



Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China

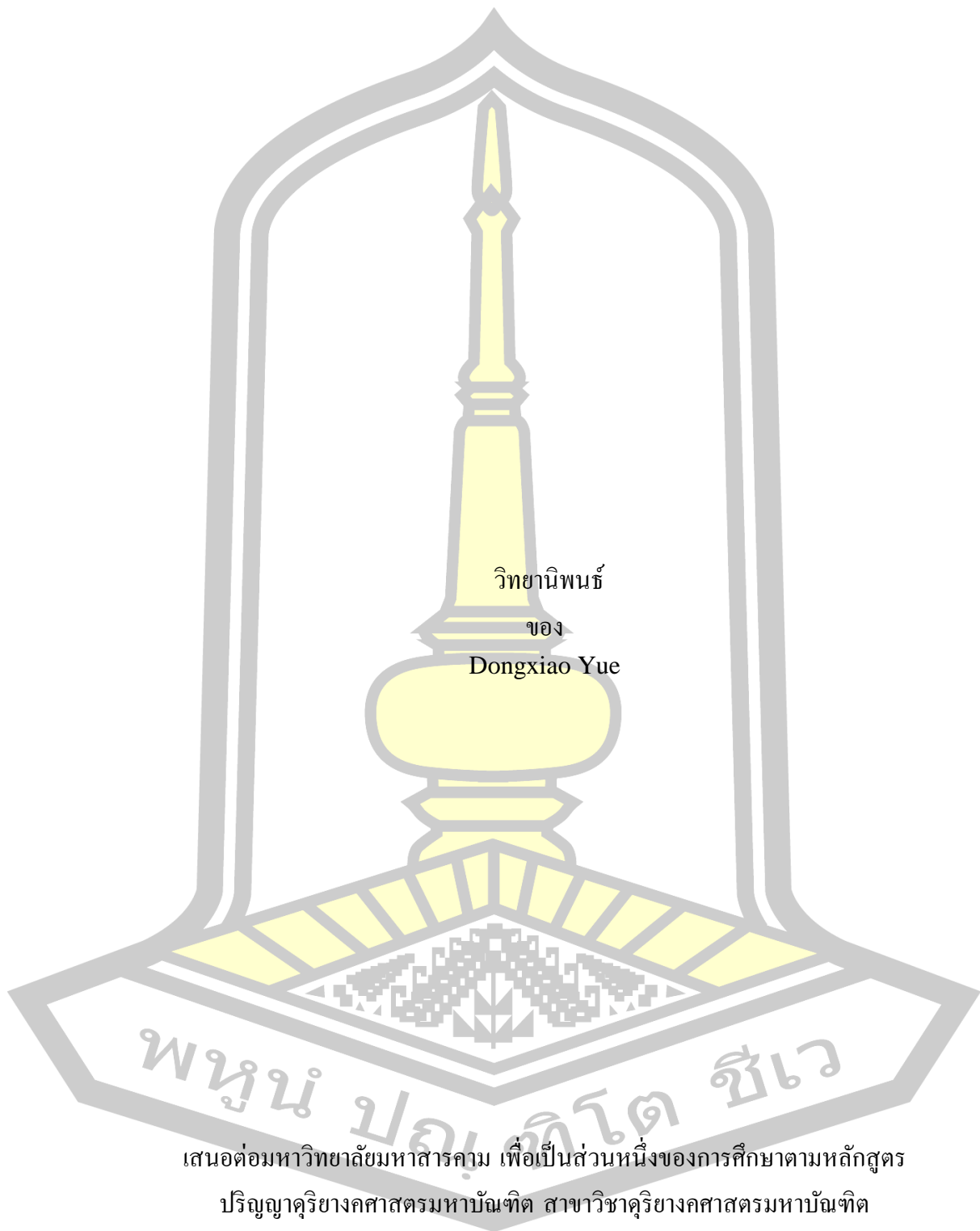
Dongxiao Yue

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Master of Music in Music

October 2023

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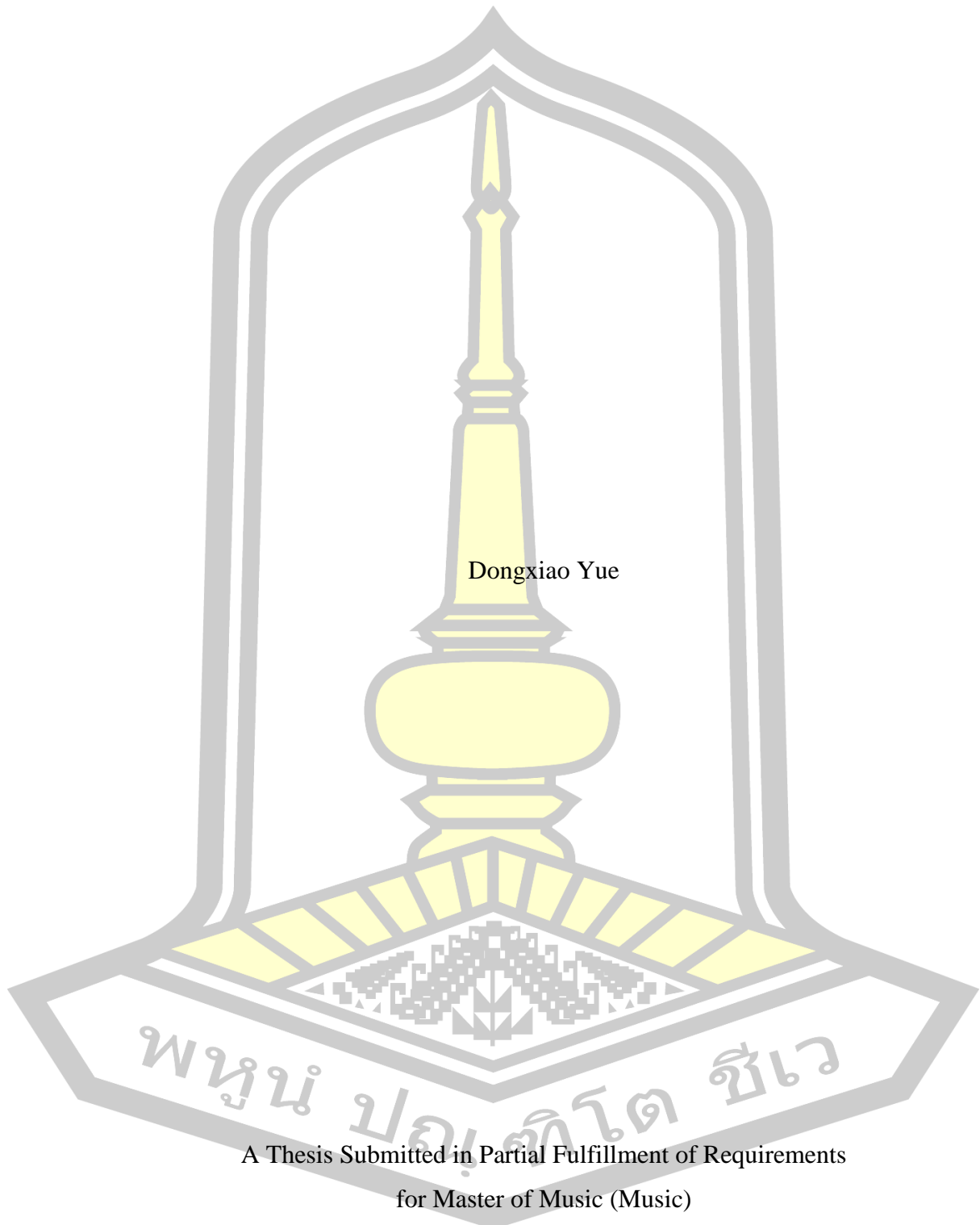


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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on Songming lantern opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China. It is quality research through documents and fieldwork to analyze its historical context and music analysis. The opera, rooted in the Songming region, has been debated among scholars. It is an integral part of Yunnan's cultural heritage, flourishing from the Qing dynasty's Qianlong era until 1912. Key performers Wenping Yang and Guoqiong Li are key figures in its preservation. The study also highlights the modern cultural phenomenon, "Lantern Opera Square Dance," which has reshaped local cultural entertainment.

A thorough musical analysis of Songming Lantern Opera music includes "Eagle's Bright Wings" as part of the "instrumental tunes" category, "Pouch Embroidering" under the "song and dance tunes" category, and "Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival" attributed to the "drama tunes" category. Eagle's Bright Wings is a popular instrumental tune in Songming Lantern Opera, known for its upbeat melody and distinct rhythm. It features a strophic form with a main beat of 2/4 and 3/4 and a key tonality of A pentatonic style and G pentatonic style. The Pouch Embroidery's climax is segment A2, transitioning to G pentatonic style and ending at the main chord. The Spring Celebration on the Lantern Festival is a parallel trilogy song composed in five parts with a 2/4 main beat and pentatonic-style main tonality.

Keyword : Songming Lantern Opera, Kunming, Yunnan, Historical background

พหุบัณฑิต ชีเว

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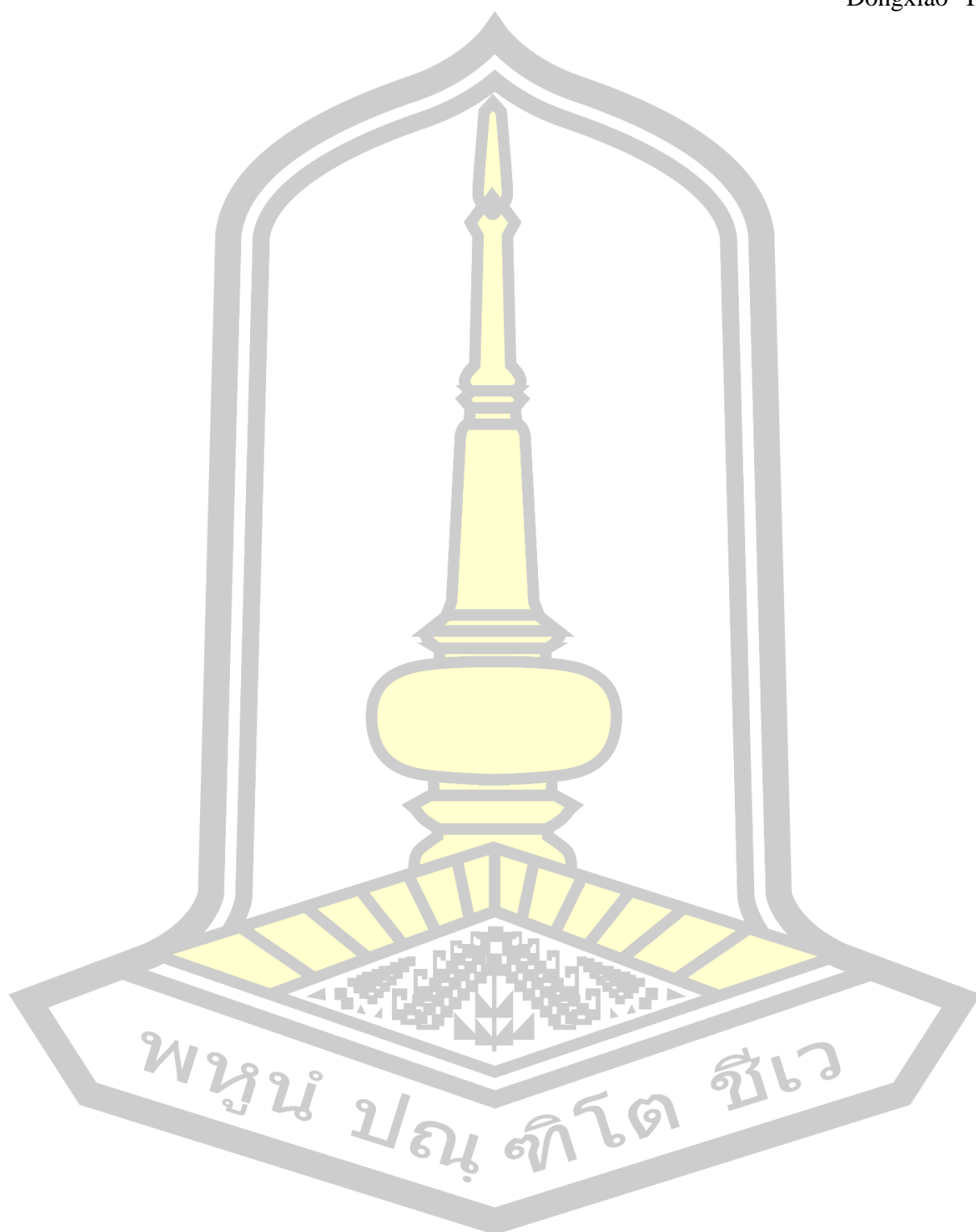
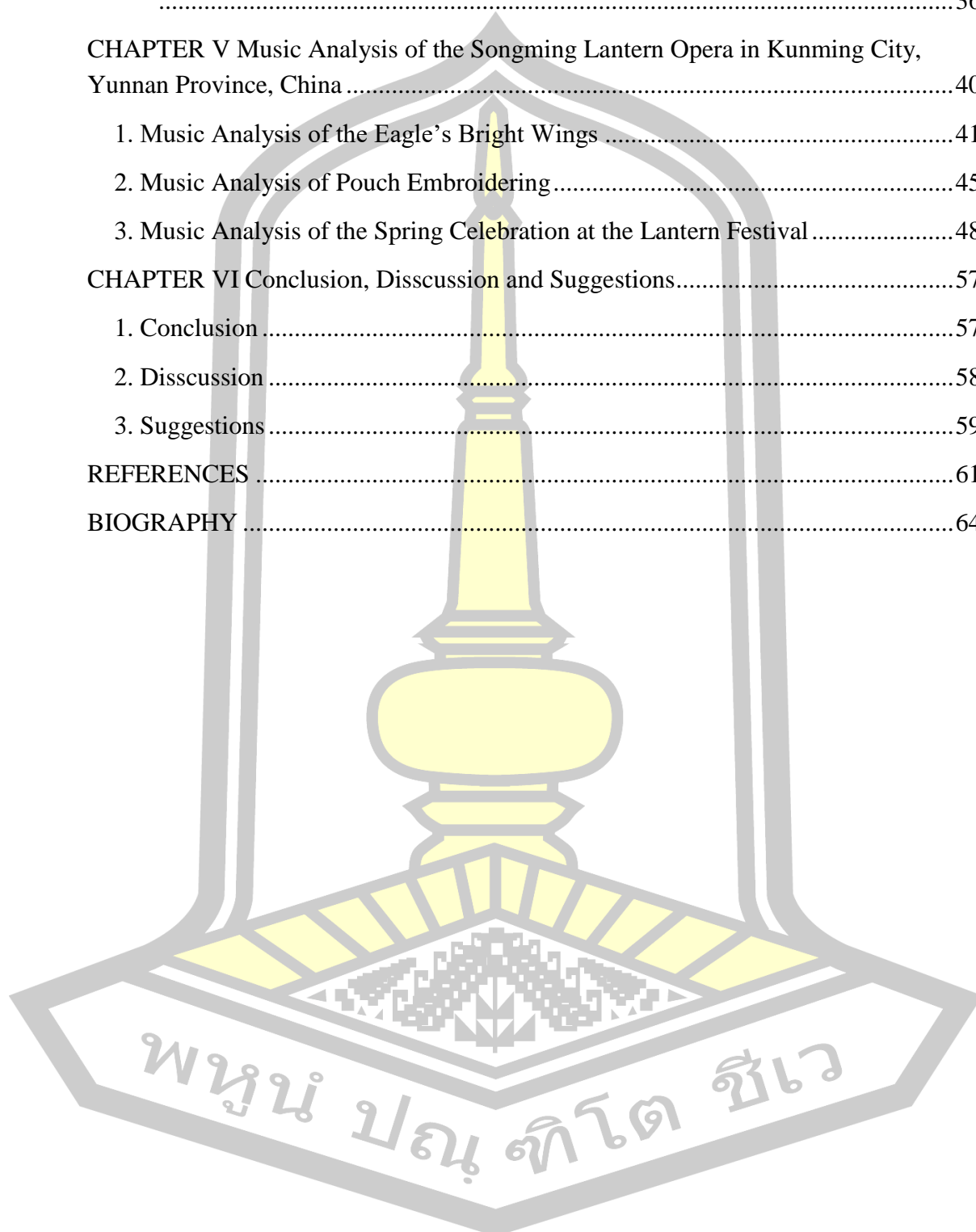


