

The Artistic Features of Nuo Dance in Nanfeng

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Abstract

Nuo dance in Nanfeng County, Jiangxi Province, is known as the ancient Chinese dance "living fossil". Nuo dance has a long history of origin and is a performance form that includes religion, music, dance and mask art as a whole, and is a folk ritual activity for the purpose of warding off epidemics and praying for good fortune and wearing masks as a performance feature. This paper is first based on the cultural anthropology of dance fieldwork, followed by the "first-hand materials" and the results of previous research to implement the material analysis, mainly to study the dance characteristics of Nanfeng Nuo dance and sound rhythm form, found that Nanfeng Nuo dance is to express the meaning of the shape, with five kinds of witch step, four kinds of hand decision. The musical structure of the Nuo dance is relatively single, and the instruments mostly use drums and gongs, which are more dependent on musical rhythm in performance. In this paper, through a more profound analysis and study of Nanfeng Nuo dance, we hope to facilitate the majority of learners in the study of this type of work to broaden their thinking and more accurately grasp the connotations of Chinese folklore works.

Keywords: Nuo dance; Artistic features; Rhythm; Nuo mask

Introduction

Nuo dance is a widely spread around the folk dance with the function of driving away ghosts and epidemics, rituals, is the dance part of the Nuo ceremony, generally performed between the first day of the New Year and the sixteenth day of the first month.

Nuo dance originated in human totems, prevalent in witchcraft, as far as three thousand years ago in the Zhou Dynasty, Nuo will be with mysterious colors of the majestic, bitterly cold style, in the state's Nuo ceremony with natural disasters and plagues to compete. Nanfeng Nuo dance, commonly known as dancing Nuo, is along the ancient ritual of driving away ghosts and epidemics (see figure 1). It has gone through a long period of time, continuous reform and innovation, and gradually evolved into a folk dance, is one of the four national "non-heritage" projects in Fuzhou. During the Shang and Zhou dynasties, Nuo developed from ancient totem worship into a fixed ritual used to drive away ghosts and epidemics, in the Zhou dynasty when the "ritual" system, called "Nuo".



Figure 1: Nuo ceremony

For more than 3,000 years, the mysterious Nuo in the long history or hidden or visible, from ancient times to today, inherited the ancient Chinese culture, for generations of people to pray for this peace and good luck.

Since the 1980s, the study of religion has become a hot spot in the study of traditional Chinese culture. So, more and more scholars are concerned about and into the Nanfeng "NUO" cultural research. At present, many scholars at home and abroad on Nanfeng Nuo dance field investigation and research, published a number of papers and writings. In the history of Nuo dance, masks, rituals and other aspects have made certain achievements, however, for Nanfeng Nuo dance from the music culture is relatively not much research.

Through the author of Nanfeng Nuo dance in the past research, can be found in the past research characteristics:

(1) For Nanfeng Nuo dance history, origin, dance, religion, more discussion, but for Nanfeng Nuo dance music research is relatively small.

(2) The study of Nanfeng Nuo dance music, usually only to Shiyong Nuo dance as a representative of the music research, and not from more than one Nuo dance on behalf of, for example, Ganfang, to comprehensively analyze.

In summary, the author seeks from a multi-dimensional academic perspective, for Nanfeng Nuo dance artistic features to explore, dig its music and cultural connotations to fill an academic gap.

Materials and methods

In this study, the literature related to "the artistic characteristics of Nanfeng Nuo Dance" was investigated and analyzed by using the literature research method and the method of analysis of musical works.

2.1. Literature Research Method

In the initial stage, I developed a database search strategy to delve into the literature related to the research topic. Literature related to the research topic.

This initial review was crucial in understanding the amount of research available and identifying relevant studies that meet the author's research needs.

