

A Brief Analysis of Why Chinese Traditional Musical Instruments "ChuQuan" in "The Coming One: Super Band"

WangXinyi

¹ University of International Relations(UIR), Beijing, 2021, China
 E-mail:m18801106907@163.com

ABSTRACT

With the introduction of "cultural self-confidence", an increasing number of traditional cultures reappear in the public view. Thus, increasingly, Chinese reality TV shows are not only the main sources of entertainment but also play a vital role in promoting the traditional culture. effect. In this context, in 2021, the Orchestra of Tomorrow's Sons recruited not only a group of western musicians but also three Chinese traditional musical instruments players, namely, the Mongolian Morin khuur player Haramuji, the Kazak's Dombra Samuhar and Yan Yongqiang, Han Suona Horn player. Therefore, amid the general background of the Covid pandemic, Chinese official cultural policies, current social and cultural trends, and the high-quality promotion and operation of the Orchestra of Tomorrow's Season, traditional Chinese music successfully broke "ChuQuan" as a "niche" cultural symbol. In this article, we go into more detail on these various reasons why folk music successfully "ChuQuan" on The Coming One: Super Band's platform.

Keywords: Chinese traditional national musical instruments, Cultural self-confidence, Target audience, "ChuQuan", Subculture, Z Generation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "ChuQuan" was originally a popular phrase among fans group. It refers to the increase in popularity of a certain celebrity or a certain event, about how it is no longer only discussed and concerned by people in small fan circles, but have instead gained more audiences, and even entering the general public's field of understanding. These kinds of people or things that are now recognized by the general public, have a wider range of applications and are sometimes used in scenarios such as product expansion into new markets. [1]And as China enters a period of rapid international development, cultural exchanges between China and the West have become ever more frequent, with the

long-standing bias where Western musical instruments are widely sought after and widely used in popular music, while Chinese traditional musical instruments are regarded as obsolete and in the past. After Suona Horn's "ChuQuan" in the music variety show "The Big Band", "Tomorrow's Orchestra Season" seized the selling point of traditional Chinese music, and brought the instruments "ChuQuan" by combining such traditional music with Western music in innovative ways. So, what are the underlying reasons behind Chinese traditional music's 'out of circle' appearance?

2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIC IN 2020

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out globally. The sudden disaster pushed the digitalization process of Chinese society, and restricted public travel directly led to the extension of Internet users' time online. According to the CNNIC report, in March 2020, Chinese citizens spent an average of 30.8 hours on the Internet per week, an increase of 3.2 hours compared to the end of 2018. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the time these citizens spent online increased significantly.[2] The Coming One:Super Band was filmed and broadcasted in this context.

2.1. The influx of audiences from homogenized program

Initially, as a grassroots reality show, the "Tomorrow's Sons" series didn't have as high popularity as idol selection shows such as "Creation 101" and "Youth Have You" with similar schedules. However, influenced by the sudden pandemic, many other talent shows were not filmed and broadcast on time, which undoubtedly provided more audiences who love talent shows for "The Coming One: Super Band", whom we often called 'show' fans.

2.2. The show has attracted the attention of those who don't usually watch reality shows

In addition, because most Chinese domestic companies advocated for working at home during the epidemic, people spent less time out socializing and spent more time relaxing at home. The broadcast of this program even attracted many "non-show fans" from the outside, and the ratings were even higher than those of the previous two sessions. The above two factors provided a substantial audience base for this "ChuQuan" of traditional Chinese music.

3. THE DOMESTIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND UNDER THE CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE CONCEPT

3.1. The cultural self-confidence concept encourages reality shows to incorporate more traditional cultural elements

In 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping first put forward the concept of "cultural self-confidence"

in the celebration of the 95th anniversary of the founding of the party. He pointed out that, "Only by persisting in moving from history to the future, advancing and continuing from our national heritage, will we be able to advance into the future." [3]The film and television industries are carriers of cultural promotion. It directly faces and has an immeasurable influence on the general public. Especially for reality shows, an important form of expression in the film and television industry, because it is geared towards Young people who shape our nation's future, we should pay more attention to the construction of cultural self-confidence in such areas.