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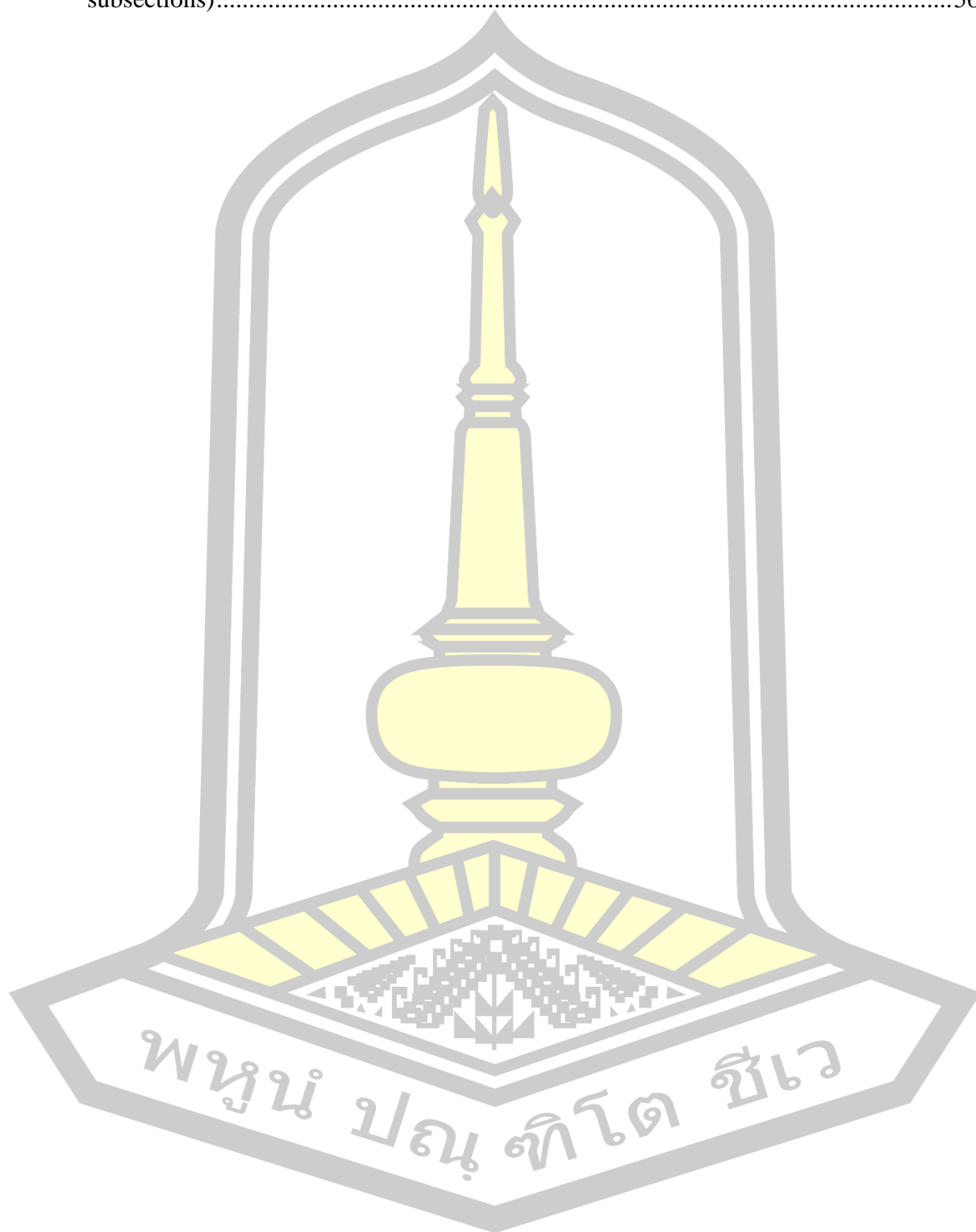
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background of research

Songming lantern opera is a traditional Chinese art form originating in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China. It combines singing, dancing, and storytelling, illuminated by lanterns. This art form has evolved over time, incorporating regional influences and preserving cultural traditions. The use of lanterns is a distinctive feature, adding to its enchanting atmosphere. Efforts have been made to study and preserve this heritage, and it continues to gain recognition locally and internationally. It represents the enduring power of traditional Chinese performing arts in Kunming's cultural identity.

Yunnan Province is the most southwestern province in China, with an area of 394,000 square kilometers, accounting for 4.1% of China's area. Yunnan is a region with complex cultural blending and has also bred many excellent traditional folk cultures, one of which is "Yunnan Lantern Opera". As a comprehensive folk culture, "Yunnan Lantern Opera" has a broad mass base. "Yunnan Lantern Opera" is divided into ten categories because of the different geographical environment, tribal branches and performance styles, such as "Kunming Lantern Opera", "Yuxi Lantern Opera," "Midu Lantern Opera," "Songming Lantern Opera, "and "Yuanmou Lantern Opera." Each type of lantern has its own characteristics and is widely circulated throughout the province in a mixed and interactive way (Zhudi, 2015).

Songming County, Kunming City, Yunnan Province, located in the central part of Yunnan Province and the northeast of Kunming City, has the reputation of "the hometown of lanterns". The researcher consulted the relevant information and found that up to now, there is no accurate definition of the concept of Songming Lantern Opera. At present, the visible research mainly exists in the list of provincial non-heritage projects, local historical materials, reference books and some scattered news reports.

In 2006, Songming Lantern Opera was selected as the first batch of provincial non-heritage projects in Yunnan Province, which was included in the list of traditional dramas.

Songming's traditional lantern activities are very prosperous, according to historical records, more than 200 villages have lantern activities. In addition to the performances during the Lantern Festival, Songming Lantern Opera is also performed in various temple fairs for a period of 1-2 months. The performance of Songming Lantern Opera has various forms. The folk custom is divided into two parts: "group field" and "sitting field"(Bu Wenjuan, 2018).

The 1995 edition of Songming County Annals records that "Songming is one of the birthplaces of Yunnan Lantern Opera". According to investigation, as early as the Tang Dynasty, there was a Lantern Festival in the Song and Ming Dynasties. Records of the Collection of Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dances: "Almost every village in Songming has a lantern shed, and lantern performances are very common" "Song Ming Lantern" has the ceremony of worshipping the Lantern Mountain. Worship Lantern Mountain, also known as "Invite the Lantern God", is a solemn ceremony that must be held before the performance of Songming Lantern Opera. "Annals of Yunnan Province (Songming government, 2006).

Through the above introduction, we can see that Songming Lantern Opera has a variety of cultural manifestations and rich content, mostly classified as folk songs and dances or traditional drama, and mainly has the following characteristics:

- 1) Strong ritual, with a complete set of rituals and customs;
- 2) Strong singing and dancing, good at collective singing and dancing;
- 3) Closely related to folk customs, such as Lantern Festival customs;
- 4) The number of participants is very large and the loyalty is high.

Based on the above analysis and field investigation, the researcher believes that the concept of Songming Lantern Opera can be explained as follows:

Songming Lantern Opera is a branch of "Yunnan Lantern Opera", which exists and spreads in Songming County and its surrounding areas. It is a kind of traditional drama intangible cultural heritage based on the corresponding folk customs, which embodies the unique production and life style, concept, belief and value orientation of

the local people through the performance forms of rap, singing and dancing, and opera, and then achieves the purpose of entertaining gods, entertaining people and educating people.

Because after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the rich feudal ideology, culture, and art have been damaged to varying degrees, especially in China's Cultural Revolution, the Songming Lantern Opera was impacted and stopped performing normally. After the reform and opening up in 1978, Songming Lantern Opera was also affected by western pop music culture, lacking market demand for performance, and the audience was aging. Therefore, researchers want to study the Songming Lantern Opera. I will investigate the history and cultural background of the Songming Lantern Opera and analyze the music of the opera so that more people can understand it.

2. Research Objective

2.1 To study the historical background of Songming lantern opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China.

2.2 To analyze the music of the Songming lantern opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China.

3. Research question

3.1 What is the historical background of Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China?

3.2 What is the music of the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China?

4. Benefits of the research

4.1 We will know the historical background of the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China.

4.2 We will know the music of the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China.

5. Definition of terms

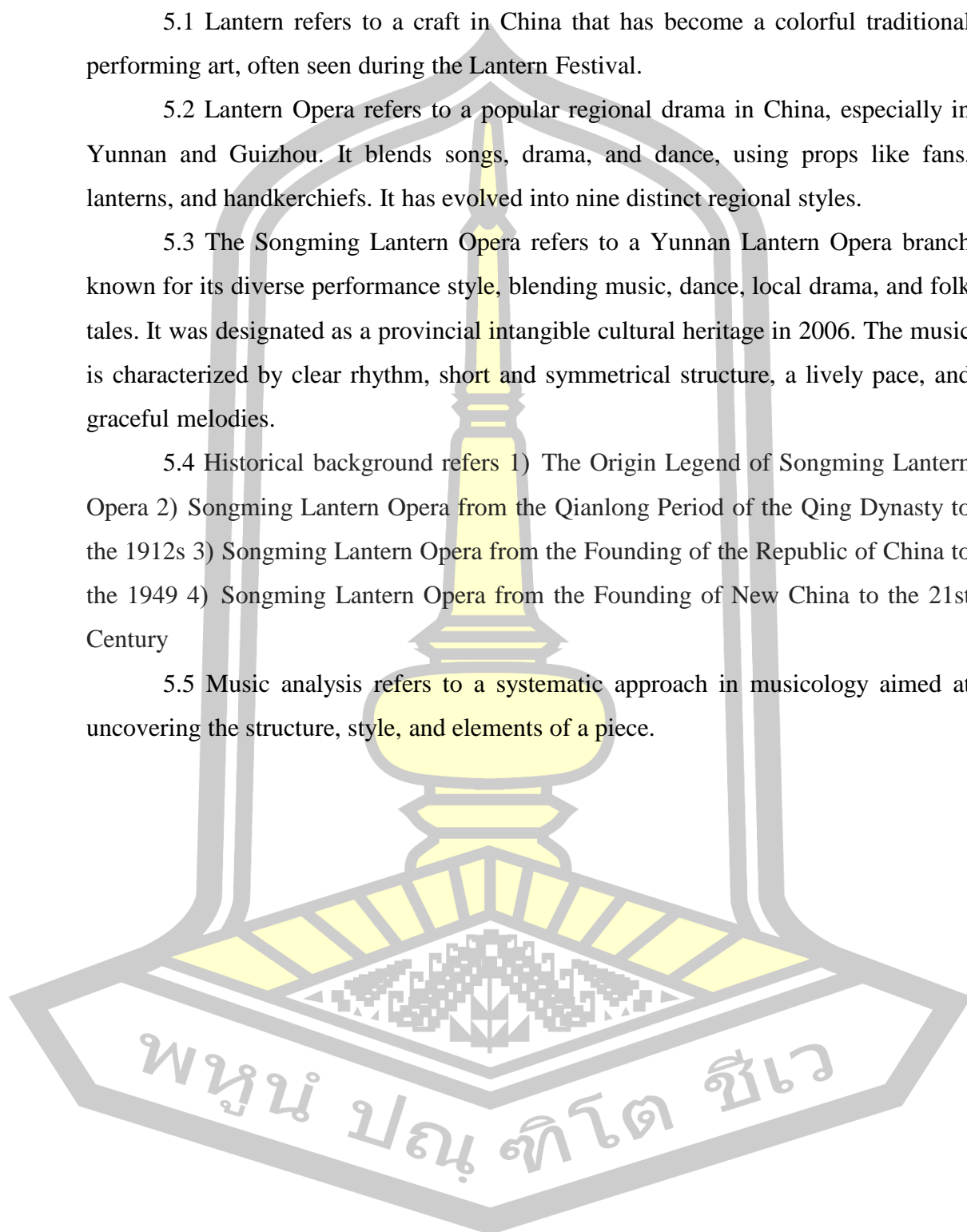
5.1 Lantern refers to a craft in China that has become a colorful traditional performing art, often seen during the Lantern Festival.

5.2 Lantern Opera refers to a popular regional drama in China, especially in Yunnan and Guizhou. It blends songs, drama, and dance, using props like fans, lanterns, and handkerchiefs. It has evolved into nine distinct regional styles.

