
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Comparative Analysis of Sino-US Pop Singer's Influence in the New Media Era

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| ABSTRACT

Popular music has clearly permeated every aspect of modern society, whether it is through active participation in streaming media or opening music software, or passive acceptance while doing business in coffee shops and retail malls. The United States has long been at the top of the world music market, and its pop music has influenced the trend of contemporary pop music. In recent years, with the continuous development of the music industry, pop music has gradually become an important aspect that demonstrates the cultural soft power of the country and region. The struggle between China and the United States in terms of soft power has been fiercer in light of globalization and rivalry between the two nations. This article will refer to the "Billboard" list of the most influential singles in the United States in recent years and the "Grammy" award, the most authoritative music award, to introduce several influential Chinese singers overseas and representative American singers. Comparing and analyzing the current Chinese and American popular music and comparing their influence is of great significance for grasping the development trend of the times, understanding popular trends, enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture, and using music as a carrier to promote Chinese culture to the world stage.

| KEYWORDS

Pop music; pop singer; China; US; Comparative Analysis

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1. Introduction

As an important part of popular culture, the development of pop music is closely related to the context of social development. Pop music originated in the United States in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. It has a short structure, popular content, and lively form. The United States is the distribution place of global pop music, and various types of music are also showing a trend of diversified development. In recent years, with the continuous development of the music industry, pop music has also become an important aspect of highlighting the cultural soft power of the country and the region. In the context of globalization and the competition between China and the United States, the competition for cultural soft power between the two countries is becoming increasingly fierce. Therefore, comparing and analyzing the current Chinese and American popular music and its influence helps grasp the development trend of the times, understand the popular trend, and enhance the soft power of Chinese culture. It is of great significance to promote Chinese culture to the world stage with music as a carrier.

In August 2022, the American music organization Billboard officially announced its entry into China, focusing on the dynamics of global music and coming to China to promote the development of the Chinese music scene. Billboard magazine has expanded to China at the same time and will work with local singers to promote their publications. Billboard not only brings the content of global pop music to Chinese audiences but also spreads and promotes Chinese artists and musicians around the world, realizing the powerful combination of the popularity, authority, and influence of singers on the Billboard list. This allows Chinese singers to highlight China's image on a broader platform. With the continuous development of Internet information technology and the deep integration of various media platforms, the spread of popular music has the characteristics of increased speed and breadth and expanded channels and spaces. The dissemination of popular music culture can make full use of media resources and technologies

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to create excellent local music. In the dissemination of music culture, pop singers have the flavor of the times. They are popular and can lead the trend. The commercial value and social influence of singers in society are increasing, and their image serves as the core symbol of cultural production and consumption. Singers are artists of life and culture. Their works not only express personal emotions but also reflect the cultural environment in which singers live. Therefore, this article will compare and analyze the influence of top pop singers in China and the United States from the following aspects: the number of fans, the number of listeners, the number of MV broadcasts on major music and social platforms at home and abroad, as well as the types and styles of songs created by singers.

2. The Selection of Pop Singer Samples

After Billboard magazine entered China, the first two covers were Jackson Wang and G.E.M, which referred to the singer search rankings of NetEase Cloud Music and QQ Music, and finally decided to use Jackson Wang, G.E.M, and JJ.Lin as reference samples. In the choice of American pop singers, the author mainly refers to popular singers who have won many awards in the Billboard Music Awards and Grammy Awards and finally selects the artist with the most nominations for the 2022 Grammy Awards, Jon Batiste, who has won five Grammy Awards, Olivia Rodrigo won 7 awards at the 64th Grammy in 2022 and 7 awards at the 2022 Billboard Music Awards, becoming the most awarded female singer this year, and Drake is the most awarded artist of all time at the Billboard Music Awards, winning a record 29 times and holding the title in 11 categories.

