

Exploration into the Development of Hubei Dance Art Nourished by the Yangtze River Culture

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Abstract. As an important natural and cultural resource in Hubei Province, the Yangtze River has had a profound impact on Hubei's dance art. Its magnificent natural scenery and rich cultural heritage provide endless creative inspiration for dance artists, nurturing a series of dance works with unique styles and artistic charm. The dance art in the Yangtze River Basin not only retains elements of the Central Plains Chinese ritual culture, but also extensively absorbs the essence of traditional culture in southern ethnic minority areas, forming an aesthetic characteristic that combines mystery and romance, complexity and simplicity, gentleness and heaviness. Hubei dance art actively integrates the red stories of the Yangtze River circulation into its creation, combining revolutionary spirit with dance art, further enhancing the artistic value and social significance of the works, and inheriting and promoting red culture. In addition, the nourishment and infiltration of the Yangtze River not only enriches the expressive techniques and stylistic characteristics of dance art, but also injects new vitality and connotation into it, promoting the sustainable development and innovation of Hubei dance art. At the same time, as a link between Hubei and other regions, the Yangtze River has also promoted the exchange and integration of Hubei dance art with other regional art forms, further enriching the connotation and expressive power of dance art.

Keywords: Yangtze River; Hubei; Dance.

1. Introduction

In the long river of history, the Yangtze River is like a majestic dragon, winding and twisting through the vast and fertile land of central China. Its magnificent and boundless scenery is like the most beautiful and moving poem in the world, singing the vicissitudes and glory of thousands of years. From the ancient Chu Dynasty to today's modern Hubei, the Yangtze River is like a kind and great mother, nourishing every inch of skin and every soul on this land with its selfless irrigation and generous gifts. She not only provided a solid material foundation for the prosperity of the Chu state, but also nurtured a unique and rich Yangtze River culture for this land.

The Yangtze River culture, as an important component of Chinese culture, has unique charm and value. It combines the traditional culture of Chu State with the natural landscape of the Yangtze River, forming a unique regional culture and ethnic customs. Under the influence of the Yangtze River culture, the people of Hubei have developed the characteristics of diligence, courage, wisdom, and openness, injecting infinite vitality and energy into this land.

2. The River Nurtures Dance Styles

The Yangtze River Basin, an ancient and vast land, has been one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization since ancient times. Its unique geographical environment and cultural background provide unique conditions for the birth and development of dance art. On this land, the dance art of the Yangtze River Basin, especially the dance in Hubei Province, exhibits unique style characteristics. These characteristics are deeply rooted in the soil of the Chinese ritual culture in the Central Plains, and widely absorb the essence of traditional culture in southern ethnic minority areas. They blend and permeate each other, jointly nurturing an aesthetic characteristic of mystery and romance coexisting, complexity and simplicity intertwined, and softness and heaviness unified. In the dance of the Yangtze River Basin, we can see the solemnity and elegance of the Central Plains Chinese ritual culture, as well as feel the enthusiasm and exuberance of the southern ethnic minority

culture. The integration and collision of this culture not only enriches the expressive techniques and stylistic characteristics of dance art, but also injects new vitality and connotation into it.

The history of Chu dance can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. With the rise and expansion of the Chu state, Chu dance gradually spread and developed widely in the Yangtze River Basin. During the Warring States Period, the abundant water of the Yangtze River really provided the Chu people with unique natural conditions, making them have inexhaustible water resources. This abundant water resource not only nourished Chu's agriculture, fisheries and other industries, but also nurtured Chu people's profound emotions and unique aesthetics towards water. The Chu people love water not only because it is the source of life, but also because it symbolizes the flow, change, and endless vitality. The people of Chu drew inspiration from the flow of water and created unique culture and art. In their dance, there is a sense of admiration and reverence for water. Although Chu dance originated in the Central Plains, it gradually formed its own unique local characteristics and romantic charm through the integration with the indigenous and barbarian cultures in the south. Long sleeves and slim waist are the basic characteristics of Chu dance, as well as the regional fashion and aesthetic standards in the Jingchu area. Chu dance, with its graceful and flowing artistic beauty and strong colors full of romantic imagination, showcases the graceful and gentle beauty of the Chu people. At the same time, Chu dance also emphasizes the beauty of dance form and rhythm, pursuing the "three bends" style of high difficulty dance form, fully expressing the beauty of human curves. Throughout the long historical process, Chu dance has continuously absorbed and integrated various cultural elements, forming the rich and colorful art forms we see today. Inspired by water, it shows the deep friendship of Chu people for the Yangtze River and their love for life with its soft, vigorous, flexible and steady dance movements.

