes rest.

12:00

The singer was trying to read the libretto independently with the CPA. The accuracy was over 80%. However, he took some thinking before sound characters with problem No.1 and 2.

12:15

The singer again read the libretto. The accuracy was over 95%. Took less time. Mistakes focused on problem No.2.

12:30

The singer was asked about where he felt is the difficulties to learn and sound, the answer was “ri”. Training day 1 closed.

The researcher’s comment:

As the diary of training day 1 shown, the singer was struggled in most of the consonants doesn’t exist in Italian or other Western languages (figure 7). Especially when the sounds indicated by the IPA-system they should’ve been familiar with, but they can’t be understandable for showing rarely, such as “x” [ç] and “c” [tʃ]. He also

took a while on the distinguishing of “j”, “q”, “x”, “ch”, “sh”. After thirteen minutes learning, the problems seemed eliminated.

Training day 2

10:30 – 12:00, 02 May, 2019, Practice Room 1.59, ESML

Participants: Anonymous Baritone as the language learner; The research as the teacher;
The pianist

Tools: The musical score of the song, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 11,

The Text of the song Wo Zhu Chang Jiang Tou as in the appendix.

10:30

Question: Feeling of learning Chinese.

Answer by the singer:

It's hard to singing in Chinese because every single character has to be trained as one syllable, however, in CPA or IPA, it's not. Like Latin language, the pronunciation of Chinese character can be indicated in roman letters, but the way of sound is different. The characters could be considered as the same as one syllable of western words, but often, the sound itself contains more than one syllables.

In singing, every character has to be sound very clear to form a phrase, it's quite different to western language, when speaking or singing in wester languages fast, there are sometimes ambiguity on the non-stress syllables. This made Chinese sounds more serious.

10:40

The singer read the text with the CPA marked over the text by himself. He did almost 100% percent right. Few places listed as below were considered right but

inaccurate:

- 1, “Chang and Jiang”, the consonants.
- 2, “Jun”, the [u] from Italian came first of [y] of French.
- 3, The “ian” was read as [ian], but should closer to [ien]
- 4, “Xiu” was sound with the end vowel [u], but it’s ended with [ou]

11:40

After correcting the inaccurate pronunciations, the singer tried once singing the piece.

Problems issued above were still troubled him.

11:50

Learned again reading the text following the researcher , emphasizing the inaccurate pronunciations.

11:55

The singer again sang the song with the first section recording as evidence.

12:00 Training day 2 ended.

The researcher’s comment:

The CPA system is able to lead the foreigners to the correct pronunciations of Chinese characters with the similar symbol sharing with Latin languages. However, it’s not easy to switch the speaking habit of westerns to the orients, that’s what called accent. Especially the diphthong finals such as [ian], [i(o)u], the Latin language speakers are used to sound them phoneme by phoneme, but it’s considered to be an entirety in Chinese. Based on the recording of the second training day, it’s obvious that the singer

voiced the phrase: dìng bù fù xiāng sī yì 定不负相思意 quite right as a native singer, the function of the

CPA system are apparently positively.

APPENDIX B: Email with Phoebe Haines

2019/5/30

QQ邮箱 - 打印邮件



Re: 回复: 回复: Ask for Assistance in Research

发件人: Phoebe Haines<phoebehainesmezzo@gmail.com>

时 间: 2019年5月28日(星期二) 上午8:01

收件人: 草薺随心所欲<yecaocaogp@qq.com>

Dear Mr. Chen,

Thank you so much for your very **helpful email**; your **explanation** does indeed **clarify** some of the questions I had, so thank you so much for taking the time to **explain** those finer points to me!

I have rewritten some of my answers to your questions, for **publication** in your thesis. I wanted to amend the tone to be a **little** bit more thoughtful and formal. See below.

Very best wishes to you,
Phoebe

Q1, Why and How you chose the specific Chinese songs for your performance?

I was a Young Artist at iSING International Artists Festival in both 2016 and 2018. 2016 was my first time in China, working with the Mandarin language, and I owe **all** of those initial experiences to the iSING programme. My coaches and teachers there **helped** me to prepare a range of Chinese language repertoire for operatic and art song performances. Through my work with iSING, I was introduced to the oeuvre of 20th Century Chinese art song, including the pieces you mention (Hong Dou Ci, Jiao Wo Ru He Bu Xiang Ta, etc).

