

Blank Space--On the Creation of Dream Dance Beauty in Deep House of Graduation Drama

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Abstract

The creation and expression of dance beauty in small theater space has always been limited by funds and theater technology, and often the main creative team does not consider visual impact through dance beauty. However, with the further pursuit of improving the spiritual level of public aesthetics, more and more people enter the theater to enjoy the verification brought by the drama world, which puts forward higher requirements for stage art with drama function. This paper discusses how to achieve the best of both worlds by presenting the stage effect with visual impact with very little funds in a small theater space with many restrictions through the creation of dance beauty in graduation drama *Shenzhai Jingmeng*.



Full Text Article



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The graduation play "Deep Dreams in the House" is adapted from Su Tong's novel "Concubines", on which Zhang Yimou also based his 1991 movie "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High", which tells the story of a series of tragedies caused by the jealousy of four aunts of a big family during the Republican era. The graduation play "Deep Dream" is a combination of dance and drama presented in a new stage form; as the choreographer of this play, I will talk about the creative thinking of this play from the perspective of creation, choreography expression, and the value of the presentation of the three aspects.

Creative perspectives: innovation under demanding conditions

The original "Concubines" is a revelation of the oppression of women by the feudal patriarchy, and at the same time, the women who are trapped under the oppression of this feudal rite of passage are instead competing for favors, cheating each other, and being reduced to the tools to please the men, which is a glimpse of the twisted deformation of human nature under the rotten and old-fashioned rules of the evil ghosts that are eating the people. Someone once commented that Zhang Yimou's Big Red Lantern is the greatest horror movie of all time. Yes, what is really scary is not the ghosts or apparitions, but the cruel social system in that era, like the high wall erected in the deep house, trapping women's hope, living a life of ignorance, and like the walking dead.

The director of the graduation play "Deep Dreams in the Mansion", who is also the playwright, set the tone at the early stage of creation to reduce the expression of the overly depressing atmosphere of the play, but the presentation of the theme is still to reveal the oppression of the feudal and corrupt cannibalistic rites for women, and to reflect the connotation of the drama in a romantic way. The performance form of the play is presented in the form of dance+drama, and the dance takes up nearly half of the play's length. The plot advancement and connection of several key scenes rely on the dance to complete, and the progression and transformation of the characters' hearts and emotions are also chosen to be presented by the dance, while the narrative of the play is completed by the drama.

This kind of serious literary adaptation and realistic drama is usually done as a big production with visually stunning choreography. However, this graduation performance was held in the small theater of our school, with no electric boom, small side stage, limited lighting, and most of all, very little production funds. The limitations of space, theater technology, and financial constraints necessitated the creation of a new idea for the choreography. Although it is performed in a small theater, there are many actors and actresses, the scene scheduling frequency is high, the dance is interspersed with it, and the narrative scene is switched back and forth, the use of space is multi-dimensional, and the demand is complex. Choreography, how to present? Taking into account the large demand for space for dance, there can be no obstacles, drama and the need to support the pivot point, the environment of the instructions should also be clear, and ultimately decided to try to use the Chinese visual aesthetic characteristics - white space. Weakening the figurative deep house, using light to interpret and reflect the dramatic tension, conveying the characters' hearts, leaving enough stage space, point-like figurative pivots to meet the narrative function of the play, while explaining the physical environment. The connotation of the drama is slowly experienced in the audience's immersion in the play, the void also brings imagination, the drama is the need to leave white space, the need to give the audience room for thought.

The expression of choreography: the visual communication of dramatic tension

The choreography of the show coincides with the director's thinking. The director believes that a small theater should have the characteristics of a small theater, although it is not characterized as a pioneering theater to rehearse, but to present a new stage image is a new interpretation of the play.

The main color of the stage is red, which has a distinctive dual nature, and on the one hand refers to festivity. For example, the master of a rich family goes from room to room, and every time he marries his aunt, his wife, and his wife, they are decorated with lanterns and decorations. On the other hand, it refers to blood and terror. Just like this big house, it opens its mouth and swallows these married young ladies; It was also the cannibal feudal ethics of that era that exploited and oppressed women. As the choreography design takes leaving white space as the starting point, the thick wall is replaced by red gauze curtain on the wall of the deep courtyard, which reduces the sense of oppression under the scale of the small theater. Four red gauze curtain translucent screens with a height of 3 meters stand on both sides of the stage, enclosing an empty courtyard space. Each wall is hung with a big red lantern with a diameter of 60 cm, There was a row hanging over the platform. Lanterns are a sign of the play. Whoever the master dotes on is Chang Ming's lantern in front of his door. Over time, the lanterns in this house decide the "life" and "death" of aunts and

wives. The fourth aunt came into the big house and decorated the lanterns. At night, the housekeeper shouted to light the lights. One by one, these bright red lanterns over the stage lit up, and the story began. It was also the beginning of the "cannibalism" of the house.

