

Aesthetical Exploration of Dragon Dance Movement

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Abstract—The Chinese dragon dance is a treasure with unique aesthetic characteristics in the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. This paper makes a preliminary analysis of the aesthetic characteristics of the Chinese dragon dance through the methods of literature review and expert interview.

Keywords—Dragon dance movement, esthetical Exploration

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese folk dragon dance has gone through thousands of years of development and changes. The dragon represents auspiciousness, nobility and valor in Chinese culture, and is also a symbol of power. The Chinese people believe that dragon dance on a festive day can bring good luck and happiness in an effort to ward off evil spirits. Today, dragon dance has developed into a highly skilled sport which can show the action of the dragon, shape the image of the dragon, and show people's wisdom and astute superb skills. It has a very rich form of expression and style of different artistic characteristics. Today's dragon dance is a cultural art combining martial arts, drum music, drama and art, and has become a sport with unique aesthetic characteristics.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DRAGON DANCE MOVEMENT IS GENTLE IN SOUTH CHINA AND STRONG IN NORTH CHINA

Chinese dragon dance is an important part of Chinese traditional culture. There are differences between the north and the south China. The making of props of southern dragon dance is relatively shorter, lighter and thinner, so, the dexterity of the dragon is conducive to display skills and appears delicate, beautiful, slender a few on modelling[1]. Generally speaking, the southern dragon has soft and round lines, and the dragon body pays attention to decoration with gorgeous colors and clear patterns. The performance style is full of unpredictable changes, vitality, freedom, flexibility and agility. In contrast, southern dragon dance is relatively taller and heavier in the making of props, magnificent and powerful on modelling, rough and rigid on figure, and it highlights the momentum and ups and downs in the style of performance. In general, the northern dragon dance is characterized as unflappable, vigorous, fierce, violent and brave, which just reflect that characteristics of the northern people are honest, unrestrained, rough and free.

III. AESTHETIC FEATURES OF DRAGON DANCE

A. The Beauty of a Dragon Dancer's Body

Physical beauty includes physical beauty, good looks and posture beauty. Unless the person's appearance can be changed through medical plastic surgery, it is basically subject to innate heredity. Although the human figure has a great relationship with heredity, the figure and posture have a great plasticity. Significant changes can be made through scientific training [2]. The well-built, well-proportioned and elegant figure of dragon dancers are benefit from their systematic training on dragon dance movement. All the techniques of dragon dance movement require the coordination of the upper and lower limbs. A lot of somersault and jump during exercise can develop the muscles of the waist, abdomen, buttocks and legs. The dance movement can promote the exercise of the shoulder, chest, back and upper limbs and other muscles more fully. Therefore, through systematic dragon dance training, people's body coordination, symmetry, fitness and posture will become more elegant.

B. The Beauty of Action Style of Dragon Dance Movement

1) The Beauty of Rhythm of Dragon Dance Movement

Rhythm is physiological and psychological reflection of aesthetic subject as a respond to different sound, line of different length and different thickness, rich colors, fluctuant forms through different stimulation, such as the auditory, visual, tactile, etc. It is reflected by the repeated changes of the continuous movement with regularity and order of the aesthetic object[3]. It comes first from life and natural rhythm, such as the alternation of day and night, seasonal changes, human respiration, pulse beat, nervousness and relaxation of labor. Rhythm is produced in a unified and complete activity process with strong contrast, it is by no means independent. The rhythmic beauty of the dragon dance movement is also embedded in the dragon dance movement itself and the repetition of the elements of the changes of the dragon dance movement in the whole practicing process of and the dragon dance movement. It includes the internal rhythm of the dragon dance movement and the rhythm displayed in the external form.

2) The Modelling Beauty of Dragon Dance Movement

The beauty of modelling is the beauty expressed with the form posture. It includes the beauty of static modelling and dynamic modelling as well as the beauty of dynamic and static combination. The dynamic modelling beauty of dragon dance movement include the dragon's disc, swim, turn, roll, wear, teng, wrap, play and other forms, and it makes the above movements coherent naturally. Movements and modelling such as "dragon play ball", "fly dragon chase ball" and others show the spirit of the dragon and life of the caress and care. "Dragon rising" symbolizes the prosperity of the motherland, standing tall in the world. The whirl of flower on the shoulder symbolizes the Chinese satellite's flighting in space. Every dragon dance move must have the expression of "meaning". The beauty of static modelling is as follows: "mountain character modelling", "butterfly modelling", "Chinese dragon modelling" and "8 character modelling", all of which are based on the static performance[4]. The "static posture" of the dragon body itself, such as winding, pattern, modelling and character formation, serves as a foil to the "moving charm", which plays the role of putting the finishing touch on the whole dragon dance process. Static modelling has the difference of height and pitch. Tall modelling is like "tower dish model", give people a kind of magnificent sense of majestic and imposing. Low modelling is like "lying dragon modelling", reflected a kind of relaxed and free, leisurely and unrestrained mood. The modelling of bow is like "dragon play ball model", which shows a kind of heroic spirit with great power. The form of lift, such as "dragon's tail high warps modelling", shows a kind of heroic and unyielding, indomitable fighting spirit. In the performance process of "moving" or "static", the changes of various forms have shaped the artistic images in various forms. The ingenious combination of "movement" and "static" makes the dragon dance movement melt into the coherent performance, to win people by power, to entertain people by form, to touch people by spirit, and to flow through by spirit. The dragon dance movement is like a beautiful lyric poem or a bold and unrestrained march song, enabling people to enjoy the beauty and savor the mellow traditional Chinese culture in the tumbling and modeling of the traveling dragon.

