

# Let Excellent Music Works Enter the Public Cultural Life—Comment on 2023 Music Related Festivals, Competitions and Exhibitions in China

Yuanyuan Guo

Music College of Capital Normal University, Beijing 100048, China

**Abstract:** *Looking back at 2023, China's various music-related arts festivals, competitions, exhibitions and other activities are relatively rich, covering the whole of China both in time and space. Three outstanding characteristics can be summarized: responding to the national Belt and Road call, continuing to attach importance to intangible cultural heritage, guiding cultural tourism combined with stimulating cultural consumption. We can see the unremitting efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the people's governments of provinces and cities, and the associations. But the question is, did the depth of the impact reach expectation? Does it really benefit the people? Can it produce certain economic benefits?*

**Keywords:** Music criticism, Art festival, Events, Exhibition and performance, Review.

## 1. Introduction

Looking back at the past 2023, China's various types of music-related arts festivals, competitions, exhibitions and other activities are relatively rich, covering the whole year of 2023 from the time span. From the space span, north to Heilongjiang Province, south to Guangdong Province, west to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, almost involving every provincial administrative region in the country, covering the whole of China.

## 2. Overview of the Situation

According to the different organizers, the arts festivals, events and large-scale exhibitions held in 2023 can be divided into three categories, which are sponsored by national government departments, sponsored by industry associations and sponsored by other organizations.

Arts festivals, events and performances sponsored by national government departments can be divided into national and provincial events. State-level activities are mainly sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China. For example, the Fifth Chinese Opera Festival, held every three years in Zhejiang Province in May, brought together 24 excellent works. Among the new works, "Red Boat", "Qiao Pii", "Border Town" and "Snow and Dabie Mountain" were highly evaluated. In June, the 2023 National Ethnic Instrumental Music Exhibition was held in Hebei Province. 10 national orchestras and 32 musical groups participated in the performance, including Jiangnan Silk Bamboo, Southwest Shandong Drum Music, Zhucheng Guqin, Fujian Nanyin, etc. The works performed were all newly created works since 2018, and more than 70% of the pieces included were original or innovative adaptations. Such as the concert "Sun Tzu Art of war echo" "Xiaoxiang water cloud" and so on. In August, the 36th China Harbin Summer Concert was held in Heilongjiang Province, including the 15th National Vocal Music Exhibition and the first National Excellent symphonic works exhibition. Among the symphonic works exhibition, there were works of

the "Times Symphony" creation support program of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, such as "My Motherland" by Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra. There are also new works created by well-known composers around the symphony League committee in recent years, such as Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra "Warm Spring River", Fujian Provincial Song and Dance Theater "Strait Strait" and so on. It is worth mentioning that this year's "Haxia" launched the 2023 Harbin International Music Culture Industry Expo in the name of the government for the first time, held more than 20 musical instrument brand promotion meetings, brand audio auditions, light shows and other promotion activities, and also launched the 2023 Harbin Ant Music Festival, national DJ Haxia tour and other fashion cultural activities.

Activities held by provincial government departments are mainly sponsored by the provincial government and the provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, such as the first Xinjiang Culture and Arts Festival held in April, which staged world-class intangible cultural heritage "Manas" singing, modern Dao Lang dance "Mai Geti under the Sun", large-scale music dance poem and painting "Lift your head - Xinjiang is a good place" and so on. From September to October, the 10th Shaanxi Art Festival held every three years in Shaanxi Province, large-scale symphony scene suite "Red light gold", Qin opera "Oasis of life", northern Shaanxi Daoism "Qiankun Bay" and so on.

The art festival, events and performance activities sponsored by the industry association are mainly led by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC) and the Chinese Musicians Association. The largest event in 2023 is the 14th China Music Golden Bell Award, which includes 42 competitions in four categories of vocal music (ethnic and Bel Canto) and instrumental music (Erhu and violin).

