

Between France and China: A Symphonic About Culture

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I. Introduction

The research focuses on the culture exchange between France and China through the Silk Road. And it will take the music drama communication and spread as a specific sample.

The musical is a new type of stage drama that originated in England and developed in the United States in the 20th century. It is a modern stage art form that combines music, dance and drama. It is dominated by dramatic performances that tell the story, combined with easy to understand singing performances and spectacular dance performances. In addition, the musical also uses auxiliary elements such as stage props, lighting design and costume design to show amazing stage effects^[1].

These years, it has got popular among young people. At the same time, it had developed further differently compared with before.

Taking its practical significance into consideration, it was listed as the research object. The Researcher aims at understanding more about the characters in the two countries and knowing more about the possibilities in music drama and culture communication.

I.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the cultural phenomenon behind the music drama communication between France and China. Specifically, it aims to discuss following problem:

1) *The present situation of French and Chinese music dramas communication*

China and France are both great historical and cultural powers, and good diplomatic relations have been established in recent years. The attendant benefit is the culture of both countries. It has achieved great success, and also lays a strong enough foundation for after development.

2) *The influence from music drama audiences on its development*

There is no doubt that the best art should be suitable for people of all ages, but that needs a lot of time to achieve. What we should pay attention to firstly is the audience now. It's a realism world, so the music drama industry needs to commercialize, in other words, it needs more profit which comes from the audience now to maintain its development and attract more new audience.

The discussion about this problem is relating to its future developing direction.

3) *The barriers in the culture exchange*

With different backgrounds, we mean to face many difficulties from language, value, history and so on during the intercultural conversation.

In this research, it would be taken into consideration.

4) *The future and possibilities of culture exchange between France and Chinese*

The result of the research could be a reference, and in the after works, which could enable the cultural development satisfy consumers better.

Through exploring for the music drama, the relationship between two countries will be tied more closely.

1.2 Research significance

1) *The exchange of art*

Music drama as a comprehensive performing art that combines music, dance, theatre and other art forms, has its unique charm and infectious power. Through the exchange of Chinese and French music drama, it can promote the mutual understanding and appreciation of culture and art between the two countries, and enhance the friendship and between the two peoples.

2) *The conversation about culture*

Sino-French music drama exchanges can promote the cooperation and development of the cultural industries in the two countries. As an important cultural product, music drama theatre has a broad market prospect and commercial value. Through exchanges, the two countries can explore the mode of cooperation in the creation, performance and promotion of music dramas, and jointly promote the development of the music drama industry.

3) *A chance for relevant talents*

Sino-French music drama exchanges can also provide useful reference and inspiration for art education and talent cultivation in both countries. By learning from each other and exchanging experiences, the two countries can improve the level of music drama creation, performance, education and other aspects, and cultivate more excellent music drama talents.

4) *A treasure for human civilization*

Sino-French music drama exchanges also have important historical significance. As two countries with a long history and splendid culture, China and France have unique traditions and characteristics in the field of music drama. By exchanges, the historical origin and cultural connotation of music drama of the two countries can be excavated, leaving a valuable legacy for the history of cultural exchanges between the two countries. To sum up, the significance of studying the music drama exchanges between China and France lies in promoting the cultural and artistic exchanges between the two countries, promoting the cooperation and development of the cultural industry, providing reference and inspiration for art education and talent cultivation, as well as having important historical significance.

2. Background

2.1 The basic situation of the music drama

Music drama originated in the late 19th century in Britain, when it was called "musical drama comedy", which evolved from comic opera and operetta. It is a stage art form combining singing, dialogue, performance and dancing. Music drama has experienced various stages such as style diversification, cross-border cooperation, technological innovation and so on. Its style is becoming more and more diverse, covering various musical

drama styles and themes, and even began to conduct cross-border cooperation with movies, television and other media, which has made musical dramas warmly welcomed worldwide.

Nowadays, music drama has made a lot of technological innovations in stage design, lighting effects and so on.