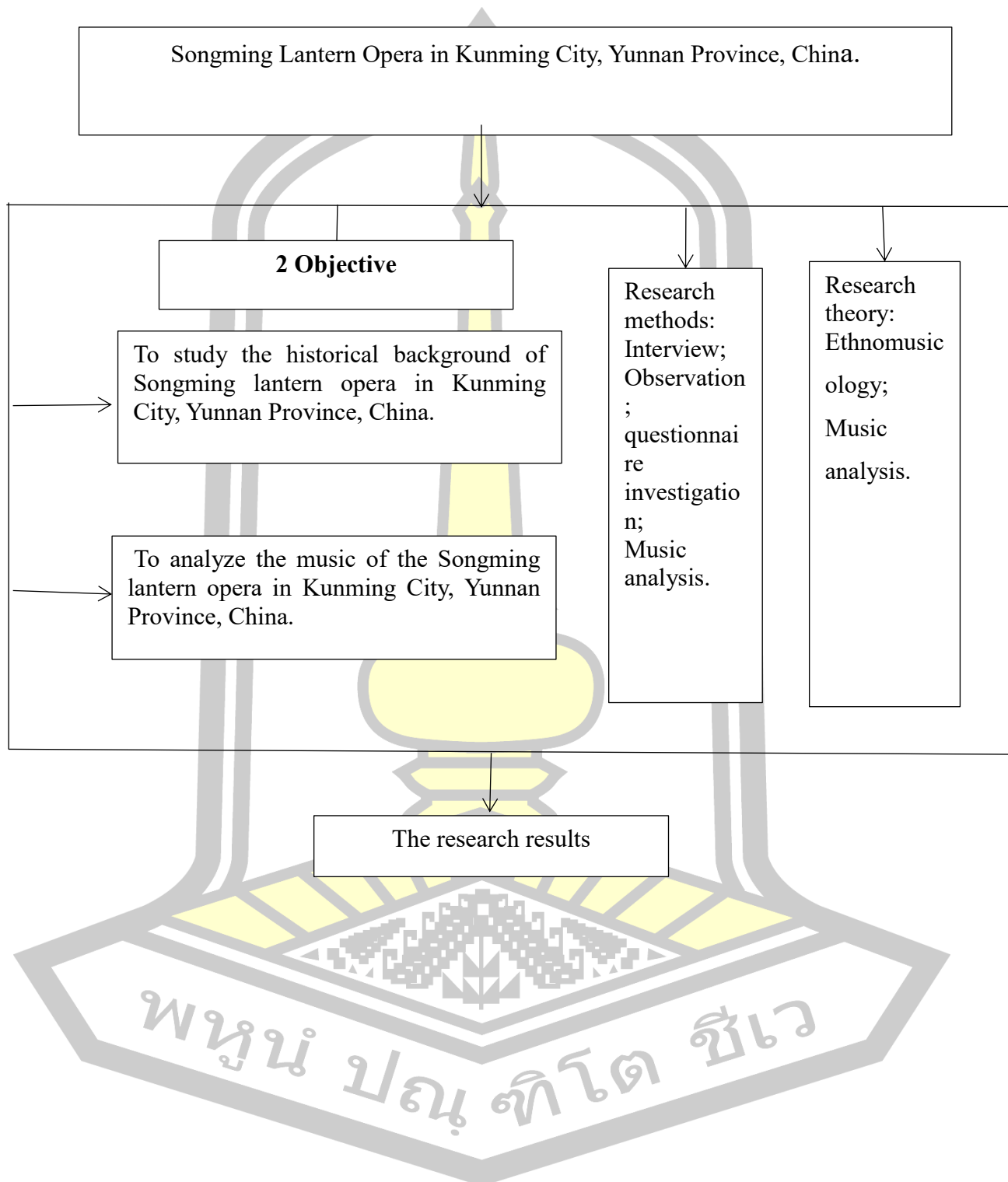
5.3 The Songming Lantern Opera refers to a Yunnan Lantern Opera branch known for its diverse performance style, blending music, dance, local drama, and folk tales. It was designated as a provincial intangible cultural heritage in 2006. The music is characterized by clear rhythm, short and symmetrical structure, a lively pace, and graceful melodies.

5.4 Historical background refers 1) The Origin Legend of Songming Lantern Opera 2) Songming Lantern Opera from the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty to the 1912s 3) Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of the Republic of China to the 1949 4) Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of New China to the 21st Century

5.5 Music analysis refers to a systematic approach in musicology aimed at uncovering the structure, style, and elements of a piece.



6. Conceptual framework



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Songming Lantern Opera is an important part of the excellent traditional culture in Songming area, and also the most representative part of Yunnan Lantern Opera art. The academic literature and information related to this study mainly include the following topics:

1. General knowledge about the research area
2. General knowledge about opera in Yunnan
3. General knowledge about opera in China
4. Research theory
5. Related documents and research

1. General knowledge about the research area

Songming Lantern Opera is an intangible cultural heritage of traditional drama, which is produced and popular in Songming County, Kunming City, Yunnan Province and its surrounding areas.

Yunnan Province, referred to as "Yunnan", is one of the 23 provinces in China, located in the southwest region and the provincial capital Kunming. Located between $97^{\circ} 31'$ and $106^{\circ} 11'$ E and $21^{\circ} 8'$ and $29^{\circ} 15'$ N, the Tropic of Cancer crosses the southern part of Yunnan Province, belonging to the low-latitude inland area. Yunnan Province has a maximum east-west transverse distance of 864.9 kilometers and a maximum north-south longitudinal distance of 990 kilometers. Yunnan Province covers a total area of 394100 square kilometers, bordering Guizhou Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the east, Sichuan Province in the north, Tibet Autonomous Region in the northwest, Myanmar in the west, Laos and Vietnam in the south.

1.1 Yunnan Province



Figure 1. Yunnan Province, China.

Source: <https://www.google.co.th>.

Accessed: April 20, 2022.

Kunming is located in the central region of Yunnan Province, the capital city of Yunnan Province, with $102^{\circ} 10' E$ to $103^{\circ} 40' E$ and $24^{\circ} 23' N$ to $26^{\circ} 33' N$. It is 237.50 kilometers long from north to south, 152 kilometers wide from east to west, and covers a total area of 21012.54 square kilometers. It is China's frontier and important gateway to South Asia, Southeast Asia and even the Middle East, South Europe and Africa.

Kunming has a low-latitude subtropical plateau mountain monsoon climate in the north latitude. Due to the influence of the warm and humid air flow in the southwest of the Indian Ocean, Kunming has a long sunshine, short frost period, and an average annual temperature of $15^{\circ} C$. It has a mild climate, with no heat in summer and no severe cold in winter. It has a pleasant climate, with an annual precipitation of 1035mm. It has a typical temperate climate feature. Flowers are open all year round, and grass and trees are evergreen all year round. It is a famous "Spring City" and "Flower City".

Kunming has a long history and splendid culture. It is one of the first 24 national historical and cultural cities announced by the State Council. It has a history of more than 2200 years, and the Dianchi area has a history of 3000 years of civilization. About 30000 years ago, people lived in Kunming.

Songming County is located in the central part of Yunnan Province and the northeast part of Kunming City. It is located at $25^{\circ} 05' - 25^{\circ} 28' N$ and $102^{\circ} 40' - 103^{\circ} 20' E$. It is a suburb county under the jurisdiction of Kunming City and the gateway to northeast Yunnan. It is the source of the three rivers (Panlong River, Niulan River and Nanpan River). The county borders Malong County in the east, Yiliang County and Guandu District in the south and southwest, Panlong District in the west and Xundian County in the north. It is 34 kilometers away from Kunming. It covers an area of 1357.29 square kilometers (Bu Wenjuan, 2018).

Songming County is located inland, on the edge of Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. The whole climate belongs to the typical temperate zone, warm temperate zone and northern subtropical mixed climate. There is no heat in summer, no cold in winter, and the four seasons are like spring. The annual average temperature is about $14^{\circ} C$, the extreme maximum temperature is $35.7^{\circ} C$, the extreme minimum temperature is $-15.9^{\circ} C$, the annual average frost-free period is 232 days, the annual average rainfall is 1000-1400 mm, and the annual average wind speed is 3.1m/s, with the southwest wind prevailing. Songming, also known as Songmeng, got its name because ancient tribes once joined here. Songming was inhabited in the Paleolithic Age (three million years ago).



1.2 Kunming city

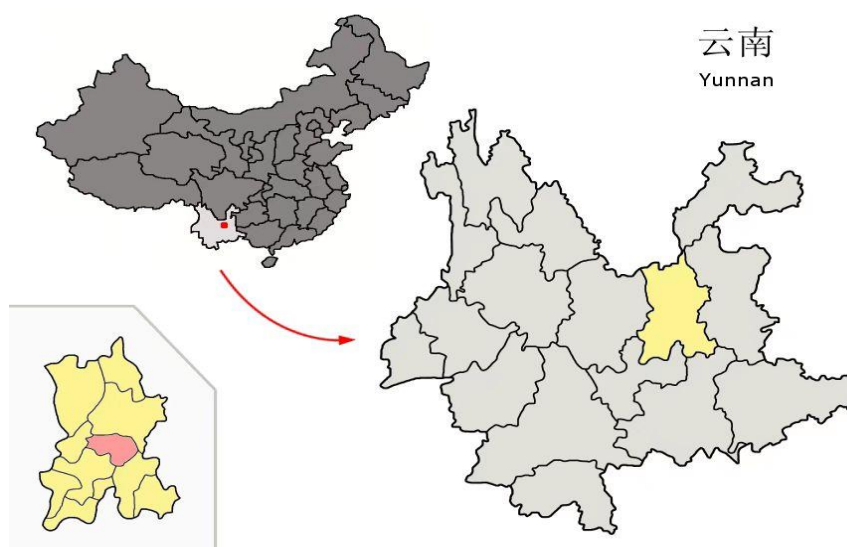


Figure 2. Research site: Songming County (pink) and Kunming City (yellow) within Yunnan.

Source: <https://www.google.co.th>.

Accessed: April 20, 2022.

To sum up, Songming Lantern Opera is rooted in the fertile land of Songming. With its long history and unique style, it is unique and has become an integral part of Yunnan Lantern Opera. It is bound to thrive and develop among the people and survive forever in this fertile land.

2. General knowledge about opera in Yunnan

Yunnan Opera, influenced by its geographical location and the diverse ethnic cultural background, stands as a unique gem within Chinese opera. Owing to its multi-ethnic composition, Yunnan boasts numerous opera forms, each embodying the culture and traditions of a specific ethnic group from the region. Yunnan Opera is a vital component of China's multicultural tapestry, illustrating the cultural exchange and fusion in Yunnan's multi-ethnic areas. Compared to other traditional Chinese operas, Yunnan Opera showcases distinct characteristics in music, dance, performance, and costumes. Beyond mere entertainment, Yunnan Opera also encapsulates meanings spanning history, religion, and societal customs.

1) Dian Opera (滇剧)

Dian Opera, also known as Yun Opera or Dianchi Opera, is a traditional theatrical form native to the Yunnan region. With its origins tracing back to the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, it gradually developed and became the dominant theatrical art form among the Han Chinese population in Yunnan. Throughout its evolution, Dian Opera has incorporated features from various other opera forms, such as Kunqu (昆曲), Sichuan Opera (川剧), and Qian Opera (黔剧), especially establishing a close connection with local folk arts in terms of music and performance. The musical accompaniment of Dian Opera primarily consists of stringed instruments and sheng (笙) and xiao (箫) flutes, with traditional instruments like the Dianchi big drum (滇池大鼓) and Dianchi small gong (滇池小锣) playing significant roles. These instruments endow Dian Opera with a distinctive sonic characteristic, setting it apart from many other Chinese operas.

In terms of repertoire, Dian Opera encompasses a wide range, from historical legends, mythological tales, folk stories, to social life narratives. Performers emphasize the comprehensive skills of singing, acting, reciting, and acrobatics, prioritizing realism and naturalism, which distinguishes it from other opera styles. Regarding costumes, Dian Opera features vibrant and diverse attire, integrating the cultural traits of Yunnan's multiple ethnic groups. While retaining the style of traditional Han Chinese clothing, it also incorporates unique elements specific to Yunnan. (Jun Yang & Jia Yun Liu, 2011) In essence, Dian Opera (滇剧) is a significant embodiment of Yunnan's rich culture, merging various artistic forms to express the emotions and life philosophies of the Yunnan people. It not only serves as a primary entertainment medium for the local populace but also plays a pivotal role in their spiritual and cultural lives.

2) Yi Opera (彝剧)

Originating from the Yi ethnic areas, Yi Opera (彝剧) stands as a cultural gem and spiritual sanctuary for the Yi people. This theatrical form is deeply rooted in the

history, beliefs, and folk legends of the Yi community. From its unique music and dance to its ethnically distinctive costumes, Yi Opera showcases the singular cultural allure and life philosophy of the Yi (彝族) ethnicity. Its repertoire often draws inspiration from Yi myths, heroic legends, ancient religious ceremonies, and the emotional intricacies of daily life. Musically, Yi Opera employs traditional Yi instruments, such as the large Yi drum (彝族的大鼓), bronze drum (铜鼓), and sheng (笙), providing a distinctive sonic backdrop that seamlessly integrates with singing and acting. The costumes are another highlight of Yi Opera. From the silver crowns worn as headgear to the intricately embroidered garments, each piece stands as a testament to the exceptional craftsmanship and rich culture of the Yi (彝族) people. (Jie Peng, 2009) For the Yi community, Yi Opera (彝剧) is more than just an art form or entertainment medium; it's a cherished legacy passed down through generations, bearing the collective memory and cultural identity of the ethnic group.

3) Bai Opera (白剧)

Bai Opera, a cultural treasure of the Bai ethnic region, is a theatrical form passed down through generations among the Bai people. Its roots are closely tied to the Bai ethnic group's traditional dances and religious ceremonies. Over time, it has progressively developed and refined into a distinct theatrical system. Music, the soul of Bai Opera, is deeply influenced by traditional Bai musical forms like Sanxian (三弦) and Da Ge (大歌), resulting in melodies that are both melodious and impassioned. Accompanying instruments, especially the Sanxian, impart a unique local flavor to Bai Opera. (Yuan Lei Fu, 2006) Its repertoire is diverse, ranging from historical legends, mythological tales to contemporary themes, offering a rich artistic experience for audiences. In terms of performance style, Bai Opera emphasizes naturalness and authenticity, with actors mastering the intricate skills of singing, reciting, acting, and acrobatics, distinguishing it from other opera genres. Costume-wise, Bai Opera features vibrant and colorful attire, merging traditional Bai elements with modern aesthetics, reflecting the history and culture of the Bai ethnicity while remaining fashionable. As a cultural symbol of the Bai ethnicity, Bai Opera holds immense esteem locally and constitutes an integral part of Bai community life.

