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Research on Emotional Expression and Artistic Presentation in Dance Performances in the New Era Context

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Abstract: This paper, based on the new requirements for the development of dance art brought about by the changes in the aesthetic context in the new era, conducts a systematic analysis of the generation logic and presentation path of emotional expression in dance performances. Firstly, it clarifies the artistic attributes of dance performances and the connotation of emotional expression, and explains the generation mechanism of dance emotions by combining body aesthetics theory. On this basis, it summarizes the new requirements for dance art expression proposed by the aesthetic context in the new era. Secondly, from three aspects: the unified construction of dance themes and emotional connotations, the dynamic transformation of body movements and emotional psychology, and the coordinated expression of facial expressions and body language, it analyzes the internal operating mechanism of emotional expression in contemporary dance performances. Finally, by combining excellent contemporary dance creation practices, it extracts four innovative practice paths: promoting the authenticity of emotional expression through theme deepening, enhancing the level of emotional expression through the innovation of body language, strengthening the stage emotional tension through the coordination of music and space, and enhancing the artistic value of the work through the integration of cultural inheritance and contemporary aesthetics. The research holds that the emotional expression and artistic presentation of contemporary dance performances should not only follow the laws of dance art but also actively respond to the aesthetic demands of the times. In the dialogue between traditional aesthetics and contemporary aesthetics, innovative development should be achieved in order to provide a reference for the practical innovation of Chinese dance performance art in the new era.

Keywords: New era; Dance performance; Emotional expression; Art presentation

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1. Introduction

Dance art, as an art form that conveys emotions through the body, has always undergone continuous

adjustments and evolution in its expression logic in accordance with the development of the contemporary context. Since the advent of the new era, the transformation of social and cultural structures has reshaped the aesthetic horizons of the general public. Audiences' aesthetic demands for dance art are no longer limited to the display of movement skills, but also pursue the expression of contemporary spirit in the works. Therefore, systematically exploring the internal logic of emotional expression in dance performances under the new era context and extracting the innovative paths that have been tested through practice is not only an inevitable choice to respond to the development needs of dance art itself, but also can provide practical references for the high-quality development of contemporary dance creation and performance in China, helping dance art play a more important role in inheriting Chinese excellent traditional culture, telling Chinese stories, and conveying the spirit of the times.

2. Theoretical foundation of emotional expression and artistic presentation in dance performances in the new era context

2.1. The artistic nature and emotional connotations of dance performances

The essential attribute of a dance performance lies in the externalization of emotions and the generation of meaning through the medium of body movements. Susan Lang, in her symbolic aesthetics system, pointed out that dance is an artistic form in which the dancer expresses a "phantom force" through continuous body postures. This "phantom force" constitutes an abstract expression of "imagined emotions" rather than real emotions. The emotional connotation of a dance performance has a dual structure. On the one hand, it is rooted in the dancer's understanding of the emotional tone of the work; on the other hand, it is manifested through the unfolding of body language. The aesthetic standard pursued by Chinese classical dance, namely "completeness of form and spirit, unity of inside and outside", is essentially a refined summary of this structural relationship. From an artistic perspective, the emotional expression of dance is always within the tension of emotional logic. The dancer needs to find the convergence point between body movements and emotional content in this tension, so that each movement form carries identifiable emotional information [1].

2.2. Body aesthetics and the mechanism of dance emotional generation

In the dance art that uses human body movements as the means of expression, the aesthetic object essentially represents the internalization of body aesthetics, while the aesthetic subject develops a conscious awareness under the overall influence of multiple senses. This implies that the generation of dance emotions is a construction of interaction between the body and consciousness, perception and expression. The dancer, based on empathy as the emotional foundation, engages in a dialogue between their own life experiences and the emotional content of the work, and then realizes the externalization of emotions through movements, facial expressions, and stage presentation methods. The Chinese classical dance body posture system emphasizes the operational laws of "the mind and intention merging, intention and qi merging, qi and force merging, and force and form merging", revealing that the transformation from internal emotions to external movements is not a mechanical transmission, but rather an orderly unfolding through the regulation of breath and the distribution of force. Thus, the mechanism of generating dance emotions presents a hierarchical progressive structure, with emotional experience as the driving force, breath operation as the intermediary function, and body movements as the final material manifestation [2].