After the concept was put forward, more and more Chinese people began to pay attention to the protection, development, and innovation of the traditional national culture. Many reality TV shows took the initiative to promote traditional cultural content in innovative forms. Although 'The Coming One: Super Band' is not purely a show that promotes traditional national culture, it actively responded to these policies, adding traditional cultural elements that the general public cares about, and actively making musical innovations according to young people's current tastes. Thus, we can regard this as a social factor for traditional Chinese music to "ChuQuan" with the help of "The Coming One: Super Band".

3.2. The formation of sub-cultural interest groups such as "national style music" and "traditional music and rock"

Long before the cultural self-confidence concept was formally put forward, the sub-cultural interest circle of "national style music" had already appeared among the youth groups. They have put up many of their works on the Bilibili platform and meet in small interest organizations online and offline. The "subculture" mentioned here refers to a local cultural phenomenon where smaller culture groups stand in opposition to the mainstream culture. Dick Hebdige believes that the youth subculture is a form of cultural resistance. Resistance is an important feature of youth subculture. Its resistance to mainstream culture is represented in ways to stop the traditional mainstream culture from shaping one's self-style.

put forward, many high-quality music films with national musical instruments themes were born, such as "Our Shining Days" which describes the current situation of young traditional music practitioners, "Birds paying homage to the Phoenix" which reflects the development of Suona Horn. A series of high-quality works made "Guofeng Music" break through the small circle for the first time and entered the public's field of vision, allowing most people to take another look at traditional music and realize that the current development of traditional music is not easy. At the end of the movie, the audiences often found themselves reflecting on the homeland and the development of national culture. In the online variety show "The Big Band", the Jiulian Live Band added a lot of Suona Horn music to the songs, replacing the parts of Western music with high-pitched Suona Horn, bringing in new feelings of excitement to the audience. At the same time, their singing incorporates Hakka Chinese tunes, their lyrics bring in Hakka dialect, and used mysterious ways of singing to accuse social problems. Western music collides with folk music, traditional music with modernized problems. Thus, many audiences fell in love with this orchestra and fell in love with Suona Horn, which was used only in weddings and funerals in the past. People voluntarily shared Jiulian's performance sounds and videos through Weibo and WeChat and introduced this distinctive band to friends around them.

Because of the above-mentioned film and television cases, the public's acceptance of the integration of folk music into film and television works increased, and the subcultural circle related to traditional music is gradually expanding. More audiences are attracted by the elements of traditional music. Such is the industry and audience factor that helped "The Coming One: Super Band" to bring traditional music "Chu Quan".

4. THE ADVANTAGES THAT 'THE COMING ONE: SUPER BAND' ITSELF HAS ON "CHUQUAN" OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

4.1. The program is well-known and brings its audience

By the year 2020, the program of "The Coming One: Super Band" has gone through four seasons. Since 2017, it has been broadcasted on Tencent's video platform every summer as an original reality TV music show. Although due to the grass-roots status of its players, the number of its fans is often difficult to compete with those of idol-cultivating reality shows such as "Creation 101" and "Youth with You", etc. Although it is in a relatively niche area in talent shows, its popularity has been relatively high among the many reality shows that have been broadcasted every year. The outstanding players in the first three seasons have high popularity in the music market, becoming "spokespersons" and "topics points" in the fourth season. Although elements like amateur artists and originals songs are as eye-catching as idols, the program maintains a stable audience base. The series has even accumulated a number of loyal fans that look forward to the show's broadcast every summer. According to Weibo's Reality Show List, the fourth season of 'The Coming One: Super Band' collected 1.65 million topics[4], which is very impressive considering its origin. The high-quality influence provides strong financial and audience support for the "ChuQuan" of traditional music in the program.

