

The Experience of the "Body-Mind Unification 'Field'" in the Aesthetics of "Seizing the Moment" Taking "Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program" as an Example

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ABSTRACT

This article takes the "Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program" of Beijing Dance LDTX in 2024 as the category, and combines the dual perspectives of participants and commentators to analyze the contemporary value and social significance of this activity through theoretical connotations such as enjoyment, body-mind unification, and field, and to narrate the contemporary development of Chinese modern dance.

Keywords: *Modern dance, Aesthetics of "seizing the moment", Body-mind unification field, Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern dance, one of the types of dance, is a dance genre that emerged in Europe and America at the end of the 19th century.[1] It has undergone over a century of development and has become the second largest universal dance language in the world after ballet.[2] As one of the representatives of the "eastward transmission of western dances" since the 20th century, modern dance has developed in China. This article takes Mr. Wu Xiaobang, the pioneer of China's "new dance" art, as the guide to discuss it.

Starting from Mr. Wu Xiaobang's return from studying overseas in Japan in the 1930s, the author roughly divides the development of modern dance in China into two stages. The first is the development stage of "new dance" in China from the 1930s to the late 1970s, which can be referred to as the "localization" development stage of modern dance in China. During his study overseas in Japan, Mr. Wu Xiaobang followed the Miyamoto couple to systematically learn modern dance. After returning to China, he resolutely devoted himself to the development of Chinese dance industry, taking "saving the country's survival" as his own responsibility and choreographing a large number of "new dances" with revolutionary era significance

[3]; The "Xiaobang Dance School" and "Xiaobang Dance Studio" founded by him successively have cultivated a large number of successors of modern dance, which can be regarded as the first incubation places for the localization development of Western modern dance in China. The second is that since the 1980s, with the revitalization and development of the dance industry, modern dance has gradually moved from the stage of "localization" in China to the stage of "local growth"[4] in China. Especially the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Class and Guangdong Modern Experimental Dance Troupe established in Guangdong in 1988, as well as the first Modern Dance College Class offered by Beijing Dance Academy, can be regarded as the cradle for nurturing the new generation of modern dancers in China; In addition, the first Modern Dance Competition held in Dongguan, Guangdong in 1994 is regarded as the first "enclosure movement" of modern dance in China.[5] What's more, several privately-owned professional modern dance troupes have been established in China, including Taiwan Cloud Gate Dance Troupe, Shanghai Jin Xing Dance Theatre, Beijing Dance LDTX, Beijing TAO Dance Theater, Shanghai XDT, etc. These modern dance troupes have accumulated a lot of resources in various aspects of

local development, including management, influence, and goal direction.

To this day, the development of modern dance in China has long changed the attitude of "indifference and absurdity"[6] in the early stages of reform and opening up, showing a more compatible, open, and diverse modernization pattern. Although the full picture of the difficult development process of modern dance in China has not been witnessed, the author has some humble opinions on this dance experience. The author believes that the contribution of Beijing Dance LDTX to the development of modern dance in China cannot be underestimated, and the contemporary development of modern dance in China may be glimpsed from it. This article takes this event as the category and combines the dual perspectives of the participants and commentators. Through theoretical connotations such as enjoyment, unity of body and mind, and field, it analyzes the social significance and contemporary value of the event, and narrates the contemporary development of Chinese modern dance.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITIES OF BEIJING DANCE LDTX

Beijing Dance LDTX (hereinafter referred to as "Leidong") was officially established in 2005. It is a private professional modern dance troupe jointly founded by Cao Chengyuan and Li Hanzhong. Under the leadership of Mr. Cao Chengyuan, "Leidong" has gained a reputation both domestically and internationally. The dance troupe's activities have multiple functions and significance, including operation and promotion, exhibition and performance of works, theoretical popularization, and dance promotion. And the author personally participated in the "Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program" organized by "Leidong" from May 2-4, 2024. (See "Figure 1") The mentor team included Mr. Cao Chengyuan, the artistic director, and six outstanding full-time dancers.

2024 Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program			
	May 02 Thursday	May 03 Friday	May 04 Saturday
Date/time	2 nd floor rehearsal room	2 nd floor rehearsal room	2 nd floor rehearsal room
10:00-11:30	Workshop 1	Workshop 4	Rehearsal/dress rehearsal
12:00-13:30	Workshop 2	Workshop 5	
13:30-14:30	Rest		
14:30-15:30	Workshop 3	Workshop 6	
16:00-18:00	"International Perspective of Modern Dance" Lecture 1 Cao Chengyuan	"International Perspective of Modern Dance" Lecture 2 Cao Chengyuan	16:00-17:00 2024 Spring thunder plan performance

Figure 1 Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program

a Picture source: official account of Beijing Dance LDTX.

3. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE "BODY-MIND UNIFICATION FIELD" IN THE AESTHETICS OF "SEIZING THE MOMENT"

In Vico's book "New Science", there is a passage that describes: "Heroes rely on various senses to recognize two factual truths in all economic theories, which are maintained by two

Latin verbs (education) and (training)... the former verb is used for spiritual education, and the latter verb is used for physical training."[7] The author believes that in today's era of technological advancement, contemporary Chinese modern dance art should also follow these two "facts and truths", that is, to use all senses of the body to feel the world and life itself.

