

A Comparative Study of Public Art Education by the State Theaters in Korean and China

MINGJIN WANG^{1,*}

¹Sahmyook University, Department of Music, Seoul, KOREA

Abstract: As a contributor to the construction of a modern public cultural service system, theaters, together with libraries, art galleries, cultural centers, etc., shoulder the social responsibility of public art education. Public art education takes public art service institutions as the carrier. At present, schools are the most popular and developed institutions among public cultural service institutions. With the advancement of socialization, public cultural and art institutions are flourishing. Funded and operated by the government, more and more public institutions bear the social responsibility of public art education in the new era and shape the diversified forms of public arts education. With National Theater of Korea and the National Theater for the Performing Arts as the objects for its research, this paper analyzes the similarities and differences between the measures for public art education in the two countries through a comparative study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Theater of Korea and the National Grand Theater of China, as the showcases of culture and art of the countries, not only enhance the cultural vitality of the city and the whole country, promote cultural and artistic exchanges, but also serve as carriers of art and spirit in serving politics, cultural industry, public culture and art groups at the same time. The development of the cities is closely related to the urban cultures.[1] As one of the carriers of the urban culture, the theater reflects the development of the regional art through various types of arts. The exchange of art and culture through the stage of the theaters can enhance the cultivation of the citizens in artistic appreciation, enrich the spiritual and cultural life, and promote the development of regional economy.[2] The theaters are symbols of the spiritual civilization of cities. As landmark buildings, they are closely related to the cultural development of modern cities, and consciously undertake the social functions of culture, entertainment and education.

2. Measures for Public Art Education by National Theater of Korea

As a national art performance center, the National Theater of Korea serves for the purposes such as cultural exhibition and art education. As an important cultural facility funded and constructed by the state, in the construction of a public cultural service system covering the society, it bears the social responsibility of benefiting the public with culture and art and guiding and improving the national cultural and artistic quality.[3] By carrying out

events for public art education, the theater has not only achieved both the goals of publicity and artistry, but also realized the unified benefits in both social and economic senses. The audience, as the receivers of art institutions, constitute a necessary condition as well as an important factor for the survival and sustainable development of institutions of arts. The cultivation of the audience is the primary goal to achieve the sustainable development of the theater, for which public art education comes as one of the most effective ways to expand the audience. In 2012, the National Theater of Korea set a separate department for art education in its organizational structure. In terms of culture and art education, the National Theater carries out varied projects for children, teenagers, adults and foreigners annually, with corresponding events for art education for different social groups through the major ways like education, experience and participation.

Since 2016, the education programs of the National Theater of Korea have basically centered on the projects such as traditional art academy, the Changegeuk academy, the specific lectures on performing arts, the national music academy for foreigners, the art school for children, culture partners and vocational training for teachers. Among them, the traditional art academy, as a project run by top Korean tutors, targets adults interested in traditional art. With the advantage of the platform, National Theater provided the academies with opportunities of systematical education on traditional art through courses by excellent art performance masters. [4]The purpose of the traditional art academy is to expand the audience base of traditional arts, improve the public awareness of traditional arts, expand the opportunities for national cultural enjoyment, and make contributions to the development of traditional arts. Since it was founded in 2013, the youth Changgeuk troupe has been the only educational course specialized in

*Corresponding author. Email: WMJ290270@gmail.com

Pansori and traditional art in Korea. The instructors of the troupe are from the Korean National Changgeuk Troupe as well as the best artists in various fields. The youth can learn Pansori, drama, Korean dance, traditional performance and traditional instruments according to the curriculum. It is a long-term art education project of the National Theater of Korea. While providing high-quality educational resources, the Changgeuk academy also cultivates new generations of successors for Korean traditional art and contributes to pass down Korean traditional culture. The specific lectures on performing arts are taken as a measure for the popularization of arts and sciences among citizens. Through the theory and practice, it can spread the characteristics of art and culture in a more vivid form. Giving full play to the platform advantages of the National Theater of Korea, the project invites well-known artists from the industry and academia to give lectures, so as to enhance the people's understanding of the performing arts and improve the public's understanding of the performing arts.

