

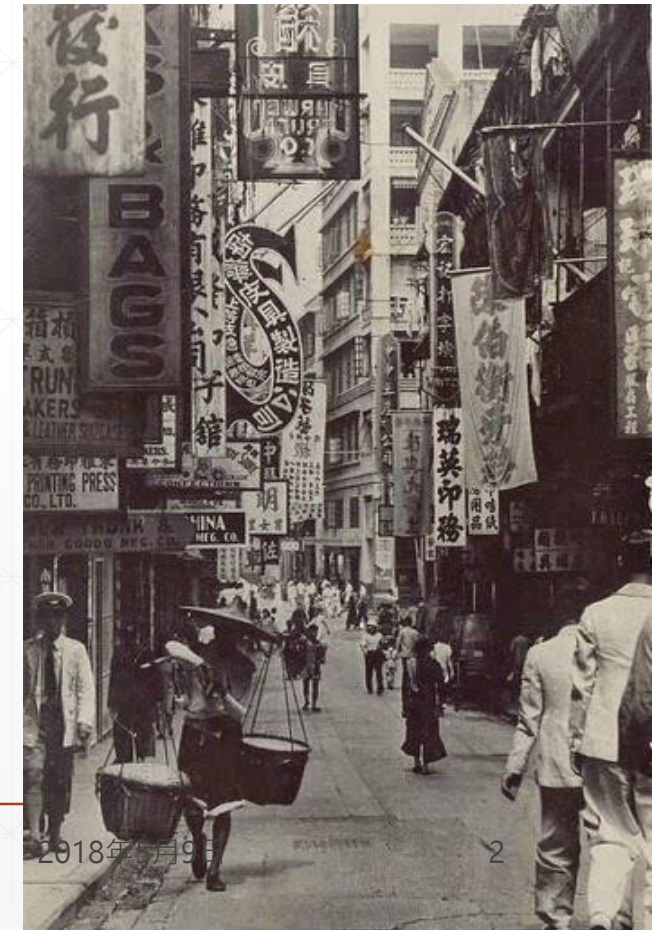
Transformation of traditional art forms in the evolving contexts: Cantonese opera in Hong Kong as an example

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Hong Kong in the early 20th Century

- Developing economy – from a fishing village to a commercial city
- Population grows, with increasing immigrants
- Increasing needs of entertainment



Evolving Contexts in 1950s – 1970s in Hong Kong

- After World War II, economic recovery
- Political confrontation in Hong Kong – 1967 leftist riots



1997 – Returning to China

1984 - Sino-British Joint Declaration

- HK returns to China in 1997
- No change in 50 years after 1997
- HK is ruled by Basic Laws
- HK has its own Special Administrative Region Government ruled by HK people



Developmental stages of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong

1. 1920s – 60s: Golden Age

- Developing into a mature art form
- The only public entertainment in Hong Kong



Cultural Tradition in Cantonese Opera

- Ritual performances as original performance context
- Improvisatory, without scripts but outline of story only



Cultural Tradition in Cantonese Opera

- Transmission: Quasi-family relationship between Master and Apprentice
- Superstition and Taboo: Psychological needs



2018年5月9日

2. 1970s – 1990s: Period of Deteriorating

- New entertainments' competition – HK people pursued “westernization” and “modernization”
- Cantonese opera is regarded as “old-fashioned” and “outdated”
- Taiwan pop & Canto-pop songs emerged



Evolving Contexts in 1950s – 1970s in Hong Kong

- Import of television broadcasting / western movies / pop songs from the West and Taiwan



3. 2000 – Present: Period of Revival

- Return of HK Sovereignty to China in 1997
- Promotion of Chinese culture in school education and general public
- Cantonese opera is enlisted in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009
- Establishment of government funding for Cantonese opera development
- School formal music curriculum includes Cantonese opera in Music

Evolution of Cantonese Opera since 1930s

- **Nature:** From improvisation to rigorous script writing
- **Function:** From ritual performances to fine arts
- **Practice:** From single-gender troupes to both-gender troupes
- **Transmission:** From apprenticeship to formal & non-formal education
- **Contents:** From traditional Chinese folklore to infusion of western elements (or modern elements)

