

National Intangible Cultural Heritage Xuzhou Clapper Opera

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Abstract: Xuzhou Clapper Opera has a rich historical heritage, with roots stretching back to the early Ming Dynasty's Hongwu era. This art form has undergone continuous evolution over hundreds of years, resulting in the development of several distinct schools and styles. In 2008, Xuzhou Clapper Opera was recognized and added to the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. This paper aims to explore the origins, evolution, and continued promotion of Xuzhou Clapper Opera through the use of field research techniques. The study investigates the origins and development trajectory of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, examines the various schools that have emerged within Zhou Clapper Opera, and assesses the promotion and preservation measures implemented to ensure the longevity of Xuzhou Clapper Opera as a national treasure. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for the further development and dissemination of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, enhancing its reputation as a significant element of our nation's intangible cultural heritage.

1. The Rise and Development of Xuzhou Clapper Opera

1.1 The origins and development of Xuzhou Clapper Opera.

Xuzhou Clapper Opera is a kind of ancient traditional opera, commonly known as "big opera", also known as "Clapper opera", is the Henan opera in the Xuzhou area after the combination of local dialect, and absorbs the local folk music and other tones developed. Due to the jujube wood clapper as a percussion instrument, the rhythm of the melody is performed by a pair of drums and clapper, so it has been popular in Xuzhou and other northern areas of Jiangsu for three to four hundred years.^[1] The rise of Xuzhou Clapper Opera underwent three periods: the early Ming Dynasty, the late Ming Dynasty, the early Qing Dynasty, and the middle and late Qing Dynasty.

The origin of Xuzhou Clapper Opera is very early. Its first stage can be traced back to the Hongwu and Yongle years of the early Ming Dynasty until the Chenghua years. A large number of immigrants from Shanxi and Shaanxi moved to the Xuzhou area, followed by not only material things, but also customs, culture and other aspects of content, including ballads, minor tunes, acrobatics and folk music. And in future life, it is natural that heterogeneous cultures produced in different regions will collide, fission, alienation and fusion from time to time.^[2] Immigrants moved in and brought the folk songs of their hometown to Xuzhou, and gradually merged with the local

folk songs and tunes, and also integrated with the Yuyao dialect spread from the south, forming the opera dialect with local characteristics. A large number of different regional cultures, customs of fierce collision, and then for the production of Xuzhou Clapper opera to create the basic environment.

The second stage is the late Ming Dynasty to the early Qing Dynasty, Yiyang tune with its strong inclusiveness, quickly streaming from south to north, and derived a lot of local opera tunes. Xuzhou finally has a local opera troupe based on singing southern opera, Pei County Ying Snow class. Shortly thereafter, Luo Luo Qiang was also introduced to Xuzhou from Shanxi via Henan and Shandong. It is the input of Luo Luo opera, which directly affects the formation of Xuzhou local opera voice. With the artistic paving of Luo Luo Opera, there is a real sense of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, which is the foundation of Xuzhou Clapper Opera in the real sense.

In the third stage, during the middle and late Qing Dynasty, Clapper Opera gradually formed its own style during many years of performance practice. There were famous Clapper artists with names that could be compared, such as Jiang Hua Stand and Yin Fengzhe. Especially in the late Qing Dynasty, it produced a qualitative leap. The development of Xuzhou Clapper Opera rose to a higher level, and even for a long period after liberation, Xuzhou Clapper Opera showed a continuous brilliant scene.

These three stages are the three stages of Xuzhou Clapper Opera. This is the origin of Xuzhou Clapper Opera.

1.2 The history of Xuzhou Clapper before the founding of the People's Republic of China is of great significance.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, Xuzhou Clapper Opera was deeply influenced by the prevailing socio-political and cultural environment. The players of Xuzhou Clapper Opera initiated the spontaneous formation of a mobile concert troupe to actively participate in the resistance against Japanese aggression. Xuzhou, which was located at the heart of the war zone, served as an important outpost against the Japanese invasion. Numerous patriotic literati and famous performers gathered in this region, including Tian Han, Hong Shen, Jinshan, among others, thus raising the standards of Xuzhou Clapper Opera in terms of repertoire, performance, and musical singing. Many artists joined the revolutionary forces and were deployed to the forefront of the war of resistance, including Xiao Jizhou and Wang Huaiyan. In addition to traditional plays such as "Xue Li's Expedition to the East" and "Lei Zhenhai's Expedition to the North", they also performed newly developed plays such as "Traitors Anyway" and "Yue Fei" created by Guo Yingqiu, the Commissioner of the Western District and Director of the Drama Committee of the Lake District, which served to strengthen the fighting spirit of the anti-Japanese army and the people. In the aftermath of the Republic of China, the troupe continued to perform in military attire and actively participated in military operations. At the same time, many amateur troupes produced heroic battle plays to further inspire the fighting spirit of the Anti-Japanese War.

