



# Wu Yun and Spring Life—Looking Forward to the Development of Traditional Chinese Opera with Wu Opera as an Example

Xinchen Jin, Jingling Tang

College of Art, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

Email: 2857128333@qq.com

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## Abstract

Currently, with the rapid development of the economy and the increasing diversity of people's daily entertainment activities, the continuous innovation of technology has also led to a gradual decline in people's attention to traditional Chinese opera art. As an ancient intangible cultural heritage art form, Wu Opera is also facing the danger of dissipation. In order to inherit and develop elegant art, continuously enrich the spiritual world, and strengthen the role of the cultural industry in promoting the adjustment of China's industrial structure and the transformation of economic development mode. Therefore, inspired by this, this article innovatively proposes the establishment of a "Wudao" online and offline dual linkage platform, changing the current situation of a single form of expression, and promoting it in conjunction with major traffic platforms, creating more forms of expression that are in line with the current stage of public aesthetic awareness, such as large-scale live performances and the combination of popular music. In addition, with the sales of various products, it breaks the single target audience of the elderly while creating economic value, providing a broader development space for Wu Opera and ideas for the development of traditional Chinese opera.

## Subject Areas

Culture

## Keywords

Wuju, Linkage, Development

## 1. Introduction and Development Status of Wu Opera

### 1.1. What is Wu Opera

Wuju is a living fossil of Chinese opera, originating from the Wuzhou area of

Zhejiang Province, with a long history and rich cultural connotations. As one of the local opera genres in Zhejiang Province, Wu Opera has distinct local characteristics and a broad mass base. Wu Opera is renowned for its unique singing style, performance form, and artistic style, and is hailed as one of the treasures of Chinese opera art. The performance forms of Wu Opera mainly include five basic skills: singing, reciting, doing, playing, and dancing. The actors will demonstrate the charm of the story plot and characters through exquisite skills. On June 7, 2008, Wu Opera was approved by the State Council to be included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list. Wu Opera is often performed in traditional Chinese opera performances, cultural activities, and traditional festivals. [1] Yin Xiaodong, Dean of the China Academy of Chinese Opera, pointed out that the dissemination and development of Chinese opera culture is an unchanging issue in the process of inheriting Chinese opera. Under the influence of the new era, it is both an opportunity and a challenge. While respecting traditional Chinese opera itself and following the laws of development, we also need to actively respond to the changes in social aesthetics in the new era and the continuous development of emerging technologies in the information age. This is a problem that traditional Chinese opera inheritors must solve.

## 1.2. Overview of Existing Issues

As a precious intangible cultural heritage, Wu Opera is limited to a narrow living space today, which is closely related to its lack of transmission from generation to generation and differences in aesthetic standards of the times. The emergence of emerging art has led to a shift in the audience and a shortage of talented inheritors of Wu Opera, resulting in internal and external challenges for the survival of Wu Opera. The following will provide specific explanations.

### 1.2.1. There are Significant Differences in the Times

Listed as a national intangible cultural heritage, Wuju originated in the Ming Dynasty, developed relatively mature and independently in the middle of the Qing Dynasty, and reached a peak in the 1950s and 1960s with the support of Wuju and the government media, but since then it has gradually declined from prosperity to decline. [2] Wuju people have been making continuous efforts to inherit and develop Wuju, but they are suffering from great differences between the consciousness and custom of specific times and the current public aesthetic consciousness in the context of the rapid development of The Times.

### 1.2.2. Poor Popularity

Today, with the rapid development of society and the Internet, entertainment methods are becoming more diversified, and the lack of innovation in traditional operas has led to the decline of the influence of today's Wu Opera. Although traditional Chinese opera has started to be promoted on campus in primary and secondary schools, according to a survey, only 11% of primary and secondary

school students enjoy listening to drama, which has led to a series of problems such as insufficient audience base, weak appeal, and insufficient marketization.

### **1.2.3. Talent Shortage**

There are only 5 professional Wuju troupes in Jinhua City, and based on the current structure of practitioners in Wuju troupes, the main actors are all over 45 years old. The number of young people willing to join the Wu Opera troupe is decreasing among the younger generation, which also makes many professional Wu Opera performance groups face the phenomenon of unreasonable talent structure and talent shortage. The existence of these problems has led to the phenomenon of weak successors in the folk form of Wu Opera. [3]

## **1.3. Usable Advantages**

Wu Opera originated in Jinhua, Zhejiang. As a unique economic and cultural province in fields such as technology, education, and tourism, Zhejiang has provided outstanding geographical advantages for the development of the Wuju cultural industry. In addition, with Jinhua Station as the center, it radiates to all corners and forms a comprehensive transportation network that integrates railways, highways, waterways, and aviation. As a result, Wu Opera has spread throughout surrounding urban areas such as Lishui, Linhai, Quzhou, Jiande, and Chun'an. Private theater troupes have also traveled to nearly 100 counties and cities, and this strong vitality and potential for development are difficult to separate from the geographical and transportation environment they are located.