Music drama is becoming more and more popular.

French musical dramas undoubtedly play a key role in the world music drama field. Depending on the excellent literary heritage, French music drama is as poetic as its culture, with the characteristics of "emphasizing songs and weakening narration".

The evaluation of Chinese theater practitioner Fei Yuanhong arouses people's dreams. He says that the romance, imagination and blank space that Chinese traditional drama pursues.....all of these coincide with the core of French aesthetics^[4].

There are countless classic works of French music drama, which is enduring. Previously, there were STARMANIA, Romeo and Juliet, and later, there were Mozart l'opéra rock, Molière, etc., which are widely popular among young people in the Chinese market.

Meanwhile, the development of Chinese music drama is in the ascendant. French music drama have opened up a new path in the world where Britain and America dominate the aesthetic discourse. A development path based on its national culture undoubtedly gives a perfect example to the same ancient China.

2.2 The communication is growing vigorously

In recent years, French music drama tours in China have been in full swing, with a hot market. High-quality performances are sold out, and tickets are hard to get. Many audiences even follow the troupes to different cities to watch performances.

French musical drama artist Laurent Ban mentioned in an interview from the 2019 tour that the support of Chinese audiences has actually provided great living space for the development of French musical dramas.

In today's social development, the artistic influence of theater is obviously far inferior to that of films and TV series. It is difficult to support an excellent play to be performed for ten or twenty years with the limited market share in France.

So from a cultural perspective, it is a resonance of the soul. And from a business perspective, it is also a mutually beneficial transaction.

In the previous China tour, "Mozart l'opéra rock" visited Shanghai and earned more than 19 million yuan. The French music drama "Le rouge et le noir - L'Opéra Rock" adapted from Stendhal's masterpiece hit the Chinese market in 2019. The box office of Shanghai station alone exceeded 2 million yuan in 12 hours.

Then the epidemic emerged and the tour was forced to stop. In the following three years, due to various reasons, the tour exchanges between the two countries almost came to a halt.

Enter this year, 2024, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France. The Chinese media called this year "the spring of China-France cultural exchange".

In the previous dialogue between the leaders of the two countries, former French President Emmanuel Macron specially mentioned the topic of French music drama going to

China.

By March 2024, the cultural exchanges represented by Chinese and French musical dramas have obviously lived up to this expectation. First, excerpts from the French music drama "Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris" were featured on the Chinese Spring Festival Gala, singing the first melody of spring. Then the box office of "Rock Mozart" in Suzhou exceeded 3 million yuan on the first day. A series of dramas have announced their China tour plans.

2.3 The communication depending on the Silk Road

The scale of the Sino-French musical drama theatre exchange continues to grow. It is a fusion of two cultures and a dialogue between two economies. China and France will celebrate the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations in 2024, and cultural exchanges will reach a peak in this regard. We cannot ignore mentioning the Silk Road when talk about this.

The Silk Road originated in China during the Western Han Dynasty (around 138 BC) when Zhang Qian, an envoy sent by Emperor Wu of China to the Western Regions, travelled through the region. It evolved over the centuries and became a link for cultural, economic and political exchanges between Asian and European countries along the ancient route. Of course, the development process of the Silk Road was halted for a long time by the world-wide environment of feudalism, colonisation and wars, which will not be discussed in detail here. After the establishment of New China, China is willing to establish friendly and cooperative relations with other countries in the world, especially after the reform and opening up, it opened a series of related projects based on the ancient Silk Road.

After so many years of development, the Silk Road has also come to have a broader definition, from the Land Silk Road to the Maritime Silk Road. The road takes Asia and Europe as its basic disc, and radiates to drive the development of a number of regions such as Africa.

China and France are both historical and cultural powers, along the Silk Road, with their own unique national treasures. In recent times, the two countries have established good diplomatic relations with the beautiful and eclectic desire to be together. In the protection of their own national cultural characteristics at the same time, let their own culture to go out, let the culture of others to come in.

