

Communication Strategy of Chinese Traditional Opera Against the Background of "the Belt and Road"

Taking "Huayin Laoqiang" as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Under the strategic framework of the "the Belt and Road", Chinese traditional music is actively spreading to the foreign countries. Chinese traditional opera has distinctive national and local characteristics, and plays a positive role in the cross-cultural dissemination of art and culture. "Huayin Laoqiang" is a traditional folk opera in Guanzhong area of Shaanxi Province. "Laoqiang" has successfully spread across the country with the help of some marketing strategies and artistic performance innovation, enjoying high popularity. This paper analyzes the artistic characteristics and domestic communication strategies of "Huayin Laoqiang", explores the path of overseas communication, and provides reference for the communication strategies of Chinese traditional operas in the context of the "the Belt and Road".

Keywords: "the Belt and Road", Chinese traditional opera, "Huayin Laoqiang", Music communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the "the Belt and Road" national strategic framework, China's traditional music culture is going overseas and actively spreading overseas. Chinese traditional opera is an important part of China's excellent traditional music culture and is also actively responding to the mission of the times. In terms of the current understanding of Chinese traditional opera by overseas people, most of them are only familiar with the quintessence of China - "Peking Opera". According to statistics, at the beginning of the 21st century, there are 60-80 operas in China. In addition to "Peking Opera", other local operas also carry the unique cultural genes of the Chinese nation. There is no doubt about the importance of further promoting these operas to be broadcast overseas. "Huayin Laoqiang" is a traditional Chinese opera form originating from Huayin County, Shaanxi Province. Since its birth in the Western Han Dynasty, the popularity of "Huayin Laoqiang" has been relatively limited and is not well known outside Shaanxi. In recent years, especially after pop singer Tan Weiwei and "Huayin Laoqiang" artists

performed the song "Huayin Laoqiang a Shout" at the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in 2016, the art form of "Huayin Laoqiang" quickly became known to the public. This success is closely related to some communication strategies used by "Laoqiang" in the propaganda process.

2. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF "HUAYIN LAOQIANG"

"Huayin Laoqiang" has a long history, obvious musical and artistic characteristics, and strong regional characteristics.

2.1 The Historical Evolution of "Huayin Laoqiang"

"Huayin Laoqiang" originated in the Western Han Dynasty, and there are two possible theories about its origin. One is the battle song that originated from Zhang Liang in the Han Dynasty and inspired the morale of the army; The other is the labor chant called by the leader of the water

transport workers, which is mainly aimed at improving the work efficiency and handling speed. It is worth noting that the early "Huayin Laoqiang" is closely combined with the shadow play. The performers often perform behind the white screen of the shadow play. The audience can only watch various shadow play actions through the white screen, and the performers have no direct positive contact with the audience. In terms of opera, in addition to singing and lyrics, the body movements and expressions of performers are also important means to convey emotions. This form of performance creates a space separation between the performer and the audience, which is not conducive to the audience's comprehensive appreciation of the "Laoqiang".

In 2001, the cadres of the local Bureau of Culture, Sports, Radio, Film and Television proposed to remove the shadow play and the curtain and change the backstage singing to the front stage performance, which is a major performance form reform of "Huayin Laoqiang". This reform reflects the humanistic aesthetic concept centered on performers. After the reform, for the first time, the audience can intuitively see the unrestrained performance posture and bold and rough expression of "Laoqiang" actors, which greatly increases the stage appeal and sense of the times of "Laoqiang". In 2006, "Laoqiang" was selected into the national intangible cultural heritage protection list. In 2012, "Huayin Laoqiang" acted as the background music of the series in the film "White Deer Plain". Because its bleak and magnificent music style is consistent with the theme of the film, the selection of "Laoqiang" has led to the popularity of this drama. In 2015, singer Tan Weiwei and "Laoqiang" artists adapted one of the aria in a TV program, and successfully achieved the integration of "Huayin Laoqiang" and western rock music. At the Spring Festival Gala next year, "Laoqiang" shone brilliantly. Since then, "Laoqiang" has become well known to audiences nationwide.