1.3 The history of Xuzhou Clapper after the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Since the founding of New China, the traditional arts of Xuzhou Clapper Opera have flourished. In 1957, a Repertory Work Committee was inaugurated in Xuzhou, which systematically advocated the ethos of "changing people, changing plays and reforming". Therefore, an extensive exploration of more than 500 traditional plays was carried out, with a particular focus on identifying, adapting, and modernizing plays representative of "Rouge" and "Zhanhong Zhou".

In July 1958, Xuzhou Clapper Opera established a provincial professional art performance group approved by the People's Government of Jiangsu Province, which is one of the eight troupes owned

by the whole people of the province. In November 1959, it was officially named Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Opera Troupe, which mainly performs Xuzhou Clapper Opera. At the beginning of 1960, the Culture and Education Bureau of the Xuzhou Commissioner's Office officially notified me that the Shandong Clapper and Henan Opera troupe belonging to the whole region were all named Jiangsu Clapper and have been named since then.

Since its establishment in 1958, Jiangsu Clapper Opera Troupe has produced a large number of popular performing artists and excellent plays. Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Troupe actors Zhang Hong and Yan Ling won the 9th (1992) and 18th (2001) Chinese Drama Plum Blossom Awards, which greatly improved the popularity of Jiangsu Clapper throughout the country.^[3] In 1992, the Jiangsu Clapper Opera "Beating the Temple of God" and "Li Ping Er" were performed in Beijing, and Zhang Hong won the ninth Plum Blossom Award. In 2000, Jiangsu Clapper opera "Huashan Love and Hatred" was performed in Beijing, and Yanling won the 18th Plum Blossom Award. In 2007, Xuzhou Clapper Opera "Three Breaks Rouge Case" won the first prize at the 5th Jiangsu Provincial Drama Festival. There are many opera troupes by Clapper in the northwest of Xuzhou. Fengxian, Peixian and Tongshan counties all had their own professional Clapper opera troupes. On December 20, 2009, after the reform of the cultural system, the company changed its name to Jiangsu Clapper Theater Co., Ltd., and implemented enterprise management. There are 99 cast members. In 2008, "Xuzhou Clapper Opera" was approved as a national intangible cultural heritage protection project, and Jiangsu Clapper Theater Co., Ltd. was the protection unit of the project. In early 2009, the large-scale modern opera "Peach Blossom Village" performed by Xuzhou Clapper Troupe won the "Innovative Drama" award at the 31st World Theatre Festival held in Nanjing, becoming the first time that Xuzhou won the international award of the World Theatre Festival. The small comedy "Nao Chongyang" created by Jiangsu Clapper Troupe won the gold medal of China Binzhou and Boxing Little Drama Arts Festival sponsored by China Drama Association. Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Theater's original Clapper drama "Mother" won the 2019 annual Script Incubation Program of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (the first case in Xuzhou), won the "Fourth Jiangsu Provincial Cultural Award and Huimin Performance, won the Zijin Culture and Art Festival Excellent Drama Award, won the Jiangsu Provincial Spiritual Civilization Construction" Five one Project "award, won the 2019 Jiangsu Provincial Excellent copyright work first prize, Jiangsu Province Stage Creation Art Boutique Support Project in 2019, Jiangsu Province stage creation art boutique Support project in 2019. In 2019, Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Theater created a large-scale original Clapper play "Dawn" reflecting the birth history of Xuzhou Party and League organization.

