

The fusion of tradition and modernity: a study on the development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera from the perspective of "living heritage"

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Abstract

Hunan Flower Drum Opera is a treasure of Chinese local opera, occupying an important position in the history of Chinese opera development with its unique artistic charm and profound cultural heritage. However, in the face of the rapid changes in modern society, Hunan Flower Drum Opera is facing many challenges, such as the discontinuity of inheritance, the loss of audiences, and the lack of innovation. Based on the theoretical perspective of "living inheritance" and the development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, this paper uses methods such as literature analysis, field research, and in-depth interviews to analyse the difficulties faced by the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. The research shows that in order to achieve sustainable development, Hunan Flower Drum Opera must be based on tradition and oriented towards the modern world, and transform and upgrade itself through inheritance and innovation. Specifically, it is necessary to strengthen theoretical research and deepen the connotation of "living inheritance"; innovate performance forms and enhance artistic taste; expand communication channels and cultivate new audiences; improve the talent training system and stimulate endogenous motivation for inheritance; and strengthen policy support and create a good environment for development. This study aims to provide theoretical inspiration and practical guidance for the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera and other traditional opera arts, and to provide useful reference for the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture in the modern context.

Keywords: *Hunan Flower Drum Opera, Living Heritage, Traditional Opera, Cultural Heritage, Innovative Development.*

Introduction

Research Background and Problem Statement

Hunan Flower Drum Opera is an important part of Hunan culture. With its simple, lively and humorous artistic characteristics and profound cultural heritage, it has become a popular opera genre among the people of Hunan and even the whole country (Chen, 1995). After hundreds of years of development, Hunan Flower Drum Opera has formed a performance network that spans urban and rural areas, numerous schools of thought and a variety of performance forms. It has created a number of popular classic plays such as "Repairing the Pot," "Liu Hai Chopping Wood," and "Playing the Gong," and can be called a banner of local opera in China in the 20th century.

However, since the 21st century, the development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera has encountered unprecedented difficulties (Zhou, 2019). The gap between traditional concepts and contemporary aesthetics, the squeeze of high-speed urbanisation on rural performance spaces, the impact of secular entertainment, and the exodus of young artistic talent have made this once popular genre no longer popular and in trouble (Ning Fang, 2019). Quantitative research shows that from 2010 to 2020, the number of professional performances of Hunan Flower Drum Opera plummeted from an average of more than 1,200 to less than 400, box office revenue fell from 45 million to 15 million, and the number of employees dropped from more than 5,000 to less than 2,000 (Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2021). The inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera is in an unbalanced state in terms of time and situation, people and things, quality and quantity, and virtual and real, and has reached an important juncture where reform and innovation are essential (Xiao Yu, 2020). In this context, taking Hunan Flower Drum Opera as the research object, in-depth analysis of the difficulties it faces in its inheritance and development, and exploration of the road to innovation and transformation, are of great theoretical and practical significance for the inheritance and development of traditional operas in the new

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era (Yang & Zheng, 2020).

Table 1. Overview of the Development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera From 2010 to 2020

Year	Number of Professional Troupes	Number of Employees	Number of Performances	Box Office Revenue (10,000 yuan)	Number of Audience (10,000 persons)
2010	51	5204	1266	4512.5	305.8
2012	48	4763	1098	4006.7	273.1
2014	43	3995	925	3335.4	239.6
2016	39	3317	719	2571.8	186.4
2018	35	2580	526	1897.3	131.7
2020	33	2173	412	1483.9	109.2

Source: Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism. Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism Development Statistics Bulletin (2021)