In the dance art of Chu, Chu people often imitated the form of water in daily life. The "bow waist" and "curled up" forms in Chu dance vividly demonstrate the beauty of dance that resembles rippling water waves. The dancers, with their slender waist as the axis, continuously fold lightly to the left and right like a wave. This dance movement not only has visual impact, but also deeply conveys the Chu people's love and reverence for water. When describing the dance moves of palace dancers in the early Han Dynasty in "Wu Fu", Fu Yi wrote: "The Snake Maiden Ran is weak, the clouds sway and sway. Her body is like a swimming dragon, and her sleeves are as plain as silk." As Han dance inherits the Chu style, this description indirectly reflects the characteristics of Chu dance. And the unique charm of Chu dance is vividly depicted with phrases such as 'circling around the body like a ring, once circling around the ground, supporting oneself in Ana, moving and turning music, so graceful as a god, body like autumn medicine exposed to the wind, hair like a knot, galloping like a startle'. The descriptions of "circling like a ring" and "swimming like a dragon" in these poems undoubtedly evoke the softness and agility of the Yangtze River water waves, while "galloping like a startle" and "drifting like clouds" capture the ever-changing and unpredictable characteristics of water waves. The dance forms in Chu dance and the descriptions in the poems collectively reflect the influence of water as an important element of Chu culture. They not only shaped the unique aesthetic concepts of the Chu people, but also deeply influenced their personality and spiritual outlook. Chu people draw inspiration from water and create a dance art that is both gentle and vigorous, dynamic and steady. This is a vivid portrayal of their harmonious coexistence and mutual influence with water. Therefore, the forms of "bow waist" and "continuous curling" in Chu dance, as well as the related poetic descriptions, are important manifestations of water elements in Chu culture, which together constitute the unique and rich cultural heritage of the Chu people.

The influence of the Yangtze River on Chu dance is profound and unique. It is not only the natural and cultural background for the formation of Chu dance style, but also an important source of its artistic soul. Chu dance, nourished by the Yangtze River, blends the essence of indigenous and barbarian cultures from the Central Plains and the south, forming a unique style of long sleeves, slim waist, graceful flow, and romantic imagination. The magnificent waves of the Yangtze River provide endless creative inspiration for Chu dance, making its dance movements echo the rippling water waves, showcasing the beauty of elegance and softness. At the same time, the aesthetic concept of the

Yangtze River Basin deeply influenced Chu dance, making it focus on the harmonious coexistence between dance and nature, and pursuing a harmonious and beautiful artistic realm.

3. Integrating Red Stories into Hubei Dance Art

The Yangtze River, this winding and magnificent river, not only inspires poets with its natural scenery, but also witnesses the heroic struggle and indomitable spirit of the people of Hubei during the most difficult period in Chinese history. It is in this context that the dance drama "The Waves of Honghu Lake" has emerged. It is carefully adapted from the classic opera "Honghu Red Guard" and is proudly launched by Hubei Vocational College of Arts. It has also been included in the National Art Fund's 2023 Communication, Exchange and Promotion Support Project.

This drama is directed by renowned emerging directors Shuai Xiaojun and Lu Hui, bringing together elite cast members from Hubei Vocational College of Arts and China Telecom Wuhan Art Troupe to create a stunning visual and spiritual feast. The plot revolves closely around the four key events of "stealing guns," "encirclement and suppression," "persuading surrender," and "sacrifice," vividly depicting the historical picture of the Honghu people in the revolutionary base area of Hunan Hubei western region, under the leadership of Han Ying, the secretary of the Red Guard Party branch, fearlessly fighting against reactionary forces and bravely striving for liberation and freedom during the Second Domestic Revolutionary War. These stories not only take place on the land of Honghu, but also serve as a microcosm of countless revolutionary struggles along the Yangtze River. Together, they constitute an important part of the red culture of the Yangtze River.

