

Original Paper

Research on the Inheritance and Innovation of Zhanjiang Folk Music under the Background of Cultural and Tourism Integration

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of China's accelerating integration of culture and tourism, the preservation, dissemination, and social embeddedness of Zhanjiang folk music have undergone significant transformations. As a distinctive embodiment of Lingnan culture and maritime traditions, this musical heritage has gained renewed visibility through tourism-driven initiatives. However, challenges such as the erosion of traditional transmission mechanisms, homogenization of musical content, and the loss of cultural depth have become increasingly prominent. Drawing on theories of cultural ecology and culture-tourism integration, this study employs methods including literature review, field investigation, interviews, and case analysis to examine the historical and artistic dimensions of Zhanjiang folk music. It explores the role of folk music in tourism development and investigates pathways for revitalizing traditional music within the dynamics of cultural tourism. The findings indicate that while the expanding cultural tourism sector offers broader platforms for dissemination, the lack of robust preservation and creative renewal mechanisms may lead to the over-theatricalization, symbolic simplification, and commercial dilution of musical traditions. In response, this study proposes strategies such as establishing a multi-stakeholder system for music heritage preservation, promoting digital and cross-sectoral innovation, and strengthening cultural branding to support the sustainable development of Zhanjiang folk music within integrated cultural-tourism contexts. Overall, this research contributes to the academic understanding of regional musical culture and offers a practical reference for the contemporary transformation of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords

Zhanjiang folk music, culture-tourism integration, intangible cultural heritage, cultural ecology, heritage transmission and innovation

1. Introduction

With the filing of China's merging of culture and tourism at a faster pace, the preservation, communication, and social embedding of Zhanjiang folk music have been changed significantly. As a unique collective memory of Lingnan culture and maritime traditions, this musical heritage has got the new cultural visibility through the contemporary tourism-driven initiatives. Simultaneously, the thinning of tradition carriers, the musical content homogenization, the cultural depth disappearance, etc. issues have also become louder and clearer. This article, grounded in cultural ecology and culture-tourism integration theories and using literature analysis, field investigations, interviews, and representative case studies as methods, traces the historical and artistic aspects of Zhanjiang folk music, studies the employment of this music for tourism, and researches the revival of the traditional music method under tourism dynamics. It infers that the expanding cultural tourism sector provides larger dissemination platforms but, on the other hand, the nonexistence of strong preservation and creative renewal mechanisms may bring about the over-theatricalization, symbolic simplification, and commercial dilution of musical traditions. Urged by these revelations, the study drafts the measures like stimulating the multi-stakeholder system for the music heritage, promoting digital and cross-sectoral innovation, and facilitating cultural branding to nurture the sustainable growth of Zhanjiang folk music in the integrated cultural-tourism environments. This work, in general, deepens the academic understanding of regional musical culture and serves as a practicable reference model for the intangible cultural heritage contemporary transformation. The rising attention to cultural revival and the focus on regional characteristics in China have made the integration of culture and tourism a key force in local development. As cultural tourism moves from basic sightseeing to deeper experience-based activities, traditional cultural forms are placed into wider frameworks that connect heritage display, city image building, and cultural industries. In this changing environment, Zhanjiang's folk music—formed in daily life, local identity, and long-term community practice—has become an important subject for redefining cultural value and exploring new cultural innovation. Zhanjiang, located in the southwest of Guangdong Province, stands at the meeting point of Lingnan, maritime, and multi-ethnic cultural traditions. Through many centuries, its folk music has developed various styles influenced by migration, coastal living, and ritual customs. Melodies from the Leizhou Peninsula and work songs of fishermen show local musical taste and also carry collective memory and community identity. However, industrialization, rapid urban movement, and modern media have weakened the social environments and transmission systems that once supported these traditions. More young people now prefer global cultural products, and the original cultural contexts of folk music are slowly disappearing. Because of this, the protection and renewal of Zhanjiang folk music has become an urgent and complicated issue. At the same time, the fast growth of cultural tourism has created new chances for folk music to enter public view in different ways. A bigger tourism market and the growing interest in meaningful cultural experiences let traditional music reach more people. Stage shows, immersive cultural events, and digital media also give folk musicians more ways to express their work.