In addition to its excellent geographical and transportation advantages, China's emphasis on the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in recent years will also contribute to its future development. In May 2020, Wu Opera was selected as one of the first batches of "Zhejiang Cultural Impressions", which means that its position in the cultural and artistic fields of Zhejiang Province has been established. While increasing its domestic publicity efforts, it will also implement overseas communication projects to enhance its international influence. This will be conducive to better refining the historical value and spiritual identity of Wu Opera culture and promoting the development of Wu Opera cultural industry.

## **2. The Inheritance and Development Strategies of Wu Opera**

### **2.1. Strengthen One's Own Hematopoietic Ability**

Before using any external force to promote and spread, it is necessary to have high-quality of oneself. Due to the ecological environment of the development of Wujuopera being damaged by information technology and foreign culture, the number of inheritors of Wuju opera has been decreasing year by year, and major opera troupes are also struggling to maintain their livelihoods. Therefore, the first step is to strengthen the cultivation of inheritors of Wu Opera. Famous actors and teachers can be regularly invited to give lectures and improve the professional competence of the actors in the theater troupe. At the same time, the

reorganization and reform of the repertoire of Wu Opera are also essential. In order to gain a wider audience for Wu Opera, adjustments must be made to the previous repertoire based on the times. Innovative development and creative transformation can also be achieved in terms of creative sources, program performances, and other forms, presenting Wu Opera to the public in a novel and vivid way.

## **2.2. Building an Online and Offline Dual Linkage Platform**

### **2.2.1. Online Platform**

Linking Learning Connect, Learning Power, Himalaya, Tiktok, etc. have good traffic base platforms to broadcast the voice and image of Wu Opera and online development interest courses, so as to increase publicity efforts and improve people's interest in Wu Opera. In addition, make reasonable use of online sales platforms and register store information. Integrating elements of Wu Opera into cultural and creative industries and modern product design to create products that cater to the aesthetics of the new era. [4] Alternatively, it could extract creative ideas from the culture of Chinese Wuju, leading the trend of modern Wuju home decor and igniting a trend of new furniture decoration. There are also ingenious ideas to integrate traditional Chinese opera culture into online games, such as the background music adapted from the Beijing Opera style in "Tianya-Mingyue Dao", the new Kunqu game characters in "New Qiannu Ghost", and the Kunqu game costumes in "King of Glory". It greatly enhances people's interest and love for traditional Chinese opera, which is conducive to the continuous development of its integration with today's society.

### **2.2.2. Offline Platform**

The development of traditional Chinese opera requires innovation in all aspects, ensuring that the audience has the opportunity to watch the play, closely connecting with the Zhejiang Bureau of Culture and Tourism and the Zhejiang Wuju Theater. On the one hand, it adheres to the principle of adhering to tradition, preserving classics, promoting characteristics, and embracing diversity, inheriting and continuing the traditional artistic image. On the other hand, it uses well-known and popular Jiangnan legends as materials to create a group of high-quality works of Wuju that represent the cultural image of Zhejiang Wuju, are rich in Zhejiang spirit, reach the first-class level in China, and are deeply loved by the people. In addition, the cultural auditorium can also be used as the main carrier for performances, utilizing sound, light, and information media art with physical props, combined with the content and plot of Wu Opera, to create a performance scene that immerses the audience. [5] Taking Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe as an example, the new version of "Butterfly Lovers" is being performed at the Butterfly Theater. Continuing the use of plaques, grass bridges, and scenery from the repertoire, a series of designs such as stage surround speakers, stage lighting and shadow changes, and audience interaction during the closing ceremony have been added to stimulate audience interest.

Online platforms have also sparked a wave, making the promotion of Yue Opera more profound.

### 3. The Practice of Wu Opera in Current Society

Nowadays, more and more practitioners and enthusiasts of Wuju realize that the development of Wuju is not optimistic. Therefore, with the joint efforts of the government, organizations, and individuals, the creation of Wuju cultural and creative products and live stage performances as envisioned in the article have emerged. However, how to promote Wuju can refer to the linkage online platform proposed in this article and leverage the location advantages of Jinhua.

### 4. Epilogue

Due to the rapid development of the current era and the impact of the fragmented information age, traditional art has gradually lost its competitiveness, and the audience of dramas such as Wuju has begun to be limited to the elderly. The innovative idea proposed in this article is to first improve the quality of actors and scripts to ensure the high-quality development of traditional dramas such as Wuju, and then use the development of new media and other information technologies to expand communication channels and break through a single audience group, so as to provide a continuous source of power for the development of Wuju. In addition, this model also has great reference value, which can promote the development of other traditional Chinese operas and even contribute to the inheritance and promotion of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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