4) Dai Opera (傣剧)

Dai Opera is the traditional theatrical form of the Dai ethnic region, profoundly influenced by Dai culture and Buddhist traditions. Its origins can be traced back to ancient Dai dances and religious festivals. The musical accompaniment of Dai Opera embodies a strong ethnic characteristic, often utilizing traditional Dai instruments like the elephant-foot drum, reed pipes, and bells. The melodies resonate harmoniously, mirroring the Dai's life rhythm and natural environment. The repertoire of Dai Opera predominantly reflects the history, myths, folk tales, and daily life of the Dai people. Many plots are closely intertwined with Buddhist stories and legends, such as "Manna Weng", showcasing the Dai values of harmony, love, and respect.

In terms of performance style, Dai Opera integrates the arts of singing, dancing, and drama, creating a theatrical form rich in narrative and expressiveness in song and dance. Regarding costumes, performers wear traditional, vibrantly colored Dai attire. Particularly noticeable are the long skirts and silver accessories of the female performers, adding a unique flair to the stage. In essence, Dai Opera is not only an integral component of Dai culture but also serves as a primary entertainment medium within the Dai community, carrying the weight of their history, traditions, and beliefs.

5) Yunnan Lantern Opera (云南花灯剧)

Yunnan Lantern Opera is a unique traditional theatrical art form in the Yunnan region, closely related to the local lantern culture. Lanterns have a profound folk tradition in Yunnan. Especially during festivals, notably the Spring Festival, locals craft and display colorful lanterns. Huadeng Opera gradually developed against this cultural backdrop. Yunnan Lantern Opera integrates opera, dance, and music, boasting both dramatic narratives and expressive song and dance performances. The musical accompaniment often utilizes traditional Yunnan instruments, such as the bronze drum and Sanxian. The plots primarily depict the history, folk tales, and life stories of the Yunnan region, resonating deeply with the local populace's experiences and cultural emotions. (Wang Qun, 2003)

In terms of costumes, Huadeng Opera features vibrant and splendid attire, reflecting the diverse ethnic characteristics of Yunnan, and fully showcasing the local

folk craftsmanship and aesthetic tastes. On stage, performers hold lanterns or other props, offering audiences a combined visual and auditory feast. In essence, Yunnan Lantern Opera is not only a gem of Yunnan's folk arts but also a vital medium for preserving and displaying the diverse culture of Yunnan.

3. General knowledge about opera in China

Rooted in thousands of years of rich cultural traditions, Chinese opera intricately weaves history, religion, philosophy, and a spectrum of art forms, shining as a treasured facet of Chinese heritage. Each style is imbued with unique regional and ethnic nuances, masterfully integrating a wide range of performance skills, from singing and recitation to acting and martial arts. The systematic role categorizations, distinctive musical instruments, and austere stage aesthetics set it apart from other global theatrical traditions. Beyond mere entertainment, Chinese opera serves as a profound vessel that communicates historical narratives, spiritual beliefs, and societal ethos. With the passage of time, it champions a delicate balance between honoring age-old customs and embracing modern innovations, underpinning the continual relevance and evolution of this venerable art form. Among its diverse variants, the most iconic and celebrated include Kunqu (昆曲), Peking Opera (京剧), Huangmei Opera (黄梅戏), and Yue Opera (越剧).

1) Kunqu (昆曲)

Kunqu, also known as Kun Opera (昆剧) or Kunqiang (昆腔), stands as one of China's most ancient operatic forms, boasting a history that spans nearly six centuries. Originating from the Kunshan (昆山) region of Jiangsu during the Ming Dynasty, Kunqu exhibits a unique artistic style across its literature, music, performances, and dances. Its melodies are characterized by their gentleness, lyricism, and dynamism, especially its distinctive "Banqiang" (板腔) music, setting it apart from other Chinese opera styles. In terms of performance, Kunqu emphasizes the harmony and fluidity of body movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Every nuance requires actors to undergo rigorous and prolonged training. Kunqu's repertoire often draws from ancient

historical and literary works, such as "The Peony Pavilion" (牡丹亭) and "The Palace of Eternal Life" (长生殿), renowned for their profound emotions, intricate character relationships, and philosophical dialogues. (Wei Min Yu, 2011) During the Ming (明朝) and Qing (清朝) Dynasties, Kunqu emerged as the predominant form of opera, particularly cherished by scholars and officials. However, its popularity waned in modern times, only to experience a revival in the late 20th century. In 1998, UNESCO recognized Kunqu as a "World Cultural Heritage," underscoring its significance in global culture.

2) Peking Opera (京剧)

Peking Opera, also known as Beijing Opera, is among the most celebrated and representative opera forms in China. Emerging in the mid-18th century, it amalgamated theatrical elements from various regions, particularly evolving from the foundational tones of four major "voice styles"—Kunqiang (昆腔), Handiao (汉调), Yiqiang (义腔), and Bangziqiang (梆子腔). Peking Opera reached its zenith from the early 19th to the early 20th century, especially favored by the imperial court and the elite. Performances in Peking Opera emphasize singing, recitation, acting, and martial arts. Characters are categorized into four primary types: Sheng (生), Dan (旦), Jing (净), and Chou (丑), each possessing its distinct costumes, makeup, and vocal characteristics. For instance, the Sheng role often represents righteous male characters, while the Dan role portrays various female characters. (Yun Wang & Ying Guo, 2010)

The musical accompaniment of Peking Opera typically consists of percussion and stringed instruments, such as gongs, drums, erhu (二胡), and sanxian (三弦). Its plots often derive from Chinese history, myths, and folk tales, marked by potent emotions and moral teachings. Not only cherished widely within China, Peking Opera is also renowned and appreciated by audiences globally. It has become a cultural emblem of traditional Chinese heritage, designated as "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO.

3) Huangmei Opera (黄梅戏)

Huangmei Opera is one of the significant genres of Chinese opera, named after its place of origin, Huangmei County in Hubei Province. It emerged in the early 19th century, initially circulating as a form of rural entertainment in both Hubei and Anhui provinces. The singing style of Huangmei Opera is soft and lyrical, drawing extensively from folk songs and stories. Its language is colloquial and accessible, with content closely mirroring the lives of common people, thus resonating deeply with rural audiences. Huangmei Opera emphasizes the amalgamation of singing and acting, especially in narratives revolving around love, family, and societal life. (Cai Yun Zhang, 2013) Its performance style is characterized by naturalness and sincerity, with a profound and delicate emotional expression. The musical accompaniment is simple yet melodious, with commonly used instruments including the sanxian (三弦), huqin (胡琴), flute, and pipa (琵琶).

In terms of costumes and makeup, Huangmei Opera is more simplistic and realistic compared to other opera forms. Costumes are often designed based on a character's societal status and personality, rather than being overly ornate or exaggerated. Owing to its profound folk roots and broad audience base, Huangmei Opera experienced rapid growth in the mid-20th century, establishing itself as one of the most beloved operatic forms in the southern regions of China.

4) Yue Opera (越剧)

Originating in Zhejiang Province, Yue Opera stands as one of the principal genres within the tapestry of Chinese opera, with a history that spans nearly a century. It initially circulated in the four regions of Suzhou, Hangzhou, Jiaxing, and Huzhou in Zhejiang as a folk art form and gradually evolved into a widely influential operatic art. The singing style of Yue Opera is melodious and smooth, primarily dominated by female soprano voices. Its performance style is characterized by its delicate and emotional nature, with a special emphasis on portraying female sentiments. Consequently, for a period, Yue Opera predominantly featured female protagonists.

Yue Opera presents a vast repertoire, encompassing themes from history, mythology, folk tales, and contemporary life. Plays like "The Dream of the Red

Chamber" and "The Butterfly Lovers" (梁山伯与祝英台) have garnered immense popularity. The musical accompaniment adopts an ensemble of various instruments, including the yueqin (月琴), sanxian (三弦), flute, pipa (琵琶), and huqin (胡琴). In terms of costumes and makeup, Yue Opera offers a more concise and vibrant style compared to other opera forms.(Lai Da Zhou, 2013) The costumes are brightly colored, and the makeup is meticulous, reflecting a certain aesthetic preference intrinsic to Zhejiang culture. Post mid-20th century, Yue Opera, with its heart-touching emotional expressions and innovative capabilities, emerged as one of the most adored operatic forms in southern China, winning the hearts of audiences nationwide.

4. Research theory

4.1 Ethnomusicology

The formal birth of ethnomusicology was marked by the concept of "Ethnomusicology" put forward by the Dutch scholar Kunst in 1950. Its predecessor was comparative musicology formed in the 1980s. The main research fields of both of them are beyond the scope of traditional western "musicology" - non-western music and western folk music. However, the main research perspective has changed from structural form to cultural connotation, so there is both inheritance and strong independence between ethnomusicology and comparative musicology.

As early as 1941, Glen Haydon had pointed out that the branches of comparative musicology included non-European music (further divided into primitive music, highly civilized music) and folk music.(Glen Haydon, 1941) In 1960, Alan P Merriam put forward the famous definition of ethnomusicology: "music research in culture". His explanation is: "I believe that our goal is consistent with cultural anthropology to a large extent. Our interest, I believe, should be directed to a broader understanding of music, not just as a structural form, not according to a specific region or population, nor as an isolated, but as a creative human phenomenon, which plays a role as part of culture. In the process of defining this field I have tried to make it clear to the best of my ability that I will never rule out the consideration of purely historical, purely structural and purely aesthetic equality with ethnology. The key is

that a clear understanding of history, structure and aesthetics is closely related to the understanding of the cultural background in which these aspects operate" (Alan P. Merriam, 1960).

The basic meaning of the above discussion has three points: First, the goal of ethnomusicology is consistent with cultural anthropology to a large extent, which reflects the close relationship between ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology; 2 The study of pure history, structure and aesthetics should be given equal consideration to ethnology - such ethnomusicology is actually equivalent to musicology as a whole; 3 A clear understanding of history, structure and aesthetics is closely related to the understanding of cultural background in these aspects - which emphasizes the importance of the study of cultural background (cultural anthropology) to other disciplines such as history, structure and aesthetics.

In 1992, Helen Myers proposed that ethnomusicology is a branch of musicology, with special emphasis on the study of music under its cultural background - music anthropology Generally speaking, the music in oral tradition and the existing music system are the most attractive fields for ethnomusicologists. Usually they study cultures outside their own, which makes this field different from most historical musicology (Helen Myers, 1992).

In 2001, Carole Pegg proposed that at the beginning of the 21st century, ethnomusicology accepted the study of all music in the local and global context. It mainly focuses on existing music (including music, songs, dance and musical instruments), and recent research has also investigated the history of music.(Carole Pegg, 2001)

In 2005, Bruno Nettl proposed that we should not give preferential treatment to the music of the elite. We should pay special attention to the music of the lower socio-economic class, the colonial people and the oppressed minorities. We believe that we must finally study all music in the world, from all nationalities and countries, strata, origins and historical periods. We just haven't taken the time to take care of all this (Bruno Nettl, 2005).

In short, Ethnomusicology is a theoretical discipline under musicology that studies the traditional music of various nationalities in the world and their development types. The specific research practice of ethnomusicology often includes

field visits, collection and arrangement of music data (including notation and audiovisual recording), and promotion of the inheritance and development of this kind of music, but these activities can also be included in the research practice of other disciplines such as music morphology, These activities themselves cannot be used as the basis for judging whether a study belongs to ethnomusicology (the specific rules of these activities can reflect the differences between different disciplines); The study of ethnomusicology also often includes the study of music morphology, and the study of history is also gradually increasing, but these studies often serve its main purpose - the study of cultural connotation, or (especially when these studies are relatively independent and in-depth) the study is not purely ethnomusicology research, but belongs to a comprehensive study of multiple disciplines, that is, it contains music morphology, history and other disciplines.

In my thesis research, in the first stage, I used the method of ethnomusicology fieldwork to investigate, collect and record all kinds of cultural phenomena related to the music of Songming Lantern Opera, in addition to the notation, recording and video recording of the performance scene of Songming Lantern Opera; It also includes investigating and studying the relationship between Songming Lantern Opera and its social and cultural background, as well as other arts, so as to verify the historical development of Songming Lantern Opera. Provide powerful materials for the second stage of desk writing.

4.2 Music analysis

Music analysis refers to taking music as the research object, "the research of dissolving a music structure into a relatively reduced component and the function of some factors in the structure is called Music analysis". (Beach David&McClelland Ryan, 2012) Although Music analysis is a subject that has developed rapidly since this century, it is actually developed on the basis of "music form theory" and other music works analysis theories. Therefore, Music analysis involves a larger scope and broader meaning than "music form analysis" and "work analysis". "It can even take everything that can be called music as the object of analysis, because the analyst can freely choose to enter the perspective of analysis and select targeted methods to solve problems within the framework of" Music analysis "according to specific analysis purposes". (Stanley Sadie, 2001) The broad meaning of Music analysis and Music

analysis itself contain complex music activities, sometimes even "it is difficult to determine which activities belong to Music analysis in the process of music learning". (Stanley Sadie, 2001) However, as an independent discipline, Music analysis has its own distinctive characteristics and obvious boundaries with related disciplines.

First of all, the fundamental purpose of Music analysis is to understand the internal organizational logic of works. If the theory of musical form existed as a technique of composition in the 18th century, that is, some structural patterns were summarized in the works of previous people and used for creation, then when it developed to Music analysis, especially after the rapid development of Music analysis in the 20th century, it did not exist directly for the purpose of composition as an independent discipline, It is aimed at revealing the internal organizational logic of the work (this logic is far broader than the logic concept in melodramology, which includes the organizational logic of all factors in the work and the organizational logic among various factors). Secondly, after we have a detailed understanding of the "Schenker Chart Analysis System", which has a wide influence in the 20th century, we believe that no one will think that this analysis method of obtaining the same basic structure from different works is directly aimed at music creation rather than understanding the deep organizational logic of the works. Therefore, there are obvious differences between Music analysis and composition theory.

Music analysis, as a way for people to understand music works, plays an important role in human music activities. It has been a long time since it reached today's height. Music analysis can be divided into three stages according to its own development characteristics: 1. The early history of Music analysis (before the middle of the 18th century); 2. The period of Music analysis centered on music form (from the middle of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century); 3. The period of Music analysis characterized by the integration of personal style and theory (from the end of the 19th century to the 20th century).