Q2, How long it took you to learn each of the Chinese song (text)?

When I first began **learning** repertoire in Chinese, I would say that it took me **slightly longer** to memorise than European-language repertoire, purely because I had **little** understanding of grammar, word order, poetry, and **literary** references in Chinese. As I gained a better understanding of the spoken and written language, my ability to memorise has improved **exponentialy**, and now I **learn** Chinese repertoire just as **quickly** as European-language repertoire. I now speak more Chinese than I do Italian, for instance. So for me, the memorisation process is no different.

Q3, What **auxiliary** do you used to **learn** Chinese lyrics? Please choose one or more.

- International Phonetic Alphabet
- Pinyin/Chinese Phonetic Alphabet
- Audio reference of the specific song from native singer
- Native speaker assistant

I use **all** of the above resources to some extent, though I would say that numbers 2 and 4 are those I use most **frequently**.

Q4, Please name the major **problems** of **learning** and singing in Chinese in your opinion

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APPENDIX C: Email with Juliet Petrus

2019/7/29

QQ邮箱 - 打印邮件



Re: 回复: Ask for Assistance in Research

发件人: Juliet Petrus <juliet@julietpetrus.com>

时 间: 2019年7月26日(星期五) 下午2:28

收件人: 草薮随心所欲 <yecaocaogp@qq.com>

Hello Mian,

Thank you so much for your patience and continued reminders. Here you go!

I hope that these answers are what you are hoping and needing for your paper. If you need to discuss anything, please let me know.

I'd like to tell you that, one of the reasons for my slow reply is because I am currently studying and writing on this topic right now for a publication which will be released in the United States soon.

I appreciate all of your questions and am so happy to know that many native speakers are thinking about the best way to sing in their own language! Chinese music deserves to be heard all over the world.

Juliet

Q1, Why and How you chose the specific Chinese songs for your performance?

Before 2011, I had had no experience with Chinese music of any kind. It wasn't until my first visit to China with the program iSing Beijing, now known as the iSing International Young Artist Festival in Suzhou, that I received my first introduction to Chinese music and Chinese language.

The Chinese songs both found in the videos online, as well as on my 2015 CD, A Great Distance, 千里之外, were from songs introduced to me by my coach, Wei Fugen, at the Shanghai Conservatory. He directed me to the music that most fit into the 'bel canto' style of singing. In the case of public concerts with iSing, those songs are chosen for me. In the case of the CD, I chose from the pieces introduced to me by my mentors and fellow singers.

Q2, How long it took you to learn each of the Chinese song (text)?

The very first song I ever worked on in Chinese was 我爱你中国. I only sang the opening line 百灵鸟从蓝天飞过, and part of the first verse, 我爱你轻松气质

Q3, What auxiliary do you used to learn Chinese lyrics? Please choose one or more.

Pinyin/Chinese Phonetic Alphabet

Audio reference of the specific song from native singer

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**APPENDIX D: Texts and Translations of the Songs to be Performed on the
Final Recital**

