

## **The Historical and Cultural Precipitation of Music and Dance Epic the East Is Red**

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**Abstract:** Music and dance epic "The East is Red" is an important work in the history of Chinese literature and art, it integrates music, dance, poetry, art, and other art forms, transmits the history and culture in the course of Chinese revolution, but also reflects The Times and national spirit. The paper will discuss "The East Is Red" from the aspects of creation background, artistic characteristics, historical events, performance influence, dance history status, national cultural inheritance, modern significance, and enlightenment. In the aspect of creation background, we will analyze the background of celebrating the 15th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the initiative and guidance of Premier Zhou Enlai. In terms of artistic characteristics, we will discuss the integration of music, dance, poetry, and art in the "East is Red", as well as the new way of national song and dance. In terms of national culture inheritance and modern significance, we will discuss the inheritance of red culture and national spirit, the dissemination of socialist values with Chinese characteristics, and the innovation and development of national culture. With the analysis of these aspects, we will better understand the historical and cultural precipitation of "The East Is Red" and its contribution to the history of Chinese dance and Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Music and Dance; The East is Red; National Culture; National Spirit

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Music and dance epic The East is Red is a classic work in the history of Chinese dance. It is not only the first large-scale song and dance work after the founding of New China, but also a landmark work in the history of Chinese dance. In a unique form, it fully shows the characteristics of The Times and the spirit of the revolution of New China at that time, with a strong sense of The Times and history, but also an important part of the inheritance of Chinese national culture.

By in-depth study of "The East is Red", we can better understand its important position and far-reaching influence in the history of Chinese dance, Chinese culture and Chinese modern history. Its movements convey not only artistic ambition but a chronicle of struggle and triumph.

The choreography draws from tradition yet bursts with revolutionary fervor, echoing the transformative energy of an era. Examining "The East is Red" unveils the profound interplay between art and society, revealing

how performance becomes a testament to a nation's journey.

## 2. CREATION BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF *THE EAST IS RED*

### 2.1 Background of the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the founding of China

1954 was the 15th year since the founding of the People's Republic of China. It was also a period of rapid economic and cultural development in China. To celebrate this important historical moment, the Central Ministry of Culture decided to create a large-scale musical and dance epic to express the joy and pride of the people. This work should be a collection of music, dance, poetry, art in one of the national song and dance, with strong revolutionary era color and distinctive Chinese characteristics. Therefore, the enthusiastic and revolutionary spirit of the East is Red was born (Yuefu, 2022).

### 2.2 Zhou Enlai's initiative and guidance

Premier Zhou Enlai personally proposed and guided the creation process of *The East Is Red*. He stressed that the work should take the working people as the theme, show the great changes after the founding of New China and fully express the patriotic feelings of the people of New China. He also personally participated in the script review and music creation of "*The East Is Red*" and put forward valuable opinions and suggestions during rehearsal.

### 2.3 Creation process and overcoming difficulties

In the creation process of *The East Is Red*, the creators faced many difficulties and challenges. First of all, the time is limited, and the creation time is less than half a year. Secondly, this is a very challenging work, which needs to integrate a variety of art forms, but also needs to express the style and spirit of the new China, which puts forward high requirements on the creative ability and creativity of the artists.

Finally, due to the limitations of manpower and materials, the rehearsal process is also full of difficulties and challenges. However, under the leadership and encouragement of Premier Zhou Enlai, the creators overcame all kinds of difficulties together, constantly improved and improved the creation level of *The East Is Red*, and finally created a Chinese classic that has been passed down to this day (GU, 2022).

### 3. ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS AND VALUE OF THE EAST IS RED

#### 3.1 Integration of music, dance, poetry and art

"The East is Red" is a typical large-scale song and dance epic. It integrates music, dance, poetry and art in an innovative way to integrate different art forms. In terms of music, the music style of "The East is Red" has a strong Chinese national style, using the elements of national instruments and Chinese classical music, and skillfully integrating the elements of western classical music, forming a unique music style. In the aspect of dance, the work is mainly group dance, with individual dance, solo dance, pair dance and other forms, enriching the dance form, so that the whole work is full of vitality and dynamic. In terms of poetry, the works select many excellent poems as lyrics, with high artistic value and aesthetic value.

