

Analysis on the Success of Music Shows-- A Case Study of "The Flash Band"

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ABSTRACT

Recently, China's first musical social contact variety show-- "The Flash Band" has attracted a large number of audience's attention. It surpassed the other variety shows in terms of views right after it had released. The show positions itself as a musician's journey to seek bosom friends. It goes back to the nation's traditional musical aesthetics of "high mountain, flowing water and kindred spirits". In the traditional Chinese ideology, music becomes more lustrous because of bosom friends. This paper analyzes how "The Flash Band" is characterized by innovation, times and artistry. It is concluded that "The Flash Band" stands out because of its innovativeness in positioning and mode, era-defining character in the selection of musicians and songs, as well as artistry shown in arrangements and the stage design.

Keywords: *Flash band, Music varieties, Innovativeness, Social contact, Success.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Music variety shows have long occupied a big share of the variety show market with great market potential because of their "star-making" and multi-channel profit capabilities [1]. In recent years, music variety shows have ushered in the growth of a blowout type. Some of them immediately go viral on the Internet. But this trend of growth is doomed to cause "homogeneity", referring to a kind of phenomenon that goods of different brands in the same category imitate each other and even gradually converge in performance, appearance and even marketing methods [2]. On December 25, 2021, "The Flash Band" began to be broadcast on Zhejiang Satellite TV. The audience were immediately attracted by it for its novel positioning as the first "musical social contact" variety show. As expected, the show topped the ranking of variety shows for a week, received more than 2.9 billion views on the Internet, and contributed 221 search entries on the Internet [3]. The success of a music show is inseparable from its innovation.

By analyzing the innovativeness, era character and artistry of the program "The Flash Band", this paper is helpful for the music variety industry to develop and innovate when avoiding homogeneity. Meanwhile, this paper also provides effective help in promoting Chinese music culture.

2. INNOVATIVENESS

2.1 Innovativeness in Positioning

From the introduction by the compere Huashao, it is known that the show is positioned as a large-scale music-based social contact show. That means "The Flash Band" is a pioneer in a new area. The director Fan Jiaju once talked about the intention of creating the show—to bring together professional musicians to create a professional music group, and also create a new concept of musical social contact. Throughout the process, "The Flash Band" is indeed worthy of the term "social contact". Twenty-seven musicians communicate and group themselves at will in a "music community". They cooperate and fuse with each other in music styles, break the barriers between music types and years of creation, and create music that they have never imagined before. Such interaction inspires their potential and brings them out of their comfort zones. At the end of each episode, competing singers are invited to give a music-sharing session, which is another indicator of "social contact". In each sharing session, a theme about music is given, so that every musician tells the story deep in their hearts.

This can not only bring the musicians closer to each other, but also make the audience and the fans see the special communication and dialogue among musicians behind the scenes, and feel the experiences and emotions

in their songs. The show sets up a platform to help musicians clear communication barriers, and bring their souls closer to collide, thus generating new musical inspirations [4].

2.2 Innovativeness in Mode

The success of "The Flash Band" is inseparable from its mode of innovation. Music variety shows have boomed since 2004. However, the knock-out music competition programs that are constantly imitated have caused visual fatigue among the audience. The elimination system also makes the audience leave quickly without knowing the players well enough, leaving the audience with one regret after another.

However, the flash band invites 27 musicians with different styles and strengths to discuss freely in a music community. The show is positioned as a journey for musicians to seek bosom friends. It aims to return to the traditional music aesthetics of "high mountain, flowing water and kindred spirits", and demonstrate the charm of music through teamwork. In each episode, 300 music fans are invited as the audience to score the performance according to their own preferences, and the under-performing bands are at a risk of reorganization. As the show progresses, the number of each band members increases bit by bit from two at the beginning to six later. Each injection of new blood triggers a different chemical reaction. And every "selection war" adds entertainment to the show, making the show more attractive to the audience. "The Flash Band" has no mentors or knock-out system. There is only a spark of music and a feast of talents on the stage.

3. ERA CHARACTER

3.1 Era-defining Musician Selection

The show takes great pains to select musicians. In order to make the music diversified, the show first invites musicians of different styles including pop, rock, rap, Chinese-style, folk music, instrumental music and even electronic music; then the show invites musicians from different areas such as talented up-rising stars, "sounds of nature" singers, capable music predecessors, and creative producers; and finally the show invites musicians of different ages from those born in the 1960s to those born in the 2000s [5]. It is not an exaggeration but half of the Chinese music circle is covered.