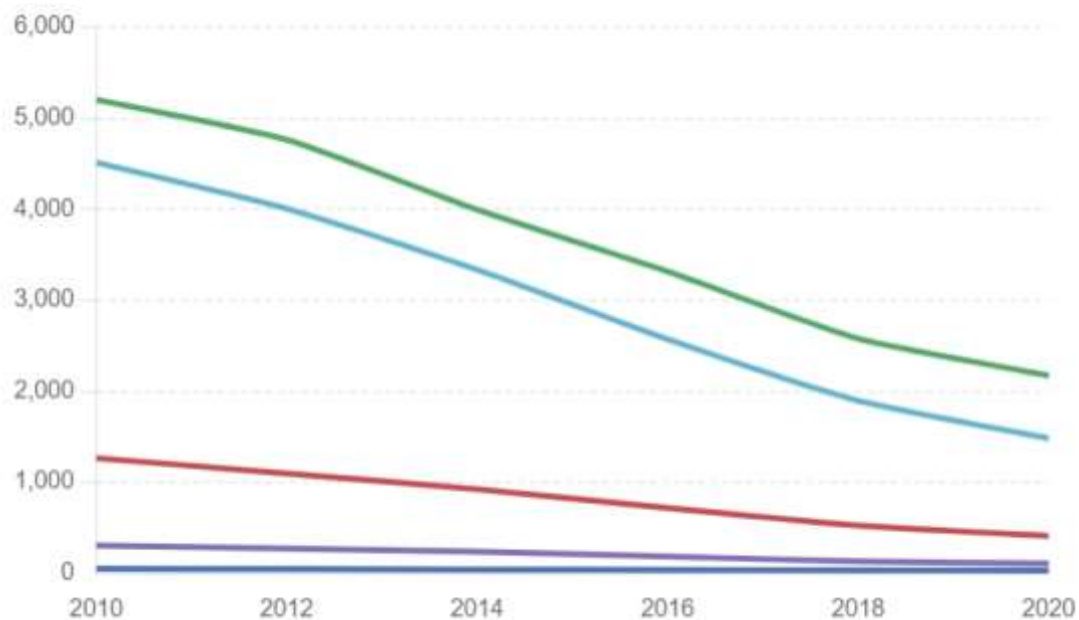


Figure 1. Trends in the Number of Performances and Audience Size of Hunan Flower Drum Opera From 2010 to 2020

Literature Review

Scholars at home and abroad have conducted extensive and in-depth research on the contemporary inheritance and transformation of traditional opera art. In terms of foreign research, Cohen (2019) used Japanese puppet theatre as an example to propose that in order to achieve creative transformation, traditional art must not only maintain the essence of the "hereditary system," but also embrace an "open" future. Wetmore (2018) found that Kunqu must find a balance between "faithful to the original" and "contemporary interpretation" in order to go global. Thonvold (2021) compared the cross-cultural communication of Yueju and opera, revealing the important role of cultural mutual learning in the "going out" of opera. Domestic scholars pay more attention to sorting out problems and prescribing solutions from the local context. Liu Zhen (2020) pointed out that the change in audience consumption habits has had an impact on the traditional opera market, and that a breakthrough in transformation must be sought between "literati" and "common people". Zhang Xinyue (2021) theoretically summarised the survival of the Henan opera "singing good opera, performing good opera, and selling good opera", highlighting the

importance of the "trinity" and precise supply. Wang Kui (2021) analysed the survival and development dilemma of Qinqiang and its cultural roots, emphasising the need to base ourselves on the times, break through barriers, and avoid complacency. In general, domestic and foreign research has mainly focused on specific cases of the transformation of traditional operas, and research on the common dilemmas and universal laws they face has yet to be strengthened (Wang, 2020). This study intends to build on the research of predecessors and distil the general theoretical implications of the Hunan Flower Drum Opera case, contributing "Hunan wisdom" to solving the problem of the inheritance of traditional operas.

Research Ideas and Methods

This study upholds the concept of "living heritage," which is based on tradition and oriented towards the modern, preserving tradition while promoting innovation, and adhering to the fundamentals while developing, so as to achieve the development of traditional opera in continuity and the continuation of development in development (Wang Kui, 2018). Based on the perspective of "living heritage," this paper intends to provide a panoramic view of the development of Hunan Flower Drum play, the difficulties of its inheritance and the mechanisms behind them. Then, using the theory of "schematic crisis" in cultural ecology as a guide, and using analytical tools such as SWOT and PEST, the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and challenges of the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera are clarified, and innovative development strategies are proposed (Song, 2020).

This study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including literature analysis, field research, in-depth interviews, and questionnaire surveys. First, it extensively searches and systematically sorts through relevant literature to grasp the development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera from a macro to a micro perspective (Liu & Zhang, 2020). Second, it visits troupes, opera schools, villages, etc. in Xiangtan, Hengyang, Shaoyang, and other major popular areas of Hunan Flower Drum Opera to understand the current situation of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. Third, in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders such as cultural and tourism departments at the provincial, municipal and county levels, artists and audiences to understand the crux of the inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera from multiple perspectives (Kong, 2021). Fourth, a questionnaire survey was conducted among the general public to objectively present the degree of awareness of Hunan Flower Drum Opera and the willingness to watch performances, providing data support for the expansion of new audiences. Through multiple surveys and multidimensional analysis, we strive to comprehensively and objectively reveal the true picture of the inheritance and development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera.

The historical evolution and inheritance dilemma of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

The development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

Hunan Flower Drum Opera originated from the folk "Dengshan Song and Dance" and "Sanbanggu" in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, and was a mixture of singing, dancing and reciting. It has gone through the stages of germination, development, prosperity and decline, forming a fascinating historical picture (Gong and De, 2016).