In terms of art, the stage design of the works fully considers the elements of traditional Chinese aesthetics and national culture, so that the audience can appreciate the charm of traditional Chinese aesthetics while viewing the works. This fusion of music, dance, poetry and art was unprecedented at the time. It fully demonstrates the characteristics and excellent traditions of Chinese national culture and plays an important role in enriching and inheriting Chinese art. In addition, its creation also fully embodies the characteristics and national spirit of the revolutionary period, allowing people to better understand the ideology, culture and values of the Chinese revolutionary process.

#### 3.2 New way of national Song and dance

"The East Is Red" integrates national elements with modern artistic techniques, showing the artistic style of the new era. Its new style, new form and new content opened a new chapter in the history of Chinese dance. First, in the aspect of music, it innovatively integrates Chinese traditional music elements with western classical music elements, forming a unique style of music.

This new music style provides a new idea and direction for Chinese dance music creation. Secondly, in the aspect of dance, The East is Red emphasizes the group dance, pays attention to the expression forms and techniques of the group dance, and integrates various forms of individual dance, solo dance, pair dance and so on, making the whole work full of vitality and dynamic. This innovative form of national song and dance also

became a classic form of Chinese dance art and influenced the later dance creation. Finally, in terms of artistic content, the theme of "The East is Red" is distinct, reflecting the great achievements of the revolution and social changes of the New China at that time as the main line, highlighting the important role and status of the working people in socialist construction. Its content and artistic technique also become an important reference and inspiration for the creation of Chinese dance art. Therefore, it can be said that the new way of national song and dance shown in the East Is Red has played an important role in promoting the development and innovation of Chinese dance art.

In the work, the dancers take the revolutionary spirit as their inner driving force, showing the heroic feeling and spirit of the Chinese people going forward. The dance movements of the dancers also reflect the simple and striving spirit of the working people, highlighting the spirit of the Chinese people's unremitting self-improvement.

The props and costumes in the works are based on traditional Chinese culture, and pay attention to the inner texture of the fighting spirit of the Chinese people, as well as the confidence and pride of the Chinese people (WANG, 2022).

#### 4. Historical Events and Characterization in 'The East Is Red

##### 4.1 Typical events of the revolutionary stage

As a song and dance epic, The East is Red shows typical events in the revolutionary stage, allowing the audience to better understand the ideas, culture and values of the Chinese revolution. In the works, many important historical events are involved, such as the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the War of Liberation, and land reform.

Through the representation of these historical events, the works show the passion, suffering, victory and other aspects of the revolutionary War vividly. One of the most representative events is the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. The theme of the work is "unyielding Chinese people", which shows the heroic struggle and indomitable spirit of the Chinese nation in the war of resistance against Japanese Aggression. Another typical event is the Battle of Pingxingguan during the War of Liberation.

Through the form of dance and music, the work shows the heroic performance of the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army in the war, reflecting the spirit of the Chinese people's unity and

heroic struggle.

Through the representation of these typical events, the works show the characteristics of China's revolutionary stage and the great efforts made by the Chinese people to achieve national independence and liberation, highlighting the Chinese people's struggle and indomitable spirit.

#### 4.2 Depiction and transmission of character images

In "The East is Red", the portrayal and transmission of characters is an important aspect of the work. The characters involved in the work are colorful, covering people of different ages, genders, identities and positions. On the one hand, the portrayal and transmission of the characters reflect the characteristics of the Chinese revolutionary period, on the other hand, it also shows the inner world and emotional experience of the characters.

In the works, the main figures include workers, farmers, revolutionary leaders, soldiers of the People's Liberation Army and so on. Through dance, music and poetry, the works vividly depict the characteristics and inner world of these figures, such as hard-working workers, simple farmers, and determined revolutionary leaders. Through the portrayal of characters, the work conveys the tenacious, brave and indomitable spirit of the Chinese people in the revolutionary period.

#### 4.3 Influence and enlightenment on the course of Chinese revolution

As a song and dance epic, The East is Red had a profound influence and enlightenment on the course of Chinese revolution. First, the work shows the unity and struggle spirit of the Chinese people in the revolutionary period. The Chinese people went through numerous difficulties and obstacles during the revolutionary period, but through unity and hard work, they finally achieved national independence and liberation.

This spirit of unity and struggle is also vital in today's society. Secondly, the work emphasizes the important role and status of the working people. In the works, workers, farmers and other figures have been fully expressed, emphasizing the status and role of the working people. This is also of practical significance for today's society.