2.2 The Artistic Characteristics of "Huayin Laoqiang"

Chinese opera is a highly comprehensive national art, and its artistic characteristics can be analyzed from two aspects: performance form and music form. In terms of performance form, "Huayin Laoqiang" originated from shadow play. After the reform of removing the curtain, "Laoqiang" absorbed part of the performance forms of Qin

opera; At the same time, it also retains some unique performance actions of the shadow play, and incorporates martial arts actions such as collapse and kicking. The performance style of "Laoqiang" is rough and unrestrained. The team is generally composed of five people, who play the roles of shadow player, deputy shadow player, front leader, backstage supporter and banhu. The five people both perform their respective duties and cooperate with each other, with complete lines of business. From the perspective of music form, the tone of Huayin Laoqiang is heroic and majestic, and its voice is loud and straight, reflecting the rich northwest style. Belonging to the music system of banqiang, the vocal cavity is divided into two types: Agong tune and Xianban tune. The music is gentle and lingering, with obvious features of drawl and falsetto. The roles are divided into four major trades: male roles, female roles, painted roles and clowns. The repertoire has a wide range of subjects and rich content, and is mostly based on historical repertoires. The accompaniment instrument is played by banhu in the Wenchang and bangzi in the Wuchang, plus clappers, gongs, cymbals and tuba. The singing is fresh and easy to understand, including manban, jinban, gunban, erliuban, etc. The music is relatively monotonous in form, and the singing is composed of upper and lower sentences. The types of the plate are zhengban, jinban, gunban, pieban, etc. The lyrics are mainly composed of seven-character sentences and cross-shaped sentences, as well as six-character sentences, eight-character sentences and nine-character sentences. The accompaniment is mainly simulated singing, set off rhythm and played through the door. The local opera "Huayin Laoqiang" has strong regional characteristics, reflecting the characteristics of loess civilization in northwest China. At the same time, it can also be seen from the aspects of business, music and content that this kind of opera inherits the typical characteristics of traditional Chinese opera.

3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF "HUAYIN LAOQIANG"

The communication of any type of drama is closely related to its artistic creation form, modern communication methods, and other factors.

3.1 Innovation of Performance Form and Promotion of "Star Effect"

Innovation is the key factor affecting the development of cultural industry. The reason why "Laoqiang" can be widely accepted by the public in this form is precisely because of the innovation of performance form, which is embodied in the adaptation and integration of music form. As far as singing is concerned, "Laoqiang" has a heroic and majestic tone, a high-pitched and straight voice, which has something in common with the singing method of rock music. The tone, rhythm and stress use mode of Shaanxi Dongfu dialect are also unique, which makes "Laoqiang" appear more "fierce" compared with other local operas, and the characteristics of language make the expression of emotion more powerful. Strong emotional expression also coincides with the spirit of rock music. Based on these common points, after carefully analyzing the respective artistic characteristics of "Laoqiang" and rock music, the art creators have targeted the two art forms to match and edit, explore the similarities between the two, and skillfully arrange and integrate the outstanding features of the two. It has not only highlighted their typical characteristics, but also promoted their strengths and avoided their weaknesses, so that the two different forms of music have reached a harmonious unity. The traditional opera "Laoqiang" has given new vitality through self-innovation. Among young audiences who know more about rock music, the acceptance of "Laoqiang" has been greatly improved.

"Star effect" means that enterprises invite popular stars to attend or endorse their products, so as to achieve the purpose of building a good corporate image. The marketing management team of the enterprise will contact the star brand resources through planning, organization, leadership, control and other channels to carry out marketing positioning, develop marketing strategies and effectively implement them, so as to meet the aesthetic needs of consumers and achieve the effect of improving product popularity. "Huayin Laoqiang" has successfully applied this corporate marketing strategy to the propaganda of opera. As a talent show singer, Tan Weiwei has a certain popularity among the young audience. The fan group pays attention to her works, so that the play "Laoqiang" has entered the eyes of the young audience. At the performance site, some famous artists also made many positive comments on this song. For example, Cui Jian believes that it "can be

regarded as a textbook rock music", and Liu Huan says that "every note can smoke when it lands". This kind of praise and recognition from famous stars has played a role of "star endorsement" in its dissemination process. The involvement of excellent singers in the process of communication has a positive effect on communication.