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According to Chinese media Xinhua News Agency, the Year of Culture and Tourism has been organized in close cooperation and carefully prepared by China and France on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Hundreds of activities in the fields of performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage and tourism promotion are expected, including the opening concert to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and China and the Year of Culture and Tourism, the "Hello China" tourism promotion, the "Versailles and the Forbidden City" tourism promotion, and the "Versailles and the Forbidden City" tourism promotion! China", the "Versailles and the Forbidden City" exhibition, and so on^[3].

China-France exchanges cover a wide area, the extent of the depth of the modern society as a model of friendly countries exchanges.

France's "new solidarity" newspaper editor-in-chief Christine Bie believes that over the past 60 years, France and China's friendship has never wavered, the two countries fruitful economic cooperation. "The best feature of France-China relations is the willingness of the two historic sovereign states to act for world peace and stability^[3]."

Liazid Benhami, vice president of the France-China Friendship Association in Paris, France, said a new era is opening in France-China relations, with both countries committed to dialogue within an open, multilateralist framework. At a time when global challenges abound, conflicts are intensifying and climate change will lead to economic, food and migration crises around the world, France and China's efforts to promote multilateralism are welcomed by other countries^[3].

The China Import and Export Fair, one of the country's major landmark economic events, is a window of opportunity for French companies to tap into the Chinese market. France has participated in six consecutive sessions of the Fair, and the number of exhibitors, exhibition area, intended turnover and other exhibition indicators of each session have ranked among the top among all countries in the world. It is learnt that France will be invited to be one of the Guests of Honour of the 7th Fair. A magnificent blueprint printed by people and government.

The cultural and economic exchanges between China and France have a beautiful blueprint. Such exchanges are not only reflected in the trade exchanges between the two countries, but also in the in-depth co-operation between the two sides in the fields of culture,

art, science and technology.

First of all, in the field of culture and education, China and France have carried out a number of cooperation projects. For example, the "Sino-French Cultural Spring" is an event aimed at introducing French culture to Chinese audiences. Such activities not only enhance mutual understanding between the two countries, but also open the door to the Chinese market for the French cultural industry. Meanwhile, with the deepening of Sino-French cooperation in the field of education, cultural exchanges between the two countries will become more frequent and deeper in the future.

Secondly, in the economic field, China and France also have a wide range of co-operation space. China is one of the largest consumer markets in the world, while France has the world's leading luxury brands and high-end manufacturing. The co-operation between the two sides brings great business opportunities for each other. In addition, with the promotion of the "Belt and Road" initiative, China and France will achieve more results in infrastructure construction, energy and other areas of cooperation.

Finally, in the field of science and technology innovation, China and France also maintain close cooperation. The two sides have carried out a series of joint research and development projects in areas such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology, and the successful implementation of these projects will inject new momentum into the scientific and technological progress and social development of the two countries.

Overall, cultural and economic exchanges between China and France have a broad prospect and a bright future. With the deepening of co-operation between the two countries, it is believed that the two sides will achieve mutual benefits and win-win situation in more fields, and jointly promote the peace and development of the world.

3. Analysis of the Development of the Communication in Music Drama Between Two Countries

France is located in Europe, by the opera culture, developed light opera also for the development of musical drama theatre laid a good foundation.

And China for a long time China has its own unique musical drama art form, opera. This has dominated the aesthetics of the Chinese people for thousands of years. There is no such thing as high or low art, but connecting with the world is not the same as giving your own cultural charm. musical drama theatre culture coincides with the Chinese people's open-mindedness and pursuit of a better life, and once introduced, it has gained a large number of young people. At the same time, it has also formed a number of excellent dramas, such as "Nie Xiaoqian and Ning Caixian" and "Tiger Gate", which are jointly created by Sanbao and Guanshan, the representative figures of Chinese musical drama theatre.

The cultural differences between the two countries and the different degree of development of musical drama theatre have created the ground for exchange. Therefore, the article will start to analyse the differences in the development of musical drama theatre between the two countries.

