

การวิเคราะห์แบบท่าการใช้ไหล่ของนาฏศิลป์จีนมองโกเลีย:

นาฏลักษณ์และความหมาย

The Analysis of Shoulder Movements of Chinese Mongolian Dance Performance: Characteristics and Its Meaning

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ได้รับบทความ: 19 กันยายน 2565

ปรับปรุงแก้ไข: 1 พฤศจิกายน 2565

ตอบรับตีพิมพ์: 9 พฤศจิกายน 2565

บทคัดย่อ

นาฏศิลป์มองโกเลียเป็นการแสดงทางวัฒนธรรมที่รังสรรค์ขึ้นจากกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์มองโกเลียผู้ซึ่งถูกนิยามว่า “เกิดมาบนหลังม้า” เป็นนาฏศิลป์ที่มีจังหวะ แสดงถึงความกระตือรือร้น และลักษณะของการเป็นผู้นำ อันเป็นธรรมชาติของชาวมองโกเลียโดยมีนาฏลักษณ์แบบท่าการใช้ไหล่ที่เป็นเอกลักษณ์สะท้อนถึงสุนทรียศาสตร์ของชาวมองโกเลีย งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์นาฏลักษณ์แบบท่าการใช้ไหล่ของนาฏศิลป์จีนมองโกเลีย และวิเคราะห์ความหมายทางด้านสังคมและวัฒนธรรมที่แฝงฝังอยู่ในท่วงท่าของนาฏลักษณ์

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ เป็นการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ใช้วิธีวิทยาทางการวิจัยด้วยการทบทวนวรรณกรรมและสำรวจสถานภาพองค์ความรู้คู่ไปกับการวิจัยภาคสนามแบบมีส่วนร่วม วิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยี และธุรกิจกว้างโจว สาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน ผลของการวิจัย

พบว่า นาฏลักษณ์แบบท่าการใช้ไหล่ของนาฏศิลป์มอญโกเลีย ประกอบด้วย แบบท่าสลับไหล่แบบเน้นน้ำหนัก แบบท่าสลับไหล่แบบไม่เน้นน้ำหนัก แบบท่าหมุนไหล่ แบบท่าสะบัดไหล่แบบจังหวะสั้น แบบท่าสะบัดไหล่แบบจังหวะยาว และแบบท่ายกไหล่ โดยแต่นาฏลักษณ์แบบท่า มีความหมายสะท้อนและเชื่อมโยงถึงบุคลิกภาพ อุปนิสัย วิถีชีวิต และนิเวศวิทยาทางวัฒนธรรมของชาวมอญโกเลียอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ กล่าวคือ แบบท่าสลับไหล่แบบเน้นน้ำหนักและไม่เน้นน้ำหนัก มีนัยสื่อถึงความสง่างามและควมมีชีวิตชีวาของชาวมอญโกเลีย แบบท่าหมุนไหล่ มีนัยสื่อถึงบุคลิกภาพที่สุภาพอ่อนน้อม แบบท่าสะบัดไหล่แบบจังหวะสั้นและยาว มีนัยสื่อถึงการจำลองท่วงท่าของการขี่ม้า และแบบท่ายกไหล่ มีนัยสื่อถึงบุคลิกภาพของชาวมอญโกเลียที่เป็นคนร่าเริง รักสนุก และยังสื่อถึงท่วงท่าของการขี่ม้าเช่นกัน

คำสำคัญ : นาฏศิลป์จีนมอญโกเลีย, แบบท่าการใช้ไหล่, นาฏลักษณ์

Abstract

Chinese Mongolian dance is the cultural performance created by Mongolians, the ethnic group that was “born in the saddle”. The dance presents the rhythmic, enthusiastic, and heroic nature of the people. The characteristics of shoulder movements are the foundation of the Mongolians’ dance. These shoulder movements significantly show the artistic features of Mongolian people. The purposes of this study are to analyze the characteristics of shoulder movements in Chinese Mongolian dance and to interpret the meaning of these dance movements in relevant to socio-cultural aspects.

The research method is qualitative research, which mainly combines the literature review and participatory fieldwork at Guangzhou

College of Technology and Business, Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China.

The findings found that there are six shoulder techniques consisting of hard shoulder, soft shoulder, shoulder rotation, short-flicking shoulder, long-flicking shoulder, and shrugging shoulder presented in the Mongolian dance performance. In choreography, each movement will be created and choreographed by coding the significant meaning to portray the Mongolian people's personality, manners, ways of life, and cultural landscape. This study discovers that the hard and soft shoulders portray dignified and lively Mongolian people. Shoulder rotation shows a calm and soft personality. Short-flicking and long-flicking shoulders present the riding the horse or gallop scene, while the shrugging shoulder expresses the cheerful and happiness of the Mongolian people while riding horse or laughing as well.