2.2 Method of analyzing musical works

The method of analysis of musical works refers to stand at the technical level and literary level, using a variety of knowledge and information to analyze the work, digging into the rich artistic characteristics of the work, and then comprehensively and profoundly know the work, understand the work, and achieve the promotion of the Nuo dance, the role of inheriting traditional culture. We analyze the work from both technical and literary levels. Literary level is to understand the development of Nuo dance, background, etc., the technical level is the use of music expertise on Nuo dance characteristics, rhythm and other aspects of the analysis, to strengthen the overall cognition of Nuo dance, these for the importance of, and to protect the development of folk culture plays an important role.

Results

3.1 The development of Nanfeng Nuo dance and representative

The history of Nanfeng Nuo can be traced back to the second century BC, began in the early Han Dynasty, until the Song Dynasty is the development of Nanfeng Nuo dance period, the Ming Dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang importance of sacrificial activities, Nanfeng folk build Nuo temple, group Nuo group, Nuo rituals are very prevalent.

Nanfeng Nuo dance is commonly known as "dancing Nuo". Nuo group more natural village combination, artists are farmers, as few as 5 people, up to 36 people, are called "disciples". The organization performing the Nuo rituals and dances is called "Nuo group" and often has strict team rules. Every Chinese New Year, the first day of "Nuo", within half a month, Nuo class to go around the village, dance, entertain the gods and entertain people, praying that everything goes well. One to three days after the Lantern Festival "Nuo" (round Nuo), the end of a year of Nuo activities. In many of

the Nuo group and Nuo dance, the Shiyong Nuo and Ganfang Nuo is best, because their program is the oldest and the grandest Nuo ceremony.

3.1.1 Ganfang Nuo

Ganfang Nuo is the name of the place name Ganfang for the Nuo dance. Ganfang Nuo temple was built 600 years ago, is still well-preserved in Jiangxi Province, is the oldest Nuo temple (see figure 2) in China. Ganfang Nuo dance is a representative of the county's ancient Nuo, the original color is strong, clear rules and regulations, ceremonial grand, retaining the inherent strength, simplicity, power, rugged ancient style. Ganfang Nuo rituals every year on the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar "Nuo", the whole jump Nuo activities have continued until the end of the first month 18. The night of the eighteenth day of the first month, "Nuo" by the Nuo class to invite the gods from all walks of life to return for, and in the Nuo God Hall in the dance there Nuo, until dawn, year after year to perform such rituals, indicating that the Ganfang Nuo class to invite God to send God's devotion.



Figure 2: Nuo Temple

3.1.2 Shiyou Nuo

Shiyou Nuo is the name of the place name Shiyou for the Nuo dance. Shiyou village is located in the territory of Sanxi Township of Nanfeng and is a village famous for Nuo dance, Shiyou dance to the ancient and primitive, rugged and bold, more native form and experts as the "last tribe of Han". In the hearts of the Shiyang people, Nuo is sacred, dancing Nuo is an extremely solemn ritual, an order, when dancing Nuo people wear masks (see figure 3), they become the incarnation of God, enjoy the courtesy of God, do not have to adhere to the common sense of man. However, the rules of dancing Nuo, including the content and action, are natural, does not allow any changes and deviations, so each year from which the family began to dance, to which the end, its time and route, there are strict regulations. From the first day of the first month to sixteen during the dancing Nuo, the head of the people on behalf of God, the exercise of supreme power, the management of the Nuo class, the management of the entire village, the management of everything in the village. The most lively and grandest to be counted on the night of the sixteenth "round Nuo".



Figure 3: Nuo actors with mask

3.2 Nuo masks and costumes

The biggest difference between Nuo dance and traditional dance lies in the fact that Nuo dance to wear a mask (see figure 4). Nuo masks symbolize God, but also the symbol of expulsion of ghosts and epidemics. Nuo masks are an important part of China's Nuo culture. Many kinds of Nuo masks, the shape is different, Nuo masks in terms of color preferences with bright and fresh, with red, yellow, green, white, black as the main color system. Carved with willow wood and balsam wood, then lacquered, reproducing the original totem image to show the important spiritual power of people since ancient times. Unlike ordinary masks, each Nuo mask has its own name and is a representative of the sacred. The mask is the carrier of divine resistance in the exorcism ritual, and in the Nuo dance performance is the dressing of the character, with different sound structures to portray different personalities. Nuo artists hope that through the Nuo clothing and Nuo masks to achieve the purpose of Human-God connection. Pray for good weather and peace in the coming year.