In terms of expression, the dance drama 'The Waves of Honghu Lake' boldly innovates, abandoning the traditional 'singing out' method and instead adopting a more intuitive and impactful 'jumping out' form. The director team cleverly utilized the temporal and spatial transformation characteristics of dance, blending intense external struggles with rich internal emotions. Through exquisite dance language, they created a series of vivid and profound typical images, conveying the revolutionary spirit of perseverance and courage to struggle to the audience. In the arrangement of the dance drama, the director cleverly used the technique of artistic representation to transform those heroic deeds into moving scenes on stage. In order to more realistically reproduce the scenery of Honghu Lake, the director carefully selected props such as "fishing boats", "bamboo hats", and "reeds" to create a strong local atmosphere. In the dense reed beds and agile fishing boats, Han Ying held the Communist Manifesto in her hand and worked together with Liu Chuang, Wang Jinbiao, Qiu Ju, and Chun Sheng. The Red Guards shuttled through it, agile and agile, like swimming fish in the water. Amidst the chirping of waterbirds, a light and clear morning arrived. The guerrilla fighters flashed sporadically, and their performances were highly personalized, vividly demonstrating the bravery and resilience of revolutionary soldiers. Qiuju walked over with a large basket of fish, as if issuing a morning exercise order, and distributed the fish to everyone. The team members each have a big fish and move like swimming fish in the water, interweaving in groups of three or five, undulating up and down, shuttling left and right, flipping inside and outside, and leaping vertically and horizontally, vividly portraying the harvest scene by Honghu Lake. This not only reproduces the busy scene of fishermen along the Yangtze River during the harvest season, but also vividly portrays the spiritual outlook of the people of Honghu, conveying a strong humanistic sentiment soaked in water. In terms of stage art, this drama has also put in a lot of effort. By fully utilizing various technological means such as sound, light, and shadow, vivid and realistic scenes of revolutionary history have been carefully created. The audience seems to have traveled through time and space, experiencing firsthand the era of continuous warfare.

The dance drama 'The Waves of Honghu Lake' has won high praise and unanimous praise from the audience for its unparalleled artistic charm, profound thematic content, and exquisite stage presentation. This work is deeply rooted in the legendary story of the Honghu Red Guards. Through the unique and expressive art form of dance drama, it vividly presents the magnificent and heart wrenching revolutionary history to the audience for the first time, as if leading everyone back to the

war-torn years of the second domestic revolutionary war. The movie 'The Waves of Honghu Lake' is not only a heartfelt review of those turbulent years, but also a noble tribute to the revolutionary spirit. It tells the story of the brave and persevering struggle of revolutionary soldiers in the language of dance, demonstrating their enormous sacrifices and unremitting efforts for national liberation and people's happiness. The success of this dance drama lies not only in its exquisite artistic expression and profound thematic connotation, but also in its successful integration of the red stories along the Yangtze River, presenting this history in a more vivid, intuitive, and touching way to the audience.

The Yangtze River, as the mother river of the Chinese nation, is not only a natural river, but also a cultural and spiritual river. It has witnessed countless hardships and victories in revolutionary struggles, and has also nurtured countless brave and fearless revolutionary soldiers and great revolutionary spirit. The dance drama 'The Waves of Honghu Lake' combines the red stories of the Yangtze River's circulation with revolutionary spirit through artistic techniques, allowing the audience to appreciate the historical weight and cultural connotations carried by the Yangtze River while appreciating the dance. The combination of revolutionary spirit and dance art is a unique way of artistic innovation. It can not only enhance the artistic value of the work, but also make the dance more infectious and impactful; It can also endow the work with profound social significance, allowing the audience to appreciate art while being influenced and infected by the revolutionary spirit, inspiring their inner patriotism and national pride. Therefore, the dance drama "The Waves of Honghu Lake" is not only an excellent work of art, but also a red classic with profound educational significance. It will shine brightly in the long river of history and forever inspire people to strive tirelessly for truth and ideals.

4. Yangtze River Culture Promotes Hubei Dance Culture to Bloom Together

The Yangtze River, this vast mother river flowing eastward, has nurtured the children of Hubei with its broad mind since ancient times. She not only generously endowed the people of Hubei with abundant water resources, but also injected inexhaustible power and vitality into the economic development of this region. The nourishment of the Yangtze River has made the Hubei region not only beautiful in natural scenery and mountains, but also rich in cultural heritage and a gathering of people, becoming a brilliant pearl on the land of China.

In recent years, with the vigorous development of the cultural industry, Hubei Province has become an ideal place for art events due to its unique geographical location and cultural advantages. On this vibrant land, the seeds of culture and art continue to take root and sprout, blooming with brilliant flowers. Especially in 2023, the first Chu Culture Festival will grandly open in Jingzhou, Hubei. This event not only demonstrates the respect and inheritance of traditional culture by the people of Hubei, but also showcases the vibrant vitality of cultural innovation in Hubei under the background of the new era. The theme of the first Chu Culture Festival, "Inheriting and Innovating, Chu Charm Jingzhou," deeply reflects the spirit of Hubei people's courage to explore and innovate while inheriting the essence of Chu culture. During the cultural festival, a series of exciting and diverse artistic performances were staged in turn, bringing visual and spiritual feasts to the audience. Among them, the song and dance "Feng Ming Chu Tian" vividly showcases the glory and charm of Chu culture with its magnificent stage effects and moving melody, making the audience feel as if they have traveled back in time and space to the mysterious and romantic Chu era. The large-scale song and dance performance "The Waves of Honghu Lake" showcases the diligence and wisdom of the people in Hubei's water towns, as well as their yearning and pursuit for a better life, with its rich local flavor and passionate interpretation.