Keywords: Chinese Mongolian Dance, Shoulder Movement, Characteristics of Dance

Introduction

The Mongolians are an ethnic minority of the People's Republic of China that is famous for their skillful singing and dancing. The Mongolians mainly lived in the northeast and northwest areas of China, and for thousands of years, they had emigrated from place to place in search of water and grass and lived as nomadic herders. In the history of China, Mongolians were brave and battle-wise. They once extended their conquest

to Europe and were called as "Scourge of God" (Guang, 2018: 69). This glorious history has made the Mongolians a legend.

Mongolian is a nomadic herders, hunting is a crucial way to obtain survival resources. Animals such as horses, eagles, and wild geese are commonly found and seen in Mongolians' lives. According to Wen Hua, these animals are not only livestock domesticated by Mongolians but also symbols of mother nature that believe in animal worship, or totem (Wen, 2006: 120). Hunting activities and Totemism constitute a part of the Mongolian grassland culture, and these also have an essential impact on the formation and development of Mongolian dance. The grassland culture breeds and shapes the Mongolians' traits of character, such as friendliness, simplicity, and forthrightness. The generous character of the Mongolians

"born in the saddle" makes their dancing heroic and enthusiastic. Based on Feng Aiyun, the character of Mongolians can be seen in the Mongolian dance through the warm and lively character. Whereas the female dance's character will characteristically perform the shoulder and wrist movements, the males dance will emphasize the elegant and straight posture as well as light and free steps, expressing their heroic and brave character (Feng, 2011: 2).

The style of Chinese Mongolian dance has been greatly influenced by the national character, history, and beliefs of Chinese Mongolians, which are reflected in the movements of Chinese Mongolian dance, specifically the manifestation of clear rhythm and full power (Gao and Wei, 1998: 42). The researcher noticed that the using of shoulder movements is one of the characteristics of Mongolian dance that distinguishes Mongolian

dance from other ethnic dances. These movements enable the audience to feel the artistic beauty of Mongolian dance.

Shoulder movement techniques are the set of movements connected to the limbs, arms, hands, wrists, joints, and even leg movements. Referring to Sang Rina, these shoulder movement techniques are very significant to Mongolian dance performance and can be seen and performed in every type of Mongolian dance (Sang, 2019: 39). Therefore, dancers should pay special attention to the shoulder movements' training to perfect the rhythmic movement synchronized with acting and feeling expression to accentuate a performance style with heroic, free, happy, and beautiful features.

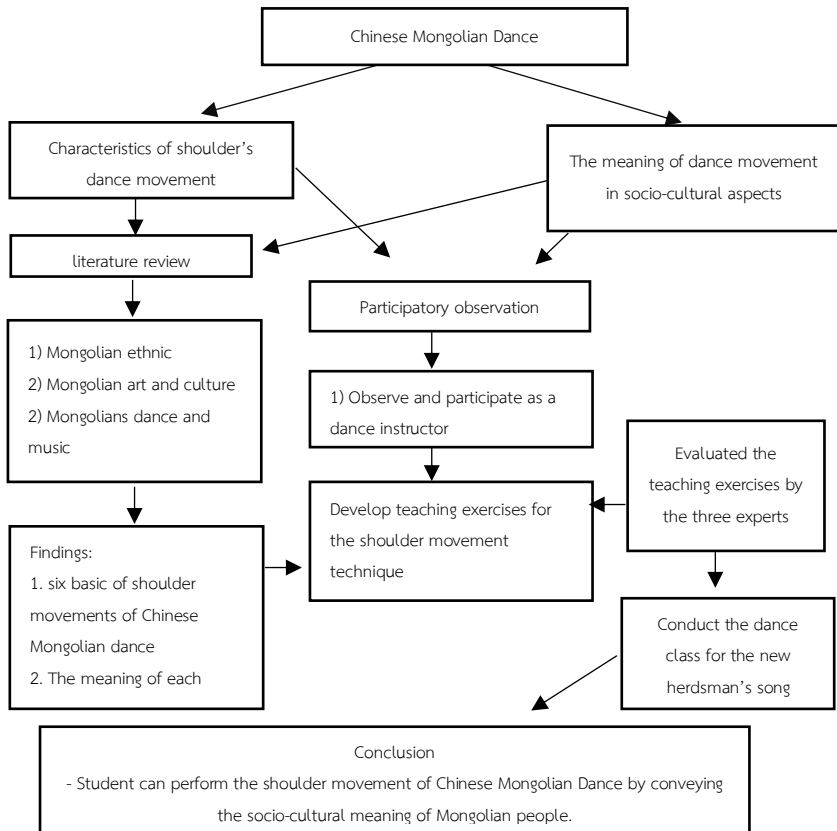
With this significance, it is necessary to learn the movements to improve the performance ability intensively. Specific exercises, including the upright chest position, the chest and upper limbs expansion, and the wrist hands movements, needed to be trained to perfect the body's coordination while maintaining the basic posture of Mongolians to make the performance attractive to the audience. Besides, to understand the philosophy of this unique movement, the significance and connotation of dance movements should be deepened and investigated.