3) The Dynamic Beauty of Dragon Dance Movement

a) The Linear Beauty of Dragon Dance

Chinese dragon dance, in a sense, is a kind of "line" flow. Under the guidance of the dragon head, people are unified in a movement and a rhythm. The dragon head, dragon body and tail are in harmony, rolling from side to side, up and down. With the moving "line", a vivid, surging, majestic dragon is danced, and the Chinese nation's spiritual strength and majestic momentum is showed fully[5]. The "line" in dragon dance, containing infinite interest and grand momentum, has a high aesthetic value. For example, the movement of "swimming dragon", from simple straight lines, curves and walk rounders to the air flying movements, which are all executed by athletes by marching along a straight line, curve, arc line. The athletes' body posture do changes with the ups and downs of the dragon festival, presents a smooth and fluent, activities of the "line". Here, the 'line' flows either fast or slow, rises and falls, or rolls left or right, giving the movement a lively motion. Generally speaking, lines show different aesthetic characteristics in different dragon dance movements, forming two kinds of beauty: feminine and masculine.

b) The Round Beauty of Dragon Dance

The movements of Chinese dragon dance are mostly circular, with both arms making circular movements and routes making circular movements. The movements of dragon dance are mostly related to the circle, and the twists and turns of dragon body and the rolling of dragon ball are all round. Dragon dance movement request that "dragon's head bite tail", and keep rolling in a circle, dragon dress looks smooth in the case of no wrinkle, no folding, no twisting, no drag. Dragon body dance round or not round, is an important measure of the level of dragon dance skills. If you dance round, it means you are skillful. If you dance not round, it is not beautiful.

C. The Rhyme Beauty of Dragon Dance Movement

The music accompaniment of the dragon dance is ancient, and it is an important part of the dragon dance competition or performance today. It plays an irreplaceable role in enhancing the atmosphere, changing the rhythm, inspiring the team members' emotion and causing the audience's resonance. Chinese dragon dance is performed with the accompaniment of music, so "rhyme" has a special meaning in the performance of dragon dance movements[6]. The dragon dance performance requires a sense of rhythm, full of rhythm changes and repeated climax. The changing of the tempo of music melody and the coordination of each dance dragon movement make the smoothness of music and the fluidity of the dance dragon constitute a harmonious and perfect picture. Music, which is novel, rich in Musical Instruments and high-level in performance, can not only heighten the atmosphere, but also make the action of dragon dance and the rhythm of music coordinate, showing the elegant charm.

D. The Beauty of Artistic Conception of Dragon Dance Movement

Artistic conception is the highest aesthetic level that Chinese people pursue, it is a kind of artistic state that the life picture that expresses and the thought that express confluence is consistent. It is holistic and perceptible, like the magic of the body, can be understood and cannot be expressed. Artistic conception also can cause people to have association, aftertaste, far-reaching and long. I generalize the understanding of artistic conception as follows: scene integration, realistic and empty, evoking association and thought-provoking. Landscape painting can be created with virtual, Peking Opera with virtual reality, poetry can be integrated with scenes, with virtual. When we see the soaring spirits of the dragon dancers and the majestic dragons, we immediately feel the stirring national spirit of the people who are united against drought, famine, evil and the pursuit of a happy life. As "the descendants of the dragon" pride and confidence naturally arise. As a festive activity dotted with life, dragon dance is more and more loved by people. For when people watch the dragon dance, they are so engaged and comfortable, so happy and excited, the pressure of life, work and worry are all left behind, so that people can be happy and relaxed after the happy leisure

into a new life. Chinese dragon dance movement has been embellishing and enriching people's life in the form of festive entertainment and content in line with people's aesthetic psychology.

E. The Spiritual Beauty of Dragon Dance Movement

Dragon dance is a difficult skill category, athletes must possess a firm and indomitable will, fighting spirit. At the same time, dragon dance is a collective activity, dragon dancers should coordinate and cooperate, unite and in step, pearl lead dragon, dragon follow pearl walk, fast and orderly, it is only depending on the collective strength to complete the dragon dance performance. Everyone is expected to see themselves as part of the whole and to work actively with others. The people behind must follow the movements and routes of the people in front of them. Without the awareness of cooperation and regardless of others' freedom, the performance of the dragon will be affected because the movements are too fast or too slow. Moving too fast will destroy the movement rhythm of the whole dragon body, even cause the dragon body to fold. Moving too slow will affect the range and speed of the movement, the overall smoothness of the dragon dance process. The dragon dance movement embodies the national spirit of unity and harmony, hardworking, striving for progress and self-improvement, and creates a peaceful, tranquil, festive and happy atmosphere.

F. The Colorful Beauty of Dragon Dance Movement

The colors of the ornate costumes of the dragon dancers and the colorful dragons are reasonably matched, further highlighting the festive atmosphere of the dragon dance and creating a unique artistic realm, giving the audience more perfect artistic enjoyment

IV. SUMMARY

Chinese dragon dance is the manifestation of the life rhythm and the image of group leaping. The Chinese dragon dance movement embodies the basic spirit of the Chinese culture of "unceasing self-improvement" and "unity and endeavor", and is always pregnant with new creations corresponding to The Times. After thousands of years of evolution, Chinese dragon dance has become a strong artistic performance, in line with people's aesthetic habits. Through the continuous reform and innovation of the predecessors, the dancing dragon movement has been endowed with a colorful form of the goal beauty of the heart, so that people can appreciate and experience the rich aesthetic feeling in the dragon dance activities, and be cultivated by the beauty, so as to feel their own ideal of personality, life and strength, and obtain spiritual enjoyment and psychological satisfaction. Chinese dragon dance can be spread among the people for thousands of years because of its unique aesthetic characteristics. People always love beautiful things, and only beautiful things will be handed down through the ages, generation after generation, will be constantly rich, perfect.

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