2.3. The impact of the new era aesthetic context on the expression of dance art

The influence of the new era's aesthetic context on the expression of dance art is primarily manifested in the aspect of the contemporary renewal of emotional vocabulary. The integration of individual emotions with national narrative has become an important trend in contemporary dance creation. Dance artists need to incorporate more public emotional connotations into their personalized physical expressions. The creation practice of the dance drama "Peony Pavilion" indicates that contemporary dance performances increasingly emphasize constructing dance language based on the real emotional experiences of characters and the logic of the story, rather than mechanically choreographing from established dance vocabulary. Calm or gentle postures can also constitute dynamic body language. At the same time, the intervention of digital technology in the era provides new media conditions for dance presentation, but the application of technological means should not obscure human values and humanistic sentiments; it should inspire new aesthetic experiences in the interactive integration of artistic forms. Cross-cultural contexts also show a conscious pursuit of Eastern aesthetic paradigms in dance creation. Foreign forms such as ballet have formed an expression style that is both international in perspective and has local charm by integrating traditional Chinese literary themes and the aesthetic of free expression [3].

3. The internal mechanism of emotional expression in dance performances in the new era

3.1. The unified construction of the dance theme and its emotional connotation

The theme constitutes the logic of emotional expression, while the emotional connotation endows the theme with a perceivable temperature. The degree of their unity directly determines the artistic quality of the dance performance. In contemporary dance creation practice, the selection of themes is increasingly showing a trend from singularity to diversity and from grand scale to individuality. The dance drama "The Everlasting Electromagnetic Waves" is based on the revolutionary historical theme and uses the faith of underground workers and the emotional connection between a couple as the emotional thread, providing a concrete and perceptible emotional foundation for the national and family sentiments. This creative practice indicates that the unity of the theme and the emotional connotation is achieved through the establishment of the relationship between characters in specific situations, allowing the theme to naturally grow at the emotional level. The depth of the dancer's understanding of the work's theme directly affects the level of their emotional expression. When the dancer merely stays at the conceptual level of the theme, their body movements are prone to fall into stereotyped emotional interpretations. Only by internalizing the theme as one's own perceptible emotional experience can the movements gain a clear emotional direction in the stage presentation. In the new era context, Chinese classical dance has also gained richer connotation requirements, that is, the accuracy of form must serve the authenticity of spirit, and the authenticity of spirit must be based on an in-depth understanding of the theme [4].

3.2. Dynamic transformation of physical movements and emotional psychology

Dancers base their emotions on empathy, engaging in a dialogue between their own life experiences and the emotional content of their works. They then externalize these emotions through movements, facial expressions, and stage presentation techniques. The operational laws revealed by the Chinese classical dance body language system, such as "the unity of mind and intention, the unity of intention and qi, the unity of

qi and force, and the unity of force and form," provide an effective analytical framework for understanding this transformation process. Emotional psychology first transforms into the regulation state of breath, and the depth, speed, and pauses of the breath then affect the distribution of physical strength. The changes in strength distribution ultimately manifest as differences in the texture and rhythm of the movements. Taking the expression of sorrowful emotions as an example, dancers do not complete the emotional transmission through exaggerated facial distortions or large-scale falling movements. Instead, they use the stagnation of breathing, the sinking of the center of gravity, and the delay of movement speed to allow the sorrowful emotions to naturally permeate every aspect of the body movement. Conversely, the execution process of the body movements also feeds back to emotional psychology. Specific movement qualities can evoke corresponding emotional memories, allowing the dancer's emotional experience to deepen continuously as the movements progress.