Objectives

1. To analyze the characteristics of shoulder movements in Chinese Mongolian dance.
2. To interpret the meaning of these dance movements in relevant to socio-cultural aspects.

Conceptual framework

Table 1 Conceptual framework



Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative study. To achieve this study, the researcher uses the literature review and participatory observation to collect the data. The researcher investigates the literature review on Mongolian history, Mongolian culture, and previous studies about Mongolian dance and music. For participatory observation, the researcher engages with the fieldwork in the role of a dance teacher, teaching the Mongolian dance and choreography subject to the dance student. The course had been held from February to May 2022 at the Guangzhou College of Technology and Business in the People's Republic of China. In addition, the researcher conducts the interview with three experts who are experienced in Mongolian dance and music. The first informant is Professor Cheng Jianping who has teaching experience of 40 years. Professor Cheng Jianping was a former dean of the School of Music of South China Normal University and dean of the School of Music of Guangzhou College of Technology and Business. The second informant is Associate Professor Xiao Rui. She is the Director of the Department of Dance Performance at Xinghai Conservatory of Music. She has attended the second China Art Education Leadership Summit of Brigham Young University for 18 years. The third informant is Associate Professor Gao Qian. She is the Director of the Dance Teaching and Research Section of the Dance Department, at Hunan Vocational College of the Arts. The interview was conducted to evaluate the teaching exercise created in this study.

Research tools

The research tools are participatory observation and investigation field notes. With the data gained by these tools, the researcher creates the 12-week teaching content and invites the experts for evaluation. The result will be presented in the following session.

Results

The research findings are as follows:

1. The characteristics of shoulder movements in Chinese Mongolian dance.

Shoulder movements are not only an essential part of Mongolian dance but also symbolic movements of the dance. As mentioned by Siqin Tariha, the skills of such movements can bring a unique visual feel to the audience and make them experience rich emotions. Therefore, shoulder movement techniques of Mongolian dance are essential training content for Mongolian dancing classes. (Siqin, 2008: 10)

From the researcher's investigation, there are six types of shoulder movements practiced in the Chinese Mongolian dance.

First, the “hard shoulder” refers to a continuation of the alternation of the left and right shoulder. For instance, the movement of the left shoulder pushes forward while the right shoulder pulls backward. This movement will lead the direction of the whole body. By performing this movement, the dancer will stand in the first position of ballet, then travel or change the direction back and forth following the choreography. This movement is the most common in Mongolian dance. The movement will be determined according to the music rhythm or

the story development. In addition, the movement should be accurately controlled to achieve a quick and clear step with effortlessness.

Second, the “soft shoulder” refers to a continuation of the alternation of the shoulder similar to the hard shoulder, but a slight shrug and lightweight. This movement requires controlled energy to perform steady and slow to show a soft and gentle sensation.

Third, “shoulder rotation” refers to the movement that performs for a single/one side or both shoulders with synchronized or twisted movements. The key point of shoulder rotation movement is to rotate both shoulders with coordination of the feet and knees.

Fourth the “short-flicking shoulder” refers to the rapid shaking of shoulders following the pause and transition in rhythm to give the audience a sense of vitality and passion. When shaking, the shoulder should be fully relaxed. This movement is alike to the hard shoulder but with a lively rhythm. The most apparent characteristic of the movement is that the shaking frequency should be fast, and the dancer should be more skilful. While shaking the shoulder, the dancer must keep his/her lower body in stable balance to avoid lower body shaking which may affect the overall dance posture.