Finally, the work conveys the revolutionary ideas and spirit of the Communist Party of China. In the works, the images of the Communist Party of China and revolutionary leaders are fully represented, showing the hard work and great sacrifice made by the Communist Party of China for national independence and people's liberation. This also has far-reaching

enlightenment and influence on today's Chinese revolutionary cause (HUANG, 2022).

## 5. PERFORMANCE AND INFLUENCE OF THE EAST IS RED

### 5.1 First performance and national tour

The East Is Red was premiered at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 26, 1964, and caused a sensation. Later, the production went on a nationwide tour and was well received by audiences. According to statistics, from 1964 to 1966 alone, The East Is Red toured 190 performances, a total of more than 8 million people to see the production. The tour not only promoted the development of Chinese song and dance, but also showed the spiritual features and cultural deposits of the Chinese revolution to the audience.

### 5.2 Film shooting and restoration

In order to let more people appreciate the artistic charm of the East is Red, a film version was made in 1965. The film version integrates dance, music, poetry, art and other artistic forms organically, so that the audience can feel the artistic charm of the work more directly.

However, due to the age, there are some problems in the quality of the film version. In recent years, the National Film Archive has restored and digitized the film, enabling audiences to enjoy the classic with better audio-visual effects.

### 5.3 Influence and evaluation at home and abroad

The East Is Red has a very high status and influence in the history of Chinese song and dance art and culture. The work is not only praised as "China's first modern dance", but also known as "the peak of Chinese revolutionary song and dance art".

Art forms such as music, dance, poetry and fine arts in the works have been fully developed and integrated, creating a new pattern of Chinese modern dance. The creation concept and artistic style of the works also have an important influence on the development of Chinese dance art. In addition, "The East is Red" also has a high international visibility and influence.

In 1965, the work was exhibited at the Florence Art Festival in Italy and won the Gold Medal, the highest award at that time. The creative ideas and artistic achievements of the works also provide new inspiration and

thinking for the international dance art.

## 6. THE STATUS OF THE *EAST IS RED* IN THE HISTORY OF CHINESE DANCE

### 6.1 Competition and honor of dance classics

As a classic in the history of Chinese dance, 'The East Is Red' has won many dance competitions and honors. In 1995, "The East Is Red" ranked first in China's "20 most popular songs of the 20th century" by China Central Television. In 2001, the Chinese Dancers Association awarded "The East Is Red" the title of "Classic of Chinese Modern Dance", in recognition of its important position in the history of Chinese modern dance.

In 2012, the Ministry of Culture released the first list of representative items of national intangible cultural heritage, including the dance piece 'The East is Red'. In addition, 'The East Is Red' has participated in many international dance competitions and exhibitions and won many international awards, making important contributions to the influence and status of Chinese dance in the world. These honors and evaluations fully reflect the status and influence of "The East is Red" as a classic in the history of Chinese dance, but also provide new impetus and direction for the development of Chinese dance.

### 6.2 Influence and enlightenment on later dance art

'The East Is Red' has a profound influence and enlightenment on the development of Chinese dance art. First, the work's integrated artistic technique has opened a new way for Chinese modern dance. In the works, music, dance, poetry, art and other artistic forms are organically integrated, creating a brand-new artistic style and expression technique, which has become an important feature of modern Chinese dance.

Secondly, the work emphasizes the social responsibility and artistic value of dance through the expression of the theme of the revolutionary period. Through the expression of the revolutionary process, the works show the role and significance of dance in society, providing ideological support and guidance for the development of modern Chinese dance. Finally, the individuality and creativity of the dancers are highlighted in the work. In the works, the dancers not only have superb dancing skills, but also reflect their own personality and creativity. This personalized way of expression also has enlightenment significance for the development of Chinese dance.

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### 6.3 Promoting the development of Chinese dance

The success of "The East is Red" promoted the development and expansion of Chinese dance, and had a profound influence and enlightenment on the development of Chinese modern dance. The successful performance of the work has also attracted a large number of talents and resources to the development of Chinese dance. After this, Chinese dancers began to be more determined and confident in the path of exploring and innovating Chinese dance. The continuous emergence of new works and dancers has enriched the artistic forms and expressions of Chinese dance. In addition, the work also provides new ideas and methods for the development of Chinese dance. Through the expression of the revolutionary process, the work shows the role and significance of dance in society, and provides new thinking and inspiration for the development of modern Chinese dance. The combination of dance, music and poetry in the works opens up a new path and direction for the development of Chinese dance.