3.3. Synergistic expression of facial expressions and body language

The synergy between facial expressions and body language directly affects the persuasiveness of the emotional expression in dance performances. The function of facial expressions in dance performances constitutes an integrated emotional presentation together with body language. When the emotional information conveyed by facial expressions and body movements is consistent, the persuasiveness of emotional expression is enhanced. When there is a controlled tension relationship between the two, more complex emotional layers may be generated. The creative practice of the dance drama "Dream of the Red Chamber" emphasizes constructing dance language based on the real emotional experiences of the characters, meaning that the application of facial expressions must be based on the psychological state of the characters in specific situations, rather than being presented in a type-based manner according to fixed patterns. Body language plays a more fundamental role in emotional expression, with the force, amplitude, direction and rhythm of the movements constituting the main carrier of emotional information. Facial expressions then provide precise identification and intensity regulation of the emotional nature on this basis. The synergy of the two also involves the overall presentation effect of the stage space. The coordination between individual facial expressions and collective body coordination in the group dance segments directly affects the quality of creating the emotional atmosphere of the work. Dance artists should establish a conscious awareness of the relationship between facial expressions and body language in training and performance practices, avoiding the disruption of emotional expression caused by the disconnection of the two, and also preventing the excessive use of facial expressions from interfering with the transmission of emotional information through body language [2].

4. Innovative practice paths for emotional expression and artistic presentation in dance performances in the new era

4.1. By deepening the theme, we aim to make the emotional expression of the dance more genuine

The deepening of the theme constitutes the prerequisite for the realistic expression of the emotions in dance. The dance drama "The Everlasting Electromagnetic Waves" uses the true story of Li Bai as its material. The screenwriter Luo Huaizhen wrote a complete script of over ten thousand words for this play, providing the main creative team with a starting point for their thinking. The creative practice shows that the deepening

of the theme is achieved through the construction of specific interpersonal relationships, enabling the revolutionary faith to acquire an emotional texture that can be perceived by the body. Dancer Wang Jiajun divides the understanding of the character into stages from "full of movements in the mind" to "character shaping" and then to "mission and responsibility on the stage". The transformation of his performance state reveals an important rule: the realization of the authenticity of emotional expression depends on the deepening of the dancer's understanding of the theme. The theory of classical Chinese dance posture and grace emphasizes "completeness of form and spirit", and in the sense of deepening the theme, it requires the dancer to internalize the spiritual core of the work into their own experiential emotional experience, so that every link of the body movements gains a clear emotional direction. Another important aspect of theme deepening lies in handling the tension relationship between individual emotions and public narrative. The dance drama "Dream of the Red Chamber" condenses the 55 chapters of the original work into 35 chapters, selects six important characters, constructs a narrative structure of "dream scroll" and "picture scroll", and enables the "ultimate emotion" between Du Liniang and Liu Mengmei, which transcends life and death, to have sufficient emotional expansion space within the limited length.

4.2. Enhancing the complexity of emotional expression through innovative body language techniques

The "power" category in the body language system of Chinese classical dance provides important theoretical resources for the innovation of body language. As a basic category at the technical and aesthetic levels, "power" serves as a visual carrier for creating an artistic atmosphere characterized by vivid spirit and unified state of mind. A deep understanding and creative application of "power" enable dancers to convey the differences in emotional layers through subtle changes in the intensity of movements, rather than relying on the increase or decrease of movement amplitude to achieve the contrast of emotional strength. The handling of the "Jingmeng" section in the dance drama "Dream of the Red Chamber" demonstrates another approach to the innovation of body language. The actors convey the hazy emotions in the dream through light movements and delicate breathing within a limited space, and even without direct physical contact, the audience can still feel the emotional flow between the two. The analysis of words, short sentences, the formation method of connecting movements, and the style and temperament in the construction of the body language of Han and Tang classical dance also points to the basic direction of body language innovation, that is, through the refinement and reorganization of movement vocabulary, the body can respond to the multi-level needs of emotional expression in a more precise way.