But when music and tourism come together, it often makes the culture too simple. Many traditional elements are shown in a very dramatic or symbolic way. This can make the depth and real meaning of folk music weaker in commercial situations. So it is important to study how Zhanjiang folk music can be protected, continued, and changed in creative ways under the culture–tourism integration. Using ideas from cultural ecology, intangible heritage studies, and culture–tourism development models, this research looks at the history, musical features, and modern uses of Zhanjiang folk music. The study uses fieldwork, interviews, and case analysis. The main goal is to explain the inside logic of how traditional music is changing today. It also tries to give strategies that can help the music continue and develop in a creative way that fits both cultural ecology and market needs. In general, this study gives more academic understanding of regional folk music and provides practical ideas for cultural development in Zhanjiang and the larger Lingnan area.

2. The Cultural Ecology and Artistic Features of Folk Music in Zhanjiang

2.1 Historical Origins and Cultural Formation

The development of Zhanjiang folk music comes from long-term cultural mixing, not from a single or isolated process. As an important part of Lingnan culture, Zhanjiang has been shaped by many waves of Han migration from the Central Plains, by maritime traditions formed through fishing life, and by contact with local ethnic groups such as the Li and Liao people. Since the Song and Yuan dynasties, different melodic ideas, rhythm patterns, and lyric styles started to blend, creating a clear regional musical style (Zhang, 2024). During the Ming and Qing periods, the arrival of Hakka groups added more musical elements, including new narrative structures, tune types, and performance habits. From a cultural ecology perspective, the growth of Zhanjiang folk music is closely connected to local production activities and ritual practices. Leizhou Peninsula is both an agricultural and maritime society, so music was part of farm work rhythms, fishing teamwork, and religious ceremonies. Leizhou songs were often sung during short breaks in farming work. Fishermen also used work chants to help group actions, such as rowing or pulling nets together. In this case, the music was not only a way of artistic expression. It also made the community more united, kept ritual order, and supported cultural identity. This close link with daily life gives Zhanjiang folk music its stable form and helps it stay alive for a long time. Zhanjiang is located on important sea routes, and this made it interact with Hainan, Guangxi, and Southeast Asia. These connections brought new ideas in melody and rhythm. They gave the music a more open style that shows the wider maritime culture. So Zhanjiang folk music has both strong local traditions and outside cultural influence. Understanding these historical and cultural roots is very important when we study how Zhanjiang folk music changes today, especially when it enters new cultural and tourism fields. This background also helps us explain different musical types and gives support for later discussion about cultural innovation (Xi, 2024).

2.2 Musical Types, Stylistic Features, and Cultural Meaning

Zhanjiang folk music has many kinds of musical forms. Each form was shaped by different social needs, ways of expression, and people's taste. The main types include farming songs, fishermen's work chants, ritual and ceremonial music, wedding and festival music, and some traditional narrative or performance styles. All these forms together build a cultural system that shows local society and daily life. In terms of style, the music keeps the smooth melodies and flexible rhythms that are common in Lingnan traditions. It also shows expressive features from the maritime culture. Leizhou songs usually use a small melodic range and have a soft and gentle flow. This makes them easy to sing during farm work or community events. Fishermen's chants often have a strong and steady rhythm to support teamwork. Ritual music often uses free tempo and a serious sound. It expresses spiritual and symbolic ideas in local belief systems. Besides the musical structure, Zhanjiang folk music also carries social, cultural, and emotional meanings. Folk songs describe rural life and include values, farming knowledge, and shared feelings. Work chants show cooperation and persistence. They express the rhythm of maritime labor and the spirit of fishing communities. Ritual music supports kinship ties and keeps the symbolic order in traditional religious life. In this way, Zhanjiang folk music is not only sound. It also shows community life and the regional view of the world on many levels. Performance practices also show the cultural complexity of this tradition. Many folk songs allow improvisation, so singers can change the melody or lyrics based on the situation. Work chants often use call-and-response and group participation to make collective identity stronger. Ritual music is usually performed by trained cultural members or specialists, which keeps a strong link between the music and the ceremony. Together, these practices create a cultural ecosystem that helps Zhanjiang folk music continue from one generation to the next. Overall, the many musical types, styles, and cultural meanings show that Zhanjiang folk music is both very traditional and able to change. This mix of stability and openness gives a strong base for its creative development in tourism settings and also supports new ideas for cultural innovation (Guo, Wang, & Li, 2025).