Fifth is the “long-flicking shoulder” which refers to the flicking of the shoulder backward and returning to its original position under the force of inertia and with one’s body relaxed. This movement includes rapid and slow acts that follow the rhythmic and dynamic of the music. Long-flicking shoulder presents a straight and upward aesthetic feeling through the overall posture.

Lastly is the shrugging shoulder. In China's dance, this movement is called a 'laughing shoulder' or a 'smiling shoulder' because it portrays the nature of people when laughing or expressing their cheerful mood in the festive or in happy atmosphere in their daily life. There are two types of shrugging shoulder movement. The downbeat focuses on the lower position with smaller movements, while the upper position performs the exaggerated movement.

The Mongolians' grassland culture, daily life, and character traits have all influenced the formation and development of shoulder movements in Mongolian dance. These movements are not only the basis of Chinese Mongolian dance but also an important symbol implying Mongolian dance reach a certain level. As symbolic movements in Chinese Mongolian dance, shoulder movements are frequently used and are the expression of the life and labour of Mongolian people in the artistic practice.

2. The meaning of the shoulder movements is relevant to socio-cultural aspects.

China's Mongolians, taking "tribes" as units, live scattered in extensive areas, which mainly include the Ordos plateau, Horqin grassland, banks of the Sini River (where Buryat lives), and Alashan region (where Torgut lives), etc. "Born in the saddle", Mongolians need to ride a horse for a long time during their herding. Therefore, the main body movements that the Mongolians use in their daily life are upper body movements.

If analysed from the perspective of physiology, the shoulders are the core position of the whole upper limbs of the human body. The neck and hands are connected through the shoulders, which are also the joints of

movements in dance performance. Compared with the people who are used to walking, the Mongolians use shoulder movements to show their strength. The Researcher supported Pan Zhitao statement that the shoulder movements in Chinese Mongolian dance are the artistic reconstruction of Mongolians' daily life and labour process. (Pan, 2001: 25). In the researcher's opinion, these shoulder movements also represent the living habits such as drinking, laughing, playing the Morin khuur, milking, or wrestling as well as demonstrating Mongolian aesthetic. Therefore, shoulder movement techniques are important characteristics of Mongolian dance.

The Mongolians have lived in the Mongolia grassland for a very long time, where there is a blue sky, vast grassland, clear streams, and herds of cattle and sheep. Their mind is as broad as the grassland and their personality as fervent as running horses. Mentioning by Zhao Linping, Mongolians love freedom and be enthusiastic, heroic, eclectic, plain, simple, and implicit. (Zhao , 2010: 52) All these characteristics have been coded into those of shoulder movements in Mongolian dance. After refining, beautifying, choreographing, and re-choreographing by dance artists, the movements have been presented more delicately and artistically, gradually forming more standardized and complete shoulder movements in Mongolian dance.

As a researcher is a dance teacher and the course coordinator for the Mongolian dance class, Guangzhou College of Technology and Business, People's Republic of China, the researcher chooses the dance "The Herdsmen's New Song" for training the new dance student for improving the dance skills of Mongolian dance performance. Apart from theory, the researcher has designed the teaching contents by incorporating the Mongolian dance and music elements that were

gained during conducting the fieldwork to enhance the students' performance skills aesthetically. The teaching content was evaluated by the three experts using the Index of the item - Objective Congruence (IOC). The result of this IOC is as follows.

Table 2 The Index of item - Objective Congruence (IOC) for teaching content

Teaching contents	Mr. Chen	Ms. Xiao	Ms. Gao	Total	Assessment results
Week 1: the history of Mongolian Dance and music Dance exercise: the overall	1	1	1	3	1
Week 2: the Herdmen's new song Dance exercise: Basic bodily posture	1	0	1	2	0.66
Week 3: the Herdmen's new song Dance exercise: Hard shoulder and wrist	1	1	0	2	0.66
Week 4: the Herdmen's new song (adagio) Dance exercise: Hard and soft shoulder	1	1	1	3	1
Week 5: the Herdmen's new song (allegro) Dance exercise: Shrugged shoulder	0	1	1	2	0.66
Week 6: continue from Week 5	1	1	1	3	1
Week 7: the Herdmen's new song Dance exercise: Soft shoulder and arm	1	0	1	3	0.66
Week 8: continued from week 7	1	1	1	3	1
Week 9: the Herdmen's new song Dance exercise: Shoulder rotation and the horse step	1	1	1	3	1
Week 10: the Herdmen's new song Dance exercise: Shoulder rotation, the horse step, the long-flicking and short-flicking shoulder	0	1	1	2	0.66
Week 11: the Herdmen's new song (overall)	1	1	1	3	1
Week 12: Showcase	1	1	1	3	1
Total	10	10	11	31	
Mean					0.88

By conducting the three-month participatory observation, the researcher found that students can better perform the Mongolian dance, especially the shoulder movements. Their movements can reveal the story of Mongolians who have lived in this beautiful grassland for generations. Their performance mainly expresses the Mongolians' lively and cheerful character and plain spirit through a series of shoulder movements as elaborate as follows.