The budding stage (late Ming and early Qing to the Republic of China): During the reign of Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty, the "Three-Stick Drum" singing and dancing was popular in the Hengyang area, marking the beginning of the development of the flower drum opera. During the reigns of Emperor Daoguang and Emperor Xianfeng, the "Dengshan Song and Dance" in the Changsha and Xiangtan areas incorporated spoken dialogue, making it a performance form that combined singing, acting and martial arts, laying the foundation for the flower drum opera. During the Guangxu period, Yang Enshou wrote in his book "Xu Ci Yu Cong Hua": "In Xiangzhong, there is a kind of 'lantern play' at the beginning of the year. Two performers, each holding two lanterns, dance facing each other, each performing their own style." "Lantern play" refers to a form of singing and dancing with lanterns and ground flower drums. Hunan flower drum opera was developed on the basis of this folk song and dance, absorbing labour folk songs, walking field signs and opera music (Tang, 2021). Originally, the local flower drum dance developed into a pair of flower drums with a storyline, and then into a "three-act play," gradually becoming more theatrical.

Finally, on the basis of the three-act play, it absorbed the tunes, accompaniments and performances of other Hunan opera genres such as Xiang opera, Yang opera, flower lantern opera, Xiang Kun, Miao opera, and Baling opera to form Hunan flower drum opera (Tian, 2021). In terms of the system of roles and the scale of performances, its formation and development can be divided into three stages: "duzi huagu" to "liangxiao xi" to "sanxiao xi" to "huagu xi" (i.e. "duoxingdang de benxi").

From "duzi huagu" to "liangxiao": This period lasted for about 100 years, from the reign of Emperor Qianlong to the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (1736-1820). Duzi huagu and liangxiao are both sung and danced by the roles of "chou" and "dan," and their forms are very similar, but their substance is quite different. Dui Zi Hua Gu was originally a folk song sung by the working people in the mountains and fields to relieve fatigue or express their emotions. Later, it was developed into a comprehensive folk art form that combines song, dance and music through the artistic processing of artists (Xu, 2021). Its themes are mostly about labour practices and love between men and women. A pair of flower drum performers plus a band of about ten people, the band consists of drums, gongs, small gongs, cymbals, large drums, and suona, and sometimes also includes cloud gongs, flutes, and small suona. "Two small plays" are based on the "pair of flower drum plays" and are a form of drama that focuses on singing and dancing. They have a certain storyline and combine singing and reciting, which is an important feature that distinguishes them from "pair of flower drum plays." The performance of the two small plays is divided into two types: "single flower drum" (a clown and a female lead) and "double flower drum" (one clown and two female leads or two clowns and one female lead). The singing is still mainly based on folk songs and lantern tunes, and many special tunes have also been developed. The majority of the troupe organisations are semi-professional groups that are also farmers and artists, and they are seasonal theatrical activities that gather and disperse at times (Mao, 2022).

"Three Little Plays": This was the period of formation and development of the characteristics of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, which lasted from the Daoguang to Tongzhi reigns (1821-1874) of the Qing Dynasty. Due to the needs of the content, the role of Xiaosheng (young scholar) appeared in Hunan Flower Drum Opera, which was based on the original clown and Xiaodan (young female role) and added the Xiaosheng role (mainly performing the roles of scholars and young masters). This allowed Hunan Flower Drum Opera to break away from the old pattern of singing and dancing, and formed the performance characteristics of having characters, plots, recitations and singing (Chen et al., 2022). Therefore, the development of the "three small plays" was not just a matter of adding a new role, but an important step in the development of Hunan huagu opera, which expanded and enriched the opera in terms of characters, plots, singing and reciting, and the scale of the opera, compared with the "two small plays", and had a dramatic scale.

Development stage (1912-1949): During the Republic of China period, Hunan entered a state of frequent war and political turmoil, and folk art flourished. In 1912, the "Sanyou Society" was established in Xiangtan, staging large-scale flower drum opera performances, which marked the beginning of professional and theatrical performances. Since then, professional troupes have been established in Hengyang, Changsha, Zhuzhou and other places. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, Hunan opera became an important tool for anti-Japanese propaganda, and a number of new plays with realistic themes were created, such as "Paying the Salary" and "Making a Cotton Coat," which directly pointed out the shortcomings of the times and had a profound impact (Chai, 2023). During this period, folk art forms such as quyi (folk music and song) and huagu (flower drum) were widely absorbed, promoting the prosperity and development of Hunan opera.

The golden age (1950s-1980s): After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Hunan huagu opera entered a golden age. The Hunan Provincial Party Committee and the provincial government introduced a series of policies to support the inheritance and development of huagu opera. In 1953, the Hunan Provincial Huagu Opera Experimental Troupe was established to improve opera music, sort out traditional repertoire, and train performing talents. During the Cultural Revolution, huagu opera was reduced to a tool of political struggle. After the "Gang of Four" was crushed, it was able to regain its vitality and revive its flag (Holl, 2023). Since the reform and opening up, Hunan opera has entered a period of prosperity. In 1980, the Hunan opera "Liu Hai Chopping Firewood" represented Hunan at the first China Theatre Festival and won the first prize for the repertoire. A large number of excellent plays sprung up, and a group of

artistic masters emerged, forming schools in Zhuzhou, Hengyang, Xiangtan, Changde, etc. In the 1980s, there were more than 120 professional troupes in the province, with more than 5,000 performers and staff, creating more than 500 plays, and performing more than 12,000 times a year, reaching a historical peak (Gong and De, 2016).