3.1 Aesthetic Perception of “Seizing the Moment”

“Xing”, one of the interpretations in “Shuowen Jiezi”, refers to interest and taste.[8] The term “seizing the moment” first appeared in “Book of Jin·Collected Biographies, Volume 50”, describing Huizhi searching for friends, staying up at night to make a door, and bluntly saying, “I am seizing the moment and returning with full enjoyment, why bother to see Andao.”[9] In Chinese classical aesthetics, “xing” is precisely one of the concepts that best reflects the typical characteristics of Chinese classical culture. It integrates thinking modes such as the connection between heaven and man, the integration of emotions into scenery, and the observation of objects and objects into the process of artistic creation and appreciation.[10] The slogan of the “Thundering” training program, “Spring thunder rings, all things are born, may you come with joy...”, embodies one of the reasons why dance exists in the material world of reality, which is to pursue the infinite possibilities of human spiritual development. Zong Baihua once said, “Jin people have discovered nature outward and their deep affection inward.”[11]

3.1.1 The Aesthetic “Burden” That Follows Closely Like a Shadow

“Seizing the moment” can be seen as an aesthetic state of mind generated during the process of participating in artistic activities, and the so-called aesthetic state refers to “the opportunity for the aesthetic subject to enter the aesthetic activity, which is a concrete manifestation of the construction of the aesthetic psychological field”[12]; At the same time, it is also a progressive tense, not the source or result of aesthetic psychology. As for the essence of dance art, the “dynamic nature” as one of its characteristics is also the same, accompanying the entire process of dance art activities. In aesthetic psychological activities, when the subject forms a stable aesthetic state of mind, the psychological structure formed by various elements also emerges. In addition, the awakening of aesthetic consciousness (i.e. the awakening of oneself as a true person) promotes people to consciously enter the process of shaping their own aesthetics with beauty. Human beings are immersed in social life, constantly playing multiple roles such as family members, staff, and college students, just like characters in a theatrical sample, marching along the predetermined trajectory of life. Art is like drops of dew in the desert, infiltrating

every dried up soul and assisting individuals in self-improvement on a spiritual level. The ultimate goal of dance art is to “make people truly human”.

3.1.2 The Aesthetic “Illusion” of Infinite Expansion

Arnheim believed that movement is the most easily noticeable object in visual perception, and people will automatically respond to changes in the phenomenon of movement.[13] At the same time, in artistic aesthetic practice activities, “kinesthetic sensation occurs before other sensations”,[14] and kinesthetic sensation is often understood by people as an aesthetic perception “illusion” of the body. Based on the identity as a participant in this event, the author believes that the process of aesthetics should not be limited to the aesthetic psychological activities of the aesthetic subject towards the aesthetic object, but should also include the process of dancers creating and experiencing beauty themselves. It can be roughly summarized as the aesthetic perception on the basis of visual perception, supplemented by kinesthetic and kinaesthesia from different levels of subjects and objectives. This explanation can not only solve the common sense problem that is plagued in the field of aesthetic experience, but also help participants to better understand and grasp the essence of dance art beauty, and improve their aesthetic perception at the spiritual level.

3.2 The Expression of “Body-Mind Unification ‘Field’”

The concept of “body-mind unification” refers to the high degree of unity between the body and mind, which enables the perception of the existence of the body and the connection between the mind and body, allowing consciousness to command the body and unify them into a unified whole with the same qualitative characteristics.[15] In Mr. Lv Yisheng's book “Aesthetics of Dance”, there is a very appropriate expression that “the essence of dance beauty lies in its physical expression of consciousness, a perfect combination of inner and outer.”[16] The “body-mind unification” in dance art refers to the entire process of immersing the dancer's entire body and mind into the dance, actively experiencing and creating the beauty of the dance. It is also the entire process of the dancer's “body-mind unification ‘field’” from training to construction. The term ‘field’ here can be summarized into three meanings by the author: the first is a counting unit, referring to the number of

times or events in a popular sense. The second is to conduct dance practice and theoretical activities to enable participants to personally perceive the body-mind unification as a "field"; The third is the "dance theater", which refers to the final stage of the training activity where dancers present their performance results through integrated rehearsals and the use of the dance theater where "LDTX" is located.

The main content of this training activity includes three parts: the first part is modern dance training courses, which are taught with modern dance segments under the guidance of six "LDTX" dance instructors; The second part is the theoretical courses, which is a series of lectures on "International Perspectives on Modern Dance" taught by Mr. Cao Chengyuan; The third part is the presentation of achievements, integrating rehearsals and performance reports. By integrating the contents of the above three parts, participants can fully experience the transformation process from ordinary people to "dancers", and complete the entire process of "body-mind unification 'field'" from training to construction, from duration to synchronicity.