3. Challenges Facing Zhanjiang Folk Music in the Context of Culture–Tourism Integration

3.1 Intensifying Weakness of Transmission Agents and the Emerging Cultural Gap

As social structures and everyday lifestyles continue to undergo rapid transformation, the traditional mechanisms that once sustained the transmission of Zhanjiang folk music have been substantially weakened. What used to function as a community-rooted system—embedded in family networks, village life, and collective cultural practices—has gradually given way to fragmented and informal modes of learning. The authority and social roles of veteran musicians in rural society have diminished, and the model of apprenticeship based on daily immersion and intergenerational teaching has become increasingly difficult to maintain. Younger generations, drawn overwhelmingly toward popular music, digital entertainment, and urban cultural forms, display declining emotional attachment to local musical traditions. As a result, the community base that formerly upheld Zhanjiang folk music has noticeably

contracted. This structural shift is further compounded by the aging of tradition bearers and the scarcity of younger successors. Many of the remaining master practitioners have never benefited from systematic documentation or professional preservation support; Their knowledge is still mainly kept in the body and passed on through oral teaching (Zhuan, 2024). Once these lines of transmission break, the loss of cultural memory and musical skills cannot be changed back. In recent years, intangible cultural heritage policies have grown, but the gap between official protection and real community continuity is still very big. In Zhanjiang, many heritage projects focus on making records and giving official titles. But they do not always support the long-term growth of living practitioners. Because of this, their influence on local cultural ecosystems is limited. The fast commercialization of the tourism industry adds another level of difficulty. Using folk music in tourist shows seems to make it more visible, but these “performative revivals” often bring new kinds of cultural disconnection. Standardized choreography, artificial stages, and designs that focus mainly on visual effects do not show the real situations where the music was first used. When the performances become too stylized or too decorated, the music loses its social background and turns into only a visual symbol made for tourist expectations. Over time, these created versions of tradition may cover the real community practices. They may also push cultural inheritors aside and make their cultural authority weaker.

In general, the difficulties in the inheritance of Zhanjiang folk music do not come from one single reason. They result from the combined influence of population movement, cultural modernization, policy practices, and the business logic of cultural tourism. Understanding these issues in depth is important for later discussions on how to build a sustainable model for cultural inheritance in the culture–tourism environment. From this point of view, rebuilding a strong and meaningful link between the inheritors and their cultural environment becomes the first and most important task for supporting the long-term development of Zhanjiang folk music (Song, 2024).