Adjustment period (1990s to 2010): In the 1990s, the marketisation and urbanisation of opera accelerated, and the flower drum opera fell into a trough. Professional troupes were dissolved one after another, practitioners were transferred en masse, theatres were transformed and closed down, and creative enthusiasm plummeted (Huang & Yu, 2023). In order to find a way out, industry insiders actively explored, such as building amateur stages and holding performances for the benefit of the people, but the results were minimal.

Transformation stage (2011 to present): In 2011, Hunan huagu opera was successfully inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, ushering in an opportunity for transformation. Hunan Province has introduced a series of support policies and implemented the "Huagu Opera Revitalisation Project" to promote innovation in the genre, talent development and industrial development. However, deep-seated conflicts such as the gap between traditional concepts and modern aesthetics and the squeeze on the radius of performance in the era of high-speed rail still stand out, and the inheritance and development still has a long way to go.

Table 2. Main Stages and Characteristics of the Development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

Stage	Time Span	Development Characteristics
Budding	Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasty - 1912	Initial combination of narrative, dance, and dialogue, forming the prototype
Development	1912-1949	Beginning of professionalization and theaterization, absorption of folk arts, wide-ranging themes
Prosperity	1950s-1980s	Supported by national policies, innovation and improvement, emergence of talents, peak period
Adjustment	1990s-2010	Impact of marketization, dissolution of professional troupes, career changes for practitioners, low period
Transformation	2011-present	Became a national intangible cultural heritage, received policy support, urgent need to solve deep-seated conflicts

The Inheritance Dilemma of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

Throughout the development trajectory of Hunan Flower Drum Opera from its heyday to its decline, the inheritance difficulties such as the imbalance between tradition and modernity, the lack of talent, and the lack of motivation for innovation have become apparent. Under the impact of multiculturalism, the market economy and rapid technological development, people's values have undergone tremendous changes, the audience has dwindled, government funding support is weak, and the inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera is difficult (Jing & Prompanyo, 2023). Although Hunan Flower Drum Opera was listed as the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage in 2008, its development is still an important issue that cannot be ignored in the face of reality.

First, the content of the repertoire is outdated and there is a lack of creative personnel. In the 1950s, Hunan Flower Drum Opera experienced a boom-banned performance-boom-decline development process. During this period, many classic plays were created, such as "Liu Hai Chopping Firewood", "Playing the Gong", "Repairing the Pot", "Asking for School Fees", "The Virtuous Sister-in-Law", "Liang Shanbo Visiting Friends", "The Love in the Cupboard", etc. After the 1990s, the market for Hunan Flower Drum Opera gradually declined, and many actors switched to other industries. We can deeply feel that the renewal of Hunan Flower Drum Opera plays is slow, and there is a lack of new classics. It is very difficult to create a Hunan flower drum opera that is both popular and influential. Most Hunan flower drum opera

performers do not have the ability to create Hunan flower drum opera, and they lack the inspiration and material literacy to explore modern life themes (Xin & Booranakeithsakula, 2023). Although the old repertoire is very traditional, it is difficult to meet the aesthetic tastes of the younger generation and attract young people to join the ranks of Hunan flower drum opera inheritance.

Second, the management model is lagging behind, resulting in a lack of publicity and a lack of effort to pass it on. The biggest problem with the management of the Hunan Flower Drum Opera is that the coverage of publicity and inheritance is not broad enough and there are certain limitations. This problem stems from the fact that the awareness of inheritance is not widespread enough and the promotion of cultural self-confidence is not strong enough. On the one hand, the current training courses and the introduction of Hunan Flower Drum Opera into the classroom are relatively fragmented and small in scale, and the breadth, density and depth of their popularity are far from enough (Yun, 2023). On the other hand, in the old days, Hunan folk artists performed Hunan Flower Drum Opera for a living, and the scope of their performances expanded from rural areas to cities, and they were used in activities such as birthday celebrations, weddings, celebrations, and funerals. With the changes of the times and the arrival of a well-off life, these folk inheritors gradually moved away from this way of making a living. Whether it is folk or theatre groups, due to the lack of protection and attention to Hunan Flower Drum Opera inheritors, the inheritors are facing the dilemma of an ageing population and a lack of successors. It can be seen that the mechanism for protecting and training Hunan Flower Drum Opera inheritors is not mature and sound enough, which seriously affects the sustainable development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera (Jiao et al., 2024).