Other large-scale art festivals, competitions and performance activities such as the eighth "Chinese Symphony Spring" hosted by the National Center for the Performing Arts, the 2023 National Center for the Performing Arts Opera Festival,

etc.

### 3. Characteristics Summary

An overview of the festivals, events and performances to be held in 2023 shows three main features:

#### 3.1 Respond to the National Belt and Road Call

2023 is the tenth year of the proposal of "national Belt and Road call", so there were lots of musical events around this theme. For example, the 2023 Shenzhen "Belt and Road" International Music Festival held in Guangdong in September, more than 1,000 artists and art troupes from over 30 countries (regions) including Russia, Montenegro and the United Kingdom participated in various categories, including instrumental music, vocal music, national opera and world music. Performances of Cantonese opera "Qiao Guo Lady", "The Romance of Liu Yi", dance drama "Wing Chun" and other works with strong Chinese characteristics.

In addition, the 9th Silk Road International Art Festival, the 6th Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Cultural Expo and the 5th Maritime Silk Road International Art Festival were also held.

#### 3.2 Continue to Attach Importance to Intangible Cultural Heritage

The year 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has initiated and encouraged commemorative activities across the country at the beginning of the year. In October, the 8th China Chengdu International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. More than 3,000 traditional performers from 47 countries (regions) around the world participated in the festival, including the Chengdu International Guqin Art Festival, the Chengdu-Yuzhou-Suzhou folk art exchange performance, and the Qiang people's lambskin drum dance, Tongliang Dragon dance, Scottish bagpiper, Sriram Kapuga dance and other intangible cultural heritage performances.

Activities such as the 2023 Chinese Native Folk Song Festival, the Third China Danzhai Intangible Cultural Heritage Week, the sixth Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi and Anhui Intangible Cultural Heritage Joint Exhibition, and the 2023 Yellow River Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition were also held.

#### 3.3 Guide the Combination of Culture and Tourism to Stimulate Cultural Consumption

Cultural tourism festivals were held in many places, such as the 2023 China Flower Conference and the second Cultural Tourism Festival of "Flowers Linxia in the River State" held in Hezheng County, Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province in June, including the national flower exhibition, flower culture theme exhibition, folk song performance, Linxia cultural tourism resources and industry investment promotion project, featured products exhibition, etc. During the three days of the conference, Hezheng County received a total of 626,700 tourists, with a comprehensive

tourism income of 218 million yuan.

There are also such as Lhasa Shoton Festival, 2023 Yarlung Cultural Tourism Festival, the 13th Anhui International Cultural Tourism Festival, the fourth Jingchu Rural Cultural Tourism Festival and so on.

### 4. Retrospective Thinking

According to incomplete statistics, more than 70 large-scale arts festivals, competitions, performances and other activities have been carried out nationwide in 2023, which are year-round and nationwide, covering a variety of music categories, demonstrating the national image, stimulating the development of the music industry, and promoting the protection and inheritance of traditional culture and intangible cultural heritage. It can promote the exchange and progress of music art, from which we can see the unremitting efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the people's governments of various provinces and cities, and the associations, but more importantly, we can see some problems that still exist and improve them, so as to hand over more satisfactory answers to the people.

In terms of publicity, such as the Chinese Opera Festival, the International Intangible Cultural Heritage Festival and other such major and rich activities, it is obviously not enough for only a few mainstream traditional media to publicize, and it is not enough to publicize only through offline performance channels. At present, the creation of music works in our country is not completely without excellent works, then where have these excellent works gone? Where are the great works emerging from the opera festival? Where are the works of various arts festivals? Where are the outstanding products in all kinds of exhibition activities? These carefully created works only accept the review of experts in the industry, do not accept the comments of the public, and how can they become both artistic and mass quality? Why is it difficult to see the publicity of major art festivals and music festivals on popular platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili and XiaoHongshu? Is the fundamental purpose of these large-scale art and music activities only to engage in art behind closed doors, not including the mission of improving the artistic quality of the people of the country and enriching the mass cultural life?