The national music academy for foreigners is a project to experience the traditional Korean performing arts for foreigners living in various walks in Korea. To strengthen cultural exchanges between different countries through traditional arts, the project is held twice a year, each lasting 12 weeks. Through long-term operation and stable development, it has become a representative project for foreigners. There is also a long-term project named "Cultural Partner", a project launched by the National Theater of Korea in 2005 for foreigners to learn Korean traditional art, which will see the participation of foreigners from all over the world will participate for up to six months every year. However, since the advent of the COVID-19 in 2019, this project has been suspended until now. The art school for children, as a project by National Theater of Korea for short-term training of children in every holiday, expands the art population base by revitalizing the art education for children to help them appreciate the beauty in nature, social life beauty and artistic fields, and cultivate healthy aesthetic interests and keen aesthetic perception through the access to arts and to feel arts through the education. Through arts education, their feelings will be enriched and their love towards life enhanced even from childhood. At the same time, artistic creation can effectively boost children's imagination, which can be expressed through artistic media. The project also helps the children experience stage cooperation and enjoy the charm of stage and art through involvements. Among them, Five Senses Entertainment Music Tour is a project of education on Korean music through entertainment, which is also an experience project readily easy for children. It is a traditional music appreciation experience project to enhance the traditional music foundation of children and teenagers and develop potential audience through activities like the appreciation, experience, creation, and performance of Korean music.[5]

The vocational training for teachers is a program by the National Theater to further develop traditional art, with a purpose to help students understand the development of traditional art and improve their perception of traditional art. In addition to the characteristic curriculum, the experts

will be employed to give particular instructions and demonstrations, to help the trainees to master the key content of traditional art through practices upon theories, so as to better carry out the mission of the popularization of traditional art education upon their professional advantages of. This is the embodiment of the public and social value of the National Theater of Korea. Themed "Understanding Traditional Arts and Education of Drama", the program, as a long-term public welfare project for free application, studies creative learning strategies through performance and education.

3. Measures for Public Art Education by the National Theater for the Performing Arts

Since its opening in 2007, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has firmly adhered to the people centered work orientation, and made great efforts in art popularization and education, and the promotion of the development of arts, with sharing the achievements of art with the people as its original purpose. As a public cultural facility funded and constructed by the state, the National Theater for the Performing Arts serves not only as a platform for art performances, but as an important showcase of the cultural and artistic style of a country, a nation and a region. It has a symbolic function in the construction of China's social public cultural service system. To boost the art popularization is the cultural function that the National Theater for the Performing Arts must perform, as well as an inevitable choice as state-owned cultural assets to serve the people and social and cultural construction. In addition, the National Theater for the Performing Arts, as a public cultural institution, also shoulders the social responsibility of popularizing culture and art to the public and guiding and improving the national cultural quality. Therefore, it is an inevitable choice for the National Theater for the Performing Arts to carry out art popularization education to make art serve the public. Only by carrying out art popularization education and providing high-quality and low-cost cultural and artistic products and activities for the masses, can the National Theater for the Performing Arts bring more people the chances to enjoy first-class works of arts and to be educated about arts. Is is the duty of the National Theater for the Performing Arts to promote and prosper the development of China's culture and art market, and enhance China's image concerning culture and arts.[6]

The department for art education, established by the National Theater for the Performing Arts in July 2007, is responsible for the planning and implementation of events for public art education. Through the careful planning and organization of the department, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has launched many events with educational significance for public arts, forming its unique model for the popularization of the public art education. The National Theater for the Performing Arts has become the most powerful and top public service organization for performing arts popularization and education with the greatest influence in China, and is deeply favored by the

audience. With its resource advantages and platform effects, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has realized the joint development of art education, art production and industry exchanges, serving as a model for the development of public art education in China's state-owned theaters. The National Theater for the Performing Arts, backed by a huge group of artists and the art education resources of major art colleges across the country, has built a national public art education exchange platform upon the advantages of resources and its brand appeal.