The Master is a symbol of power in this play, and the director's treatment is to make him hidden in the background but able to control everything. From the design point of view, the visual presentation of the master is also virtualized; a 2-meter-long wooden screen is set up in the middle of the stage, and the hollowed-out area is covered with a translucent silk cloth, which is the master's room; the light from the canopy hits the screen back and reflects the master's silhouette, which is a powerful, oppressive, and irresistible black shadow. The stage creates the environment of each aunt's room with localized realistic scenery. The four high screens standing on both sides of the stage serve as the entrance to each aunt's room during the interpretation of the play, and the furniture and furnishings are formed by a quick change of scene during the light cut. Flexible props not only facilitate the scene switch, but also provide enough space for the dance part of the performance, while ensuring the smooth rhythm of the stage.

In order to meet the director's scheduling needs, the stage can not be too flat, the need for façade space, I set up a simple two-story balcony at the back of the entrance, this performance area can be a roof, can be a theater, can also be the final trial and execution of the third concubine. Based on this space, the director can have more scheduling considerations and designs, which can make the stage presentation more full.

For the women who are trapped in the feudalistic rites and cannot save themselves, I would like to interpret the playwright's connotation of the drama through visual means, and had envisioned pulling several red nylon ropes diagonally above the stage to form a net, which is surrounded by the deep side-stage and feels infinite, covering the deep house and trapping the women of that era. At the same time, it creates some visual impact, making the visual presentation of the stage more metaphorical and reflective. However, due to the limitation of the stage facilities and machinery, as well as the consideration of being a graduation play for the students, this presentation was finally abandoned.

The conception of the stage art of "A Deep Dream" emphasizes the white space and the "emptiness" of the stage, but the emptiness here is not a weakening of the set or the choreography. Instead of utilizing the realistic set to impact the audience's senses, we tried to create an invisible aura to create such an effect. The scale of the small theater stage is just enough to satisfy the psychological perception of smallness, oppression and constraint. The four high walls with red veils are also a metaphor for the tragic end of each woman in the house. The frequent use of dark blue lighting, a ghostly color, also confirms that every woman here has become a walking corpse.

Presentation of values: emotional resonance

General Secretary pointed out that "good works of literature and art should be like the sunshine in the blue sky and the breeze in the spring, capable of enlightening the mind, moisturizing the soul and cultivating the life."

Drama is an art form that allows people to enter a fictional world and experience different emotions and experiences. Its function is not only limited to entertainment and aesthetics, it can affect people's behavior and psychology in different ways, so that the audience can be inspired by

watching it. Stage art is also four-dimensional, at the same time, the integration of space and time, in the theater space under the package of everything on the stage to stimulate the audience, stage art to provide the visual image of the drama to create the illusion, music and sound effects to help the actors to mobilize the audience's emotions, stage lighting to promote the process of time, all the audio-visual elements of the role of the audience's perceptions, a few hours of watching the play will be experiencing the four seasons, experience the feeling of the cold and warmth of the human world. The theater performance conveys the emotion of the audience. The emotions, ideas, concepts and perceptions conveyed by a theater performance are accepted and expected by the audience, which is the value of theater art. The unique vocabulary of theater art has its own deep self-consciousness and resonates with a wide range of emotional ups and downs. If the vocabulary of dramatic art does not catch the audience's attention and emotion, and does not cause emotional resonance, the value of drama will be weakened.

In "Deep Dreams", the fourth aunt enters the mansion, and all the red color on the stage seems to be welcoming the bride at first sight, but with the presentation of the end of each aunt, it is realized that this red color is dyed with blood, just like the modern criminal investigation without luminescent reagents can not see the hidden bloodstains. Emotional drive is with the plot advancing layer by layer, until finally the mansion hung up red lanterns, and in the lights and colors to welcome the five aunts into the door, a kind of fear and despair of psychological feelings emerge, the drama has caused emotional resonance.

The classic drama can be disseminated and preserved must have played a role in alerting the world, revealing social phenomena and arousing reflection. As the most traditional medium and the simplest way of communication, theater serves the general public, builds consensus and resonates with them.

Conclusion

As a part of the drama, stage art uses its own characteristics to convey and express the connotation of the drama; not only that, the drama space created by stage art can also be the characterization of the character, through the borrowing and fusion of other forms of art to condense the visual elements that can set off the character characteristics and highlight the tension of the drama. The form of presentation of stage art can be said to be a play of a pattern, placed in different scales, under different conditions of the performance space, the final presentation of the stage art should also consider the stage art and other factors in conjunction.

Small theater theater often because of the limitations of funds and venues stage art has not done too many attempts, with the development of science and technology as well as the public's need for cultural entertainment, stage art can be combined with new performance space, new forms of performances to do more attempts and explorations.

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