Such composition makes up for the lack of middle-aged and elderly audiences facing the other music varieties, and satisfies music fans with different preferences. Such a professional and accomplished team of singers assures the quality of performances, bringing a sensory feast to the audience as much as possible. In the harmonious music community behind the scenes, the guests have no general posture of celebrities, do not

constrain themselves by the preferences of the audience, and do not make gestures as predecessors. They just treat each other as musical confidants. This is the muse, the source of inspiration for the show. Uncertain band members, uncertain musical styles and uncertain band forms not only fill each episode with unknown possibilities, but also become a direct motivation for the musicians to indulge themselves in creation [6].

3.2 Era-defining Song Selection

For a music variety show, the importance of song selection is self-evident. The songs selected should not only ensure the diversity of styles and ages to meet the audience's preferences, but also add entertainment to the show and highlight the variety show nature. "The Flash Band" is extremely considerate about the song selection session. Overall, the selected songs are highly relevant to the theme and the background of the era. They convey positive energy and a positive attitude towards life. Hear the Voice of Memory; Hear the Voice of Hope; Hear the Voice of Each Other; Hear the Voice of the Heart... The musicians express their feelings with music, and the audiences understand their feelings. Hence, the gap between the two sides is narrowed.

One episode is themed "hear the voice of the heart". And Mr. Zhang Chu from "Not One Less Band" proposes singing a milestone song in rock history. The song has a total of two lines of lyrics, so a huge room is left for recreation. Such a song is almost unseen in music variety shows. Finally, the band gave a perfect performance and was warmly welcomed. Mr. Zhang Chu once said, "Keep yourself naked. Don't label yourself." This is a spirit of being bold to challenge, to express one's own ideas. And he did it in the show. "The Flash Band" is also creative about the song selection session. The "likes" of each performance play a role -- each band grabs their wanted songs using the "likes" they get for each concert. The bands are also allowed to bid for a song with their points. The singers are calculative and anxious about a wanted song, which makes the show more entertaining [7].

4. ARTISTRY

4.1 Artistry in Arrangement

When a band gets a suitable song, how to change it creatively without losing its original charm is the key to success. Since the release of "The Flash Band", a lot of created and adapted songs went viral and topped well-known lists. A group of talented musicians collide, fuse and boldly give play to their imagination in a music community. Their adaptations to golden oldies are subversive but harmonious, leaving a deep impression on the audience.

In Episode 2, "Bao suai Band" performs "Mohe Ballroom". They add confession and harmony to the

original storytelling song, giving the song opera-like grandeur and loneliness. A beautiful picture with decline and death as the background is presented to the audience. In Episode 9, "Don't funk" chooses the classic song "Young Girl of India". When the band can find no way out, Xiao Jingteng (Jam Hsiao) comes up with the idea of using funk as the grounding and adding electronic music. They take a bold attempt of "no lead singer" on the stage. The refreshing performance is favored by the audience, and they redefine "The Flash Band" as "making the impossible possible" through their bold attempt and excellent performance.

4.2 Artistry in Stage Design

In order to perfectly present the bands' exquisitely prepared performances on the stage and give the audience pleasant viewing experiences, the show spares no effort on the stage design. It designs lighting, setting and later packaging according to the style of each song, and highlights the emotion and atmosphere of each song from different angles-- musicians either hold a guitar, or wave a drum stick, or play the piano nimbly. Each episode ushers in climax after climax as different bands perform one after another. The bands extremely release the charm and power of music in a passionate atmosphere. Exciting immersive stages are presented to the audience [8].

The stage design of "The Flash Band" is the best among all the musical variety shows ever. The show arranges everything that is thought of onto the stage, and meets the requirements of the musicians as much as possible, to achieve a film-like stage design. For instance, the stage of "Flower In The Wonderland" is decorated with real flowers and grasses, so that the musicians can sing loudly in nature; in Episode 11, the original song "Days of Sunshine" uses reversal drums for the first time, which attracts the attention of the whole audience. In video production and editing, the camera gives a close-up of each musician's extraordinary skill to attract the attention of the audience and also demonstrate the high professional level of the musician.

5. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The famous rock singer Cui Jian once said, "the frame is to be broken. Each of us should try to think that any medium should be a stage for us to express ourselves." The innovation of music variety shows is not only in the field of music. Internal innovation is the expression of the development of a group, a society, and an era. However, no matter how innovative it is, its core must firmly grasp the words "good music". Only good music can make the program sustainable for a long time.

However, with the rapid development of cross-media, there is a need to reflect and develop the music variety shows in terms of art ontology, evaluation system, and model of expansion [9]. In an era of entertainment, the

form of music variety shows may be entertaining, but the music content must be rigorous and carefully crafted. The content is an important factor in determining whether a music variety show can be favored by the market. For a variety of shows, engaging narrative development and in-depth character settings are often indispensable.

It is true that today's music variety shows are not only the collision of art elements such as music art and television art, but also the organic combination of the art and commercial market, as well as variety content and social background elements. But no matter how complex and diverse the styles and appearances are, the pursuit of the value of art is still the original intention of music variety shows. There are some elements in many music variety shows such as the adaptation and creation of tracks, the singing and stage presence of singers, the texture and experience of sound, and the design of the stage. These elements are always the most direct artistic noumenon when presenting the auditory-based art of time to the audience.

This goes back to the original point of thinking about music variety shows. The realization of its value emphasizes the introduction of good songs and the search for good singers through the program. Even in the rapidly developing art industry, the pursuit of sincerity and excellence in art is still the original intention of art management.

While striving to adapt songs, inheriting classics is also an essential part. Each era has its own unique classics, which are also the epitome of each era. These classics integrate with each other and achieve new classics. The ingenious combination of the profound heritage of elegant art and the modern communication means opens the door for the audience to perceive the art, realizes the maximum value of the program, and has a positive reference significance for the promotion of professional art forms [10]. Nowadays, with the rapid development of the Internet, the continuous infiltration of multiculturalism, and the continuous improvement of the public's aesthetic level, programs that only focus on entertainment and changes in form but lack the classic of program content, cultural connotation, and cultural guidance can no longer meet the public's aesthetic needs.

Driven by interests, many variety music programs are in short of quality and connotation, lack a sense of responsibility, and fail to truly promote Chinese excellent music culture and classic culture. In terms of content, cultural value and cultural guidance, and aesthetic orientation of program production, the real value of program broadcasting has not been realized, and the role of mainstream media in cultural publicity has not been brought into play. This kind of fixed and lasting program mode has been moved to the screen, and instead of bringing audio-visual enjoyment to the audience, some content is even mixed with vulgar elements, lacking the classic of music and the guidance of positive cultural

values, thus completely losing the real meaning of variety shows. Audiences become fatigued over time, and they are not interested in the show. This leads to a decline in the quality of the program, which goes against the original intention of the program.

Additionally, this kind of fixed program mode cannot play the role of mainstream media in truly inheriting the classics and promoting the excellent Chinese music culture. Therefore, the three factors innovativeness, era character and artistry ensure the entertainment and quality of the program, bringing a strong visual impact and auditory feast to the audience.

6. CONCLUSION

"The Flash Band" is the first musical social contact show, and its director and producing team make unremitting efforts. Each part of the show is touching, from guest invitations, to competition rules, to every article on the stage. Within two months, the musicians became affectionate with each other, and every detail is recorded in the show. At the last moment, they really realize the term "social contact". Wang Jingwen becomes more cheerful in attempts and breakthroughs together with her partners; Yang Kun successfully achieves his two goals-- making new friends and performing new works; Wu Mochou assesses her journey by saying "Perfect". Every musician gets a clear answer to this musical journey.

At the end of the show, everyone receives the books of memories from their partners. They recall the process from strange to familiar via the photos, make best wishes and make future appointments. This musical journey full of uncertainty comes to an end.

All in all, "The Flash Band" makes an impact on the music ecology, changes musicians' examination and reflection on music exchange and social interaction, and makes "musical social contact" a new milestone in variety shows.

This paper only gives suggestions on the development of variety shows by analyzing the three factors of music variety shows, but there is no in-depth analysis of the arrangement and musicality of the entire show from a professional point of view, which future research can focus on.

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