3. Comparative Analysis of Sino-US Pop Singer's Influence

Competition among nations is an eternal theme in the development of world civilization. It is the leading force driving changes in the international political and economic landscape. Any historical period is filled with the rise or fall of competition and games between countries. Under the conditions of today's era, the performance of a country's rise is no longer the previous territorial expansion but the expansion of political, cultural, and economic influence and scope, of which cultural soft power is a part that cannot be ignored. Pop culture is an important aspect of that.

Influence is an abstract concept that can be analyzed from many aspects, such as the singer's singing skills, creativity, album sales, number of concerts, awards, popularity, etc. The author will here compare and analyze the influence of Chinese and American pop singers from two dimensions. The first dimension is the market influence, including the number of media fans, the latest album playback volume, and record sales. The second dimension is the influence of music, including lyrics and music style innovation, and the influence and contribution to the historical process of pop music.

3.1 Market influence

Pop music is a kind of music form produced with the rise of the modern cultural industry and mass culture; it has commercial attributes. In today's music market, with the Internet as the medium, there are various ways to produce and release music. Music works are not only spread on music platforms but also on mainstream social platforms; they are known as one of the important ways of publicity and communication.

The development of the Internet has shortened the distance between music production and the audience. In the era of digital media, the most intuitive way to present the market influence is the number of fans of singers on various platforms, album sales volume, MV playback volume, and so on. Therefore, in terms of the selection of comparative data, the author takes into account the mainstream social media platforms and related music platforms at home and abroad. Weibo, the network platform with the widest coverage and the highest usage rate in China, and the mainstream social media platforms Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, the largest video search and sharing platform in the world. Music-related platforms, such as QQ Music and Netease Cloud Music. Collect the relevant data on the platform for comparative analysis.

Table 1: Comparison of the Number of Followers on Sino-US Social Media Platforms 2022.9 Version

	Instagram	Twitter	Weibo
Jackson Wang	30, 300, 000	6, 397, 802	30, 902, 000
JJ.Lin	4, 710, 000	1, 086, 532	54, 229, 000
G.E.M	6, 830, 000	156, 396	34, 465, 000
Drake	799, 000	39, 755, 453	none
Olivia Rodrigo	27, 630, 000	1, 907, 899	17, 000
Jon Batiste	668, 000	177, 445	none

Source: Sino-US social media platforms

Table 2: Number of Fans and Subscriptions on Sino-US Music Platforms

2022.09 Version

	Netease Cloud Music	QQ Music	Youtube Subscription
Jackson Wang	2, 719, 000	1, 487, 000	4, 940, 000
JJ.Lin	8, 669, 000	18, 603, 000	1, 420, 000
G.E.M	7, 667, 000	15, 951, 000	2, 610, 000
Drake	935, 000	429, 000	26, 900, 000
Olivia Rodrigo	61, 000	45, 000	9, 870, 000
Jon Batiste	10, 000	4, 497	294, 000

Source: Sino-US music platforms

The market influence of singers cannot be simply compared to the number of fans on domestic and foreign media platforms, and two key factors need to be taken into account. First, there are certain restrictions on the use of the external network in China, which leads to the low utilization rate of Instagram and Twitter among Chinese people. Although Instagram and Twitter are used all over the world, and they use more than 30 languages, due to the universality of English and the origin of Twitter in the United States, the most common language on Twitter is still English, and the language barrier is currently the main problem for Instagram and Twitter in Chinese country. These two are unavoidable factors in why Twitter is used less.

Compared with Weibo, Instagram and Twitter, as highly representative social network media in the world, have far more users than Weibo. Many domestic singers will use overseas online media platforms to increase their popularity and increase their overseas popularity. Therefore, in the data comparison, the author puts more emphasis on the restrictions of the Internet and language barriers; Chinese singers are not only limited to the local market, but break through the limitations, expand the audience group, and gain certain influence and popularity in overseas media platforms. Jackson Wang has more than 30 million Instagram followers, and Olivia Rodrigo and Mars Burno, who won many awards at Billboard Music Awards and Grammy Awards, have more than 20 million followers, so Jackson's overseas influence can be imagined.