1) Hard shoulder

The hard shoulder, in the "Herdsmen's New Song", expresses a dignified and lively Mongolian girl character through the body. This dance movement appears in the allegro part of the herdsman's new song. The main point of this movement is the shoulder alternating movement back and forth with sharp and powerful, accurately grasping the strength. Shoulder movement must relax while using the wrist and arm to assist back and forth.

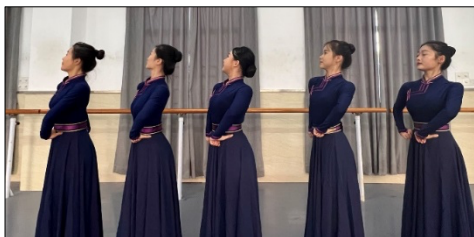


Figure 1 The performing of hard shoulder

2) Soft shoulder

Soft shoulder, in the "Herdsman's New Song", expresses the dignified, beautiful, and implicit of Mongolian women. This dance movement appears in the adagio part of the Herdsman's New Song. This action mainly shows the inner happiness and pride of Mongolian people. This movement always appeared in cheerful and light-hearted story scenes. It is commonly used to express females' elegance, gentleness, and beauty. This slowness and consistency signified the opened-minded personality of Mongolians.



Figure 2 The performing of soft shoulder movement

3) Shoulder rotation

Shoulder rotation in "Herdsman's New Song" expresses the beauty of Mongolian dance. The dance movement was characterized by calm and soft but addressed a sense of power. This movement appears in the adagio of the Herdsman's New Song.



Figure 3 The performing of shoulder rotation movement

4) Short-flicking shoulder

Short-flicking shoulder in the "Herdsmen's New Song" expresses the Mongolian people's forthright, warm character and relaxed and happy life on the grassland. This dance movement appears in the allegro of the Herdsmen's New Song. This movement shows the Mongolian people riding horses or in the gallop scene.

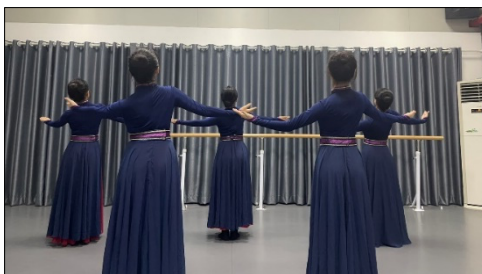


Figure 4 The performing of short-flicking shoulder

5) Long-flicking shoulder

Long-flicking shoulder in " Herdsmen's New Song" expresses the sense of speed and power of Mongolian dance. This movement integrates the basic posture of Mongolian dance to present the elegance of Mongolian people in the tall and straight position. This dance movement appears in the allegro of the Herdsman's New Song.



Figure 5 The performing of long-flicking shoulder

6) Shrugging shoulder

Shrugging shoulder in "Herdsmen's New Song" expresses the cheerful and happiness of the Mongolian people. Shoulder shrugging signifies the simulation of horse-riding action. In other meaning, this gesture is to imitate the state of people laughing. This dance action appears in the allegro of Herdsmen's New Song. The dancer will perform the shrugging shoulder with small and light. It shows the beauty of the boldness and relaxation of Mongolian dance.



Figure 6 The performing of shrugging shoulder movement

Conclusion

To summarize, shoulder movements in Mongolian dance are diverse and flexible, which can be skillfully combined with movements of other body parts, hence jointly highlighting Mongolians' character and dance style. It is of great significance to make an elaborate analysis of the characteristics of shoulder movements in Chinese Mongolian dance to deepen the understanding of the socio-cultural significance embedded in the movements. It also can emphasize the training skills to master the shoulder movements technique and enhance aesthetic appreciation in Mongolian dance performances.

Recommendation

This study elaborates on the characteristics of shoulder movements and reveals the meaning of Mongolian dance movements. The significance of this study can be the platform for in-depth study both theoretically and practically for other kinds of ethnic dance, especially for Ethnochoreology analysis. With this, dance can be appreciated and understood for its artistic and academic aspects.

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