## 7. THE EAST IS RED AND THE INHERITANCE OF NATIONAL CULTURE

### 7.1 Inherit red culture and national spirit

As a musical and dance epic reflecting the course of the Chinese revolution, The East is Red conveys the spirit of the Chinese revolution and the connotation of red culture through the depiction of historical events and characters. Through the performance of the revolutionary process, the work shows the Chinese revolutionary process under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, shows the hard efforts of the Chinese people to achieve national independence and liberation, and carries forward the national spirit of the Chinese people.

The spirit and values conveyed by the works are an important part of Chinese national culture and an important content in the development of Chinese modern culture.

The successful performance of the work not only allowed people to have a deeper understanding of the course of the Chinese revolution, but more importantly carried forward the national spirit of the Chinese people and led the cultural development of the Chinese society. The revolutionary enthusiasm and innovative spirit displayed in the works provided



important spiritual support and inspiration for the later Chinese cultural innovation. At the same time, the works also play a positive role in international cultural exchanges, providing a new channel and way for the world to understand Chinese culture (Chen & Shang, 2021).

### 7.2 Spreading socialist values with Chinese characteristics

As a musical and dance epic reflecting the course of the Chinese revolution, the *East is Red* conveys the values of socialism with Chinese characteristics and carries forward the thoughts and spirit of the Communist Party of China through the performance of historical events and figures in the revolutionary period.

The work conveys the core idea of socialist values with Chinese characteristics, namely the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the position of the people as masters. The reverence and praise for the Communist Party of China in the work emphasizes the leadership position and role of the Communist Party of China and conveys the superiority of the socialist political system with Chinese characteristics. The eulogizing and praising of the people in the works conveys the people-centered thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics and emphasizes the creativity and power of the people. At the same time, the works also convey the idea of patriotism and national honor. Through the expression of the revolutionary process, the work emphasizes the hard work of the Chinese people for national independence and liberation, arouses the audience's love and enthusiasm for the country and the nation, and conveys the thought of patriotism. The glorious history and heroic characters in the revolutionary period emphasized the sense of honor of the country and the nation, and conveyed the idea of the sense of national honor.

Through the transmission of these ideas, *The East is Red* successfully carries forward the socialist values with Chinese characteristics and leads the development of Chinese culture. The performance and dissemination of the works at home and abroad have also provided new channels and ways for the world to understand socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### 7.3 Innovation and development of national culture

As a musical and dance epic that shows the course of Chinese revolution, the *East is Red* not only inherits the Chinese red culture and national spirit, but also provides new ideas and ways for the innovation and development of Chinese national culture. The creation of the works integrates music, dance, poetry, art and other artistic forms, reflecting the diversity and

inclusiveness of the national culture. In addition, the successful performance and dissemination of the works not only provided important ideological and creative resources for the development of Chinese national culture, but also opened up a new path and direction for the innovation and development of Chinese national culture. The works emphasize the Chinese people's spirit of self-reliance, hard work, unity and cooperation, and provide valuable reference and inspiration for the innovation and development of Chinese national culture. At the same time, the expression of the revolutionary process and the reverence and praise for the Communist Party of China in the works convey the idea of national unity and construction, providing new impetus and ideas for the development of modern Chinese culture. The success of the works also provides new ideas and channels for the overseas dissemination of Chinese national culture and expands the international influence of Chinese national culture.

## 8. MODERN SIGNIFICANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF 'THE EAST IS RED'

### 8.1 Promote patriotism and revolutionary spirit

The music and dance epic *The East is Red* has carried rich historical and cultural connotations as well as profound revolutionary spirit since its birth. In the new historical period, it still has important modern significance, especially in carrying forward patriotism and revolutionary spirit plays an irreplaceable role. First of all, *The East is Red* shows the courage and firmness of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China in the revolutionary struggle through song and dance, and conveys the loyalty and faith in the great cause of the Party and the people. In the new era, this belief has far-reaching practical significance in guiding the entire nation to strengthen the four self-confidence and unswervingly follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, *The East is Red* shows the great sacrifice and efforts of revolutionary martyrs for national liberation and national independence with typical events and figures. This spirit of putting the interests of the country and the nation first also has strong practical inspiration in the new era, and requires us to always maintain the determination to strive for the prosperity and development of the country and the nation. Thirdly, *The East is Red* conveys the connotation of the revolutionary spirit through various artistic forms, making it an important textbook for young people to learn in the new era. In the context of globalization, it is particularly important to

inherit and carry forward the revolutionary spirit, which can inspire young people's patriotic passion and national pride, and cultivate their belief in contributing to the development of the country and the nation. Finally, the modern significance of "The East is Red" is also reflected in its inspiring effect on literary and art workers in the new era. This work, with its high artistic value and ideological connotation, provides an example for literary and artistic creation in the new era, encourages literary and artistic workers to uphold patriotism and revolutionary spirit in the creation process, and make new contributions to carrying forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and promoting the construction of socialist spiritual civilization (Chen, 2021).

