

PAPERS IN ENGLISH

CULTUROLOGY

THEORY AND CULTURAL HISTORY

DOI - 10.32743/UniPhil.2022.93.3.13201

**STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
OF CANTONESE OPERA**

Luo Yueyu

*Student of Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou*

Zheng Lihao

*Student of Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou*

Xie Xiaoqing

*Student of Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou*

Li Yizheng

*Student of Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou*

Zhang Shuxing

*Student of Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou*

Liu Chunjie

*Doctor of Philosophy, lecturer, Guangzhou University,
China, Guangzhou
E-mail: 790849858@qq.com*

**ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ РАЗВИТИЯ И МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ
КАНТОНСКОЙ ОПЕРЫ**

Ло Юэ ю

*студент,
Гуанчжоуский университет,
КНР, Гуанчжоу*

Чжэн Лихао

*студент,
Гуанчжоуский университет,
КНР, Гуанчжоу*

Се Сяоцин

*студент,
Гуанчжоуский университет,
КНР, Гуанчжоу*

Ли Ичжэн

студент,
 Гуанчжоуский университет,
 КНР, Гуанчжоу

Чжан Шусин

студент,
 Гуанчжоуский университет,
 КНР, Гуанчжоу

Лю Чуньцзе

доктор философских наук, преподаватель,
 Гуанчжоуский университет,
 КНР, Гуанчжоу

[Fund] National Training Program of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Undergraduates No. XJ202111078091
 [Фонд] Национальный Студенческий Проект по Инновациям и Предпринимательству № XJ202111078091

ABSTRACT

Cantonese Opera, one of the major Chinese opera categories, is a traditional Chinese art form that originated in China's southern province of Guangdong. It shows much artistic merit and contains abundant cultural connotations. Since the 1880s, Cantonese Opera domestic and international audiences have widely accepted and appreciated the art. With the great support from the current Chinese government, local artists created various innovative ways to perform and express the art. This essay will give an introduction to its status quo and will briefly introduce Cantonese opera regarding its features, history, and overseas presence.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Кантонская опера, одна из главных категорий китайских опер, является китайским традиционным видом искусства, зародившимся в южной провинции Китая Гуандун. Она демонстрирует большие художественные достоинства и содержит богатые культурные коннотации. С 1880-х годов Кантонская опера получила широкое признание и высокую оценку отечественной и международной публики. При активной поддержке нынешнего китайского правительства местные артисты создали различные инновационные способы исполнения и выражения этого искусства. В данной статье описываются текущее положение и особенности Кантонской оперы, её история и присутствие за рубежом.

Keywords: Cantonese Opera, cultural transmission, classic art.

Ключевые слова: Кантонская опера, распространение культуры, классическое искусство.

Cantonese Opera, also known as Local Troupe or Guangdong Opera, is one of the most popular streams of Chinese Operas. The art is mainly popular in Guandong, Guangxi, Hong Kong, and Macau. Cantonese Opera has spread into Southeast Asia, the United States, and Europe. In 2009, UNESCO recognized Cantonese Opera as a new collection on its Representative List of Human Vocal and Intangible Culture Heritage thanks to a joint application by Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau. This passage will briefly introduce Cantonese opera regarding its features, history, and overseas communication.

1. Features

Cantonese opera classifies its performers into different roles or professions according to their gender, age, appearance, status, and personalities. There are mainly ten professions in Cantonese opera: Wu Sheng, Xiao Wu, Hua Dan, Zheng Dan, Zheng Sheng, Zong Sheng, Xiao Sheng, Gong Jiao, Hua Main, Chou Sheng. The roles' names and ranks were established in the 1900s despite the content performed by each profession may constantly change.

Learning the basics of Cantonese opera is the most significant part of being a performer. They must be proficient in four skills: singing, reading, acting (including dancing), and fighting with additional attention to applying their body, especially hands, eyes, positions, steps, and hair (also called "methods") appropriately.

Cantonese Opera uses traditional wind, strings, and percussion instruments. The winds and strings instruments entail gaohu, Erhu, yehu, yangqin, pipa, and Chinese flute, while the percussion instruments comprise different drums and cymbals. The percussion leads the music's rhythm and pace, and the traditional instrument, Erhu, leads the whole orchestra. The melody section and the percussion section comprise the instrumental ensemble of Cantonese opera. The percussion section is responsible for stage effects using "loh gu dim."