2. The Evolution of the Xuzhou Clapper Opera Genre

2.1 Jiang School

Based on the line of succession of performers, Jiang Hua Shelf (1745-1828) of Fengxian County was considered one of the original founders of Xuzhou Clapper Opera. The ancestral home of Jiang Hua Shelf was located in Hongdong, Shanxi Province, following the ancestral migration to Fengxian Jiangdan. The artist's life was spent mastering drama, acting, and teaching drama to aspiring opera singers, contributing to the evolution of opera music. After years of dedication, he built his own suitcase and gradually developed the Jiang School of fine work, rich singing, and standardized procedures. "Jiang Men" Jiang Yunxia (Jiangsu Province Clapper troupe famous actor) is the sixth generation successor of "Jiang Men".

Jiang Yunxia, born in 1935, hails from a humble artistic family in Sunyou Village of Fengxian County. Her father, Jiang Tianyu, pursued a career in opera as an apprentice in his early years, later

earning a living through his performances. Jiang Yunxia, following in her father's footsteps, mastered the art of drama and made her debut at the age of 15, becoming a famous figure in Peixian County. In the course of her career, she has accumulated a wealth of experience, performing in more than 200 plays, with Xuzhou Clapper Opera alone boasting a repertoire of more than 300 plays. Jiang Yunxia has been an ardent proponent of Jiang Men art, which features a vocal style that is primarily robust, intense, high-pitched and fiery, but also imbued with refreshing, tender rhymes. She emphasizes the clarity of the lyrics, the directness of the speech, and the liveliness of the melody. Jiang's performances are characterized by their depth of character development, adherence to the aesthetic of the program, and their connection to the realities of daily life, which make them highly credible.

After liberation, Jiang Yunxia joined the Yellow River Opera Company, Fengxian Public Opera Company, Xuzhou Special Office Experimental Yu Opera Company, Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Opera Company, and has been closely involved in the evolution of Xuzhou Clapper Opera for more than half a century. Jiang, who officially retired in 1987, was recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage inheritor for six generations in 2008, a testament to her enduring legacy in the field of Chinese opera.

2.2 Yin School

Yin Fengzhe (1845-1935) originated in Juye, Shandong Province. He moved to Bianzhuang Village, Peixian County during the Xianfeng Year and achieved acclaim at the age of 14. His successful performance in three consecutive classes at the Miaodaokou Branch of Xi'an Public School during the Xianfeng Decade attracted a total of 200 students, which demonstrated his remarkable acting skills and talent for singing. His son, Yin Qichang, showed exceptional skills, earning the title of "King of the Face", thus elevating the Yin family to prominence and collectively forming the Yin School.

Yin Fengzhe's unique facial acting style, characterized by a vivid portrayal of voice and emotion, reflects his refined and meticulous nature. His performance of the character's actions, age, occupation, and personality demonstrate harmonious unity, which effectively reflects the character's inner world through physical performance. His expressions are unique, with his eyes displaying a range of emotions from anger to sadness to joy. In particular, his portrayal of Yang Guang in the play "One Hundred Thousand Palaces" is regarded as his finest work, vividly depicting the character's traits of rape, softness, hardness, and cunning, earning him the nickname "Living Yang Guang".

In his more than 60 years of drama career, Yin Fengzhe has mentored a significant number of accomplished artists, contributing to the development of the Opera Klapper of Northern Jiangsu. His legacy remains an important contribution to the development of Chinese opera, and he is recognized as a distinguished figure in the field.

2.3 Dai School

Dai Jinshan, aged 13 at the time, received training under the tutelage of Qing Guangxu for twenty years (1894) by the famous opera artist Big Yibox (anonymously Shandong Clapper). With his talent, he was able to skillfully portray Sheng, Dan, net, and ugly roles, as well as perform a variety of Musical Instruments and Palm Drum. His talent earned him a high reputation among the masses, and he was known colloquially as "Boss Dai". As a leading actor of Gong Ye class in Xusan village, Sanbao Township, Tongshan County, he played a pivotal role in various performances. His portrayal of Yao Ruirong in "Eight Treasure Beads", including the execution of a pair of iron shackles, grasping, lifting, dancing, swinging, pushing (wading four doors), and rolling

like a dragon, showed his remarkable ability to synchronize his body and sing rhythm with ease. His performance of Zhuang Gong in "King Zhuang's Drum Challenge", where he performed "drumming to urge the army to fight the king", showed his unique skill of rolling off his horse, jumping on the high platform, and manipulating two drum hammers to create a unique drumming and singing style that was well received by the audience. His portrayal of Kong Ming in "By the East Wind", where he wore a sword and sang to worship the wind, demonstrated his ability to control his voice and articulate his lines with clarity and authenticity. His talent and skills are truly commendable.