The public is not without the ability to appreciate art and music. From the positive point of view, singers Wu Bixia, Tan Jing, dancers Tang Shiyi, Meng Qingyang, etc. are often dubbed the "national team" by netizens. Teacher Wu Bixia sings "Moon Palace" for the NetEase game Dream Westward Journey, which combines pop, national style, colorandao and other factors, and has been well received by a large number of young people. On the contrary, a large number of people in the field of popular music can not stand the current situation of lack of good works, more choose to listen to some Western and even Japanese and Korean music works, the mainstay of our popular music, even the batch of singers ten or twenty years ago, the current output of mass music works can not meet the needs of the public music life.

In recent years, the Chinese music works that have emerged have not only been loved by many young people, but also quickly occupied a place in the fields of film and television

music, game music and other fields. Traditional Chinese instrumental music works such as flute, Xiao and zheng are also becoming more and more popular among the public, but they also have serious homogenization and need to improve the creative level. So why not take advantage of this national trend to promote the outstanding works with Chinese characteristics selected from major arts festivals, competitions and other activities to the public? Allowing the public to access more quality works is both a trend and a boost.

Better use of new media and short video platforms, under the premise of dealing with copyright issues, so that the public can first access to and see these excellent works, rather than creating, participating in the award after shelving, its social and economic benefits have not been given due play. Elegant art should also take off "Kong Yiji's long shirt", hold the propaganda position in the field of new media, learn from the experience of publicity and communication of popular culture, marketing should not be a derogatory term, attracting the attention of the public is the only way to grow and develop the music industry. Only by producing better and more attractive promotional videos, using more diversified exhibition platforms and appropriate marketing strategies, can more professional and high-quality music works approach and enter the public, make full use of online channels to provide more people with opportunities for appreciation, participation and discussion, and let the works accept the choice and test of the people, so that the music industry can have a higher mass audience. The music industry can play a higher dual benefit.

In terms of the content of the work, we should pay more attention to the contemporary nature of the work, to reflect the current life of people, to allow contemporary people to resonate with it, not only the pursuit of a few Internet hot memes to point eyes, music works can be popular, but not rotten vulgar, let alone vulgar. From a positive point of view, the works produced by the film and television industry in recent years, such as "in the Name of the People", "Awakening Years" and "Flowers", have a certain connotation and depth, and good works that reflect The Times, reflect the masses, and depict history will be seen by the public. On the other hand, in the 2024 New Year concert, a symphony orchestra played the "Subject 3" music that swept all short video platforms in the past few days during the encore, and "received" boos in the comments section. Some listeners thought that such a practice was "self-lowering". In the author's opinion, the "Subject 3" music adaptation played by the orchestra was rather dull and the voice parts were not carefully handled. There is little symphonic, and no change in the "Subject three" music to more quality and richness would be completely unacceptable to the audience. Professional music works should not become appendages of popular meme, but should maintain their professionalism while taking into account the characteristics of The Times and mass.

If the outstanding works performed by various intangible cultural heritage festivals fail to strike a chord with the masses after being promoted, then it is not impossible to adapt them into contemporary factors. If the intangible cultural heritage works are only preserved intact in museums, they will never be able to breathe new life again and will disappear sooner or later, so that more people will realize the precious place of intangible cultural heritage music. Is active inheritance and

development not the meaning of the protection of intangible cultural heritage?

In short, in the current situation that the public's recognition of domestic music is not enough, set a benchmark for the mass music culture, let the excellent new professional music works in art festivals, competitions and performance activities enter the cultural life of the public, step down the so-called "professional" and "elegant" altar, learn to "market" music products, update sales thinking, and use new media platforms. Let the professionalism of the work, The Times to accept the test of the people, in order to truly implement the mass, participatory ideas of benefiting the people, and truly achieve a double harvest of social benefits and economic benefits.

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