Third, the government's support is insufficient and there is a serious shortage of funds. The government is the policy-maker and promoter of the local traditional culture, and the local traditional culture needs effective government intervention. The protection and inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera needs to rely on the government's guidance and decision-making, and it needs to rely on the government to provide generous funding to enable it to survive and continue. For example, the promotion of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, the training of inheritance talents, and the operation of the cultural market all require a large amount of funding. However, due to a lack of funds for the protection and inheritance of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, there has been a loss of talent, stagnant or slow development of the repertoire, and marginalisation of traditional culture (Juan & Simeon, 2024).

Tradition And Modernity: The Imbalance Between Complacency and Wholesale Denial

In its development, Hunan Flower Drum Opera was once conservative and hidebound, failing to keep up with the times and meet the aesthetic needs of modern people. For example, some of the plays still use the stage design and music from decades ago, and the lines are difficult to understand, with a single way of expressing emotions, making it difficult for the audience to empathise. At the same time, some people advocate abandoning tradition completely and blindly pursuing modern elements, resulting in the loss of the characteristics of the opera and a decline in artistic taste (Wang & Moonswan, 2024). For example, some troupes have staged so-called "fashion shows", awkwardly inserting pop songs and Western instruments into the Hunan opera, which is completely out of place and fails to attract new audiences. The imbalance between tradition and modernity, between excess and deficiency, has upset the foundations of the Hunan opera.

A Succession Gap: Few Learners and No Successors

Since the reform and opening up, the problem of a talent gap in Hunan Flower Drum Opera has become increasingly serious. According to statistics, as of the end of 2020, there were only 8 national intangible cultural heritage inheritors of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, and their average age had reached 65 years old. There were 132 provincial intangible cultural heritage inheritors, most of whom were born in the 1970s and 1980s, and many of them had other jobs (Hunan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2021). It is difficult to recruit students for opera majors in colleges and universities, and the number of new students entering school is declining year by year. The training courses for Hunan opera offered by art schools such as technical secondary schools and vocational schools are "well received but not well attended"

year after year, and most students give up halfway (Xie & Simeon, 2024). The troupe is in a state of transition, and many old artists have multiple jobs and are busy both on and off stage. Young actors are not easy to "train up," and many of them stop after a brief taste, lacking the opportunity and platform to "graduate." The main body of inheritance is in danger of being left without successors.

Table 3. Age Distribution of National and Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors of Hunan Huagu Opera

Age Group	National Inheritors (Percentage)	Provincial Inheritors (Percentage)
Over 80	2 (25%)	5 (3.8%)
70-79	4 (50%)	18 (13.6%)
60-69	2 (25%)	47 (35.6%)
50-59	0 (0%)	62 (47%)
Under 50	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Average Age	73 years	62 years

Rigid thinking and methods: insufficient motivation for innovation and a lack of vitality

Currently, Hunan Flower Drum Opera is rigid in its thinking and methods in terms of repertoire creation and promotion, and there is a serious lack of motivation for innovation. Most of the script creation is "reviewing the past" and there is little "knowing the new". There are few original works with realistic themes. The means of publicity are mainly posting advertisements and distributing leaflets, which have a narrow coverage and weak appeal. Especially in the new media era, there are few official websites for troupes, and there is a lack of integrated media publicity, making it difficult to attract young audiences (Yan, 2024). In the tide of "cultural and tourism integration", cultural and creative development is lacklustre, and there are few performances and shows, which fail to effectively expand communication channels. The old way of relying on government "blood transfusion" and troupes "blood production" is unsustainable, and the "anoxia" problem is becoming more and more prominent.

Inactive institutional mechanisms: the separation of government and business is not complete, and the "maternal" drama is nowhere to be found

Under the impact of the market economy, state-owned huagu opera troupes have achieved separation of government and enterprise, but they are still bound by administrative constraints in terms of finance, personnel, and operations. The "maternal" nature of the system, such as staffing and funding, makes it difficult to explore the market. Although private troupes are flexible and changeable, they have limited capacity to undertake government projects and find it difficult to form a brand appeal. The "inherent deficiencies" of the system have led to the dilemma of "half-baked" state-owned and private troupes. In addition, the inconsistent evaluation standards for professional opera talents, narrow channels for promotion, and fragmented policy support are all institutional constraints that hinder the development of inheritance.

"Living inheritance": a path to solving the development dilemma of Hunan Flower Drum Opera

To solve the development problems of Hunan Flower Drum Opera, we must base ourselves on the concept of "living heritage" and explore a way forward in the dialectics of inheritance and development. Based on SWOT analysis, the advantages of Hunan Flower Drum Opera lie in its profound cultural heritage, professional inheritance groups, and the national intangible cultural heritage "amulet"; its disadvantages lie in outdated concepts, a talent gap, and a lack of innovation; its opportunities lie in favourable national policies, the upgrading of mass culture consumption, and the vigorous rise of cultural and tourism integration; and its challenges lie in the impact of modern entertainment and the loss of professional talent. In the future, in order to achieve sustainable development, Hunan Flower Drum Opera should focus on creating "new ideas, new talent, new forms, and new mechanisms" to promote traditional art to shine in

the modern era.