In my thesis research, based on interviews with three key contacts of Songming Lantern Drama, I mainly analyzed the music of Songming Lantern Drama "You Chun", mainly including the source analysis of the lyrics of "You Chun", the characteristics analysis of the lyrics, the content analysis of the works, and the Music analysis of the works.

5. Related documents and research

In 1987, Fang Lunyu and other scholars took Yunnan Lantern Opera as the research object and published “Lantern Dance”. According to the characteristics of different places, this book divides Yunnan Lantern Opera into four categories: the western part of Yunnan Province (Yao'an, Dayao, Chuxiong, Midu, etc.), the central part of Yunnan Province (Kunming, Yuxi, Chenggong, Songming, etc.), and the northeastern part of Yunnan Province (Luoping, Shizong, etc.). This division provides an important theoretical basis for the study of the cultural characteristics of regional lantern dance. However, this book was published earlier, and it gives a detailed description of the artistic characteristics and manifestations of Yunnan Lantern Opera dance but does not make a more in-depth analysis and discussion.

In 2003, Wang Qun’s “An Introduction to Yunnan Lantern Opera Music” was published, which is the first time in the academic field to study Yunnan Lantern Opera from the perspective of cultural inheritance. This book has carried on the overall introduction to the Yunnan Lantern Opera and recorded the classification, the form characteristics, and the musical form of the Yunnan Lantern Opera in detail. With the development of the times, the traditional lantern has been unable to meet the artistic pursuits of modern people. The development of Yunnan Lantern Opera in the 1980s encountered difficulties. After China's reform and opening up”, a large number of western cultures have entered China, and the traditional culture has had an unprecedented impact. Yunnan Lantern Opera artists and cultural authorities realize the need for innovation in the traditional lantern in order to make Yunnan Lantern Opera continue to survive and pass down. The new works of Yunnan Lantern Opera since Reform and Opening Up” are included in An Introduction to Yunnan Lantern Opera Music”, and the new lantern works are classified and studied.

An Lei (2006), Yunnan Normal University, studied the lyrics of Yunnan Lantern Opera from the perspective of literature and art. An Lei believes that the traditional Yunnan Lantern Opera is mainly about singing about gods and labor. They are a special ritual activity with a stable performance time and venue during major festivals such as the Spring Festival, which leads to the low popularity of traditional Yunnan Lantern Opera.

Xiao Qiong and Yan Guiying (2014) published *Mass Media and the Protection and Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Taking Yunnan Lantern Opera as an Example* to describe the positive role of mass media in the dissemination, protection, and inheritance of Yunnan Lantern Opera from the perspective of Yunnan Lantern Opera as intangible cultural heritage and also briefly describe the lack of media quality in the protection process.

Jin Feng (2016), Yunnan Lantern Opera, as the main local drama opera of the Han nationality in Yunnan province, has experienced a long historical evolution. In the period of the Republic of China, in order to distinguish the out-of-town operas, a "Yunnan Lantern Opera" was established. Yunnan Lantern Opera, with the provincial capital of Kunming as the center, radiation to every city in Yunnan province. Yunnan Lantern Opera was called a "big opera.", In addition to its own scope being wide, more important is the continuous development of its own and gradually mature mature, which has a certain influence on other national dramas. Its unique historical and cultural heritage, moral propaganda, art forms are difficult to replace.

Kuang Jia & He Lan (2022) The southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan is home to a plethora of traditional music, folk songs, and ethnic musical instruments, with 24 local folk music items included in the national intangible cultural heritage list and extended list. With an in-depth qualitative analysis of the data on the protection of 24 folk music items in Yunnan, the achievement, impact, and challenges of the current safeguarding efforts are revealed. The findings suggest that: 1. Government agencies at all levels have a dominant influence on the protection effort. 2. The local community, musicians, culture bearers, troupes, clubs, and social organizations form the "brick and mortar" of the folk music sustainability system. 3. The current reappearance or resurfacing of certain folk music items is a significant step toward truly reviving the folk music items in the future.

Qinghua Lu (2017), The ethnic minorities in Yunnan are numerous, and the ethnic cultural resources are rich, rich, and colorful folk song and dance music with unique personalities. Through a combined analysis of all previous national ethnic theatrical festivals and Yunnan folk song and dance performance profiles, the significance of performances was examined, and the Yunnan folk song and dance performance was put forward in the direction of innovation and development.

Liu Guilan's (1986) *Selected Hunan Ethnic and Folk Dances* gives a detailed introduction to the historical origin, ceremony, custom, and performance system of Hunan Lantern and records the dance part of Hunan Lantern with pictures and words.

Liu Yang (2011), in his master's thesis *Traditional Form and Modern Evolution of Hunan Lantern*, studied Hunan Lantern from the perspective of culture, using the methods of anthropology and folklore. By comparing the traditional form and modern development state of the Hunan Lantern, it reflects the change process of the local people's beliefs and spiritual aspirations as well as the path of local social change. From this point of view, the cultural change of the Hunan Lantern in the modern development and change of society will promote the inheritance and development of the Hunan Lantern in a way that maximizes its entertainment function.

The *Sichuan Lantern Song* (1958), published by the local cultural authority, included the boxwood pole sung by Yan Sihe, an artist of Sichuan Lantern, which caused a great social sensation. Since then, a series of good works have emerged in Sichuan Lantern, including "Guandeng", "Xiushan is a good place" and "Meijiang Boat Song", but no relevant research has been carried out in this collection.

Zhao Xinxian (2007) published *Investigation and Reflection on the Current Situation of Modern Media and Sichuan Lantern*, which made an in-depth study of Sichuan Lantern from the aspects of historical origin, protection, and inheritance, from the study of the artistic form of lantern singing and dancing to the field of studying the lantern as a folk culture and intangible cultural heritage.

In 2011, Guoqiong Li and Wang Yunde, the inheritors of Songming Lantern Opera, conducted a survey of 162 natural villages and 476 folk artists in the Songming area. They collected more than 50 works from the census in four years, compiled them into a volume, and published *Songming National Folk Dance Integration*. They annotated the Songming Lantern Opera with images, which comprehensively, scientifically, and fully reflected the content and form of the opera. They also provided auxiliary materials for the research of the opera.

Wenping Yang (1995)'s *Songming Lantern Opera Music* includes the tunes, plays, songs and dances, biographies of people, performance photos, and other aspects of Songming Lantern Opera, and some of them involve its historical origin, music

forms, music score materials, and performance customs, which have certain practical significance and academic value.

Ba Ying's (2014) *On the Artistic Features of Songming Lantern Opera Song and Dance* analyzed and discussed the Songming Lantern Opera from the perspective of art noumenon and preliminarily discussed the historical dissemination, performance form, music form, etc. of Songming Lantern Opera.

Bu Wenjuan's (2019) master's thesis, "Investigation and Research on Songming Lantern Opera in "Local Belief in Custom", based on research on intangible cultural heritage protection, cultural ecology, and folklore, described, sorted out, and analyzed the history and survival status of Songming Lantern Opera and reflected on its difficulties and problems in the current survival. This article takes "Local Belief in Custom" as the entry point, investigates and analyzes the root cause of the problem of Songming Lantern Opera being lost, and discusses the possibility of using "local people believe in customs" to protect Songming Lantern Opera.

To sum up, Songming Lantern Opera is a kind of drama produced in the Songming area of Kunming, Yunnan Province. It contains both music, dance, and drama elements. It is the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the people in the Songming area, with a warm and unrestrained local flavor that changes with the development of society. In the exchange with other folk arts, we learn from each other so that the content of performances is constantly enriched and the form of singing is constantly improved. It has become a popular form of drama art among the local people.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research on the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China is qualitative research and ethnomusicology in the study, with preliminary research from the study and the collection of academic documents, textbooks, reports, concepts, theories, and articles from various journals related to the study. In addition, the researcher conducted a study using fieldwork data from key informants, casual informants, and general informants for analysis. The study topics are divided as follows:

1. Research scope
 - 1.1 Scope of content
 - 1.2 Scope of research site
 - 1.3 Scope of time
2. Research Process
 - 2.1 Selected select research site
 - 2.2 Key informants
 - 2.3 Research tools
 - 2.4 Data Collecting
 - 2.5 Data Management
 - 2.6 Data analysis
 - 2.7 Data Presenting

1. Research scope

1.1 Research content

This study focuses on Songming Lantern Opera in Yunnan, China, exploring its historical development and analyzing its musical characteristics. It traces the opera's evolution from the Tang Dynasty to the modern era, highlighting its different phases. Additionally, it analyzes three key works in the opera and examines their music structure and melody characteristics.

1.2 Scope of research site

Songming Lantern Opera is located in the central part of Yunnan Province, China, with a favorable geographical location. It is an important transportation hub in Yunnan Province. After the "Yuan Dynasty", a large number of Han people migrated here, and Han culture was widely spread and infiltrated with the local culture of Songming at that time, merging a large number of new art forms. However, due to slow economic development, inconvenient transportation, and other factors, Songming Lantern Opera is only popular in this region.

After the 1950s, due to special political events (the Cultural Revolution), traditional cultural and artistic activities were interrupted for a long time, and the Songming Lantern Opera once declined but gradually recovered after 1978. However, due to the development of the times and the wave of internationalization, western pop music culture has been introduced in large numbers, and many inheritors of the Songming Lantern Opera have passed away. Some plays, tunes, and performance forms in the traditional Songming lantern opera have gradually disappeared, and the scale of the activity is not as good as before. Researchers hope that through their research on the Songming Lantern Opera and their thinking about the problems faced at present, more people will pay attention to it and promote the better communication and development of this art.



Figure 3. Yunnan Province, China.

Source: <https://www.chinadiscovery.com/kunming-tours/maps.html>

1.3 Scope of time

This study runs from April 2021 to June 2023.

2. Research process

2.1 Selected select research site

The research site, Kunming city, Yunnan Province, China, was chosen due to its historical and cultural relevance to Songming Lantern Opera. Kunming's unique blend of Han and local cultures has made it a hub for this traditional art form's preservation and development.

2.2 Key informants

In order to study Songming Lantern Opera, it is necessary to start with practitioners of Songming Lantern Opera and conduct in-depth interviews with them, attempting to understand how Songming Lantern Opera has developed from different regional perspectives. Personal interviews and surveys can provide a more detailed study of Songming Lantern Opera. The criteria for selecting key information providers are as follows:

- 1) Over 20 years of field experience
- 2) recognized as a representative figure in the field.
- 3) Significant contributions to the development of Songming Lantern Opera or winning influential awards

2.2.1 Inheritors and Performers of Songming Lantern Opera Music



Figure 4. Mr. Wenping Yang

Source: Dongxio Yue

1) Interviewee:Wenping Yang, male, Han nationality, born in Songming County, Yunnan Province, in 1954, is the leader of the Songming Lantern Opera Troupe and the curator of the Songming County Cultural Museum.

2) Criteria: Wenping Yang is a famous performer of Songming Lantern Opera, and he is also a scholar who studies and disseminates Songming Lantern Opera. He has written many academic papers on Songming Lantern Drama. Rich achievements, recognized by the local government of Songming County as the inheritor of intangible cultural heritage, and published works such as "Song Ming Lantern Opera" and "Song Ming Ethnic Folk Instrumental Music". I received the title of Chinese Second Class Composer.

2.2.2 Inheritors and Performers of Song Ming Lantern Opera Dance



Figure 5. Ms. Guoqiong Li

Source: Dongxio Yue

1) Interviewee:Guoqiong Li, female, Han nationality, born in Songming County, Yunnan Province, in 1958, is an associate research librarian of the Songming County Cultural Center.

2) Criteria: Guoqiong Li is a famous performer of the dance art in the Songming Lantern Opera and has organized many public performances and inheritance activities of the traditional intangible cultural heritage in the Songming region. a member of the Yunnan Province Dancers Association, a director of the

Kunming City Dancers Association, and a representative inheritor recognized by the local government of Songming County.

2.2.3 Inheritor and Creator of Songming Lantern Opera Script



Figure 6. Mr. Juncai Qi

Source: Dongxio Yue

1) Interviewee: Qi Juncai, female, born in Songming County, Yunnan Province, in 1950, is a member of the Chinese Dramatists Association.

2) Criteria: Juncai Qi, Over the past 40 years, Juncai Qi has written over 100 plays, with the most lantern plays winning three national awards. Provincial, municipal, and county-level cultural departments, troupes, enterprises, and media are constantly inviting. During his tenure as the director of the Songming County Cultural Museum, Juncai Qi collected and organized ten major cultural books, including "Songming County Opera Chronicles" and "Songming County Lantern Music Collection". He interviewed over 100 veteran artists, was a grounded writer, and was a bold innovator.

2.3 Research tools

This study will use questionnaires and interview forms as the main research tools. In qualitative research, interviews with informants and various participants in research cases are the most important method of collecting information. First of all, after determining the research topic and research object, you need to collect relevant books and Internet materials and learn as much knowledge and skills about Songming

Lantern Opera as possible. Secondly, based on the existing research related to Songming Lantern Opera, clear research objectives and expected results are proposed, questions and hypotheses are raised, and corresponding questionnaire plans are designed. Finally, the content of the questionnaire was modified and improved according to the progress of the research, and experts were invited to modify and supplement it.

2.4 Data Collecting

Data collection is divided into on-site work and written documents.

2.4.1 The researchers searched the literature and relevant information through the Internet and the library and made use of the existing written materials to have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relevant knowledge and theory of the Songming Lantern Opera in the past.

2.4.2 The field investigation method is one of the main research methods in this research. It also includes interviews, video recordings, questionnaires, and the collection and analysis of relevant documents. From October 2021 to April 2022, researchers went to Songming County twice to carry out a field survey of Songming Lantern Opera, selected three key informants to visit and observe the performance of Songming Lantern Opera, and recorded and filmed the script, singing, dancing, and instrumental music. The performance of Songming Lantern Opera is the basis of the music research for Songming Lantern Opera. Collecting and sorting out the repertoire of local Songming Lantern Opera is also conducive to analyzing the development process of the performance of Songming Lantern Opera, thus supporting the historical era of the production of Songming Lantern Opera.

2.5 Data management

2.5.1 According to the theme of this research, collect relevant data through the Internet, libraries, and documents.

2.5.2 According to the research objectives of this research, the relevant data are classified, including the historical materials of Songming Lantern Opera and the contemporary materials of Songming Lantern Opera music.

The selection criteria for works subjected to music analysis are as follows:

1) They are recognized by the government as representative inheritances of Songming Lantern Opera.

2) They are personally recommended by key information providers as representative performances.