## 8.2 Inherit excellent traditional Chinese culture

The music and dance epic *The East is Red* is not only an artistic masterpiece showing the heroic struggle of the Communist Party of China and the people, but also a treasure carrying the excellent traditional culture of China. Under the background of the new era, *The East is Red* has important modern significance in inheriting the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

First, *The East Is Red* integrates music, dance, poetry, art, and other artistic forms, showing the profound cultural heritage of the Chinese nation. Through this cross-border integration, *The East Is Red* becomes an artistic work that embodies the essence of Chinese culture and provides rich cultural inheritance resources for the later generations.

Second, the content of "The East is Red" deeply explores the spiritual core of the national tradition, such as loyalty, courage, tenacity, and other qualities, as well as the historical tradition of the Chinese nation's unity and forging ahead. These spiritual qualities and historical traditions are the immortal spiritual wealth of the Chinese nation and are of great practical significance for carrying forward the national spirit and gathering national strength.

Thirdly, *The East is Red* inherits the Chinese nation's just concept of resisting foreign aggression and defending national dignity through the reappearance of the revolutionary process. Under the background of the new era, this concept of justice is very important to guide all the people to establish a correct national concept and resolutely safeguard national interests.

Fourthly, the modern significance of "The East is Red" is also reflected in the education and enlightenment to the new generation of literary and art workers. With its unique artistic charm, this work shows the charm of

the excellent traditional Chinese culture and provides a model for literary and art workers in the new era to create and learn. Based on inheriting and carrying forward the fine traditional Chinese culture, the new generation of literary and art workers can better contribute to the construction of the common spiritual home of the Chinese nation and the rejuvenation of Chinese culture.

### 8.3 Inspiration for literary and artistic creation in the new era

Music and dance epic *The East Is Red*, as a masterpiece with profound historical and cultural deposits, provides valuable inspiration for literary and artistic creation in the new era. First, the theme of creation is clear and profound. *The East is Red* shows the historical achievements and great spirit of the Communist Party of China and the people in the revolutionary struggle, and strongly expresses national pride. Literary and artistic creation in the new era should pay attention to the theme of *The Times*, reflect the development and change of the country and the nation with the theme deeply rooted in people's hearts, inherit the national spirit, and inspire people's national pride. Secondly, the innovation and integration of art forms. "*The East Is Red*" combines music, dance, poetry, art and other artistic categories to form a unique artistic style, reflecting the profound cultural connotation of the Chinese nation. Literary and artistic creation in the new era should learn from this innovative approach of cross-border integration, break the traditional framework, and present more diversified and three-dimensional works of art to the audience. Thirdly, sincere and profound expression of emotion. "*The East is Red*" through the vivid dance performance and moving song, conveys the revolutionary martyrs for the cause of national liberation of the sincere emotion of the heroic struggle, deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Literary and artistic creation in the new era should pay attention to the true transmission of emotion, move people's hearts and arouse resonance. Finally, it emphasizes the rigor and earnestness of the creation process. The creation process of "*The East is Red*" is full of hardships, and the creators have made great efforts to achieve the ideal effect. Literary and artistic creation in the new era should treat every detail with a rigorous attitude, pursue perfection, and present high-quality works of art to the audience (Zhang, 2020).

### 8.4 Closing remarks

In short, as a classic in the history of Chinese dance, "*The East is Red*" inherits the excellent traditional Chinese culture through the integration of

Chinese excellent traditional culture and modern art forms, and has important modern significance and inspiration. The successful performance and dissemination of the works not only provide new ideas and channels for the inheritance and promotion of fine traditional Chinese culture, but also provide new impetus and ideas for the development of Chinese art. We believe that in the new era of literary and artistic creation, we can learn from the artistic characteristics and values of 'The East Is Red', better inherit and carry forward the fine traditional Chinese culture, and make greater contributions to the development of cultural undertakings and the prosperity of the country.

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