From the perspective of Chinese media platforms, Weibo, as one of the social giants in China, is mainly oriented toward Chinese users, and its degree of internationalization is not high. Many functions are designed according to the preferences of Chinese users, and their usage habits are quite different from those abroad. This makes it difficult for foreign singers to use the Weibo platform for publicity. The accounts about these singers on Weibo are basically formed spontaneously by Chinese fan groups, mainly carrying information and updates released by foreign pop singers on overseas social platforms. In terms of the number of fans, overseas fans of Chinese pop singers occupy the majority on Instagram and Twitter, including overseas students and some Chinese groups, but most of them are overseas fans. In recent years, the number of fans of American pop music in China has been increasing, and the market size has also been expanding. However, there are very few American pop singers who can really come to China. Limited by language and the Internet, there are internationally famous and influential singers. American pop stars don't necessarily get noticed in China. For example, among the sample of American singers selected, Olivia Rodrigo became popular in major media on the Internet, but domestic reports on her only came from individual music critics. She has nearly 30 million followers on Instagram, but she has no social accounts in China. As the biggest winner of the 2022 Grammy Awards, Jon Batiste is also the first black musician to win this award in 14 years. Such a highly influential singer in the world is almost invisible on social media platforms at home and abroad.

In addition to being influenced by the operation model of Weibo and the user groups, the following two aspects also have a significant influence on the influence of American singers in China. On the one hand, the news channel and the Chinese entertainment media prefer to report domestic singer information; the American singers face Chinese cultural approval, which includes not only the content of the song but also the performance form, the song with naked, sexual suggestion and other elements are not easy to review, especially the hip-hop style songs often involve violent and politically sensitive subjects. Because of these restrictions, American singers in China are less influential than in China.

As can be seen from the above analysis, most social platforms are only used to assist publicity and increase popularity to drive the popularity of songs, while music platforms are the main territory of singers. According to the data in Table 2, American pop singers have personal home pages on Netease Cloud Music and QQ Music with a certain amount of attention. Compared with Weibo, the music platform still has a certain appeal.

In the era of music tends to be divided, Netease Cloud Music relies on its unique community operation advantages and unique music social function of strong music communication power. QQ Music, whether in the dissemination of music works or as a sales channel of digital albums, has a huge user base that constitutes its strong support point. QQ Music is in a leading position in the

online music platform digital album, and its operation ability of copyright has been accepted by musicians, record companies, music platforms, and listeners at home and abroad. In the sample of singers selected by the author, although American singers have entered the domestic Netease Cloud and QQ music platforms, there is still a big gap between their activity, interaction, and fan effectiveness and Chinese singers.

Drake is relatively prominent among American singers, and there is a big gap between the data of other American singers in the sample. This has a lot to do with the singer's outing time and genre audience. Drake became popular as early as 2015 and 2016 and released a total of two years 10 singles and 4 albums; among them are One Dance, Hotline Bling, and other outstanding singles that have occupied the top of the Billboard chart for a long time. The new album Views also has many songs airborne high, topping the B list 200 albums, and Future The cooperation What A Time To Be Alive sold 375,000 copies in the first week and directly reached the top 200 albums on Billboard. The popular rising star Olivia Rodrigo has won the favor of American teenagers with her external image and teenage pop music style, but she did not have much response in the Chinese market. Compared with the relatively balanced and stable subscription data of Chinese singers on YouTube, there is no huge gap, and they continue to output excellent works, and they have also gained a large number of overseas fans. But compared to the American singers, they are still slightly inferior. After all, they are at home in the United States, and the relevant mainstream media will also promote local singers, especially these singers who have won Grammy awards and topped the Billboard charts.