4.2. The program presentation was very attractive

The target audience of "The Coming One: Super Band", which is a talent show reality TV show at its core, is the young people who grew up surrounded by the Internet from 1995 to 2000, or as we call it, the Z Generation. This group generally has a subculture complex that resists and rebels against mainstream culture.

According to Erving Goffman's "Dramaturgy", we can regard daily life as a theater stage, where people play their own roles in front of others. This stage is divided into a front stage and a backstage. The front stage is a place where actors perform in order to achieve a predetermined effect, and the backstage is a concealed side of the front stage performance[5]. In my opinion, "The Coming One: Super Band" used exactly this principle and the pursuit of subcultures by Z Generation to promote the "ChuQuan" of traditional music.

In the front stage, the collision between folk music and the theme of the show "Hot-blooded College" is essentially a collision between

"Chinese traditional culture" and "two-dimensional animation culture". Morin khuur player Haramuji, Dombra player Samhar, Suona Horn player Yan Yongqiang, dressed in suits and uniforms, each holding a national musical instrument in his hand, coupled with a superior appearance, was one of the first great visual impacts to the audience. In addition, campus-style performance scenes and the utopian atmosphere together created a vibrant cultural blending scene for the Z Generation audience, who longed for a new form of musical representation. When the first episode of the show was broadcasted, Suona Horn player Yan Yongqiang astounded everyone with his adaptation of "The Spectre", and rushed to the top of the hot search list on Weibo. Many audiences claim that it is the first time they realized that Suona Horn can not only be used in traditional celebrations like weddings or funerals but can also be fashionable, innovative, exciting, and matched with pop music.

In the back-stage presentation part, the programming group has far fewer restrictions on players than similar talent shows. It did not restrict the use of mobile phones and did not even strictly force players to arrive at the performance venue at the specified time. Players can also choose to change songs or create original songs by themselves. The contestants show their daily life of music creation almost unreservedly in front of the camera. In addition to the "White Snow In Sunny Spring" (A Chinese idiom means "Very elegant") artistic exchanges, Gen Z audiences are mostly attracted to the true temperament of musicians have shown. For example, Haramuji was under great pressure in the late stage of the competition, while trying to adapt to the transition from amateur musician to an idol. He repeatedly proposed to withdraw from the show and even danced happily on the stage when he learned that he has lost to his opponent. He repeatedly talked to the person in charge of the program to negotiate a recording break and even finished packing up his bags to go home. However, just as he was about to leave, he softly touched his Morin khuur, thinking about all the creative traditional music he can do if only he stayed, and decided to stay. Stereotypes of traditional music make us think of folk musicians with traditional and old-fashioned

images, but the folk musicians here are full of flesh and blood and live with true personalities. In addition to their superb folk music skills, they are just a rebellious and passionate group of people in the eyes of the public, just like any other "male college student".

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chinese traditional musical instruments' "ChuQuan" in "Tomorrow's Orchestra Season" was a result of many factors, and can be said to be the result of "the right time, the right place and the

right people". The sudden infliction of the COVID-19 pandemic helped the program to receive more attention than ever before; the government's encouraging policies have made the entire cultural environment more tolerant of traditional national music, which aided "The Coming One: Super Band" to add more traditional music elements; Z Generation's rebellion against mainstream music, creating a large potential target audience; the program team of "The Coming One: Super Band"'s deep training in "Dramaturgy" and used its popularity advantage to make this the traditional music "ChuQuan".

Even though folk music has repeatedly entered the public eye with the help of film and television, and some may even say, widely loved. I believe that traditional music's "ChuQuan" should not stop there. In fact, there are still many traditional musical instruments on the verge of loss. More works like "The Coming One: Super Band" are still needed to save them. This is not only about saving an instrument, but also about maintaining the integrity of the Chinese cultural gene pool. From the concept that "the music of the nation is the music of the world", the promotion of folk music "ChuQuan" also maintains the integrity of the world's cultural gene pool, and its importance should not be underestimated.

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