2.4 Jia School

Jia Xiande (1912-1993) was 11 years old when he was in Chunquan Class with his father from Dayao Class, a famous class of East Clapper Opera in Juye Mountain, Shandong Province. He lived all his life and was well versed in all walks of life. He devoted himself to opera singing, performance, facial makeup, repertoire, teaching students drama, and excelling in both virtues and arts. His disciple Zheng Wenming, followed by the teacher, sang well and had the reputation of "the first life of Northern Jiangsu". Jia Guilan, daughter of Jia Xiande, sang beautifully and formed a popular Jia school.

2.5 The contemporary Xuzhou Clapper Opera is mainly represented by the illustrious Stars Art Troupe.

In order to strengthen the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage, train local opera reserve talents, transport high-quality artistic talents for society, and realize the better connection between the school's major and industry, enterprises and positions, the modern Jiangsu Provincial Clapper Opera Company has chosen to cooperate with art schools and old Clapper opera companies such as Tongshan Clapper Opera Company to systematically teach the inheritance content of Xuzhou Clapper Opera. The selection of modern loving and talented talents for in-depth education has created representative inheritors of Xuzhou Clapper Opera such as Zhang Suyun, Liu Guilan, Wu Yan, Zhang Hua, Wang Fuke, Chen Sufang, Ge Man and so on.

3. Development status of Xuzhou Clapper Opera

Xuzhou Clapper Opera was once one of the top ten kinds of Chinese operas, with a very rich repertoire. Xuzhou Clapper Opera includes nearly 100 kinds of plays, more than 200 pieces of accompaniment, covering history, folklore, literary classics and other fields, and most of the plays are accompanied by melodious Clapper operas, full of genre characteristics and local charm. These plays have a high expressive force in the plot, character shaping, singing and so on, and are loved by the audience.

In addition, after continuous inheritance and development, the performance form of Xuzhou Clapper Opera reflects its unique style. The performance form of Xuzhou Clapper Opera pays attention to the performance of body, form and movement, and lacks large-scale dance and singing arrangements, so that the audience can be more immersed in the plot and experience the charm of the opera. In addition, the performance form of Xuzhou Clapper Opera is simple and flexible, the performance venue is not high, and it is convenient to perform in squares, villages and other places, so it is widely welcomed by farmers and workers, which greatly promotes the local characteristics and influence of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, and is also beneficial to the inheritance and development of Xuzhou Clapper Opera.

Although Xuzhou Clapper Opera occupies an important position in the history of Chinese opera, its inheritance and development are faced with some problems and difficulties due to the rapid

development of The Times, fast-paced social life and the impact of the Internet. First of all, Xuzhou Clapper Opera audience age structure is relatively old, young people's acceptance is not high, modern young people's lifestyle and aesthetic trends have changed, emerging cultural entertainment products have also affected the market share of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, modern young people have more entertainment options, such as movies, TV series, variety shows, online games and so on. This makes the audience base of traditional operas such as Xuzhou Clapper Opera gradually decrease among young people. The aesthetic trend of modern young people has changed to a certain extent, and they may be relatively unfamiliar with the ancient art form of opera, so it is difficult to accept it. Therefore, the support for traditional culture such as Xuzhou Clapper Opera is relatively weak, which will also produce certain economic pressure on the development of opera. Therefore, broadening the young audience is an urgent problem to be addressed. Secondly, the succession of Xuzhou Clapper Opera faces difficulties. At present, the number of Xuzhou Clapper Opera sessions is small, and the recruitment of young actors is difficult, resulting in a lack of performance teams. This puts the protection and inheritance of Xuzhou Clapper Opera at risk, and more specific and effective measures are needed to ensure the inheritance of its intangible cultural heritage. Finally, the market size of Xuzhou Clapper Opera is relatively small. Compared with other large-scale performances, Xuzhou Clapper Opera has relatively low performance venues, actors and technical requirements, coupled with a relatively narrow market positioning, and relatively single performance forms, lack of innovation and change. Therefore, adapting to the demands of the modern performance market and developing innovative measures such as novel repertory elements is also an important task.