Table 3: The number of subscribers and views on the YouTube homepage and the accumulated views of the latest album MV

	Youtube Views	Youtube Registration Date	Latest Album	Cumulative Play Volume
Jackson Wang	507, 891, 265	2019. 2. 6	Magic Man	64, 731, 000
JJ.Lin	1, 089, 038, 024	2006. 2. 11	一定会/After the Rain	3, 447, 000
G.E.M	1, 936, 440, 226	2019. 2. 9	启示录	26, 210, 000
Drake	13, 207, 804, 744	2009. 6. 6	Honestly, Nevermind	101, 700, 000
Olivia Rodrigo	2, 743, 217, 229	2014. 7. 12	Sour	1, 520, 000, 000
Jon Batiste	50, 061, 047	2013. 9. 11	We Are	32, 623, 000

Source: Author's calculation

YouTube has become the most popular means of experiencing online music in the field of digital music. YouTube has always taken the initiative in the MV field. In addition to single MVs, many album tracks and live shows will also be released on this platform, attracting singers from all over the world to gather here. Compared with the data of Chinese singers on YouTube, it can more intuitively reflect the overseas popularity of Chinese singers.

When analyzing the data in Table 3, the author will compare the singers who registered YouTube accounts at the same time to analyze their home page views and latest album playbacks. Chinese singer JJ Lin and American singer Drake have a registration time difference of 3 years. Compared with other singers, they debuted earlier. They are senior singers. Both have similar views on the YouTube homepage, but they focus on the accumulated views of the latest album; Drake is about 28 times more than JJ Lin. YouTube users pay little attention to the two singers, but their attention to their works is very different. The reason for this gap is that, on the one hand, most of YouTube's user groups are English speakers, and Chinese songs have a certain language barrier; on the other hand, in the American cultural environment, Drake's creations are quite attractive. His works have caused a sensation in different music fields, such as electronic/dance music, Hip-Hop/Rap, R&B, and Pop. In addition to the vocals of R&B, Pop, and Melodic Rap, the album Honestly, Nevermind also widely uses traditional Deep House, Baltimore Club, Jersey Club, IDM, Genuine Melodic House, Ambient/Electronica, Tribal House, Jazzy House, TrapBeat's genre or elements. Therefore, in the environment and cultural atmosphere of the United States, the influence of local singers is self-evident, but referring to Table 3, it is not difficult to find that there are also situations in which Chinese singers have the same browsing and playback volume as American singers.

In terms of comparison of album sales data, because of the immature development of domestic album sales statistics websites, there are still many aspects that need to be improved. At present, the website with the most cited data in the circle is y.saoju.net, which is used to count the number of singers' Album sales data and concert information, but the timeliness of the website needs to be investigated, and the latest album sales data of many singers have not been updated. At present, there is no unified website covering the digital album sales and rankings of all singers in China and the United States. On some websites that count the sales of digital albums of American singers, there are almost no traces of Chinese singers. The same is true in China. To highlight the influence of Chinese singers in the United States, the author chooses the data on the Billboard 200 (Billboard album chart) for comparison. Billboard 200 is a sales and album chart produced by Billboard, and it is the most authoritative album chart in the United States. In the weekly list from September 19, 2022, to September 25, 2022, Jackson's latest album Magic Man airborne to No. 15 on the Billboard album chart, becoming the first Chinese artist to enter the Top 20 list. Not only broke the highest record of 32 for his first album, but also Olivia Rodrigo's Sour ranked 20th, and Drake's new album Honestly, Nevermind ranked 24th.












THIS WEEK				AWARD	LAST WEEK	PEAK POS.	WKS ON CHART
12		 American Heartbreak Zach Bryan	+	★	15	5	17
13		 I Never Liked You Future	+		12	1	20
14		 Gemini Rights Steve Lacy	+		14	7	9
15		NEW Magic Man Jackson Wang	+	★	-	15	1
20		 Sour Olivia Rodrigo	+		16	1	69
24		 Honestly, Nevermind Drake	+		21	1	13