3.1 Differences in musical drama theatre audiences

After learning from French musical drama theatre fans, one of the significant differences makes the author quite surprised. It is understood that the French musical drama theatre audience is mainly middle-aged and old-aged audience, occupying more than half, especially for the classic "STARMANIA". In the Chinese theatre, on the other hand, the audience is basically all young people. Among them, women in their twenties and thirties are the main force, comparing with France, the audience is further clear and more limited.

And by the influence of the audience, the popularity of the two countries are also very different. For example, the French musical drama "Rock 'n' Roll Red and Black" has become



2020 French musical China tour promotion

the "white moonlight" of many musical drama theatre people, as it has been jokingly called "all of China is looking forward to its re-staging" in China. In France, however, the reviews were not as favourable as they could have been.

For a work of art, we can not assert its superiority or inferiority, but for a particular group of people to choose is obviously a priority.

3.2 Historical and cultural differences

A unique history creates a unique culture. Both China and France have a deep history, and have been able to support themselves in the midst of many crises. There are commonalities as well as differences.

Both are indispensable in cultural exchanges. If the two cultures have nothing in common, then the so-called exchange will become a chicken and duck talk. If the two cultures are similar, then the exchange is meaningless.

France and China share a similar geographical structure, which in turn creates a similar social structure. The clear distinction between the mountains and the plains, the dominance of the metropolis, indirectly contributed to the development of an agricultural civilisation. In an agrarian society, the distinctive class and feudalism were rooted in the lives of the people.

Even in modern times, when France became a modern capitalist country and China entered into socialism, the influence of the old agrarian society could not be ignored.

An example of this is the anti-feudal themes that are prominent in the literature of both countries. Whether the point of entry is love, politics, or class-crossing, this is always the case.

3.3 Differences in business models

There are not a few scripts of French musical dramas localised and prepared for localisation in China. However, Chinese musical dramas rarely have the opportunity to go abroad, even if they are among the best masterpieces. The author believes that there are

several reasons for this: one of them is the cost of conversion. The cornerstone of modern musical drama theatre is business, we can not put aside the economy to talk about culture, the two can not be independent. The second is the fierce competition that cannot be avoided even if the conversion is successful. There are many competitors in France, which brings us back to the first problem. The third and most crucial contradiction: the cultural divide, social and linguistic differences.

3.4 Obstacles to the Sinicisation of French musical dramas

With the expansion of domestic musical drama audiences and the gradual improvement of the industrial chain, several production companies have established a complete set of mechanisms for introduction and adaptation. However, there is a troubling phenomenon - the performance of the Chinese version of a long-lasting drama adapted in foreign countries is not as satisfactory as it should be.

Take the recently staged Chinese version of *Rock 'n' Roll Mozart* as an example, the negative reviews are endless, and it is difficult to become an "evergreen".

The reason for this is not that the producers have not invested enough in costumes and funds, but the lack of "artistic soul". The assembly line model can certainly not make mistakes, but also doomed to not have innovation. If the so-called "Chinese version" is to take the original version of the original over, costume a copy, fill in a few lines of lame Chinese lyrics, looking for some star performers to sing on stage, then with the original version of the difference in where? Why would the audience buy tickets to the theatre?

The contemporary Chinese original musical comes from the traditional folk song and dance, but it is not the same as the traditional folk song and dance. It must have a process of picking, collating, subrating and sublimating, and embark on the perfect integration of nationality and internationalization^[2].

The business model of musical drama theatre has its own uniqueness. With a ticket costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars, the cost of trial and error is too high. Therefore, a considerable portion of the audience focuses on the quality of the show, and becomes familiar with the show before entering the theatre. This is also destined in this commercial soil, word of mouth is king, quality is king.

Premature commercialisation has both advantages and disadvantages. However, in the process of Chinese adaptation, the producers obviously still need to polish with care and accumulate experience.

3.5 Difficulties in promoting Chinese musical dramas in France

I think the obstacle for Chinese musical drama theatre to go to France, or even to the whole world, is obvious. It is "language".

