



Full of Emotions on the Grassland, a Touching Dance

—A Brief Analysis of Why “Ordos Dance” Became a Classic

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Abstract

Dance is actually a carrier of culture, which ripples in the long river of history and makes future changes possible. The first performance of “Ordos Dance” directed by Mr. Jia Zuoguang in 1953 explored the living conditions of the Mongolian people, created the basic vocabulary of Mongolian dance, constructed the stage presentation of folk primitive ecology, and opened up a new era of Mongolian dance with its unique artistic expression. The author will also analyze the reasons why “Ordos Dance” has become a classic from three aspects: rhythm, composition, and core.

Subject Areas

Culture

Keywords

Ordos, Jia Zuoguang, Dance of Mongol Nationality

1. Background Introduction

Jia Zuoguang, born in Shenyang, Liaoning in 1923, is of Manchu ethnicity. He officially started learning dance at the age of 15, under the tutelage of the father of modern dance in Asia-Ishii Momo (Japan) and the renowned Soviet artist Zaporizhzhia. He is a famous dance performer, choreographer, founder of modern Chinese folk dance, and founder of Beijing Dance Academy, known as the “Oriental Dance God”.

In 1946, the dance group of Inner Mongolia Cultural and Art Troupe was established under the guidance of Mr. Wu Xiaobang. In 1947, Jia Zuoguang came to Inner Mongolia through his recommendation. In 1946, the dance group of Inner Mongolia Cultural and Art Troupe was established under the guidance of Mr.

Wu Xiaobang. The warm welcome of the Inner Mongolian people led to the rapid development of Mongolian dance. In 1947, Jia Zuoguang, as he recommended, came to Inner Mongolia and was affectionately referred to as the “child of the grassland” by the local people. During these decades, Jia Zuoguang organically integrated the policies and guidance of the Party, the state, and the autonomous region government on literature and art with the original ecological dance culture of Inner Mongolia, creating classic works such as “Herding Horse Dance”, “Ordos Dance”, and “Bowl Dance”. The “Ordos Dance” performed by the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Song and Dance Troupe also won the first prize in the 5th World Youth Student Peace and Friendship Celebration Dance Competition in 1955 and the classic work award in the “Chinese 20th Century Dance Classic Competition” in 1994 [1].

2. Rooted in the People: Rhythm Born from Life

Before the rise of stage dance, Mongolian people often took advantage of their daily life to dance, and the traditional Mongolian dance that survived was already very weak, with relatively few dance movements [2]. Mr. Jia Zuoguang went deep into pastoral areas in 1947 to learn from the people of various ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia in order to explore the style of ethnic and folk dance. Starting from labor, life, and religious customs, he organized and extracted a large number of dance movements such as horseback riding, archery, and milking that could be used in dance performances and accepted by the Mongolian people. At the same time, he summarized the Mongolian dance rhythms based on shoulders, arms, wrists, and steps, creating the basic vocabulary of Mongolian dance. And as a classic product under the New Language Collection, ‘Ordos Dance’ also vividly showcases this. It is based on the local sacrificial dance “Chama”, and the creatively created movements of “swinging hands and waist” and “jumping up and bouncing wrists and lifting legs” are derived from “Chama” “s” sprinkling gold” and “deer dance”. Jia Zuoguang’s bold adaptation removes the original majesty and mystery, while retaining the rough and unrestrained characteristics. The male dancers darted in between swinging their hands and taking steps, each time with hard shoulders as if facing the morning sun, hoping for a brand new day to come. As the female dancers enter the stage wearing red dresses, they add new colors to the scene while symbolizing the movements of milking and braiding hair, bringing a touch of life to the dance stage. The ups and downs and interactive coordination between male and female dancers seem to take viewers into the homeland of herdsmen, allowing them to experience the simple and pure beauty and happy life of the people through dancing.

3. Devoting Oneself to the Grassland: Laying out Blueprints between Heaven and Earth

The dance confined to the classroom is always lack of the power to attack people’s hearts. Mr. Jia Zuoguang, who moved from closed to open, absorbed the essence of heaven and earth from the vast grassland. In his works, he assists in the presen-

tation of Mongolian dance culture through different compositions, pursuing the expression of dance content and the hierarchical presentation of emotional thoughts beyond conforming to the laws and regulations of artistic form beauty. Jumping out of the narrow stage and immersing oneself in the blue sky and green grass. The repeated use of straight lines, diagonal lines, and circles in the dance composition of “Ordos Dance” also showcases the vastness and boundlessness of heaven and earth. The straight line movement from the first male dancer’s appearance establishes the straightforward and concise tone of the work, while the double diagonal lines flowing into the female dancer convey the sharpness of the Mongolian people while showcasing the atmosphere. The semi-circular and concentric circles formed through repeated interweaving resemble the scattered people of Ordos who were liberated by the founding of the People’s Republic of China [3]. They were spontaneously inspired by the joy in their hearts and rushed to the central government to experience the spiritual prosperity of a great country and a small family in the changes of the big and small circles. Finally, the male and female dancers gathered from both ends towards the middle and left in pairs. It is not difficult to see the emotional expression of the people of Ordos opening their arms and actively engaging in a new life in this dynamic and the smiles of the dancers [4].

4. New Architecture: Blooming Brilliance in the Times

The common problem at that time was that ethnic folk dances were detached from life and produced in imagination. Therefore, how to artistically present the original folk culture on stage became a difficult problem for dancers. Mr. Jia Zuoguang also constantly sought answers in his creative career in Inner Mongolia. He entered the lives of herdsman, observed the actual situation, and humbly learned from the people, achieving a step forward in inheriting traditional culture; He used his experience of studying modern dance in Japan to boldly extract a movement with Ordos aesthetic characteristics in the ghost dance ceremony through the three elements of “time and space power” in modern dance, achieving the next step in innovating traditional culture. The dance aesthetic concept of “caring about the people” that has always been implemented has guided him towards the right path. He repeatedly pointed out that “the people need art, and art needs the people even more”, which should be remembered in his heart [5]. The cross elements of creation and performance, such as “stability, accuracy, sensitivity, clarity, softness, health, and beauty,” have also been implemented and passed down [6]. Mr. Jia Zuoguang has accurately grasped the balance between inheritance and innovation, tradition and modernity, and created dance art works such as “Ordos Dance” that contain traditional charm and contemporary ideals and are loved by the people, laying a new foundation for the modernization process of folk dance.

5. Conclusion

Rhythms are born from life, blueprints are laid out between heaven and earth, and brilliance shines in the era. Mr. Jia Zuoguang’s “Ordos Dance” decodes and reor-

ganizes traditional cultural symbols through body language, completing a leap from cultural replication to spiritual translation. The symbiotic relationship between ethnic customs and contemporary spirit contained in the work is just like the self questioning of Chinese civilization in the wave of globalization, reflecting the creative transformation path of Chinese civilization in the context of globalization—it is neither a simple return to tradition nor a passive pursuit of Western paradigms, but rather an aesthetic expression with contemporary universality excavated from the cultural genes of the ontology. This exploration provides a practical model for how dance can carry cultural memories and respond to contemporary issues, thus creating a major classic of Mongolian dance. In future dance creations, artists should also root themselves in people's lives and local culture and generate works of art that people enjoy.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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