<p>Notte <i>Sul giardino fantastico profumato di rosa la carezza de l'ombra Posa.</i></p> <p><i>Pure ha un pensiero e un palpito la quiete suprema, l'aria come per brivido Trema.</i></p> <p><i>La luttuosa tenebra una storia di morte racconta alle cardenie Smorte?</i></p> <p><i>Forse perché una pioggia di soavi rugiade entro socchiusi petali cade.</i></p> <p><i>Su l'ascose miserie e su l'ebbrezze perdute sui muti sogni e l'ansie Mute.</i></p> <p><i>Su le fugaci gioie che il disinganno infrange la notte le sue lacrime Piange...</i></p>	<p>Noite Sobre o jardim fantástico, com o perfume da rosa pousa a suavidade da sombra.</p> <p>Também há um pensamento e uma pulsação a calma suprema, o ar, como num calafrio treme.</p> <p>A lúgubre treva uma história de morte conta às gardénias desfalecidas?</p> <p>Talvez porque uma chuva de suaves murmúrios caia dentro das pétalas fechadas.</p> <p>Sobre as misérias penosas e sobre os êxtases perdidos sobre mudos sonhos e ânsias mudas.</p> <p>Sobre as fugazes alegrias que o desengano desvanece a noite suas lágrimas chora...</p>
<p>Nebbie <i>Soffro, lontan lontano, le nebbie sonnolente salgono dal tacente piano.</i></p> <p><i>Alto gracchiando, i corvi, fidati all'ali nere, traversan le brughiere torvi.</i></p> <p><i>Dell'aere ai morsi crudi, gli addolorati tronchi offron, pregando, i bronchi nudi.</i></p> <p><i>Come ho freddo! Son sola; Pel grigio ciel sospinto Un gemito destinto Vola;</i></p>	<p>Névoas Sofro, muito, muito longe, as névoas sonolentas emergem do calado silêncio.</p> <p>Grasnando forte, os corvos, com as suas asas negras, atravessam os turvos nevoeiros.</p> <p>Às mordidas cruas do vento, os doloridos troncos oferecem, rezando, as ramificações nuas.</p> <p>Como tenho frio! Estou sozinha; Impulsado pelo céu cinzento Um gemido extinto voa;</p>

<p><i>E mi ripete: Vieni; È buia la vallata. O triste, o disamata Vieni! Vieni !</i></p>	<p>E me repete; vem; é escuro o vale Oh triste, oh desamada, Vem! Vem!</p>
<p>Pioggia <i>Piovea: per le finestre spalancate A quella tregua di ostinati odori Saliano dal giardin fresche folate D'erbe risorte e di risorti fiori</i></p> <p><i>S'acchettava il tumulto dei colori Sotto il vel delle goccioline implorate; E intorno ai pioppi ai frassini agli allori Beveano ingorde le zolle assetate.</i></p> <p><i>Esser pianta, esser foglia, esser stelo E nell'angoscia dell'ardor (pensavo) Così largo ristoro aver dal cielo!</i></p> <p><i>Sul davanzal protesa io gli arboscelli, I fiori, l'erbe guardavo guardavo E mi battea la pioggia sui capelli.</i></p>	<p>Chuva Chovia; pelas janelas escancaradas Àquela trégua de obstinados odores Saíam do jardim frescas baforadas De ervas renascidas e ressurgidas flores</p> <p>Se acalmava o tumulto das cores Sob o véu das gotículas exortadas; E em torno aos álamos aos freixos e aos louros Bebiam ávidos os torrões sedentos.</p> <p>Ser planta, ser folha, ser haste, E na angústia do ardor (pensava) Tão grande dádiva receber do céu!</p> <p>Debruçada sobre o peitoril, os arbustos as flores, a relva eu olhava, olhava e me golpeava a chuva sobre os cabelos.</p>
<p>Nevicate <i>Sui campi e sulle strade Silenziosa e lieve, Volteggiando, la neve Cade.</i></p> <p><i>Danza la falda bianca Ne l'ampio ciel scherzosa, Poi sul terren si posa Stanca.</i></p> <p><i>In mille immote forme Sui tetti e sui camini, Sui cippi e nei giardini Dorme.</i></p> <p><i>Tutto dintorno è pace: Chiuso in oblio profondo, Indifferente il mondo</i></p>	<p>Cai a neve Sobre os campos e as estradas silenciosa e leve, Dando voltas, a neve cai.</p> <p>Dança o floco branco, no amplo céu, brejeiro, para depois pousar sobre a terra, cansado.</p> <p>Em mil formas imóveis Sobre os telhados e as chaminés Sobre as lápides e os jardins Dorme.</p> <p>Tudo ao redor é paz: Encerrado em profundo esquecimento Indiferente o mundo</p>