Figure 4: Nuo dance masks

Nuo dance costumes, the traditional costume is inherited from the head wearing a red turban, wearing a red skirt or red cardigan top, green sleeve cuffs, waist skirt (see figure 5). Into the new era, Nuo dance costumes will also change with the aesthetic changes, some Nuo class will make changes in the color of the turban or top color, some Nuo class to absorb opera costumes, in short, no longer as before must wear a red turban and red skirt, Nuo dance costumes appeared in a variety of styles. However, how to change, the costume is mainly used to show the character's identity, or mainly red, yellow, green as a supplement.



Figure 5: Nuo costumes

After thousands of years of evolution, Nuo masks and Nuo costumes to join some of the elements of the heroic characters, into the hall of God, the people happy to see.

3.3 Dance characteristics of Nanfeng Nuo dance

Nanfeng Nuo dance form is not affected by other dance forms, so Nuo dance has distinctive features, simple and rigid movements, most of which maintain the original style (Zeng Zhigong,2005). Nuo dance is mainly used to show the hand movements and pace to the form of the meaning of the charm. Hand movements is the use of Taoist hand skills, there are generally three kinds of incense and fire skills, Huaguang skills, darkness skills. Step orientation using the Taoist direction

of the eight trigrams, there are four common pace, limp sick feet, left and right and step, before and after the step, hitching ground painting, scholars have summarized them into four kinds of which step, three kinds of hand movements (see figure 6).



Figure 6: Three kinds of hand movements

Nanfeng Nuo dance performance content is mainly entertainment dance, generally divided into three kinds, the first is a mask role named dance, such as the mythical story of *Kaishan* (see figure 7). *Kaishan's* typical movements have certain martial arts characteristics, the need to use slashing, chopping and other content to show a domineering image of the great god. The second type of dance is named after the symbolic form of the skill. For example, the monkey hangs a beam from a sinking ship. The character of the monkey hanging beam program is very prominent, rich in technical skills, and the characteristics of entertainment are even stronger. The third kind is the dance named after the main plot, such as *Zhang Tian Shi* summoning

the general. The ape spirit in this program is the incarnation of the ghost epidemic, and the purpose of the capture is to drive away the ghost epidemic. In fact, many of the movements are repeated singularly, but the performers can make the viewers feel that they are devoting their hearts to the dance and communicating with the spirits religiously, and this fusion of heart and movement is the most impressive.



Figure 7: The mythical story of *Kaishan*

3.4 Rhythmic characteristics

The biggest difference between Nuo dance and traditional dance lies in the fact that Nuo dance is worn throughout the mask. Nuo dance facial expressions are invisible to the audience and can not achieve diversity, so the performance is more dependent on the rhythm of the music to enrich. Rhythm is generally expressed as the strength of the dance movement, the speed and energy of the size, it is always linked to the mood to show emotion. Nanfeng Nuo dance music in general is accompanied by percussion, belonging to our folk music in the clear gong and drum

music (see picture 8). Nuo dance music is accompanied by the performance of the dance and change, it does not have complex melodic factors, there is no instrumental diversity, showing a natural and random rhythmic rhythm. Nuo dance uses rhythm to set the mood, the style is primitive and simple, with a strong local flavor, with improvised meaning. Nanfeng Nuo dance has a lot of heroes and gods of mythological stories, are strong, large amplitude, fast characteristics, showing a bright, bold style. In the Nanfeng solo dance program "*Kaishan*" (see figure 8), the performer's left hand does hand movements, while the right hand is holding an axe, and chopping and slashing, majestic, with a strong sense of rhythm.