An example: Traditional scene of a live performance



Same scene in a movie – in Western costume



Cultural Sustainability: A challenge

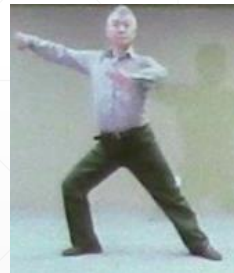
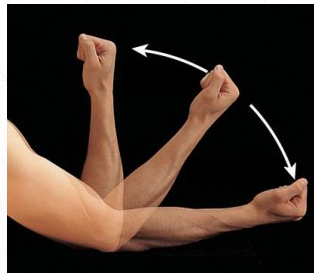
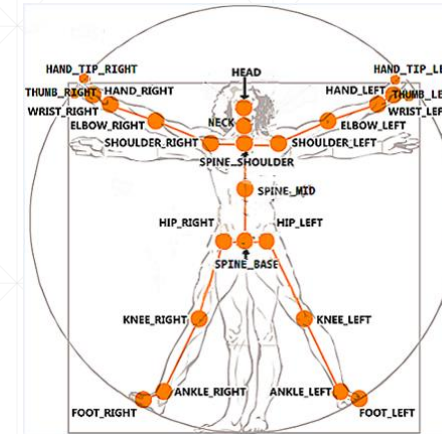
- Audience building: How to persuade the younger generation enter the theatre?
- Transmission: How to encourage younger generation to learn and become professional artists?
- General Education: How to engage children to learn the genre?
- Government policy: How to help preservation?

Current research trends

1. Research in applying technology in education

- Validation of the kinetic chain assessment and learning computerized system for Cantonese opera movement
 - Aims to provide students with immediate assessment for learning
-

Computerized Kinetic Chain Assessment and Learning System (CKCALS)



Kinect®: motion sensing input device for Xbox and Windows; Comprise an infra-red and a RGB webcam; Detect coordinates of the human skeleton

Kinect captures movements (coordinates) of the Master & learners

Compare movements according to the assessment standard

- Give learners immediate feedback for improvement
- user-friendly, inexpensive, portable

Computerized Kinetic Chain Assessment and Learning System (CKCALS)

專制身段電腦評估系統

請依下圖的示範站立： 您的彩色影像： 您的骨架影像：



專家標準：		您的數據：	
頭角度：	180	175	
頭頂 x 座標			
- 脖子 x 座標：	0	1	
頭部評價：		頭姿勢正確	

專家標準：		您的數據：	
軀幹角度：	180	178	
胸口 x 座標			
- 尾椎 x 座標：	0	4	
軀幹評價：		身體稍微傾右 叉腰姿勢錯誤	

專家標準：		您的數據：	
左肩膀角度：	80	81	
右肩膀角度：	80	82	
左肩 y 座標			
- 右肩 y 座標：	0	1	
肩膀評價：		沒有壓肩 兩肩膀高度一致	

專家標準：		您的數據：	
左大腿 x 座標			
- 左腳跟 x 座標：	0	0	
右大腿 x 座標			
- 右腳跟 x 座標：	0	5	
腿部評價：		腿站得不夠直	

返回

2. Audience building

- “Conception of Creativity as Personal Style in Cantonese Opera”

Background

- Lack of personal style (and creativity) is demonstrated
- Imitation of old style – “outdated” by younger generation

Conception of Creativity as Personal Style in Cantonese Opera

- Interviews 13 experienced practitioners (performers / accompanists / singers)
- Major research question:
 - How do the conceptions of creativity in Cantonese opera have been evolving from the perspectives of practicing artists and learners?
- Minor research questions:
 - What are the factors affecting the development of personal styles in Cantonese opera?
 - How can the artists develop a personal style?

Concluding thoughts

- Culture is evolving facing globalization
- “Preservation” may not be the right word for traditional culture and traditional arts
- We have to accept “evolution” as the norm of cultural development
- “How may and does arts education contribute to cultural sustainability?”
 - What is the definition of cultural sustainability?
 - Should we proactively sustain the culture? Or, the culture is there and will be there.
 - And could we change?