4. The evolution of Xuzhou Clapper opera.

Inheriting Xuzhou Clapper Opera is of great theoretical significance to establish the position of Xuzhou Clapper Opera. Under the current environment of economic transformation, cultural transformation, social transformation and multi-cultural coexistence, Xuzhou Clapper Opera is regarded as a microcosm of local opera research, and the collation, research and protection of Xuzhou Clapper Opera is one of the tasks of the protection and research of intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, it is an important part of the construction of Chinese cultural projects to seek theoretical basis for the protection, rescue, revitalization and development of local opera.

Since 2000, the inheritance of Xuzhou Clapper Opera has been of great importance to the government. In 2008, Xuzhou Clapper Opera was named the National Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Drama. The strengthening of protection measures and the establishment and improvement of protection measures have been comprehensively promoted, thus providing a strong guarantee for its inheritance. The first is to re-establish the inheritance system, protect and support the high-level actors of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, learn from teachers, and conduct in-depth research. In view of Jiang Yunxia's advanced age, and the national intangible cultural heritage of Xuzhou Clapper Opera needs to be passed down in the form of inheritors. On April 24, 2012, 78-year-old national second-class actor Jiang Yunxia, the sixth generation inheritor of Xuzhou Clapper Opera Jiang Men, and the inheritor of Xuzhou Clapper Opera, a national intangible cultural heritage, officially accepted Chen Sufang and Ge Man as disciples. It can be seen that the improvement of the inheritor system of Xuzhou Clapper Opera can help Clapper Opera better inherit non-heredity through talent training and inheritance mode innovation. The inheritance system can control and regulate the inheritance process to avoid non-genetic inheritance being incomplete or the inheritance process being disorderly caused by different people.

Second, colleges and other institutions set up courses or majors related to Xuzhou Clapper Opera to promote the transmission and learning of Xuzhou Clapper Opera cultural knowledge. It can be

seen that on July 28, 2020, Xuzhou Model Art School cooperated with Xuzhou Performing Arts Group and Xuzhou Clapper Opera Theater to actively explore new ideas suitable for Clapper opera teaching under the new situation, and make efforts to cultivate qualified and excellent Clapper opera performance reserve army. In September of the same year, Xuzhou Culture and Art School once again recruited Xuzhou Clapper students after 18 years, and the school restarted the orientation training mode after 18 years, which will lay a solid talent foundation for expanding the local opera team in Xuzhou and inheriting and developing the opera cause. The students recruited are all primary school graduates who will undertake a systematic and rigorous cultural and artistic study in the form of residence for 6 years. For the Xuzhou Clapper Opera related courses or majors offered by colleges and other institutions to produce good results, we need to increase publicity efforts and provide good teaching resources and teaching systems.

The third is to establish performance institutions and exchange platforms for Xuzhou Clapper Opera in the country and even globally to promote cultural exchanges and promotion. The establishment of Xuzhou Clapper opera performance institutions and exchange platforms can also promote cultural exchanges and enhance national exchanges and cultural exchanges. Xuzhou Clapper Opera can also become a part of the cultural industry, through the development of cultural industry to achieve economic benefits, better for the sustainable development of Xuzhou Clapper Opera to provide a steady stream of power. We can gradually build a well-known brand of Xuzhou Clapper Opera and improve its international influence and cultural status.

5. Conclusions

Xuzhou Clapper Opera is an art form that embodies the unique cultural traditions and social customs of Xuzhou City. Despite the ongoing creative process and the occasional emergence of surprising masterpieces, the shrinking audience and shrinking market in general is an undeniable reality. To alleviate existential and developmental challenges, effective protective and supportive measures are needed. An environment conducive to its survival and development must be cultivated, so that Xuzhou Clapper Opera to persist and thrive. However, to achieve superior inheritance and development, it is not only a matter of government and society's attention and support, but also the concerted efforts and contributions of enthusiasts and practitioners of Xuzhou Clapper Opera. Only through such a collaborative effort can Xuzhou Clapper Opera persist and evolve under the changing circumstances of history. In the broader context of local cultural development, Xuzhou Clapper Opera, as a noteworthy example of Xuzhou City's national intangible cultural heritage, not only serves as a summary and promotion of this form of opera, but also holds considerable significance for the establishment, rescue, protection, and evolution of Xuzhou Clapper Opera as an autonomous opera form.

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