3.2.1 *The Training of "Body-Mind Unification 'Field'"*

Six dance instructors combined their previous dance experience and pre-designed and arranged dance segments based on established music pieces. The basic training mainly includes four aspects: the first is the use of body center of gravity, controlling the changes in rhythm, strength, and spatial size, and feeling the flow and transformation of body center of gravity. The second is the construction of body space, emphasizing the movement of the spine, the transformation of the center, and the independent and coordinated movement of each part of the body. Among them, Rudolf von Laban's theory of "spherical space" was applied, which establishes a spatial perception of "three axes and three faces" with the body core as the origin,[17] supplemented by flexible control of muscle strength, breaking the fixed movement program and body inertia, gradually establishing one's own movement thinking and mode. The third is the training of spontaneous perception, which drives the body to move slowly through breathing, improves one's sensitivity and curiosity, and feels the fusion and collision of the internal body "field" and the external space "field". The fourth is the expression of body texture, focusing on perceiving the speed,

intensity, and breathing of body movements, in order to "capture the signals emitted by dance thinking to fill the gap between the body and consciousness",[18] and feel the existence of the "body-mind unification 'field'".

3.2.2 *The Construction of "Body-Mind Unification 'Field'"*

The theory of "body-mind unification" in the field of art is the foundation of art discipline research and a comprehensive embodiment of ontology and epistemology at the dual level.[19] In terms of dance art, the construction of the dancer's "body-mind unification 'field'" should start from the perspective of dance aesthetics, observe human aesthetic perception, and then through the development and training of modern dance bodies, supplemented by in-depth understanding of dance culture theory knowledge, feel the resonance between human body and mind. Based on the practical experience of this event, the main approach is to train through fragmented teaching of modern dance, assist in understanding dance culture theory courses, and present in a theatrical format. From training to presentation, from duration to synchronicity, the construction and expression of the dancer's body-mind unification 'field'" are completed, allowing participants, regardless of their identity, to briefly experience the dancer's' halo 'bestowed by dance art. The key to this process is for participants to spontaneously and actively complete the transformation from ordinary people to "dancers".

4. ACTIVITY EVALUATION

A total of 23 students (including the author of this paper) registered for the "Spring Thunder Action · LDTX Dancer Training Program" event. Although each student's identity, age, and profession are different, they unanimously chose to participate in this physical and mental "feast" together. Through the full participation and learning of this activity, the author summarizes three characteristics. The first is the "popular" professional dancer teaching mode, which not only targets the general public, but also provides "LDTX" dancers with more professional teaching experience and directing opportunities; The second is a "miniature" college level performance program, which replicates the dancer training model of professional dance schools in terms of content, including the entire process from classroom rehearsals to theater performances; The third is the

gathering of dance enthusiasts in the "cultivation". The launch of the "Spring Thunder Action" can be said to be a blessing for every modern dance enthusiast. In just three days, not only did the students fully appreciate the charm of modern dance practice activities, but they also cultivated more future dancers and audiences for modern dance art.

In terms of the development of the dance troupe itself, under the self-financing private operation system of "LDTX", holding this event can maximize the creative potential of the dance troupe members. However, from the perspective of the students, the author thinks that there are still some issues that need to be taken seriously. Firstly, the "popular" teaching mode for professional dancers, due to its special target audience, should be no different for children and the elderly, with no distinction in learning. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the psychological changes of students during the learning process, and avoid resistance such as being in the front row of the privileged or being disinterested in learning; Secondly, the "miniature" college level performance program is too task oriented throughout the rehearsal process, which cannot fully stimulate the students' learning enthusiasm. In addition, the short cycle of this event and the time compression also resulted in the presentation of the final work not being satisfactory. These issues may seem minor, but as one of the early representatives of privately-owned modern dance troupes in China, the development scale and influence of "Lei Dong" are highly indicative of the times. However, it is precisely because the system of such dance troupes is growing stronger and stronger that the author carefully considers them, which is quite significant and difficult to return to. Due to limited experience, the author has not been able to provide more actionable suggestions here.

5. CONCLUSION

As Chinese modern dancers gradually appear in various dance competitions, exchange performances, and dance art festivals both domestically and internationally in the form of dance troupes or individuals, a strong Chinese style dance "storm" is emerging. Private modern dance troupes in China have explored distinctive development paths that are in line with their contemporary national conditions in terms of performance creation, funding systems, media promotion, and audience development. [20] It is

worth mentioning that "LDTX" does not have a dedicated choreography. As long as it passes the review, each actor has the right to act as a choreographer, and dancers are no longer mere imitation tools under the choreographer.[21] The above-mentioned training mode for dance troupe members has existed since the establishment of "LDTX" in 2005 and has never stopped in the past 20 years. Although the object of this article is the offline training activities organized and carried out by "LDTX", such activities have long been prevalent among private modern dance teams in China, such as Beijing Modern Dance Troupe, Shanghai Jin Xing Dance Theatre, Beijing Dance LDTX, Beijing TAO Dance Theater, Shanghai XDT, and Xi'an Natural Body Theater. Under the current big artistic development trend of "Chinese path to modernization", modern dance art needs to inject more Chinese culture, pool Chinese strength, expand China's influence and charisma. At the same time, contemporary Chinese modern dance expects every "future dancer" who loves dance to join, and it will always move forward on the road of "local growth".

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