3.2 Homogenization Challenges in Market-Driven and Tourism-Oriented Contexts

Although the expansion of cultural tourism has provided Zhanjiang folk music with broader platforms for public exposure, the accompanying market pressures and consumption-oriented logic have simultaneously intensified the risks of homogenization and superficial cultural presentation. As tourism destinations nationwide increasingly incorporate folk performance programs and regional music showcases, standardized production models have begun to dominate the industry. Within this environment, Zhanjiang’s musical traditions often undergo selective adaptation to fit the expectations of fast-paced tourist experiences. Performance teams tend to favor catchy melodies and simplified arrangements that align with stage rhythms, often at the expense of the intricate musical structures and cultural nuance that define the original repertoire (Zhan & Nan, 2025). From a broader perspective, content creation in tourism settings prioritizes spectacle and instant emotional impact. Traditional music that lacks dramatic visual appeal is often considered less competitive. As a result, some cultural products now mix in modern musical elements, such as electronic sounds, louder percussion, or multi-layer harmonies, to make the stage shows more attractive. This mixed style may help audience

acceptance, but it also slowly moves Zhanjiang folk music toward a more common performance style. This process weakens the special musical features that make it different from other regional traditions. In this way, the music becomes separated from its cultural roots and is turned into a “tourism product” for commercial use. Competition among tourism programs makes this trend even faster. To shorten production time and lower development costs, some organizers use ready-made “cultural templates.” They bring performance styles from other regions directly into Zhanjiang, and this often ignores local cultural traits. This template-based way also reduces the chances for Zhanjiang folk music to show its real cultural value in the tourism market. This kind of homogenization weakens community recognition of the performed content. And when real cultural practitioners are not included, it pushes the true musical tradition further to the side (Zhang, 2025). Overall, marketization and tourism have opened more channels for spreading folk music. But they also bring structural problems, such as making the culture too simple, using music only as a symbol, and repeating the same performance formats. Because of this, keeping cultural depth, authenticity, and local features has become a very important challenge in today’s development of Zhanjiang folk music. To face these problems, it is necessary to create a more balanced relationship between cultural heritage and market demands. This balance is the basic condition for finding sustainable and creative development paths in the future (Wang, 2024).

4. Innovative Pathways for Zhanjiang Folk Music Under Culture–Tourism Integration

4.1 Cultural Revitalization Through Performance Innovation and Immersive Spatial Presentation

As culture–tourism integration becomes more important in regional development, the way Zhanjiang folk music spreads has changed a lot. In the past, people sang this music during farm work, rituals, and village life. But today’s tourism cares more about immersion, stage feeling, and interactive activities. These new cultural spaces give traditional music new chances to appear again. They turn it from daily-life sound into a performance that can reach many more people. Because of this, scene-based shows have become a key way to bring traditional music back to the public. Many cultural tourism projects use lights, videos, and planned movements to create stage stories based on local traditions. For example, some night shows about maritime culture use the rhythm of fishermen’s work chants as the main story idea. This helps the audience feel the group spirit in the music through both sound and visuals. With this cross-media style, folk music becomes a cultural “text” that people can experience in a more emotional and meaningful way on modern stages.

Immersive cultural experiences also make new kinds of innovation possible (Cai, 2024). In rural tourism areas, coastal places, and old travel routes, traditional music is not only background sound. Now it appears in activities where visitors can join directly, such as music experience rooms, workshops teaching fishermen’s chants, or recreated ritual spaces. These activities let visitors learn the music in person. This gives them a feeling of cultural presence and helps the music return to its original social setting. It also makes the culture stronger and more continuous. Performance innovation also includes changing the musical structure and stage presentation. To fit modern stages better, creators

make some small changes but still keep the main melody and cultural meaning. They add stronger beats, more vocal parts, or instruments from both traditional and modern styles. Mixing Leizhou melodies with percussion, pipa, or digital keyboards makes a stage language that connects old and new styles. This keeps the main cultural ideas but allows flexible change in form. It also helps Zhanjiang folk music communicate better and look more attractive to today's audience.

Overall, these performance innovations and scene-based shows give more ways to spread Zhanjiang folk music. They also offer practical paths for creative development. By linking musical heritage with tourism themes and audience needs, these methods help the music reach more people and grow in new cultural settings. Because of this, creating performance models that keep authenticity but also fit market needs is very important for the long-term development of Zhanjiang folk music in the culture-tourism integration era (Liu, 2024).