Reforming The Old and Invigorating The "Fossilised" Concepts

The first task is to get rid of the "fossilised" concepts of sticking to old ways and establish a new concept of "inheriting in development and developing in inheritance". To handle the relationship between tradition and modernity, on the one hand, we must adhere to the artistic characteristics and aesthetic interests of the flower drum opera, and on the other hand, we must follow the trend of the times and incorporate modern concepts and fashionable elements into it. In the creation of the repertoire, we must not only inherit and carry forward the classic repertoire, but also face the reality of life and tell the story of Hunan in a way that is popular with the people. In music creation, it is necessary to explore traditional tunes and absorb popular music to create a new model of opera music in which "classical and fashionable" coexist in harmony. At the same time, it is necessary to be open-minded, draw on the successful experience of other provinces' operas such as Beijing opera and Kunqu opera, and inject new artistic vitality into the flower drum opera.

Strengthening The Foundation and Cultivating a New Generation of Young Talent

Talent cultivation is the key to inheritance and innovation. To improve the talent cultivation system, a "three-in-one" cultivation model should be established, which includes professional college education, practical training in theatre troupes, and oral and heart-to-heart teaching by masters and apprentices. Support should be given to universities to establish opera majors, improve the curriculum system, and create a highland for cultivating distinctive talent for huagu opera. Encourage students to intern in theatre troupes, build a practical platform, and cultivate "on-stage and off-stage" interdisciplinary talent. Establish national and provincial intangible cultural heritage learning bases for flower drum opera, explore and sort out traditional repertoire, and carry out teacher-student teaching, so that young people can "sing, act, and speak". At the same time, innovate talent policies, improve job title evaluations, job appointments, etc., and establish a hiring mechanism that is in line with the characteristics of the arts, so that opera talents can "stay, do well, and have a future."

Innovate Forms and Create A "New Stage" For Immersive Experiences

To keep up with the trend of upgrading popular culture consumption, innovative performance formats should be used to enrich cultural experiences. Modern technology should be used to enhance stage effects and create visual feasts. For example, holographic projection, virtual reality and other technologies can be used to reproduce classic plays and create a "time travel" effect. Lighting and sound can be used to create a stage atmosphere and immersive experience. Small-scale, salon-style performances should be actively developed to meet the diverse needs of audiences. The "online + offline" model should be explored to expand the audience through channels such as live webcasts and video platforms. At the same time, we will explore the cultural elements of the flower drum opera, develop cultural and creative products, tell the story of the flower drum opera, create a new form of experiential consumption, and make the "new stage" shine with a different kind of charm.

Deepening Reform and Building a New Mechanism For "Pro-Clean" Government-Enterprise Relations

It is necessary to break the shackles of the institutional system, untie the development of the flower drum opera, and build a new mechanism for government-enterprise relations that is "pro-enterprise" but not "corrupt" and "clean" but not "aloof". Support the restructuring of state-owned opera troupes into enterprises, implement a system of responsibility under the leadership of the board of directors, establish a corporate governance structure, and give the opera troupes greater autonomy in their operations. Encourage private opera troupes to become bigger and stronger, and give them policy preferences in terms of repertoire creation, talent introduction, market expansion, etc., to form a development pattern of "dual-wheel drive" of state-owned and private enterprises. Strengthen the construction of industry associations, build a platform for communication between government and enterprises, and promote exchanges and cooperation. At the same time, improve the way financial support is provided, establish a diversified investment mechanism based on government procurement of public cultural services, and form a virtuous

cycle of "blood transfusion" and "blood production" at the same time.

Promoting The "Hunan Style" To the World by Integrating Chinese and Foreign Cultures

In the era of globalisation, Hunan opera must look to the world and promote cultural exchange and mutual learning between China and the rest of the world if it is to achieve sustainable development. It must adopt an open and inclusive attitude, actively "going global" and showcasing the unique charm of Hunan opera by participating in international theatre festivals and hosting cultural years. At the same time, it must be adept at "bringing in" foreign theatre experts and artists to exchange ideas and learn from advanced concepts and methods, enhancing the international expressiveness of Hunan opera. Encourage domestic and foreign universities and research institutions to conduct research on Hunan opera, establish an international academic exchange platform, and enhance the academic status and influence of Hunan opera. Make full use of the "Belt and Road" cultural exchange mechanism, use Hunan opera as a medium to tell the story of Hunan and spread the voice of China, and contribute artistic strength to building a community of shared future for mankind.