Image 1 : Billboard 200 2022.9.19-2022.9.25 Weekly List

LW	TW	ARTIST TITLE LABEL	TOTAL	CHANGE	ALBUMS	TEA	SEA
1	1	BAD BUNNY UN VERANO SIN TI RIMAS (THE ORCHARD)	96,078	-9%	2,318	582	93,178
--	2	NAV DEMONS PROTECTED BY ANGELS XO/REPUBLIC (UMG)	62,084	--	21,432	252	40,399
--	3	OZZY OSBOURNE PATIENT NUMBER 9 EPIC (SME)	60,918	--	57,412	391	3,116
2	4	MORGAN WALLEN DANGEROUS: THE DOUBLE ALBUM BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC (UMG)	47,878	0%	4,610	866	42,402
--	5	KANE BROWN DIFFERENT MAN RCA NASHVILLE (SME)	45,036	--	20,966	2,854	21,217
--	6	YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN REALER 2 NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC (WMG)	39,996	--	292	76	39,629
5	7	HARRY STYLES HARRY'S HOUSE	37,559	-13%	6,841	656	30,061
--	13	JACKSON WANG MAGIC MAN 88RISING/WARNER (WMG)	26,417	--	24,758	365	1,294
20	20	LIL BABY MY TURN QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN (UMG)	20,255	-3%	79	42	20,134
19	21	LIL DURK 7220 ALAMO (SME)	20,120	-4%	21	83	20,016
18	22	OLIVIA RODRIGO SOUR Geffen (UMG)	19,619	-9%	2,520	113	16,985
21	23	DRAKE HONESTLY, NEVERMIND OVO/REPUBLIC (UMG)	18,749	-8%	81	180	18,489
23	24	POST MALONE TWELVE CARAT TOOTHACHE MERCURY/REPUBLIC (UMG)	18,255	-2%	627	418	17,210
16	25	KENDRICK LAMAR MR. MORALE & THE BIG STEPPERS PGI ANG/TDF/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE (I IMG)	17,890	-20%	2,949	53	14,888

Image 2 : Album Sales

Source: hitsdailydouble 2022.9.19-2022.9.25 Weekly list

From Image 1, we can see that Jackson's album weekly sales rank 13th, surpassing Drake and Olivia Rodrigo by nearly 10 places. From the perspective of album sales, whether it is weekly sales or total sales, Wang Jiaer's Magic Man Both are higher than American singers Drake and Olivia Rodrigo. This time Wang Jiaer's latest digital album is only available in the United States, and the sales volume is enough to show its popularity in the United States.

3.2 Music influence

In terms of the singer's musical influence, the comparative analysis is mainly conducted from the aspects of Chinese and American singers' awards, lyrics, and genre innovation. Since the content of this part is relatively abstract and cannot be quantitatively analyzed, we cannot draw absolute conclusions. In the influence analysis of this part, the author selects representative singers from China and the United States and analyzes their music cultural connotations and music influence from the cultural background of the singers.

3.2.1 Chinese pop singer — Jackson Wang

The influence of Chinese pop music is gradually expanding. In 2022, the Billboard Chart entered the Chinese market, and the cover story column will be planned around musicians. Jackson Wang will be on the first Billboard China cover as the Billboard China cover character. Jackson's latest album Magic Man in 2022 has reached No. 15 on the Billboard 200 album chart. This result is not only his personal best but also the highest record ever for a Chinese singer. He is the only Chinese singer officially followed by Billboard. At the same time, the number of Instagram fans has exceeded 30 million, making him the artist with the highest number of Instagram fans in the Chinese field. Burno Mars, who won 4 Grammys this year, only has 25.93 million fans, while Jay Chou only has 7.54 million fans on the ins.