4.2 Digital Empowerment and Cross-Sector Integration as Drivers of Innovation

Rapid growth in digital technology has greatly changed how traditional music is recorded, shared, and explained today. For Zhanjiang folk music, digital work offers more than new ways to keep records. It also builds many layers of cultural transmission, letting music that once belonged to local communities reach wider groups across different regions, media platforms, and social settings. With this change, digital tools make new kinds of reinterpretation possible while still keeping the cultural base of the tradition.

One major development is the careful recording and archiving of musical materials. High-quality audio and video, AI tools for sound repair, and digital transcription help keep important details, such as singing skills, rhythm patterns, and style differences among different performers. Projects like local digital heritage archives — often created by cultural groups and universities — play a very important role in protecting endangered musical pieces. Compared with traditional oral teaching, digital archives make the music easier to access, easier to repeat, and easier to study. In this way, they open musical knowledge to more people and give a strong base for research and creative use. Digital sharing through online platforms has also changed how Zhanjiang folk music reaches the public. Short-video apps, music streaming sites, and live online performances turn traditional music from something that is only preserved into something that moves actively through the internet. Young creators have tried remixing, rearranging, and mixing genres. Because of this, Leizhou songs and fishermen's chants now have more attention among online users. These new ways of spreading the music help young audiences become interested again and place the tradition inside modern digital culture.

Cross-sector integration is another strong driver of modernization. Traditional music is now used in films, documentaries, stage shows, video games, and animation. This lets its cultural meaning enter different media fields. Some artists even mix maritime rhythms with electronic music, hip-hop, or modern dance. These creative works keep the cultural meaning of folk music but show it in new ways. These cross-field collaborations not only increase the cultural influence of Zhanjiang folk music but also create new chances for cultural industry growth. At the same time, VR and AR technologies

provide new ways to make immersive cultural experiences. By digitally rebuilding fishing villages, ritual places, or farming environments, VR and AR let audiences experience folk music in scenes that feel real. This kind of “immersive cultural revival” goes beyond physical limits and helps people understand the social and cultural background of the music in a deeper way.

Overall, digital tools and cross-sector cooperation form an important innovation path for the future of Zhanjiang folk music. These methods change how the music is kept, shared, and shown, and they reshape its cultural role to fit modern media and society. Through these changes, Zhanjiang folk music is slowly building a more active, diverse, and sustainable system of innovation inside the larger trend of culture–tourism integration.

5. Case Studies: Practical Explorations of Folk Music in Zhanjiang’s Cultural–Tourism Projects

5.1 Applications of Folk Music in Representative Regional Cultural–Tourism Projects

As culture–tourism integration continues to grow, many tourism projects in Zhanjiang and nearby areas have started to include local folk music in their cultural design. Studying these cases helps us see how traditional music is used in tourism settings, how it is shared with visitors, and what problems appear when cultural heritage meets commercial production. These examples also help us understand how regional folk traditions are changing today. The Leizhou Cultural Tourism Zone is a clear example. The project highlights symbols of Leizhou culture and adds elements such as Leizhou folk songs, traditional vocal styles, and wedding songs into the space and performances. At the entrance and main square, Leizhou folk songs play repeatedly to create a strong local atmosphere and help visitors build an initial cultural impression. The well-known “Leizhou Night Show” tries to create a dramatic story based on traditional music by using theatrical singing, choreography, costumes, and lighting. However, field observations show that these performances focus more on emotional effect and visual beauty than on musical depth. Many complex rhythmic structures and performance features found in traditional singing are simplified or removed. This reflects a common problem in commercial tourism shows: artistic complexity is reduced when traditional genres are adapted for market needs. A different model appears in projects on Naozhou Island, where maritime culture is central. Here, fishermen’s work chants and songs from boat-dwelling communities are performed in settings such as “fishing-song experience boats” and “harbor morning shows.” Visitors can hear the music in the natural seascape that originally shaped it, which keeps a higher level of authenticity. But with increasing tourism competition, some projects started adding electronic beats or pop-style instruments to make the music more attractive. Although these changes increase entertainment value, they weaken the cultural meaning and the real labor rhythms in maritime musical traditions. In addition to large tourism projects, some rural revitalization areas also use folk music as a cultural resource. Local villages hold Leizhou song gatherings, ritual shows, and community performances to bring the music back into daily social life. These grassroots activities focus more on community leadership and cultural continuity instead of commercial profit. However, they have some limits because they often do not have enough money,