4.3. By integrating music and space to enhance the emotional tension on the stage

Music plays multiple roles in dance performances, such as shaping the image of the dance, expressing the emotions of the characters, and embodying the aesthetic beauty of the dance. It has a mutually penetrating and interpretive relationship with the dance. The dance drama "The Everlasting Electromagnetic Waves" restructures the stage space through montage techniques, with four pairs of duets concentrated in the same space to represent different stages of the characters' emotions. The synchronization of music in terms of time enables the emotional flow during the space transformation to be supported by the auditory level. In terms of space composition, the director can form the overall picture by scheduling the actors and planning the atmosphere, thereby achieving the goal of situational effect and expressing emotions. The practice of the nominated work "Walking on Xiangyun" shows that effective space composition can make the dance

work possess the aesthetic characteristics of expression, with orderly movements, intentional pictures, and distinct layers. In contemporary dance performances, the collaboration between music and space should enter a state of deep interlocking creation, with the emotional direction of the music and the rhythm of space scheduling forming a contrast or synchronous relationship. The transformation of the virtual and real in the stage space and the changes in the strength of the music's intensity echo each other, and this collaborative method enables the emotional tension of the dance work to be superimposed in the dual channels of vision and hearing. In specific stage practices, the reasonable application of multimedia technology also provides new possibilities for the collaboration between music and space. By using means such as light projection and digital scenery, the stage space can complete rapid virtual-real transitions with the rise and fall of the music's melody, without interrupting the emotional coherence of the dance performance, and can further expand the imaginative space for emotional expression.

4.4. Enhance the artistic value of the works by integrating cultural inheritance with contemporary aesthetics

The integration of cultural inheritance and contemporary aesthetics constitutes the fundamental path for enhancing the artistic value of contemporary dance works. The success of the dance drama "Green Is This Color" provides a valuable practical example of this, as it is inspired by the Northern Song Dynasty painter Wang Ximeng's "The Long River and Green Mountains Painting", and constructs a tripartite narrative of "Reader - Painter - Green". This enables the audience to enter the creative mindset of the ancients who "paint the mountains and rivers with their lives" through viewing the painting. The drama's presentation of the aesthetic concepts of Chinese traditional aesthetics, the evocative atmosphere, and the cultural atmosphere of the Song Dynasty indicates that the contemporary transformation of traditional aesthetic spirit is a creative reconfiguration of traditional aesthetic categories to meet the emotional needs of contemporary audiences. Director Han Zhen interprets the aesthetic levels of "Only This Green" as a progressive structure from the beauty of the green color setting to the beauty of rivers and the sun, the beauty of art, the beauty of the artist's persistence, and the beauty of the five-thousand-year-old Chinese civilization. This reveals the deep logic of the integration of cultural inheritance and contemporary aesthetics, that is, the artistic value of the work continuously improves as the cultural connotations are gradually revealed. The creation of the dance drama "Dream of the Red Chamber" also embodies this integration path. The creative team firmly relied on the core plot of the original work and integrated the classic narration into the music to retain the rhythmic beauty of classical language, while reinterpreting the theme of "passionate love" in contemporary dance language, enabling the literary classic from four hundred years ago to gain a new understanding in the emotions of contemporary audiences.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, in the new era context, the emotional expression and artistic presentation of dance performances have been continuously evolving around the themes of cultural inheritance and contemporary innovation. As an art form that uses the body as its carrier, the depth of its emotional expression depends not only on a profound understanding of the aesthetic laws of the body, but also on a keen response to the aesthetic demands of the times. In future dance creations, only by continuously promoting the deepening of theme construction, the innovation of body language, the coordination of stage vocabulary, and the activation of

cultural genes, can dance works convey deep emotions, carry humanistic values, and meet the aesthetic expectations of contemporary audiences, injecting continuous vitality into the contemporary development of Chinese dance art, and promoting Chinese dance art to showcase its aesthetic charm on the world stage.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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