With reference to the practical investigation and research, the National Theater for the Performing Arts carries out different forms of art popularization activities for different groups and audiences, among which the "Weekend Concert" is a popular event carefully planned by the National Theater for the Performing Arts for the audience. Generally, the artists with certain influence and reputation in China will be invited to participate in the concert through the form of performance and explanation. [7] It is universally welcomed by the public. From 2012 to 2021, an average of 50 performances were staged annually, but in 2020 and 2021, due to the impact of the pandemic, the performances were done mainly online for fewer times.

Primary and secondary school students are the future of the nation, and also the key targets for the training of arts by the National Theater for the Performing Arts. In addition to the events like "Youth Art Week" and "Popular Concert for Teenagers" to bring children closer to arts, the National Theater for the Performing Arts, through the in-depth cooperation with governmental institutions as well as with primary and secondary schools, provides a practical platform for art education for art troupes in Beijing and even in all troupes from primary and secondary schools and colleges and universities across the country to inspire the interest of young people in arts, enhance their participation in arts, broaden their vision, and improve their knowledge about arts. The National Theater for the Performing Arts incorporated its own art popularization education into the social class of primary and secondary schools in Beijing. The number of performances of Popular Youth Concerts gradually decreased from 2016 among 2012 to 2021. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the performances were basically suspended in 2020 and 2021. [8]

Upon its platform advantages, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has explored a unique education model for art popularization through its all-round and multi-level art popularization education pattern for different groups. For example, joint efforts were made between the National Theater for the Performing Arts and famous music academies in China to launch the events for art popularization. Many colleges and universities cannot provide a stage for students to show their art achievements due to the limitations of venues and social influence. The National Theater for the Performing Arts, together with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance, has jointly carried out the event themed "Elegant Arts on Campus". In addition, joining hands with social forces to obtain corporate sponsorship,

it has taken the initiative to provide a stage for college teachers to show their teaching achievements, opportunities for students to practice art, and also wonderful opportunities for the general public to appreciate arts.

From 2012 to 2021, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has been actively engaging in art popularization and education activities upon adequate funding for the development of art popularization. Adhering to its brand strategy, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has become a brand for universal education of characteristics through the activities of art education. At the same time, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has established a platform for the interactivities for arts through the cooperation with professional academies and colleges to jointly further popularize arts upon the gathering effect of performances and art festivals. In the era of information, taking the momentum of the times and upon the utilization of the emerging media, the National Theater for the Performing Arts, has strengthened the popularization and publicity of elegant arts, enhanced its social popularity, and appealed to more people for the participation in the artistic activities. [9] Upon the full play of its own advantages, the National Theater for the Performing Arts has realized a virtuous circle of art production and public art education popularization and promotion through platform resource integration. It calls on the vast number of artists and well-known Chinese art troupes to actively participate in art popularization and education activities, so as to jointly shoulder the social responsibility of popularization and education of arts.

4. Comparative study

Compared with the measures taken by National Theater of Korea and the National Theater for the Performing Arts in the field of art education, major differences in content settings can be found.

First, in terms of the types of education projects, the National Theater of Korea is clearly positioned with the focus on the project of art education academy to carry the art education through the development of education activities of varied contents. The National Theater for the Performing Arts centers on public performance and art education academies in the art education, among which include the performances like weekend concerts, youth concerts, themed art performances, and welfare performances, without clear boundary between these events and the performances inside the theater for the preference to popular science and flash mobs. For example, the themed art performance of the National Theater for the Performing Arts will be conducted in the public space of the theater every week, mostly in the form of small chamber music, about 45 minutes for each time. The public welfare performances are held randomly for schools, communities, enterprises, hospitals, and the military forces.