Among Chinese singers, Jackson Wang's influence is unparalleled. His number of fans on Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and other platforms are all leading Chinese pop singers. The record set by Jackson Wang's debut album on the US Billboard in 2019 has not been broken by anyone so far. The Independent called Jackson Wang "the biggest Chinese pop star in the world." In white-dominated America, it is very difficult for Asians to fight for the right to speak, and Jackson Wang is an Asian in the American pop music circle. Occupying a place, the first album entered the Billboard 200, and the stage performance was ranked No. 1 in the world on Twitter. What deserves attention is that while Jackson Wang is not as good on the global music stage, he undertakes the mission of promoting Chinese culture and presenting Chinese music, culture, and art to the world. Jackson Wang was the first Chinese singer to appear on the main stage of Coachella. During the performance, he announced loudly on the stage: "This is a moment in history; this is 'demon man'. This is Jackson Wang from China!" He used The world's common language to tell Chinese stories. He has formed a cultural symbol. When he goes out, people will take the initiative to learn about everything about him, including his culture. Many foreign fans of Jackson Wang learned Chinese together to express their welcome to him, and many fans came to Chinese social platforms to follow Jackson Wang. He not only promotes Chinese pop music to the world but also shoulders the mission of promoting Chinese culture and strengthening cultural self-confidence. Accepted and appreciated by a wider range of music fans around the world, this is the meaning of culture going out.



Image 3 : Billboard Week Top-selling albums

3.2.2 American head pop singer — Jon Batiste

Jon Batiste was the biggest winner at the 2022 Grammy Awards, winning Album of the Year with *We Are*. Although he is rarely seen on various media platforms and lists, his influence can not be ignored, which is the embodiment of his emphasis on music over business. Jon Batiste is the first black musician to win the Grammy Album of the Year Award in 14 years. In addition, in this Grammy, Jon Batiste is also the artist with the most nominations, with a total of 11. *We Are* can stand out among many albums.

On the one hand, compared with other artists nominated on the list, Jon has made innovations and breakthroughs in music creation. Based on jazz, he has integrated a large number of black music elements. Musical and cultural, and social diversity. He also won Best Music Video for "Freedom," Best American Roots Performance for "Cry," Best American Roots Song for "Cry," and Best Score for the Movie "Spirit," for a total of five Grammys beautiful. In June 2020, as a representative of black artists, Batiste participated in the "Black Lives Matter" protest in Brooklyn, New York, and played the piano in front of thousands of people, using music and dance to protest police brutality.

In addition to the technical and musical value of the fusion of various black music styles, combined with Jon as the leader of the black affirmative action movement, it has a clear-cut meaning of racial unity and resistance to injustice. Jon said in an interview when he participated in a protest march held in Brooklyn in 2020, "Despite living in different communities, black music has always been an important thing to maintain this race and culture." For Jon, music is not limited to For entertainment; in the past, people mostly regarded music as entertainment, but more importantly, the power of music to heal and connect people's hearts, bringing peace is the deeper value and significance.

4. Conclusion

Through the above analysis, it can be seen that Chinese and American pop singers have a high local influence in both the market and the music. Most scholars choose to compare the differences in pop music between China and the United States, see the national character through pop music, or analyze and learn from American culture and character in American pop singers, but under the current cultural environment and international background, they emphasize the influence of the United States. At the same time, we cannot ignore the growth and progress of Chinese pop singers. We have reason to be confident that, relying on the profound Chinese cultural background and using digital media as the medium, China's pop music culture is gradually moving towards the world stage, with greater market potential and music potential. The exchange between Chinese pop music and the world is a two-way interactive process, which is the combination of the long-standing cultural temperament of the Chinese nation and modernization. In this process, Chinese pop singers shoulder the mission of creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture.

The data used in this manuscript is based on the data collected on social media platforms and online platforms in China and the United States, some data are updated in real-time, such as the number of views and fans, which are updated every second, and we cannot capture a fixed value. The object of this research is pop music, and other music styles are not covered by this study, and the comparison of other music styles is also of research value. In addition, due to geographical and language, and cultural restrictions, we cannot obtain the true reflection of American countries on Chinese pop music and singers. The media is only one of the ways to obtain information. Sometimes it is limited by politics, and there are many folk evaluations. In future research, we can go deep into the cultural environment of a country, experience a country's evaluation of foreign cultures and the real feedback of the public, and obtain first-hand information.

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