3) They enjoy widespread popularity and support among the general population in the Songming region.

2.5.3 Subdivide the data. The historical data of Songming Lantern Opera includes the development and evolution of Songming Lantern Opera, as well as some cultural backgrounds at that time, as well as the style formation process of Songming Lantern Opera music. Therefore, the data for each research objective are interrelated and intertwined and need to be carefully distinguished and treated.

2.6 Data analysis

The research employs a study method to analyze the development of Songming Lantern Opera across different periods. The study focuses on examining the evolution of Songming Lantern Opera and the formation of its unique musical characteristics. Additionally, analyze the music of the Songming Lantern Opera. The research analyzes the following: 1. Analyze the literature on Songming Lantern Opera from both online sources and libraries, followed by the categorization and analysis of the collected materials. 2. In-depth study of the musical scores documented during fieldwork

2.7 Data Presenting

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter III: Research Methodology

Chapter IV: The Historical Background of Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China

Chapter V: Music Analysis of the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China

Chapter VI: Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

CHAPTER IV

The Historical Background of Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China

This chapter includes the following headings:

1. The Origin Legend of Songming Lantern Opera
2. Songming Lantern Opera from the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty to the 1912s
3. Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of the Republic of China to the 1949s
4. Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of New China to the 21st Century

1. The Origin Legend of Songming Lantern Opera

At present, there is no definitive consensus in academia on the origin of Songming Lantern Opera. Different scholars hold different views, and there is no unified opinion. Researchers have integrated local historical literature and oral accounts from some inheritors, folk artists, and the general public to summarize the following representative views on the origin of Songming Lantern Opera:



Figure 7. Songming County Annals, courtesy of Mr Wenping Yang

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xu5HdTEYLsgpVC5pI1n6cg>

1.1 The Legend of the Tang Dynasty Origin

The main basis for this legend is a story that has been passed down within the territory of Songming County. According to the legend, during the Tang Dynasty (685-692 AD), in the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, the emperor had a dream. In his dream, he went to the underworld, where some spirits entrusted him with holding a ritual in the human world to help them find salvation. The ritual required music, and so the spirits held bamboo lanterns while singing and dancing, teaching Emperor Xuanzong to do the same. After waking up, Emperor Xuanzong taught the music he learned in his dream to those in the palace and ordered its promotion throughout the country. As a result, later generations referred to Emperor Xuanzong as the "God of Lanterns".(Bai Gengsheng, Wang Jun , 2012)

Therefore, in every Songming Lantern Opera troupe, a tablet commemorating Emperor Xuanzong is generally enshrined. At the beginning and end of the Lantern Opera performances, ceremonies called "Receiving the Lantern God" and "Sending the Lantern God" are held, and the performers sing the "Inviting the God" song: "A row of flowers blooms, and a row of greenery emerges; we invite Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty to listen to our words. In the daytime, we ask you to accept our incense offerings; at night, we invite you to enjoy the Lantern Opera."

The second legend goes like this: Long ago, there lived an old man with the surname Tang in the Phoenix Mountain to the north of Songming City. He made his living by hunting. One day, while hunting, the old man found a child and named him "Tang Wang". The old man would hunt during the day and practice music at night, teaching Tang Wang to sing some tunes. Before the old man passed away, he told Tang Wang, "When I was 18, our troupe, 'Nanzhao Fengsheng Music', was ordered by the emperor to perform in the capital city of Chang'an.(Songming County Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 1989) However, we encountered villains on the way, and our troupe of over 300 people was disbanded. I was the only one who ended up in Songming, and unfortunately, I haven't had the chance to teach you all the songs I know." After saying this, the old man passed away.

After the old man's death, Tang Wang missed his father dearly. One night, he dreamt that he went to the underworld and met the old man. Although surprised, the

old man kept Tang Wang by his side until he had taught him all the music. After learning the music, Tang Wang returned to Songming and passed on the songs to the people there. In less than three years, Songming Lantern Opera troupes spread throughout various regions. Since then, people have called Tang Wang "Lantern Head".

1.2 The Legend of the Song Dynasty Origin

The main basis for this legend is that there is a temple called Yuantong Temple in Xiaojie Town, Songming County. The temple was built during the Qingyuan years of the Song Dynasty (1195-1201 AD). Inside the temple, there is an existing stage with a couplet: "Look up and laugh, look down and laugh, look up and down, laughing and gazing, depicting ancient people, depicting modern people, depicting ancient and modern people in makeup." The couplet reflects the scene of performers dressing up as theatrical characters and the lively atmosphere of the audience watching the performance below the stage. Based on this, it is inferred that Songming Lantern Opera originated during the Song Dynasty. However, the couplet does not specify the type of drama performed, only indicating that there were already theatrical performances in the local area during the Song Dynasty. It is difficult to prove that Songming Lantern Opera originated from this time and place.

1.3 The Legend of the Ming Dynasty Origin

This theory is widely accepted in academia. According to the "Selected Historical and Cultural Materials of Songming County", during the Hongwu years of the Ming Dynasty, in 1381 AD, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched 300,000 soldiers and their families to be stationed in Yunnan, which significantly exceeded the number of local residents. In 1389, the official Mu Ying went to the capital to report on his duties and brought back 2.5 million people from Jiangnan and Jiangxi to Yunnan. At that time, Songming, which was located at a transportation hub, became an important military, civilian, and commercial garrison. During this period, the army cultivated 56,739 acres of land in Shaodian and Banqiao and 11,236 acres in Yanglin. (Songming County Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 1989)

The large number of immigrants brought the artistic culture of the Central Plains region, which invisibly promoted the exchange and integration of Central Plains culture and local culture. As a result, Songming Lantern Opera, which

absorbed the Central Plains' music and dance while incorporating local folk songs and tunes, emerged during this period.

2. Songming Lantern Opera from the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty to the 1912s



Figure 8. Lantern Opera Stage in Dianyuan Town, Songming County during the reign of Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty.

Source: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/WcLxvxE3jCQuxisA6-5arA>.

During the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, Songming Lantern Opera entered a particularly prosperous stage, and the number of performing groups gradually increased. The "Annals of Songming County" published in 1995 records: "In the early Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty (1711 AD), the Lantern Opera in Songming County entered a prosperous period. Large villages with more than 100 households organized Lantern Opera performance groups, also known as 'Lantern Associations'".(Songming County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1995)The thriving Lantern Opera performances also generated a demand for fixed venues among the public, giving rise to the emergence of "Lantern Houses".

"Lantern Houses" are traditional venues for Songming Lantern Opera performances. Most of the "Lantern Houses" in Songming were built during the Qing Dynasty. The architectural style is usually one-story, consisting of three rooms. The middle area is used for rehearsals or for enshrining the "God of the Lantern". The

rooms on the left and right are used as storage rooms for props, costumes, and other assets. Some buildings have two stories, adding an upper-level stage area. Some "Lantern Houses" are used as performance venues during the peak season and as public spaces in the village during leisure time. Due to various natural (earthquakes, floods) or historical (policies, wars) factors, not many of these buildings have been preserved. However, it is still possible to trace the historical presence of Songming Lantern Opera through the few remaining sites and some inscriptions.

There is a "Lantern House" in Dagan Du Village, Yanglin Town, which was built during the early Qianlong period. Inside the house, there is a stone tablet. The inscription reads, "Old and young alike sing of Shun's days, admiring the joyous days of Yao, how beautiful it is!" The general meaning is that people of all ages perform the Lantern Opera, reflecting a harmonious and prosperous society. According to researchers' on-site visits, the site collapsed due to a major earthquake in 1833 but was later rebuilt, with the inscriptions well preserved. Villagers rehearsed in the "Lantern House" during their leisure time and performed during the Spring Festival. The construction of the "Lantern House" brought together a large number of Songming Lantern Opera performance groups and played a driving role in the development of Songming Lantern Opera.

3. Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of the Republic of China to the 1949s

During the Republic of China period (1912), Songming Lantern Opera evolved from simple entertaining songs and dances and short performances into large-scale theatrical performances. The number of characters gradually increased, and the social content reflected in the performances also became more diverse. With the rapid development of society, some representative plays reflecting the social life of the time emerged, such as "General Cai E in Yunnan." Cai E was a famous patriotic general in Yunnan during the Republic of China period.(Songming County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1995) Plays like this praised positive figures, promoted progressive cultural ideas, and carried a certain educational significance. According to the oral accounts of artists interviewed by researchers, during this period, the performance venues shifted from fields to some urban stages. The change in

performance venues is a concrete manifestation of Songming Lantern Opera gradually gaining recognition as a folk art form.

During this period, Songming Lantern Opera had a certain social influence and produced many outstanding folk artists. However, due to historical and social development limitations, it had not yet embarked on the path of professionalization. The main performances remained primarily in the form of folk entertainment during Spring Festival activities and temple fairs.

4. Songming Lantern Opera from the Founding of New China to the 21st Century

Since the founding of New China (1949-), the Songming Lantern Opera has received attention from the government. In 1956, with the support of the local government, the "Songming County Lantern Opera Troupe" was established, and from then on, Songming Lantern Opera began to develop professionally. Many amateur groups have also emerged in various regions. Amateur lantern opera performances are also very active. In addition to the professional troupes, more than 90 amateur art propaganda teams are performing Songming Lantern Opera throughout the county. Some schools and institutions have also organized amateur propaganda teams.

During this period, Songming Lantern Opera made significant progress in several aspects:

1) In terms of creation, both professional and amateur creators of Songming Lantern Opera have produced nearly a hundred large, medium, and small plays, which have had a significant influence both within and outside the province.

2) In terms of creative genres, various types of plays have emerged, including modern plays reflecting modern life and newly edited historical plays reflecting historical figures and events.

3) In terms of performance, the traditional performance pattern has been broken, incorporating the strengths of other opera arts to enrich the performance techniques of Songming Lantern Opera.

4) In terms of singing, scientific vocalization methods have been adopted for singing lantern operas.

5) New attempts and developments have been made in makeup, costumes, and props.

6) In terms of stage art, modern stage lighting equipment has been gradually applied.

7) In terms of music, outstanding musicians and performers have been trained, breaking the traditional accompaniment pattern and increasing the number of orchestra members.



Figure 9. Song Ming Lantern Opera "Tuan Chang(团场)".

Source: Wenping Yang

During this period, although there were some breakthroughs and developments in the accompaniment of Songming Lantern Opera music, there was no in-depth research and practice on how to apply local Lantern Opera music and how to create and innovate traditional Lantern Opera in their own regions. Most of the adaptations and creations were based on the Lantern tunes from other regions, resulting in limited development of Songming Lantern Opera during this period. It wasn't until the late 1970s that the development of Songming Lantern Opera saw some changes, with the cultivation of a group of outstanding Lantern creators. During the field research on Songming Lantern Opera, two key figures, teachers Wenping Yang and Guoqiong Li, were the talents of Songming Lantern Opera who were cultivated during this period and played a crucial role in the later development of Lantern.(Yang Xiusong, 2006).

Entering the 1980s, influenced by the development of modern society, some rural and urban amateur propaganda teams gradually decreased. In 1986, the

Songming County Lantern Opera Troupe was disbanded, and some of the performers were transferred to the Songming County Cultural Center, shifting to an amateur performance-based model. During this period, some elderly artist performance teams and individual Lantern Opera performance teams gradually emerged. The rise of these performance teams reflected the mass and widespread nature of Lantern Opera performances.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the continuous advancement of the modernization process in the Songming region and the significant changes in people's lifestyles, popular culture and technological means have brought about changes in the aesthetic appeal and spiritual expression of the local people. Through field research, researchers found that from 2013 onwards, a new form of cultural entertainment emerged in the Songming region over the past five years, called "Lantern Opera Square Dance". It is a group dance activity similar to calisthenics, created by extracting dance and music elements from Songming Lantern Opera. From 2013 to the present, Songming has held four Songming Lantern Opera Square Dance competitions. As the Lantern Opera Square Dance has been widely promoted in villages and campuses and gained increasing popularity, it has become the mainstream form of Lantern performance and local villagers' cultural entertainment in the Songming region, turning into a widely popular "cultural symbol" in the area, while traditional Songming Lantern Opera performances are now few and far between.



Figure 10. Lantern Opera Square Dance.

Source: Wenping Yang

In summary, Songming Lantern Opera and its theater share similar processes of survival and development, starting with "songs," then progressing to "dances" and "drama performances." In terms of musical forms, percussion music appeared first, followed by the development of string music. Rooted in the fertile cultural soil of Songming, with its long-standing historical features and unique artistic characteristics, Songming Lantern Opera has become an integral part of Yunnan's traditional culture and will continue to develop and spread.

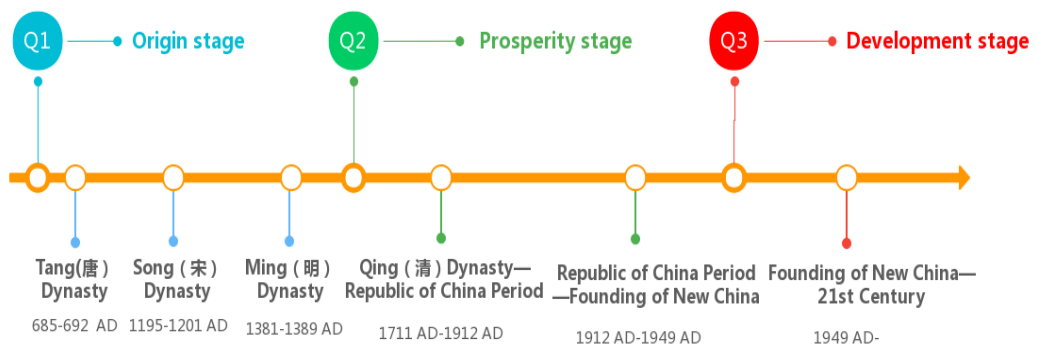


Figure 11. Historical Development of Songming Lantern Opera.

Source: Dongxio Yue



CHAPTER V

Music Analysis of the Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China

This research is based on a comprehensive field study conducted in Songming County, Yunnan Province. Initially, the research involved a thorough collection of diachronic materials concerning the Songming Lantern Opera from various institutions, including the Songming County Culture House, the Songming County Government, and the Songming Lantern Opera Troupe. These materials encompassed a wide array of sources such as performance records, information related to the inheritors, publicly disclosed governmental documents, and relevant academic literature. Subsequently, interviews were carried out with prominent torchbearers of the Songming Lantern Opera: Wenping Yang, Guoqiong Li, and Qi Juncai. This also involved hands-on learning and observation of live Songming Lantern Opera performances. Building on the organized and scrutinized literature and survey materials, this paper is set to analyze the most crucial and emblematic works of Songming Lantern Opera music. This includes "Eagle's Bright Wings" as part of the "instrumental tunes" category, "Pouch Embroidering" under the "song and dance tunes" category, and "Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival" attributed to the "drama tunes" category. Elements such as musical structure and melodic characteristics will constitute the primary dimensions in the analysis of the music in Songming Lantern Opera.