3.2 Application of Modern Media Means

With the continuous development and progress of science and technology and society, image media has become the mainstream means of communication. People are more and more accustomed to choosing perceptual media such as images to absorb information. Some scholars pointed out that local operas cannot attract young audiences, one of the reasons is the lack of the convenience of film and television. Television, film and other modern media means realize the combination of audio and picture, and are highly visual perceptual media, so they are used as a means of music art visualization. In the film "White Deer Plain", "Huayin Laoqiang", as a unique interlude, left a deep impression on the audience. Coupled with the bleak and vast background of the Loess Plateau and the storyline performed by the actors, the audience can have a deeper understanding of the cultural connotation of this drama. In the song "Huayin Laoqiang a Shout" at the 2016 Spring Festival Gala, the actors of "Laoqiang" showed the wild and simple nature of Shaanxi Loess Plateau culture to the audience through their highly infectious body movements. The mass media relying on modern information technology can break through the limitation of time and space to the maximum extent, promote the collection of information and cultural exchange, and achieve the best communication effect in a short time. The successful combination of "Huayin Laoqiang" with TV, film and other image media makes the audience feel the charm of traditional Chinese drama more intuitively.

4. OVERSEAS DEMAND AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE OPERA

Chinese opera is an important component of traditional Chinese culture, and in the context of the "cultural confidence" strategy, it has important communication significance and strategies.

4.1 Integrating Opera Resources and Disseminating "the Whole Opera" with High Quality

Integrity is one of the important characteristics of Chinese traditional culture. Since its origin, Chinese music has been the combination of music and literature. "The Book of Songs" is the best example of this feature. Chinese music is good at creating situations in which the audience can better understand the plot of the opera. A single aria is certainly the best way to quickly and intensively display the charm of traditional Chinese opera, but the narrative and plot of opera can only be reflected through "the whole opera". Otherwise, it will only leave a fragmented impression of Chinese opera to overseas audiences, which is not conducive to the real "going out" of Chinese opera.

"Huayin Laoqiang" has gained a high popularity throughout the country. The audience thinks that "Laoqiang" is a kind of music, but few people know that it is a genre of opera with myths, legends and historical stories such as "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms", "The Romance of the Sui and Tang Dynasties" and "The Romance of the Gods" as its main content. Handwritten script is also an important carrier in the process of traditional opera inheritance. It is necessary for people to explore, integrate and protect the existing opera resources, seize the essence of opera in the process of dissemination, and spread it overseas in the form of "the whole opera".

In 1935, Mr. Mei Lanfang, a famous Chinese Peking Opera master, went to the former Soviet Union to perform. Stanislavskiy and other well-known drama researchers and world-class artists also watched Mr. Mei's performance. Brecht was greatly inspired after watching the Beijing Opera, the epitome of traditional Chinese opera that attaches importance to the expression of freehand brushwork, which indirectly contributed to the emergence of the drama theory of "separation effect". This performance has made the "Mei Lanfang system" widely recognized by the international theater community.

4.2 Giving Consideration to Tradition and Modernity and Highlighting National Characteristics

In the field of traditional culture and art, European audiences are happy to see Chinese traditional music repertoire. They seem more interested in seeing how contemporary Chinese

artists face their own traditions and how to deal with the relationship between tradition and contemporary. Looking back on the propagation process of "Huayin Laoqiang", the combination of "Laoqiang" and rock music in "Huayin Laoqiang a Shout" is undoubtedly the most enlightening. The integration of "Laoqiang" and rock music has achieved an all-round organic combination, enriching the artistic content and form innovation. Traditional operas in different plays should also seek the best intersection of tradition and modernity, achieve "I am the main, for my own use", and realize the organic combination of traditional operas and pop music. Innovation is the first driving force for development. At present, the state emphasizes the innovative transformation and creative development of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the context of the new era. "Huayin Laoqiang", the creator precisely grasped the characteristics of Laoqiang's singing, keenly grasped the similarities between this traditional opera and western popular rock music, and further adapted and integrated it on this basis, finally achieving a better communication effect.

In the process of pursuing integration and innovation, it is also necessary to grasp the "degree" of universality and nationality. It is a must to emphasize the innovation in the form and content of traditional operas, but we should not lose the Chinese national characteristics as the core and essence. And there is also a must to be committed to disseminating complete classical operas and preserving the panorama of traditional Chinese operas. In today's era of emphasizing cultural confidence, it is absolutely not advisable to blindly erase its own characteristics and only integrate with the mainstream culture of the West.