With the continuous prosperity of the cultural industry and the increasing attention of the country to cultural and artistic education, the National College Student Art and Culture Festival has also emerged. In 2024, this highly anticipated cultural event has been held in Xiangyang, Hubei Province, a city with a long history and rich cultural heritage. This is not only a full recognition of the cultural strength of Hubei region, but also a powerful promotion for the development of Hubei's cultural

industry. Xiangyang, as an ancient city with a history of over 2800 years, its unique geographical location and profound cultural heritage provide unique conditions for the hosting of art and culture festivals. Here, the weight of history and the vitality of modernity complement each other, together forming the unique cultural charm of this city.

The 2024 Yangtze River Culture and Art Season, with the theme of "Inheriting the Yangtze River Culture and Creating the Glorious Chapter of the Times", opened a grand cultural feast. This art season aims to deeply explore and inherit the essence of Yangtze River culture through a series of exciting cultural and artistic activities, and comprehensively showcase the magnificent scenery and unique cultural customs of the Yangtze River Basin.

The activities are rich and diverse, covering multiple art categories such as music, dance, drama, and art, providing the audience with a dual enjoyment of visual and auditory senses. The enthusiastic participation of numerous well-known domestic and foreign artists and literary groups has added a strong artistic atmosphere and unlimited creative vitality to the art season.

At the opening ceremony, the well-known Hubei folk song "Living by the Yangtze River" was performed in the form of a duet on the surface of the Yangtze River. This first well-known Hubei folk song flows with people's unique friendship for the Yangtze River, and its eponymous dance poem won the 12th Wenhua Award from the Ministry of Culture. The theme of the male female duet "Living by the Yangtze River" is "Fish Leaping Over the Yangtze River", performed in a personified and interesting way. The costumes use fish tails and fins to show the shape of the fish, and the movements use simple small five flower movements to depict the playful and amusing nature of the fish. At the same time, borrowing devices to assist in presenting more infectious images. During the performance, the two dancers were on a boat that sailed from the Guobo Pier to the Zhiyin Pier. The audience not only saw the duet on the boat, but also the soaring "Phoenix" dancing in the air. This dance is set against the backdrop of the Yangtze River, vividly showcasing the resilience and tenderness of the people of the Yangtze River, as well as their deep attachment to their hometown, through the graceful postures and seamless coordination of male and female dancers.

Living by the Yangtze River not only continues the long history of Yangtze River culture, but also gives it new life and vitality in the context of the new era. This dance, with its unique artistic charm and profound thematic connotations, has won warm applause and high praise from the live audience. It deepens people's understanding that the Yangtze River is not only a natural river, but also a river of culture and emotion. It has nourished generation after generation of Chinese people and witnessed countless touching stories and legends. The successful hosting of the Yangtze River Culture and Art Festival not only brought an unforgettable cultural feast to the audience, but also sparked a wave of attention to Yangtze River culture and the inheritance of the Yangtze River spirit throughout society. I believe that in the future, the Yangtze River culture will continue to shine brighter and become an important source of cultural confidence for the Chinese nation.

5. Conclusion

The Yangtze River culture has a long and profound history, providing rich soil and nutrients for the development of Hubei dance art. Nourished by the Yangtze River, Hubei dance art has shown unique charm and vigorous vitality.

Hubei dance art is deeply influenced by the Yangtze River culture, providing endless creative inspiration for dance artists from natural landscapes to cultural heritage. These artists integrate the magnificence and delicacy of the Yangtze River into dance, making Hubei dance art not only retain traditional elements, but also full of modernity and contemporary atmosphere. The diversity and inclusiveness of the Yangtze River culture are also reflected in Hubei dance art. Hubei dance not only integrates the essence of the Central Plains Chinese ritual culture, but also widely absorbs the traditional culture of southern ethnic minority areas, forming a unique dance style. This multicultural fusion has made Hubei dance art more diverse in terms of expression techniques and stylistic characteristics.

At the same time, Hubei dance art actively integrates red stories, inherits and promotes red culture, injecting new vitality into dance art. This approach of combining revolutionary spirit with dance art not only enhances the artistic value of the work, but also endows it with deeper social significance. Looking ahead to the future, the Yangtze River culture will continue to nourish the development of Hubei dance art, providing it with more creative inspiration and innovative power. At the same time, Hubei dance art will continue to exchange and integrate with art forms from other regions, jointly promoting the prosperity and development of Chinese dance art.

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