Empowered By Technology, Promote Industrial Transformation and Upgrading

Advances in science and technology have opened up new possibilities for the development of Hunan's huagu opera. We must actively adapt to the wave of intelligence and digitalisation, promote the deep integration of opera art and technology, and empower industrial transformation and upgrading. We will use big data analysis, artificial intelligence and other technologies to capture audience needs, conduct precision marketing, and improve management efficiency. We will build an online opera knowledge base and a script creation assistance system to provide intelligent services for screenwriters, directors, etc. We will encourage the participation of technology companies to develop immersive viewing and performance equipment, create smart theatres, and enhance the audience experience. At the same time, relying on the Internet platform, we will develop the online performance market, develop new formats such as live opera broadcasts and online teaching, and create a digital cultural industry chain with Hunan characteristics.

Deepen Cross-Border Integration and Create a New Model of "Opera +" Development

Opera + Tourism: Develop Immersive Experience Projects

Hunan opera should actively integrate into the cultural tourism industry, and with its unique artistic charm and cultural connotations, create immersive experience projects with Hunan characteristics. It can rely on historical sites, intangible cultural heritage workshops and other resources to develop cultural tourism routes with a Hunan opera theme, and design interactive and immersive tourism products, such as Hunan opera experience halls, Hunan opera theme B&Bs, Hunan opera cultural streets, etc., so that tourists can experience the unique charm of Hunan culture while watching Hunan opera performances. At the same time, immersive tourism projects such as virtual reality and augmented reality can be developed using digital technology to create a new immersive opera tourism format that will attract more young tourists.

Opera + Education: Promoting the Diversified Development of Art Education

Hunanese opera should actively connect with the education sector to promote the diversified development of art education. On the one hand, it should strengthen cooperation with universities and encourage them to offer elective courses and club activities on Hunanese opera, and incorporate Hunanese opera elements into ideological and political courses and art courses to cultivate compound talents with both virtue and talent. On the other hand, it should carry out various activities to popularise Hunanese opera among primary and secondary school students, such as bringing opera into schools and holding opera summer camps, to increase young people's interest in and appreciation of opera. At the same time, it can cooperate with the education department to incorporate Hunan opera into local art education textbooks and compile Hunan opera readers suitable for young people to promote the inheritance and popularisation of opera art.

Opera + Health Care: Expanding the Silver Hair Market

With the ageing population increasing, there is great potential for developing a new model of "opera + health care". Hunan Flower Drum Opera should actively play its psychological soothing function to serve the physical and mental health of the elderly. It can cooperate with elderly care institutions to perform regularly at their homes to bring joy to the elderly. At the same time, it can open Flower Drum Opera interest classes in elderly care institutions to encourage the elderly to participate in opera learning and performances to enrich their spiritual and cultural life. It is also possible to develop health and wellness products for the elderly, such as Hunan opera fitness exercises and Hunan opera music therapy, which will help the elderly stay healthy while expanding the social service functions of the art of opera.

Opera + Technology: Developing Intelligent Communication Applications

Hunan huagu opera should actively embrace the technological revolution, using cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and holographic projection to develop intelligent communication applications and create an immersive viewing experience. Digital products such as a digital huagu opera museum and an online opera knowledge base can be developed to allow the public to learn about and appreciate huagu opera art anytime, anywhere. At the same time, artificial intelligence technology can be used to develop opera creation assistance systems and intelligent stage scheduling systems to improve the efficiency and quality of opera creation and performances. It is also possible to cooperate with technology companies to develop immersive viewing equipment, such as holographic projection stages and VR viewing helmets, to bring audiences an immersive viewing experience.

*Strengthen Theoretical Support and Promote Research on the Inheritance and Development of Traditional Chinese Opera**Strengthen Basic Theoretical Research and Lay a Solid Foundation for The Development of The Discipline*

We should give full play to the academic advantages of universities and research institutes, strengthen basic theoretical research in the history, aesthetics, anthropology and sociology of huagu opera, and thoroughly explore the cultural connotations, aesthetic characteristics and social functions of huagu opera, clarifying its position and role in the development of Huxiang culture and Chinese civilisation, and providing solid academic support for the inheritance and development of huagu opera. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the discipline construction of the basic theoretical research of the flower drum opera, improve the discipline system, strengthen the construction of the academic echelon, cultivate a group of compound opera research talents who understand both art and theory, and inject fresh blood into the research of the flower drum opera.