1. Music Analysis of the Eagle's Bright Wings
2. Music Analysis of Pouch Embroidering
3. Music Analysis of the Spring Celebration at the Lantern Festival

1. Music Analysis of the Eagle's Bright Wings

Eagle's Bright Wings
老鹰亮翅

小街地区

$\text{♩} = 66$

The musical score is presented in ten staves, each containing five measures. The measures are numbered 1 through 47. The piece is in 2/4 time with a tempo of 66. The melody is written in treble clef and includes various ornaments and articulations, such as trills and slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 47.

Figure 12. Eagle's Bright Wings.

Source: Dongxiao Yue

This composition belongs to the instrumental tunes within Songming Lantern Opera music. These instrumental tunes generally serve as the opening and bridging

sections during performances, as well as the introductory part of the singing tunes. Moreover, they can also be employed for standalone instrumental performances. This piece is one of the most widely circulated in Songming Lantern Opera music, known for its upbeat melody and distinct rhythm. It is frequently played solo on instruments like the suona, providing a high-spirited, brightly-toned performance with a captivating live quality, making it popular at dragon dances and major festive occasions like temple fairs. (Wenping Yang, 1995) This musical score was collected and organized by Mr. Wenping Yang in the Xiao Street area of Songming County in 1988.

Strophic Form

A A1 A2					
a	b	a1	b1	a2	b2
8	7	8	9	8	7
A clef		A clef:		G clef:	

Through analysis can get the result that Eagle's Bright Wings is a song with strophic form, 2/4, 3/4 as the main beat, the key tonality is A pentatonic style and G pentatonic style. Mainly structured by segment A, means make a twice repeat variations on A section, this kind of repeated variation will not affect the whole structure, so this form of the song is strophic form structure (Figure 12).

小街地区

Figure 13. Eagle's Bright Wings A(the 1st - 15th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part one, as segment A (the 1st–15th subsections): viewing the structure, is composed of two phrases. As a comparison section composed of a+b contrastive phrases, the length of the two phrases is 8 subsections and 7 subsections, respectively, so this section is a non-square integral section. From a tonality standpoint, this section keeps the development in A pentatonic style, so this section is also a collapsible segment. From the material, take the dots rhythm as a key, with more of the 16 note symbols, creating a cheerful rhythm, a lively melody, and a vivid eagle image (Figure 13).



Figure 14. Eagle's Bright Wings A1 (the 16th - 32th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

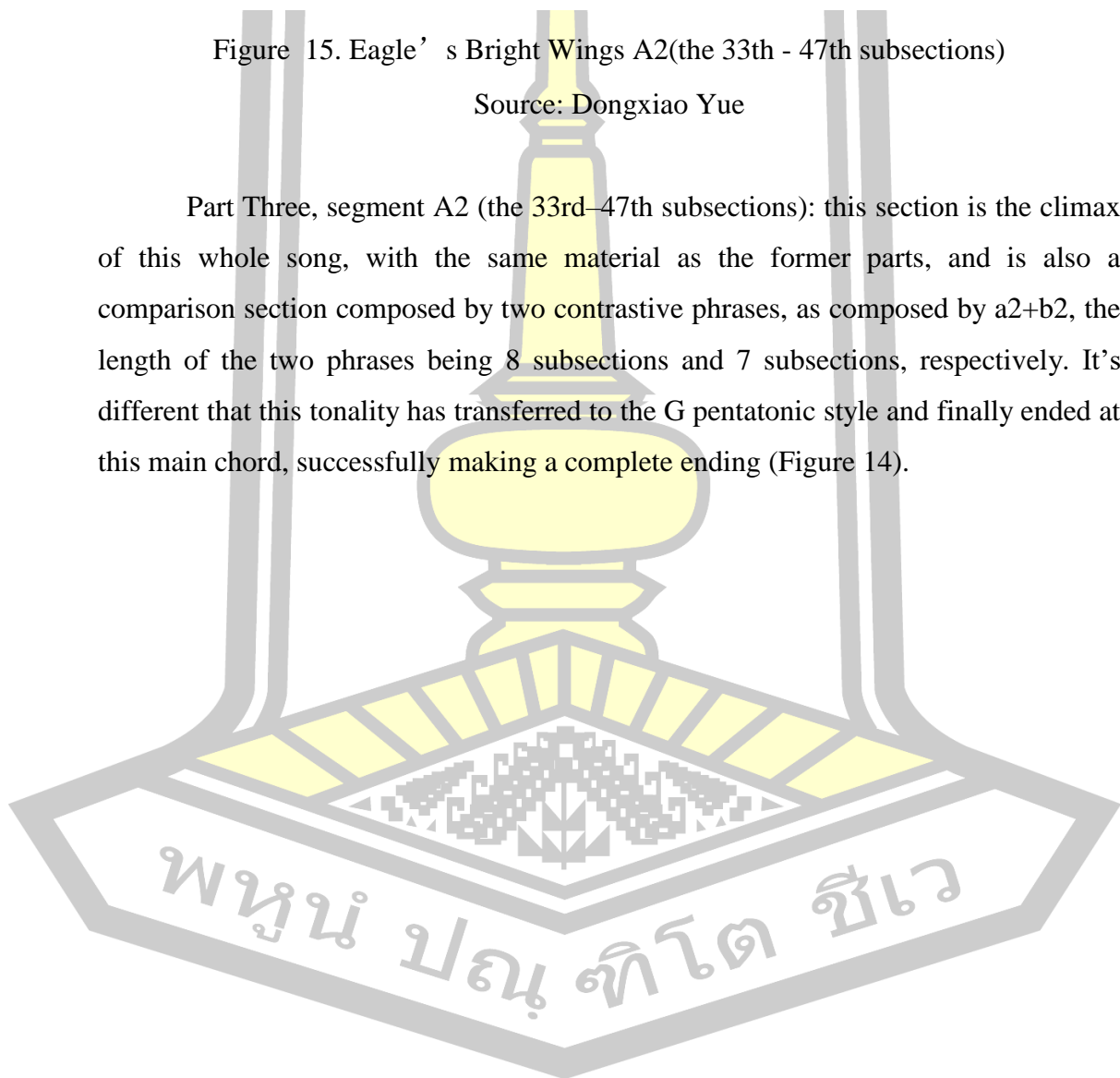
Part two, as segment A1 (the 16th–32th subsections), is a first-time repeat variation for segment A, emphasized keeping the development of the A pentatonic style. From structure, segment A1 is composed by two phrases, which means a comparison section composed by a1+b1 contrastive phrases. The length of the two phrases is 8 subsections and 9 subsections, respectively. As reviewed from here, this section has expanded the b phrase into two subsections for connection and makes a bedding for the later tonality transformation. From the tonal harmony, it finally ends at the main chord, making a complete ending.



Figure 15. Eagle' s Bright Wings A2(the 33th - 47th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part Three, segment A2 (the 33rd–47th subsections): this section is the climax of this whole song, with the same material as the former parts, and is also a comparison section composed by two contrastive phrases, as composed by a_2+b_2 , the length of the two phrases being 8 subsections and 7 subsections, respectively. It's different that this tonality has transferred to the G pentatonic style and finally ended at this main chord, successfully making a complete ending (Figure 14).



2. Music Analysis of Pouch Embroidering

Pouch Embroidering

绣荷包

Xiaojie District, Songming County
嵩明县小街地区

1 $\text{♩} = 63$ 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

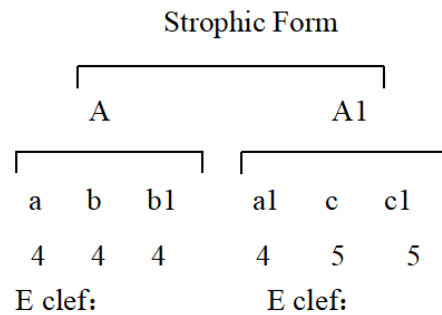
13 14 15 16 17

18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26

Figure 16. Pouch Embroidering.

Source: Dongxiao Yue



Through analysis, Pouch Embroidering is a song with strophic form that takes 2/4 and 3/4 as the main beats, and the main tonality is E pentatonic style. The whole structure is composed of a repeat variation on segment A; this kind of variation will not affect the whole structure, so this form of the song is strophic.

Figure 17. Pouch Embroidering A(1st - 12th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part one in figure 16 segment A (1st–12th subsections): from structure, this section is composed of three phrases, as a+b+b1. The first phrase makes a comparison with the later two phrases, and the later two phrases are parallel phrases. From the length, the length of the three phrases is 4 subsections, so the first part, segment A, is also a square integral section. From the material, the diapason is higher, and the rhythm mainly takes the rhythm for four 16 rhythms and the former 8 and later 16 rhythms, creating a cheerful rhythm and lively melody. From the harmonic tonality,

this section keeps the development on the main tonality in the E pentatonic style and finally ends on the main chord, totally ending, so section A is also a collapsible

s e g m e n t .



Figure 18. Pouch Embroidering A1(the 13th - 26th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part two in figure 17, segment A1 (the 13th–26th subsections): This section is a repeat variation on segment A; from structure, it is also composed by three phrases, as a1+c+c1, and here the composer makes a comparison of some new materials with the first part, just to avoid a single melody, and puts forward the interesting, forwarded to the climax of the whole song. From the length, the length of the three phrases is 4 subsections, 5 subsections, and 5 subsections, respectively, which means the second part of segment A2 is also a non-square integral section. This part keeps the development of the main tonality on the E pentatonic style, keeps a unification of the tonality, and also keeps the integrity of this whole song, finally ending on the main chords.

3. Music Analysis of the Spring Celebration at the Lantern Festival

Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival

元宵佳节贺新春

中速

The musical score is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked '中速' (Moderato). The melody consists of 64 measures, numbered 1 through 64. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as mf and f . A yellow double-headed arrow highlights measures 44 to 48. There are also some grey rectangular markings below measures 42-43 and 48-49. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at measure 49.

ศูนย์ ปณฺ ทิโต ขบ

Musical score for a piece in G minor, measures 65-125. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music consists of a continuous melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The measures are numbered from 65 to 125 in increments of 1. The piece concludes with a final cadence in measure 125.



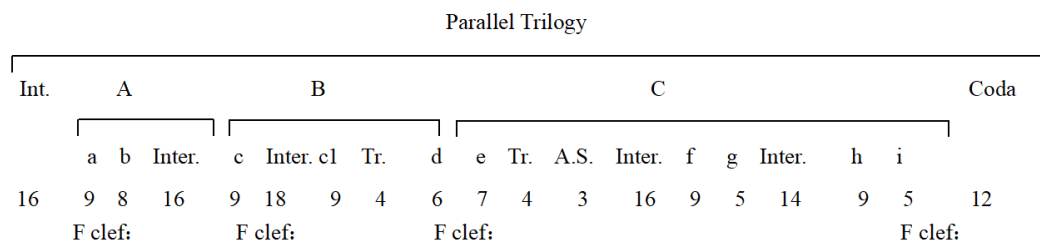
The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival'. The score is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is divided into measures, with measure numbers 126 through 179 indicated above the notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and phrasing slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 179.

Figure 19. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival.

Source: Dongxiao Yue

This work represents the drama tunes within Songming Lantern Opera music. The musical structure of the drama tunes is predominantly monothematic, with characters' spoken lines interspersed throughout the performance, in line with the development of the plot and emotional progression. Dramatic tunes are typically performed in formal settings such as opera houses, with the selection of different

types of tunes based on the characters in the drama and the development of the plot. Drama tunes, through the close coordination of instrumental accompaniment, music, and dance, represent a comprehensive form of performing arts that convey dramatic stories through the medium of Songming Lantern Opera. (Wang Qun, 2003) Their content is vibrant, humorous, and colorful. This tune is the opening tune in the Songming Lantern Opera repertoire, Grandfather Carries His Granddaughter, which narrates a story about a grandfather taking his granddaughter out for the Lantern Festival. The lively spoken lines interspersed between the granddaughter and the grandfather depict the festive celebration scene. This piece, with its humor and interest, has remained evergreen in its appeal. The score for this piece was collected and organized by Juncai Qian in the Four Camp area of Songming in 1992.



Through analysis, the Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival is a parallel trilogy song, with a 2/4 main beat, the main tonality being F pentatonic style, and it being mainly composed of five parts: the introduction, segment A, segment B, segment C, and the ending.



Figure 20. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival Introductio.

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Introduction in figure 19 (the 1st–16th subsections): composed by 16 subsections, the silent part takes a good effect on consolidating the tonality and first

choice of materials, makes a bedding for the later subject's development, and ends on the main chord, giving the people a feeling of expectation, rapidly attracting the audience, and stimulating the aspiration to listen.



Figure 21. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival A(the 17th - 49th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part one in figure 20 segment A (the 17th–49th subsections): from the structure, the a phrase+b phrase+connection parts composed a comparison section, the a phrase and b phrase composed a typical comparison phrase, and the connection part takes a good transition effect and makes a bedding for the later B section of part two. From the length, the length of the three parts is 9 subsections, 8 subsections, and 16 subsections, so the A section is also a non-square integral section. From the harmonic tonality, this part emphasizes keeping the development on the main tonality of F and finally ends at the main chord, making a bed for later development. From the material, this part takes the dot rhythm and the former 8 and later 16 rhythms as the main development, making the subject of the lantern celebration very lively.

Figure 22. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival B(the 50th - 89th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Part two in figure 21, segment B (the 50th–89th subsections): from the structure, it is a typical parallel phrase composed by c phrase+interlude+c1 phrase+connection. From the length, the length of the four parts is 9 subsections, 18 subsections, 9 subsections, and 4 subsections, among which the length of the two parallel phrases is 9 subsections, so this part is a square integral section. Segment B makes a comparison with segment A, the rhythm is cheerful and the emotion makes a forward step. From the harmonic tonality, it finally ends at the main chord, and the connection of the 4 sections makes a preparation for the C section.

Musical score in G minor (one flat) with a treble clef. The score consists of five staves of music, numbered 90 through 125. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The key signature is G minor, and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4 based on the note groupings.