professional support, or strong ways to communicate with the outside world.

Overall, these cases show that Zhanjiang folk music is used in different ways in tourism. Large tourism parks focus on stage shows and cultural symbols. Maritime projects show the connection between music and the natural environment. Rural revitalization pays more attention to community traditions. Together, these examples show the two sides of folk music in tourism: it is an important cultural sign, but it can also become too simple or commercialized. Because of this, it is important to make clear what role folk music should play in different tourism contexts to help its sustainable and creative development.

5.2 Strategies for Integrating Folk Music Into Festivals and Tourism Branding

As Zhanjiang's culture-tourism system becomes more developed, festivals have become an important platform for showing and reinterpreting folk music. Festivals express local identity and also help build tourism brands. When traditional music is included in festivals in a planned and meaningful way, it can increase cultural depth, make themes clearer, and expand public influence. Recent examples show that festival use of folk music is moving from simple display toward richer cultural storytelling, although problems still exist. Major regional festivals—such as the Leizhou Cultural Festival, local folk ceremonies, and the Fishermen's Open-Sea Festival—often present Leizhou songs, fishermen's chants, and ritual music in opening ceremonies, parades, and stage shows. In these events, music helps create atmosphere, support ritual order, and shape meaning. For example, during the Fishermen's Open-Sea Festival, chants and maritime songs are used in boat-blessing ceremonies. They show respect for the sea and express hopes for good harvests. Through these ritual settings, traditional music gets new public meaning and becomes a stronger cultural symbol for local people. Festival music also plays an important role in tourism branding. In promotional videos, theme songs, and marketing materials, Zhanjiang folk music works as an audio symbol of regional culture. Producers often change melodies and rhythms a bit to create a clear and recognizable cultural image. A common method is to match the smooth style of Leizhou folk songs with videos of coastlines, fishing ports, or old villages. This makes the music an important part of storytelling and helps show the emotional and cultural identity of the region. It also makes the tourism brand stronger. However, festivals also bring risks of shallow cultural presentation. Many big events shorten or rearrange traditional music to fit limited stage time. Sometimes newly made "pseudo-folk songs" take the place of real traditional pieces. Large chorus performances may look exciting, but they often hide the gentle emotion and storytelling found in authentic genres. When music is used only as background sound, without explanation or demonstration of how it is performed, its cultural meaning becomes weak and mainly decorative. To deal with these problems, some festivals now use more detailed cultural methods. One way is to include explanations from heritage bearers, cultural stories, or ritual re-enactments so that audiences can understand the music better. Another way is to encourage participation, such as interactive workshops, chant-learning sessions, or traditional instrument demonstrations. These activities help visitors build emotional connection and increase cultural understanding. They also help the music play a stronger

communicative role. In conclusion, festivals and tourism branding offer strong chances to promote Zhanjiang folk music. But success depends on keeping a balance between authenticity and market needs. Adding deeper cultural stories, encouraging participation, and highlighting the role of real cultural bearers can make festival presentations more meaningful and help folk music remain an important part of Zhanjiang's cultural identity.