Cantonese Opera combines music, performance, literature, and fine arts for more than 400 years. It has become a pivotal part of Lingnan culture. Featuring profound artistic value and mass base, Cantonese Opera is a unique symbol of the Lingnan culture because it is entertaining and visually beautiful. It also creates a sense of cultural ascription among more than 70 million Cantonese speakers.

2. Development

During the Chinghua period of the Ming Dynasty (1465-1487), opera troupes from other areas frequently performed in Cantonese-speaking areas. Gradually, the locals began to sing operatic songs by imitating them, which brought about the Cantonese Opera's embryo. In the early Qing Dynasty, some local troupes that sang operas in "Cantonese style" appeared, helping lay the foundation for Cantonese opera formation.

During the Tongzhi period in the late Qing Dynasty, with many workers sent to work abroad, the Cantonese Opera began to spread overseas. After the Revolution of 1911, influenced by foreign films and dramas, the Cantonese Opera was introduced to many popular jazz songs and combined with western instruments such as violin, electric guitar, and trumpet.

From the early 20th century to the 1930s, Cantonese Opera underwent a series of transformations. These changes made the art even more popular, local, and modern. Nowadays, Cantonese people in rural areas still prefer to celebrate the Spring Festival by inviting Cantonese Opera troupes. In addition, Hong Kong's theatrical culture allows provisional theatres for troupes to perform during important festivals.

3. Overseas communication

After World War II, overseas professional Cantonese Opera troupes experienced a dark period due to lacking talents and outdated equipment. During this period, amateur Cantonese Opera troupes rose one after another. Troupes and actors in overseas Cantonese Opera have

changed from professional to amateur while the actors and audiences also changed from native Chinese workers to American-Born Chinese and Foreigners. At present, short operas with a strong focus have become the leading performance form for amateur Cantonese opera societies overseas. Short performance time, low operation cost and smooth learning cycle are the main reasons. Opera highlights are the best choice for amateur Cantonese opera groups. With the gradual development of multiculturalism abroad, Cantonese opera no longer stays in Chinatown but actively goes beyond. In recent years, festivals such as the Yangcheng International Cantonese Opera Festival, the European International Cantonese Opera Festival, and the Global Chinese Cantonese Opera Cultural Festival have been worldwide. Cantonese Opera is increasingly becoming a cultural brand with global influence and unique charm.

4. Conclusion

Cantonese Opera, as an important type of Chinese Opera and the artistic treasure of humanity, has been an integral part of Chinese culture. Its future is never brighter thanks to its increased appreciation by domestic and foreign audiences. It has become an important carrier of Chinese culture. However, the rapid lifestyle change and technological advancement had changed the entertainment industry, causing a significant impact on Cantonese Opera. The elderly population mainly constructs the current audience, while the young generation showed little interest in art. Therefore, preserving and rejuvenating the Cantonese Opera is vital for the art to shine brighter with its cultural characteristics.

References:

1. Cantonese opera / [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://www.ihchina.cn/yueju.html>. (date of application: 21.10.10).
2. Greater Bay Area: Make Cantonese opera popular / [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://www.ihchina.cn/Article/Index/detail?id=22874> (date of application: 21.10.10).
3. Luo Ming, Luo Li. Cantonese Opera // Guangdong Education Press, 2010. P. 45-46. [in Chinese]
4. Li Jianqin, Tang Liangpin. Research on the innovative strategy of the inheritance and development of Cantonese Opera Art // Song of the Yellow River, 2020. №13. P. 134-135. [in Chinese]
5. Shen Youzhu. New Changes in the Overseas Dissemination of Contemporary Cantonese Opera // Drama (Journal of Central Academy of Drama), 2015. № 4. P. 88-97. [in Chinese]
6. Yu Yong. The Origin, Formation and Development of Cantonese Opera in Ming and Qing Dynasties // Chinese Opera Press, 2009. P. 38-40, 130-131, 142-144. [in Chinese]
7. Liu Yunde, Yang Yihong. The Cultural Mission of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau // China Investment, 2017. №23. P. 62-64+58-61. [in Chinese]
8. Zeng Yanwen, Li Yanxia. Cultural ecology perspective of cantonese opera spread overseas and rheological // Sichuan Drama, 2020. № 3. P. 59-62. [in Chinese]
9. Jue Hong. Red bean in the south: Characteristics and development vision of Guangxi Cantonese Opera // 2014. №5. P. 11-13. [in Chinese].