<p>Tace... <i>Ma ne la calma immensa</i> <i>Torna ai ricordi il core,</i> <i>E ad un sopito amore</i> Pensa.</p>	<p>Cala... Mas na calma imensa Volta-se o coração às lembranças E num latente amor Pensa.</p>
<p>Canticle I: ‘My Beloved Is Mine and I Am His’ <i>Ev’n like two little bank-divided brooks,</i> <i>That wash the pebbles with their wanton</i> <i>streams,</i> <i>And having rang’d and search’d a thousand</i> <i>nooks,</i> <i>Meet both at length at silver-breasted Thames,</i> <i>Where in a greater current they conjoin:</i> <i>So I my best-beloved’s am; so he is mine.</i></p> <p><i>Ev’n so we met; and after long pursuit,</i> <i>Ev’n so we joyn’d; we both became entire;</i> <i>No need for either to renew a suit,</i> <i>For I was flax and he was flames of fire:</i> <i>Our firm-united souls did more than twine;</i> <i>So I my best-beloved’s am; so he is mine.</i></p> <p><i>If all those glitt’ring Monarchs that command</i> <i>The servile quarters of this earthly ball,</i> <i>Should tender, in exchange, their shares of</i> <i>land,</i> <i>I would not change my fortunes for them all:</i> <i>Their wealth is but a counter to my coin:</i> <i>The world’s but theirs; but my beloved’s mine.</i></p> <p><i>Nor Time, nor Place, nor Chance, nor Death</i> <i>Can bow my least desires unto the least</i> <i>remove;</i> <i>He’s firmly mine by oath; I his by vow;</i> <i>He’s mine by faith; and I am his by love;</i> <i>He’s mine by water; I am his by wine,</i> <i>Thus I my best-beloved’s am; thus he is mine.</i></p> <p><i>He is my Altar; I, his Holy Place;</i> <i>I am his guest; and he, my living food;</i> <i>I’m his by penitence; he mine by grace;</i></p>	<p>Cantiga I Meu amor é meu e eu sou dele Assim como dois pequenos riachos divididos pelas margens Que lavam os seixos com suas correntes licenciosas, E tendo adentrado e recorrido mil recantos, Se encontram ao longo do prateado seio do Tamisa, Onde em uma grande corrente se reúnem Assim eu do meu bem-amado sou; como ele é meu.</p> <p>Assim nos encontramos, e depois de um longo caminho, Assim nos reunimos; nos tornamos inteiros; Sem necessidade de que nenhum renovasse o relacionamento, Pois eu era linho e ele era chama: Nossas almas firmemente unidas foram mais do que o cordão; Assim eu do meu bem-amado sou; como ele é meu.</p> <p>Se todos aqueles reluzentes Monarcas que comandam As servis regiões desta redonda terra, Pudessem gentilmente ceder suas terras, Eu não trocava minhas fortunas por todas elas: Sua riqueza não é mais do que uma imitação da minha moeda: O mundo é deles, mas o meu amado é meu.</p> <p>Nem o tempo, nem o lugar, nem a oportunidade, nem a Morte Podem curvar os meus mínimos desejos em uma mínima mudança;</p>

*I'm his by purchase; he is mine, by blood;
He's my supporting elm; and I his vine;
Thus I my best beloved's am; thus he is mine.
He gives me wealth; I give him all my vows:
I give him songs; he gives me length of days;
With wreaths of grace he crowns my longing
brows,
And I his temples with a crown of Praise,
Which he accepts: an everlasting sign,
That I my best-beloved's am; that he is mine.*

Ele é certamente meu por juramento; eu sou dele por voto;
Ele é meu por fé, eu sou dele por amor;
Ele é meu pela água; eu sou dele pelo vinho,
Portanto, eu sou do meu bem-amado, e, portanto, ele é meu.

Ele é o meu Altar; eu, seu lugar sagrado;
Eu sou sua visitante; e ele, meu alimento vivo;
Eu sou dele por penitência; ele é meu por graça;
Eu sou dele por justiça; ele é meu por sangue;
Ele é o meu olmo; eu sou sua videira;
Portanto, eu sou do meu bem-amado, portanto, ele é meu.

Ele me traz a riqueza; eu ofereço meus votos:
Eu ofereço canções; ele me oferece a duração dos dias;
Com guirlandas abençoadas ele coroa a minha frente ansiosa,
E eu a sua têmpera com uma coroa de louvor,
A qual ele aceita: em sinal eterno,
De que eu sou do meu bem-amado; de que ele é meu.

Portuguese Text by Dr. Rosana & Dr. Marco
Brescia

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