

Foshan Shifan, a traditional folkloric music style.



### Historical perspective

Foshan shifan is a kind of folk instrumental music, which belongs to gong and drum music, mainly distributed in the ancient city of Foshan and the surrounding areas. According to the ancient art population, Foshan shifan was introduced from Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang about 200 years ago. The original gong and drum ensemble 'Su juban' and the silk bamboo gong and drum ensemble 'Mixed juban' were two forms. Now only 'Su juban' remains and is closely related to the southern Jiangsu shifan gong and -drum. The southern Jiangsu shifan gong and -drum preserve the southern- and northern Ququ tablets of the Yuan dynasty, so in terms of historical origin, Foshan shifan has a history of 600 to 700 years. In the development process, Foshan shifan has absorbed the flying cymbal playing methods and the common instruments of the local eight-tone gong and drum and integrated it with folk activities to become folk instrumental music with strong local characteristics.

### Characteristics

Shifan music, also known as 'ten classes' and 'five pairs', is named after 10 instruments made of silk, bamboo, leather, wood and gold. This kind of music is relaxed and lively, with a strong sense of rhythm, harmonious rhythm and pleasant to the ear. Most shifan tunes are

derived from folk minor tunes and tuo cards, but they also get a lot of nutrients from opera. Opera and song tunes, and their embodiments, include: sitting, walking and dancing, and are generally performed by the palm holder while playing. Foshan shifan is a form of folk instrumental music with local features. As a festive gong- and drum music, Foshan shifan is usually performed in folk festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival, Tanabata and Mid-Autumn Festival, as well as during the birth of the gods and 'autumn colors' (also known as autumn scenery).



### How it's played

The features of Foshan shifan are that the thin cymbals do not touch according to the convention, but hold the cymbal crown in one hand and swing the other cymbal on the rope with the other hand to rub. The percussionists perform different styles such as 'yin cymbal', 'yang cymbal', 'single fly', 'double fly', 'backhand fly' and 'head fly' at the same time, which is collectively called 'flying cymbals'.



### Heritage value

Foshan shifan is a self-contained style, with high artistic and folkloric research value. It still uses the traditional 'sound recitation' method as the basis for oral heart transmission, and is a living fossil of folkloric gong- and drum music folklore. The ancient artists have passed away, and few heirs can keep these traditional skills alive. The particular style of Foshan shifan is in urgent need of rescue and protection and therefore labeled as Foshan Intangible Cultural Heritage.



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