The Internet often refers to Chinese as a "language compression pack". The use of allusions and ancient poems is inevitable in Chinese literature and art. These conventions can often sum up the meaning of a sentence in just a few words.

When translating subtitles, then, it is difficult to match one sentence with another. This

may seem harmless, but it's irritating when large subtitle pairs and annotations fill an hours-long video. musical drama theatre in particular is a literary form that outputs content at a high intensity.

While translation is still a challenge, dubbing is even more difficult. How do you tell the heavy historical and social context between a few sentences of expression, while taking into account the melody and rhythm of the song? This process is a test of the author's linguistic skills, but also a test of his cultural skills and artistic and literary creativity.

The author will only talk about it superficially from the perspective of audience and language. musical drama theatre is a form of art that combines both music and literature. In addition to the above, there are still many other difficulties to be overcome. The musical drama is a form of art that combines music and literature, and there are many other difficulties to overcome.

4. Conclusion

The economic development of the two countries and the improvement of people's living standards have put forward new requirements for the development of literary and artistic works. No matter what kind of art form, its essence expresses the people's pursuit of a better life and expectations for social development. Cultural exchanges are in fact the search for soul resonance among different peoples.

Culture is the root of a nation, the mind of a nation. The development of culture helps people from different countries to understand and communicate with each other.

Lea Bessie said: "In 2024, the France-China Year of Culture and Tourism and the Paris Olympics provide a unique stage for promoting cooperation between the two countries, and I hope that these cultural and sports activities will promote better mutual understanding and respect between the two countries."^[3]

French sinologist Rémy Mathieu expressed his hope that the France-China Culture and Tourism Year will give new impetus to the cooperation between the two countries in the fields of culture and tourism, especially academic and artistic exchanges^[3].

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France, the "Belt and Road" has become an excellent platform for cultural exchanges.

The "Belt and Road" initiative not only promotes economic cooperation between China and the countries along the route, but also provides a broad platform for cultural exchange and cooperation. As an important part of the cultural relationship between the two countries, the Sino-French musical drama cultural exchange is of great significance in enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

Looking back, China and France have achieved remarkable results in cultural exchange. For example, the successful performances of the original French musical dramas *Don Juan*, *Rock 'n' Roll Mozart* and *Notre Dame de Paris* in Nanjing and Zhuhai have demonstrated the glamour and artistic value of French musical dramas, as well as the Chinese side's respect

and love for French culture. These performances have not only enriched the cultural life of the audience, but also promoted the integration and resonance between China and France in theatre arts.

Looking ahead, with the in-depth promotion of the "Belt and Road" construction and the continuous development of China-France relations, we have reason to believe that cultural exchanges between the two countries will become more frequent and deeper. In the future, there may be more French musical drama works coming to the Chinese stage, and more Chinese traditional cultural elements will be integrated into French musical dramas. This kind of cross-border co-operation will help to break the boundaries of traditional art forms and promote the mutual reference and innovative development of Chinese and French cultures.

In addition, with the advancement of modern technology and the development of new media, the form and content of Sino-French cultural exchanges will continue to be innovative. In the future, there may be more cultural exchange activities supported by digital technology, such as online concerts and virtual reality art exhibitions. These new technological means will inject new vitality into Sino-French cultural exchanges and promote the dissemination and popularisation of the cultures of the two countries.

In conclusion, the Sino-French musical drama theatre cultural exchanges under the "Belt and Road" initiative provide us with valuable opportunities and platforms. In the future, we should continue to strengthen cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries, and jointly promote the deepening and development of Sino-French relations. By learning from each other and drawing on each other's experience, we can jointly create richer and more diverse cultural and artistic works and make positive contributions to the prosperity and progress of world culture.

When China meets France, it is like a wonderful symphony with highs and lows and harmonious resonance. The relationship between the two countries is as bright as the stars. The friendship between the two countries is like the Yangtze River, with a long history.

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