Strengthen Comparative Drama Research and Broaden the International Academic Perspective

We should base ourselves in Hunan and look at the world, strengthen comparative research on Hunan opera and other local operas and foreign dramas, analyse in depth the similarities and differences between different operas in terms of their historical origins, aesthetic characteristics and development models, and explore the common rules and development trends of opera art in different cultural contexts. At the same time, we should actively participate in international academic exchanges and cooperation, tell the story of Hunan opera, and enhance the international academic discourse power and influence of Hunan opera research. International drama seminars and academic visits can be held regularly to build a platform for exchanges between Chinese and foreign drama and promote multicultural exchanges and mutual learning, providing intellectual support for Hunan Flower Drum Opera and Chinese opera to "go global".

Promote The Transformation of Theoretical Achievements and Serve the Practice of Inheritance and Development

It is necessary to establish a collaborative innovation mechanism for industry, academia and research, strengthen cooperation between opera research institutions and troupes, universities, cultural enterprises, etc., and promote the deep integration of opera theory research and the practice of inheritance and development. It is necessary to encourage opera researchers to go deep into the front line, carry out field

surveys, on-site observations, etc., understand and master the actual situation and practical problems of opera inheritance and development, and put forward targeted countermeasures and suggestions. At the same time, a platform for the transformation of theoretical achievements should be established, and regular conferences and presentations of theoretical achievements should be held to strengthen the promotion of outstanding theoretical achievements and promote the transformation of theoretical achievements into the practice of inheritance and development, so that theoretical innovation can lead to practical innovation.

Create A Social Atmosphere and Gather the Power of Inheritance and Development

Strengthen Popular Education on Chinese Opera and Improve the Public's Appreciation Level

Popular education on Chinese opera should be regarded as an important part of improving the artistic literacy of the people, and various forms of popularisation and dissemination of knowledge about Chinese opera should be adopted. Various media platforms can be used to set up columns on Chinese opera culture and produce documentaries on Chinese opera to enhance the popularisation of Chinese opera culture. At the same time, emphasis should be placed on Chinese opera education in schools, and Chinese opera should be incorporated into the curriculum of art education in primary and secondary schools. A variety of popularisation activities can also be carried out in the community, such as community opera salons and opera open classes, to create a social atmosphere where everyone loves and learns opera.

Improve The Training System for Opera Talent and Strengthen the Power of Inheritance and Development

To improve the training system for opera talent, establish a scientific and standardised selection, training and use mechanism, and provide a steady stream of talent to support the development of opera. It is necessary to strengthen the construction of opera colleges and universities, optimise the setting of academic disciplines, improve teaching content and methods, and improve the quality of talent training. At the same time, it is necessary to innovate the training model for opera talent, such as "master studios" and "non-inherited learning institutes", and give play to the leading and exemplary role of famous masters to cultivate a group of opera talents with both virtue and talent. It is also necessary to establish and improve a service and support mechanism for opera talent, improve policies such as job title evaluation and salary distribution, and create a good environment for the growth and development of opera talent.

Establish A Diversified Investment Mechanism and Improve Industrial Support Policies

A diversified investment mechanism should be established, with government guidance, social participation and market operation, to broaden the funding channels for the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese opera. The government should increase financial support and set up a special fund for the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese opera, focusing on supporting the training of traditional Chinese opera talents, the creation of new plays and the construction of facilities. At the same time, it is necessary to fully mobilise social forces and encourage enterprises, social organisations and individuals to participate in the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese opera through donations and sponsorships. It is also necessary to improve relevant industrial support policies, give preferential treatment in terms of tax incentives, land supply, financial support, etc., reduce the cost of opera inheritance and development, and stimulate market vitality and social creativity.

Strengthen Intellectual Property Protection and Maintain the Ecology of Traditional Opera

It is necessary to strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights in the field of opera and create a favourable legal environment for opera creation. It is necessary to improve the relevant laws and regulations on intellectual property rights in the field of opera, clarify the ownership of copyright and the norms of use, and crack down on infringement and piracy in accordance with the law. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen law enforcement and judicial power, increase the cost of infringement and violation of the law, and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of opera artists. It is also necessary to strengthen publicity and education, raise the awareness of intellectual property rights in society, guide the public to consciously resist and report infringement and piracy, and jointly maintain a clean and upright opera art

ecology.

Conclusion

For thousands of years, Hunan Flower Drum Opera has become a valuable asset of the Chinese nation with its simple and vivid artistic expression and profound cultural connotation. The new era calls for new responsibilities, and traditional art needs innovative development. Faced with new opportunities and challenges, Hunan Flower Drum Opera should be based on tradition and face the modern world, achieving transformation and upgrading in inheritance and innovation. This requires artists to stay true to their original aspirations and forge ahead with determination, and requires the governments at all levels to attach great importance to and vigorously support it. Let us work together to inherit and carry forward the art, to write a new chapter in the era of innovation, to contribute wisdom and strength to the inheritance of Chinese civilisation and the building of a socialist cultural power, and to show the world the style of the advanced culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics through the vitality and prosperity of Hunan Flower Drum Opera.

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