Second, in terms of the social groups faced by the education projects, the National Theater of Korea targets a wider range of groups. The corresponding education

projects designed towards different ages will help promote the more specific and targeted implementation of art education. The National Theater for the Performing Arts mainly targets young people and students, with no accurate distinction between people of different ages and no art education program for foreigners.

Third, in terms of the content of education projects, the National Theater of Korea pays attention to the depth of experience and the effects of education, with its art education projects following a curriculum designed for a certain period. In a relatively fixed period of time, through the combination of theoretical guidance and performance practice, and upon the platform advantages of the National Theater of Korea, well-known artists will be invited to give precise artistic guidance to students, in addition to the graduation performances held for most courses to enhance the trainees' experience. While the art education projects by the National Theater for the Performing Arts mainly focus on art lectures, exhibitions and performances, mostly lasting for a short time, when students are mainly learning passively during process, without active participation and profound experience, and additionally, most of the contents are more likely to be the universal art appreciation for the general public.[10]

5. Conclusion

As showcases of culture, the theaters bridge the stage and the social development. All aspects of a city's cultural development can be felt through A glimpse of the theaters. Public education activities by the theaters outside the stages are actually effective ways and means to cultivate and tap the target audience for the theaters. To achieve the unity of economic and social benefits at the same time, virtuous circles need to be formed within the theaters with well-organized performances in the theaters and carefully planned programs for public art education to achieve the harmony between publicity and artistry. At present, the public education activities carried out by the theaters in China are mainly trainings, while in the context of preference for the immersion experience, people prefer to the experience and participation in cultural activities. Therefore, the theaters should design and organize corresponding art events through a positive response to the artistic needs of different audiences with the contents classified "by group, by contents and by forms" accordingly, so as to create more fashionable, friendly and diversified content appealing to more people.

REFERENCES

1. Jin Dal Yong. Transnational Proximity and Universality in Korean Culture: An alysis of Squid Game and BTS[J]. Seoul Journal of Korean Studies, 2022, 35(1) : 5-28.
2. Shepherd S. Review of Bae Sam-sik's Changgeuk Lear (Directed by Jung Young-doo for the National Changgeuk Company of Korea) National Theater of Korea, Seoul, 13 and 30 March 2022[J]. Shakespeare, 2022, 18(4): 456-460.

3. Hwang J H. Transcolonial nationhood: Global interplay in Irish and Korean national theatre[D]. , 2022.
4. Kvon D. The Main Peculiarities and Problems of the Theatre Education in Korea[J]. Culture and Art, 2016 (3): 373-378.
5. Lee J. Munhwa yesul punya ch'aegim unyong kigwane kwanhan sironjok yon'gu: kungnip chung'ang kukchanggwa kungnip kugagwonui saryerul chungsimuro [A Preliminary Study on the Korean Executive Agencies in the Culture and Arts Sector: Focused on the Cases of the National Theater of Korea and the National Gugak Center][J]. Han'guk chongch'aekhakhoe tonggye haksul palp'yo nonmunjip, 2015: 351-71.
6. Xue C Q, Wang Z, Mitchener B. In search of identity: the development process of the National Grand Theatre in Beijing, China[J]. The Journal of Architecture, 2010, 15(4): 517-535.
7. Schmich I, Chervin P, Xiangdong Z, et al. The acoustics of the Beijing National Grand Theatre of China[J]. Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 2008, 123(5): 3097.
8. Xiao Y, Ni M. The Shanxi Grand Theater: The "Renaissance" of Chinese Drama Land[M]//Grand Theater Urbanism. Springer, Singapore, 2019: 149-178.
9. Nogueira M P. Theatre for Development: an overview[J]. Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 2002, 7(1): 103-108.
10. Killick A. In Search of Korean Traditional Opera: Discourses of Changguk[M]. University of Hawaii Press, 2010.