6. Strategies for the Transmission and Innovation of Zhanjiang Folk Music Under Culture–Tourism Integration

As culture–tourism integration becomes a defining feature of contemporary cultural development, the preservation and revitalization of Zhanjiang folk music can no longer rely solely on traditional transmission mechanisms. Instead, its future must be envisioned within a broader sociocultural ecosystem, where cultural value is renegotiated and multiple actors collectively participate in cultural production. A sustainable model hinges on the formation of a collaborative cultural ecology in which communities, government, tourism enterprises, educational institutions, and heritage bearers engage in dynamic, reciprocal interaction. Within such a framework, traditional musicians should not be positioned merely as sources of cultural materials but restored to their role as interpreters and narrators of cultural meaning. Communities, as the living environment of folk music, must regain agency in cultural practices so that musical traditions may continue evolving organically within everyday life. Meanwhile, government institutions need to move beyond short-term or project-based support. They should build long-term investment systems, improve heritage-focused education, and create open-access cultural data platforms. These actions can make a more stable and strong environment for keeping and passing on Zhanjiang's musical heritage. For tourism companies, it is important to develop cultural sensitivity in their business work. They should create content together with heritage bearers, tell deeper cultural stories, and design experience-based programs that show the real logic of musical traditions, not just use them as symbols or staged decorations. Only through shared participation and shared responsibility can the transmission chain become active again and cultural vitality be restored.

Based on cultural ecological reconstruction, the innovative development of Zhanjiang folk music needs to build meaningful links between traditional musical heritage and modern communication channels. Digital transformation gives new and large opportunities for recording, keeping, and sharing traditional music. By creating digital archives, audio–video databases, and open-access platforms, it becomes possible to go beyond the limits of place and time. This also helps keep different kinds of musical materials in a clear and complete way. Digital tools together with other art forms also give new chances for creative work. Technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality can rebuild ritual spaces and old cultural scenes, helping traditional music return to public attention in a vivid and immersive form. Music visualization, immersive theater, and interactive digital installations also make traditional music easier to experience in a modern way. Cross-sector cooperation is another important method. When fishermen's chants or Leizhou melodies are used in films, stage shows, modern music

arrangements, game sound effects, or sound designs in tourism spaces, the music gains new meaning in different cultural situations. At the same time, building festival-based cultural branding systems can help folk music become more deeply connected to regional tourism stories. In these systems, traditional music is not only a background element but becomes a key cultural symbol. With methods that combine cultural storytelling, experiential scenes, and digital communication, folk music can be transformed in high-quality ways while still keeping its authenticity and gaining more value in today's society.

In the end, the sustainable transmission and innovation of Zhanjiang folk music need a flexible balance between cultural ecology, tourism market needs, and modern communication methods. Real progress can happen only when different groups work together, digital technology supports cultural work, cross-industry cooperation grows, and cultural narratives become richer. Under these conditions, traditional music can change from something that is only protected to a living cultural resource that can grow, be reinterpreted, and renew itself. In this way, Zhanjiang folk music can build a strong and lively future in the era of culture–tourism integration.

7. Conclusion

Overall, the development of Zhanjiang folk music in today's culture–tourism integration shows both new chances and new problems. On one hand, traditional music has become more visible in tourism through performance innovation, festival activities, and digital media. This shows strong potential for cultural revival. On the other hand, problems such as weaker transmission groups, loss of original cultural settings, and increasing cultural homogenization create risks that may harm the core values of the music if they are not handled with care. This study gives several important insights. Building a cultural ecology that includes communities, heritage bearers, and the culture–tourism industry is necessary for long-term development. Using digital tools, cross-art practices, and modern communication methods is also a key path for creative transformation. Increasing cultural storytelling, offering richer experience formats, and improving cultural explanation are important for strengthening the expressive power of folk music. In general, the transmission and innovation of Zhanjiang folk music must find a careful balance between cultural authenticity and modern needs. With stronger cultural awareness and better industry practices, the tradition can continue to develop in ways that stay connected to its roots while also being open and active for the future. Through this process, Zhanjiang folk music can become more vibrant, meaningful, and sustainable in the long run.

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