4.3 Building a Communication Bridge to Promote People's Hearts and Minds

Language is a tool for expression and an important bridge for communication. For overseas audiences, although the story can be understood through the performance of opera actors, language barriers limit the depth of audience understanding of opera, which is a major problem in the process of overseas transmission of opera. Most traditional operas use dialects with strong regional characteristics in the performance process. For Chinese domestic audiences from other dialect areas, it is still difficult to fully understand and feel the artistic charm. Traditional operas are mostly adapted from ancient novels and legends, or are

processed by literati to make their language have a distinctive literary color. In order to meet the needs of rhyme, the language of opera also has its own unique structure, showing the characteristics of drama art, making its translation complex and difficult. Traditional operas are good at using figures of speech such as personification and rising, and there are many "culture-specific items" in the lyrics. These are factors that need careful consideration by the translator in the process of translation. Only by integrating the vision of the lyricist, translator and target language audience can people close the distance between the audience and the original lyric, make it easier for them to understand and feel the charm of opera, produce artistic resonance, and truly promote the close connection of people in all countries.

4.4 Actively Broadcasting and Developing Effect Evaluation System

In 2018, Huayin Laoqiang Art Troupe went abroad and went to 12 cities in the United States, including New York, for a one-month exchange performance. Zhang Xiangling's Laoqiang Club went to New Zealand for an exchange performance. In terms of other operas, Yu Long and the Chinese Philharmonic Orchestra have explored the combination of Peking Opera and Western classical symphonies, and have performed overseas for many times. With the increasingly active cultural communication and exchange activities, it is necessary to improve the evaluation criteria for these activities and develop a more objective evaluation system of communication effects. Chen Ping, Consul General of China in Iquique, mentioned that it is very important to evaluate the effect of communication to see whether the communication and exchange projects run can arouse the interest of the other party. If people can promote each other's interest in China and traditional Chinese culture through a cultural activity, the other party may continue to pay attention to and understand Chinese culture and art through other channels in the future — this is the real success of cross-cultural communication.

The success of "Huayin Laoqiang" lies in the innovation of performance form on the one hand, and the use of various marketing means on the other hand. Especially in developed countries such as Europe and the United States, the application of marketing strategies is particularly important. As far as China is concerned, it is necessary for people to carry out product creative design according to

the characteristics of foreign markets, and at the same time study and learn from the operation mode and rules of western cultural performances. The country should take the lead in building an international drama exchange platform. In response to "the Belt and Road" national strategy, many music festivals of countries along the "the Belt and Road" should be held. Relevant departments should vigorously promote the "exposure" of traditional operas on similar international stages, and communicate with foreign traditional operas to learn from each other, so as to achieve the effect of common communication and development. There is also a necessity build a long-term development of music cooperation and exchange mechanism, promote academic exchanges between China and foreign countries at the music level, and establish a long-term talent training mechanism. With the help of talent as the carrier, people can find the similarities in heterogeneous cultures, thus promoting the effective dissemination of Chinese music. As far as foreign countries are concerned, they should actively participate in the exchange projects in cooperation with important art festivals and cultural institutions. Most of these art festivals and cultural institutions have formed a set of quite mature operation modes, and have close cooperation with various media. They have high popularity and a large audience. Therefore, traditional opera should cooperate with well-known institutions that seek to be familiar with the market-oriented operation mode of local performances, fully respect and absorb the opinions and suggestions of overseas partners, make advance planning for target audiences, and pay attention to the role of brand. It will be of great significance to carefully cultivate international celebrities in the opera industry and give full play to talent advantages.

5. CONCLUSION

Since the reform and opening up, China's excellent music culture has actively gone abroad and spread overseas. With the continuous improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, traditional Chinese opera has also entered the vision of overseas audiences. For Western audiences, Chinese traditional opera is the concentrated embodiment of the mysterious image of the distant East, and it is not regarded as an art form similar to western stage plays and dramas. However, overseas audiences have now completed the "disenchantment" of traditional operas and started to examine and evaluate traditional Chinese

music with the same standards. The overseas communication of traditional Chinese performing arts is in the transition period to high-quality communication. The overseas dissemination of Chinese opera is also a cross-cultural communication activity. It is necessary to make use of the talent advantages of all parties, bridge the differences between different cultures, build a bridge of communication and understanding for the "going out" of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and truly promote the connection of the people.

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