Figure 23. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival C(the 90th - 167th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

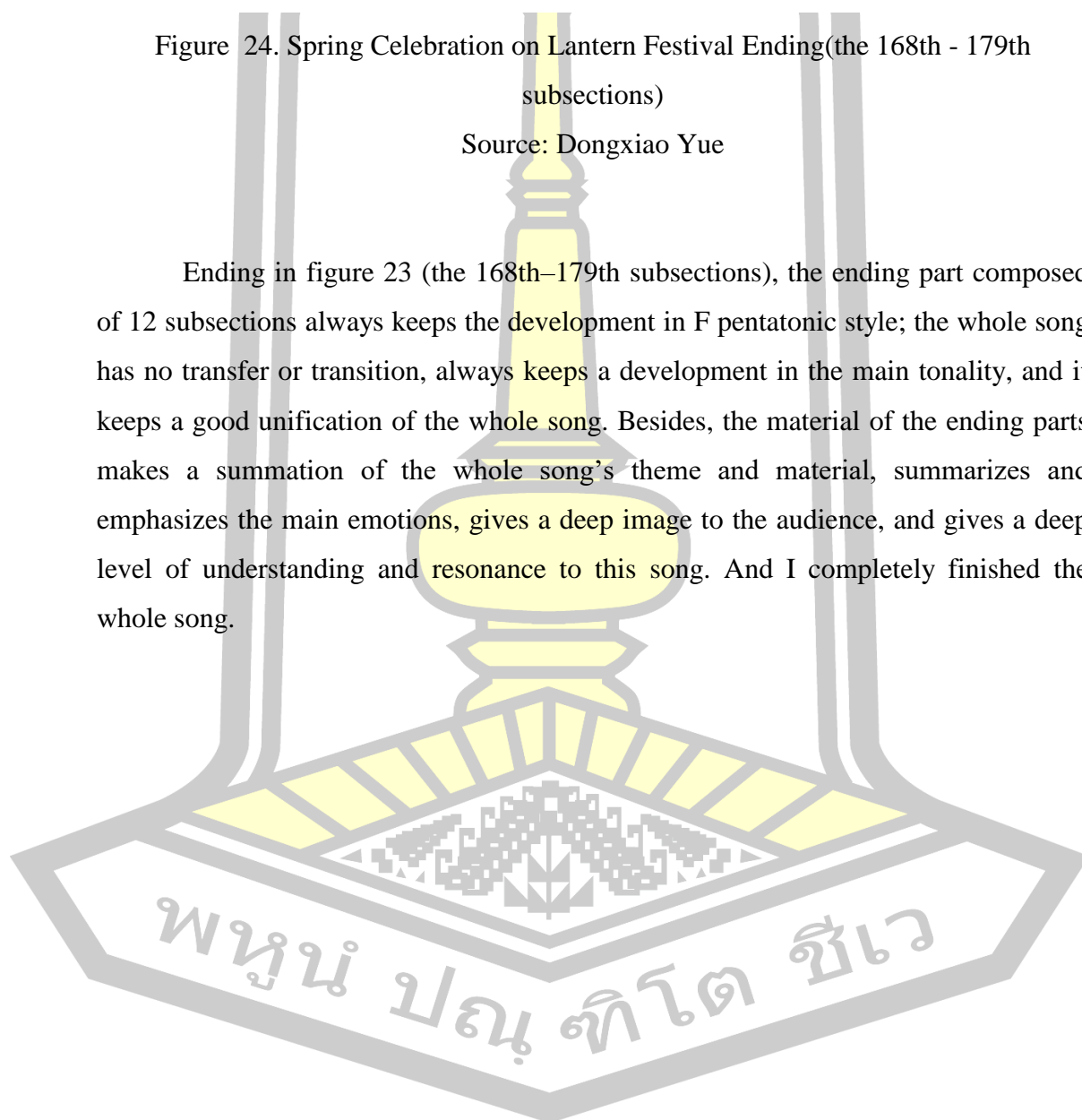
Part three in figure 22, segment C (the 90th–167th subsections): from the structure and the length, it is composed of ten parts: d phrase (6 subsections), e phrase (7 subsections), connection (4 subsections), supplement (3 subsections), interlude (16 subsections), f phrase (9 subsections), g phrase (5 subsections), interlude (14 subsections), h phrase (9 subsections), and i phrase (5 subsections). It is the climax of this whole song and also the emotional center. The diapason is higher, and the rhythm is faster, mainly with 16 note symbols, which makes the rhythm much more vivid and interesting.



Figure 24. Spring Celebration on Lantern Festival Ending(the 168th - 179th subsections)

Source: Dongxiao Yue

Ending in figure 23 (the 168th–179th subsections), the ending part composed of 12 subsections always keeps the development in F pentatonic style; the whole song has no transfer or transition, always keeps a development in the main tonality, and it keeps a good unification of the whole song. Besides, the material of the ending parts makes a summation of the whole song's theme and material, summarizes and emphasizes the main emotions, gives a deep image to the audience, and gives a deep level of understanding and resonance to this song. And I completely finished the whole song.



CHAPTER VI

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

1. Conclusion

The research findings of the comprehensive study on Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China, can be concisely stated in accordance with the research aims as follows:

1. The Songming Lantern Opera is an ancient Chinese artistic expression with a rich historical background and various accounts of its origins. This traditional art form has established profound connections with Songming County, located in the province of Yunnan. The theatrical tradition had significant growth and development under the Qing Dynasty and further expanded into more expansive shows encompassing a wide range of subjects throughout the Republic of China era. Since its establishment in 1949, the subject under consideration has garnered substantial government backing and has undergone a process of professionalization, resulting in advancements across several domains. Nevertheless, the music of this particular genre was significantly influenced by many regional sources until the late 1970s, at which point famous artists began to emerge. In recent years, there has been a surge in popularity for a novel cultural phenomenon known as the Lantern Opera Square Dance. Notwithstanding these alterations, Songming Lantern Opera continues to be a vital component of Yunnan's cultural legacy.

2. The music analysis of Songming Lantern Opera's in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, provides a deep exploration of this rich cultural tradition. Three compositions, 'Eagle's Bright Wings,' 'Pouch Embroidering,' and 'Spring Celebration at the Lantern Festival,' offer unique insights into the opera's musical diversity. 'Eagle's Bright Wings' features lively rhythms and solo instrumentals, while 'Pouch Embroidering' captivates with its engaging melodies and intricate rhythms. 'Spring Celebration at the Lantern Festival' uses a parallel trilogy structure to convey dramatic emotions effectively. These analyses highlight the opera's vibrant rhythms, tonalities, and structural intricacies, underscoring its significance in Chinese cultural heritage.

2. Discussion

According to the objectives of the study, the following outcomes may be discussed from the Songming Lantern Opera research in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China:

1. The study of Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, has provided unique insights into the relevance and evolution of this traditional art form. Songming Lantern Opera is an inspiring example of how Chinese cultural traditions may evolve while preserving their core. Songming Lantern Opera maintains a full and fascinating form of creative expression by combining aspects from numerous artistic disciplines, such as instrumental performances, song and dance, and theater. This flexibility demonstrates Songming Lantern Opera's durability and deep cultural roots.

However, as An Lei (2006) points out, it is critical to address the difficulties that this creative form faces. While culturally significant, the traditional concentration on themes relating to deities and labor has restricted its popularity beyond certain ceremonial contexts. To preserve its viability, it is necessary to investigate ways to widen the topic scope of Songming Lantern Opera while conserving its cultural history. This might include including topics that are relevant to today's viewers, bridging the gap between tradition and modernity.

Furthermore, Jin Feng's (2016) assessment of the historical history of Yunnan Lantern Opera emphasizes its significance as a separate regional opera within Yunnan province. During the Republic of China era, the "Yunnan Lantern Opera" moniker was established, solidifying its identity as a local dramatic opera. Yunnan Lantern Opera's development, maturity, and distinct cultural background have enabled it to transmit moral themes and build creative sensitivities. As a result, it continues to be an important and irreplaceable art form that has had a considerable effect on other national plays. This study adds to our understanding of the cultural depth and diversity of Yunnan's creative legacy. In the realm of instrumental accompaniment, the use of traditional Chinese instruments such as the erhu, pipa, yangqin, and others enriches the sensory experience of Songming Lantern Opera. The combination of string and plucked instruments with percussion, drums, and wind instruments creates a captivating and immersive musical backdrop. This fusion of musical elements not

only enhances the performances but also showcases the artistry and depth of this traditional art form.

2. The music analysis of Songming Lantern Opera in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China, provides an enthralling peek into the rich and diverse realm of this unique art form. Through the consideration of pieces such as 'Eagle's Bright Wings,' 'Pouch Embroidering,' and 'Spring Celebration at the Lantern Festival,' the research reveals the astonishing melodic diversity and rhythmic complexity that distinguish Songming Lantern Opera's music. It emphasizes the opera's versatility in many narrative contexts, from bright instrumental solos to intriguing melodic themes and complicated rhythmic patterns to the dramatic depiction of storylines in parallel trilogy configurations. This investigation not only expands our comprehension of the opera's musical skill but also stresses its cultural significance and promise for continuous relevance in modern times. Wenping Yang's (1995) study gives vital insights into the diverse world of Songming Lantern Opera music, presenting a full grasp of its historical beginnings and musical styles. Ba Ying's (2014) artistic study enriches our awareness of the art form by examining historical distribution, performance modes, and music structures. Furthermore, Bu Wenjuan's (2019) research, which explores Songming Lantern Opera in the framework of "Local Belief in Custom," emphasizes the necessity of cultural preservation and the role of indigenous customs in protecting this unique cultural resource.

To summarize, Songming Lantern Opera's adaptability, historical relevance, and melodic richness all contribute to its continuing appeal and cultural value. As it evolves and faces new obstacles, it remains a riveting tribute to the energy of Chinese traditional performing arts.

3. Suggestions

3.1 General suggestions

3.1.1 Supporting inheritors and artists is vital for the preservation and evolution of Songming Lantern Drama. This entails training, workshops, and mentorship to pass down traditional skills and knowledge while fostering collaboration between generations.

3.1.2 Engaging communities and creating awareness are crucial for preserving Songming Lantern Drama. Local education and participation, along with cultural events, can boost its lasting significance.

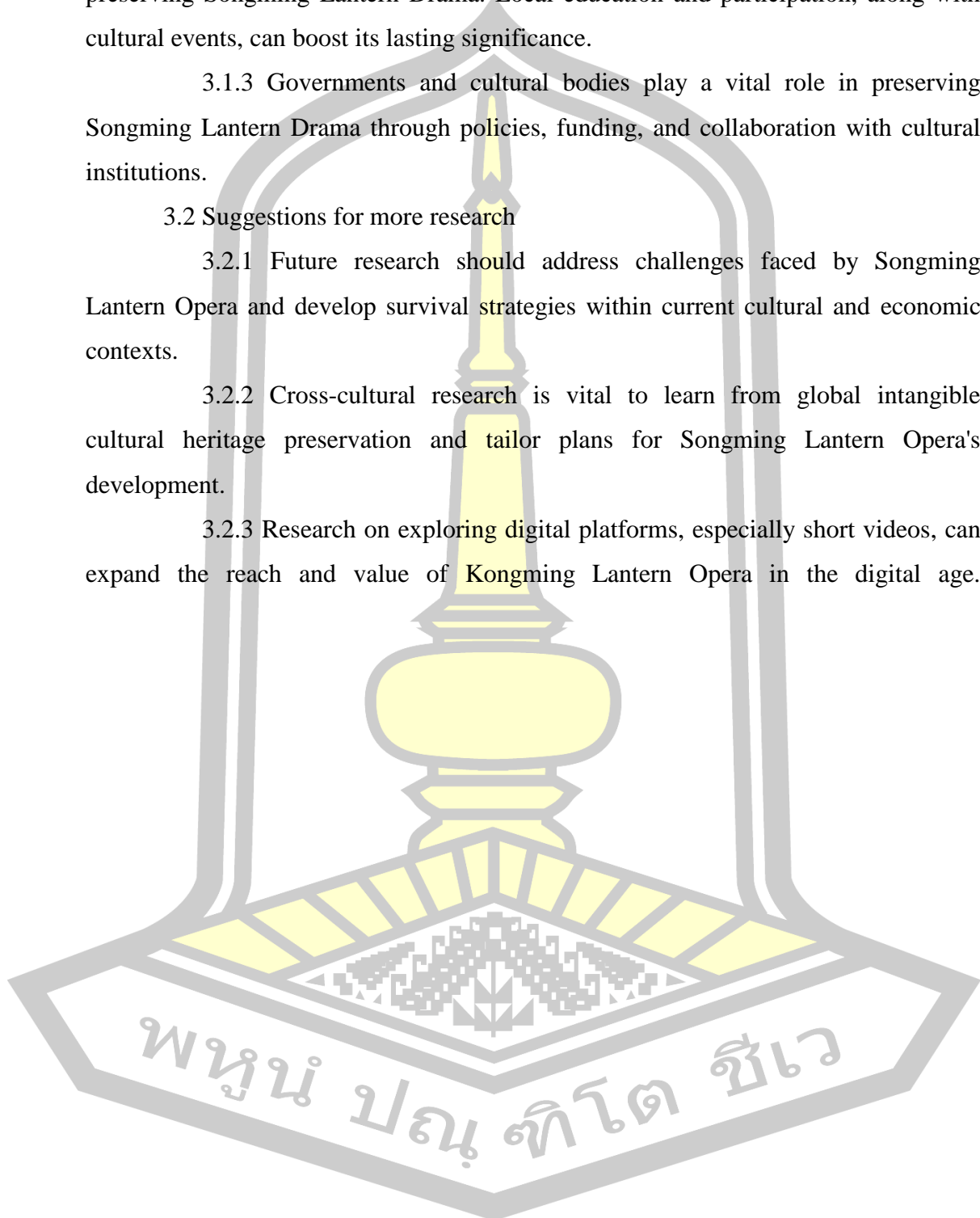
3.1.3 Governments and cultural bodies play a vital role in preserving Songming Lantern Drama through policies, funding, and collaboration with cultural institutions.

3.2 Suggestions for more research

3.2.1 Future research should address challenges faced by Songming Lantern Opera and develop survival strategies within current cultural and economic contexts.

3.2.2 Cross-cultural research is vital to learn from global intangible cultural heritage preservation and tailor plans for Songming Lantern Opera's development.

3.2.3 Research on exploring digital platforms, especially short videos, can expand the reach and value of Songming Lantern Opera in the digital age.



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