Figure 8: Nuo drum

3.4.1 Symbol of strength - one beat

In Nanfeng Nuo dance, one beat is the most commonly used. Although the rhythmic form of one beat is not recognized in the theory of European music system, it is seen repeatedly in our traditional folk music. The one-beat rhythmic form can be used to demonstrate symbols of power. For

example, the first beat of the opening music "Kaisan", outside of the flower beat rhythm in gong and drum playing, is played in a one-beat ensemble from the second beat onward. The speed of this ensemble is not fixed, it can be fast or slow, and the number of beats is not clearly defined. It can be improvised to lengthen or shorten the number of beats according to the length of preparation time before the opening, and it can also be improvised to match different dance scenes by gradual fast and slow, and gradual strong and weak, and to produce improvisation with dance movements. In addition, one beat does not necessarily have to express the grandeur, but also often expresses a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere.

3.4.2 The rhythmic form of accent shift

The so-called accent shift is the movement of the accent in the beat, giving people a feeling that the accent is erratic and lively. The accent means that the sound of the largest and most powerful tone. Most of the Nuo dance performance primitive, rough style, so in the rhythm often use the accent shift. For example, in "*Kaishan*", in order to match the brave and powerful image of the dancers and the powerful movements of the chopping and slashing, the use of progressive performance notation in many places, and then the original strong beat into a weak beat, the original weak beat into a strong beat, the formation of a clear accent shift against the norm, and "Lei Gong" is also so using the rhythmic characteristics of the accent shift, more imaginative portrayal of Lei Gong's rugged and simple character characteristics.

3.4.3 Irregular rhythmic rhythm form

Regular rhythms generally perform more calmly, while irregular rhythms often increase the contrast, forming a tense and chaotic atmosphere. Nanfeng Nuo dance music often uses irregular rhythmic rhythms, musicians will be in the dance through the experience and grasp

of the action, improvisation to reorganize the combination between the beats or alternate between the use of common beats, such as 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 rhythmic patterns. In many programs, the accompaniment is not fixed to a set of combinations or a beat, but often a mixture of beats to match the different dance movements. The gong players, with various rhythmic patterns into the drums, this irregular rhythmic rhythm with the dance movements, giving a tense and original action image.

Conclusion

Nuo culture is in the form of rituals, dance, music, etc., by imitating the image of gods or evil spirits. In order to achieve blessings, exorcism of folk activities.

In this paper, through the development of Nanfeng Nuo dance, masks and costumes, dance and rhythm of the characteristics of the analysis, explains the Nuo dance contained in the cultural value and artistic value. First of all, the Nanfeng Nuo dance of the existing, development, ritual procedures were sorted out, followed by the paper focuses on the Nanfeng Nuo dance masks, costumes, roles and their deeper meaning of the performance characteristics of the collation, supplementation and analysis, and finally, the Nanfeng Nuo dance and music rhythm was analyzed.

Nanfeng Nuo dance is a product of history, is the result of cultural fusion, not a single dance, we should fully recognize its preciousness and scarcity, to strengthen its protection efforts. Today, in the new historical conditions, people's enthusiasm for participation is still relatively high, all levels of government to protect the awareness of non-heritage has gradually deepened and improved, administrative means are gradually in place and unfolded, but, in view of the Nanfeng Nuo dance of the old artist is becoming scarce, which has an in-depth understanding of experts are also few and far between, and analyze the Nuo dance from the music point of view of the thesis is even more scarce. Therefore, the timely excavation and finishing

Nanfeng Nuo dance historical changes, summarize and analyze the characteristics of its dance performance is particularly important and necessary. I believe Nanfeng Nuo dance this ancient folk art, in its simple historical precipitation behind the foundation, in the rise of Chinese culture in the era, will be more vibrant, advancing with the times, adding a brand-new era of elegance.

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