

Unit 7  
Reading C

In with Old and in with New 《辞旧迎新》

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While a recent documentary on Peking opera has come under fire from critics and purists, it could be a step toward bringing a new audience to the ancient art form.

虽然一部最近的关于京剧的纪录片遭到了批评家和纯粹主义者的抨击，但它可能是朝着为这一古老艺术形式带来新观众迈出的一步。

1 An eight-episode documentary about the best-known of Chinese performing arts recently completed its premiere run on TV. Peking opera is lavish and the narration brimming with purple prose. As soon as it went on air, it received plenty of attention and perhaps an equal amount of scrutiny.

一部关于中国最著名表演艺术的八集纪录片最近在电视上完成了首播。京剧是华丽的，解说词充满了华丽的辞藻。它一播出就受到了大量关注，或许也受到了同等程度的审视。

2 A few minor factual errors were discovered, which the producers humbly acknowledged and said they would correct for repeat broadcasts. It was obvious that the writer was not an insider of the profession, but used the curiosity of the first-timer to approach an art form as storied and as delicate as Peking opera. A couple of slips in the voice-over text could be a small price to pay for attracting a potential audience whose knowledge of the art form remains limited to the television highlights of the old chestnuts, so to speak, such as Farewell My Concubine and The Intoxicated Lady.

发现了一些小的事实错误，制片人谦虚地承认了这些错误，并表示他们会在重播时进行修正。很明显，作者不是这个行业的内部人士，而是以新手的好奇心来接近像京剧这样有着悠久历史且精致的艺术形式。可以说，画外音文本中的一些小失误可能是为了吸引潜在观众而付出的小小代价，这些观众对这种艺术形式的了解仍然仅限于像《霸王别姬》和《贵妃醉酒》等经典剧目的电视精彩片段。

3 Ditto for the profusion of re-enactment, which was also criticized by documentary purists, they accused the producers of making essentially a non-documentary where valuable interviews are condensed to snippets and sound bites, while demonstrations of performances are so elaborately staged as to qualify as scripted entertainment.

同样，对于大量的重演也遭到了纪录片纯粹主义者的批评。他们指责制片人制作的基本上不是一部纪录片，在其中有价值的访谈被压缩成片段和简短引语，而表演的展示则经过精心编排，以至于可以被视为有剧本的娱乐节目。

4 This kind of treatment, in my opinion, is designed for the non-converted rather than those already immersed in the history of Peking opera. Just like other traditional forms of Chinese opera, Peking opera is in dire need of cultivating a young audience. Widely considered the “national opera” of the country — not just because it was born in Anhui Province and later flourished in the ancient city it's now named after — Peking opera has a rapidly aging demographic among its most

loyal supporters and it needs to change that.

在我看来，这种处理方式是为那些还未了解京剧的人而非已经沉浸于京剧历史中的人设计的。就像其他中国传统戏曲形式一样，京剧迫切需要培养年轻观众。京剧被广泛认为是中国的“国剧”——不仅仅是因为它诞生于安徽省，后来在如今以其命名的这座古城繁荣起来——在其最忠实的支持者中，京剧观众群体正迅速老龄化，这种情况需要改变。

5 There are several theaters playing Peking opera in the capital city, and many of these cater to the tourist crowd. No, it's not like Broadway. It's exclusively foreign tourists, whose curiosity must be satisfied after they have climbed the Great Wall and trekked through the Forbidden City. The programs invariably comprise visually stimulating shows like the Monkey King tales, which are more acrobatic than vocal. The compilation of highlights is tantamount to a tray of appetizers that tantalize more than fill you up. There is little need to graduate to the main entree, which runs the risk of gluttony for someone who has just tasted it for the first time.

首都都有几家剧院上演京剧，其中很多是为旅游人群服务的。不，这不像百老汇。这里只有外国游客，他们在爬完长城、游览完故宫后，好奇心必须得到满足。节目总是包括像美猴王故事这样视觉上有刺激效果的表演，这些表演杂技成分多于演唱。这些精彩片段的汇编就相当于一盘开胃菜，让人更觉诱惑而非吃饱。对于第一次品尝的人来说，几乎没有必要去欣赏主菜，因为那可能会有贪多嚼不烂的风险。

6 You cannot blame the presenters or the audience. Peking opera is an acquired taste. It takes years to decipher the secret codes of appreciation. For one, the lyrics and dialogue tend to be impenetrable without title projection—that is for us native Chinese. And the emotions and motivations of the characters do not speak to modern audiences as much as, say, highly accessible pop music.

你不能责怪表演者或观众。京剧是一种需要培养的品味。要花数年时间才能破译欣赏京剧的密码。一方面，对于我们中国本地人来说，如果没有字幕投影，京剧的唱词和对白往往难以理解。而且，京剧角色的情感和动机不像非常容易理解的流行音乐那样能引起现代观众的共鸣。

7 Even if the tunes from the model operas are endlessly hummable, at least to one whole generation, I don't consider it a good precedent in reviving the glory of Peking opera. If I have to choose between the hoary repertory of palace drama and the vitality of revolutionary operas, I would rather stick with the former. The latter is an anomaly of the times.

即使样板戏的曲调对整整一代人来说都可以无穷无尽地哼唱，但我并不认为这是恢复京剧辉煌的好先例。如果要我在古老的宫廷戏剧曲目和革命样板戏的活力之间做出选择，我宁愿坚持前者。后者是时代的一个反常现象。

8 Traditional operas are stagnant partly because they are cut off from modern necessities and sensibilities. In the old days, people tended to rely on them for a regular diet of history lessons; nowadays that mantle is picked up by television serial dramas. Another shift in taste is, people used to prefer drama sung than spoken, and now the young generation may like plays and music, but often squirm when seeing the two forms fused. That may explain the lack of popularity in China of the musical genre. Para.

传统戏曲之所以停滞不前，部分原因是它们与现代的需求和情感脱节。在过去，人们往往依

靠传统戏曲来定期获取历史知识；如今，这个任务由电视连续剧承担了。另一个品味上的转变是，过去人们喜欢唱出来的戏剧而非说出来的戏剧，而现在年轻一代可能喜欢戏剧和音乐，但当看到这两种形式融合在一起时，他们常常感到不自在。这也许可以解释音乐剧在中国为何缺乏人气。

9 Good-intentioned but misguided efforts to popularize Peking opera include the initiative to make a dozen arias suggested listening material for high-school students. That may serve to break down the mystique enshrouding the art form, but it is unlikely to convert many of them into true lovers. Exposure is certainly not the biggest hurdle. There are special television channels devoted to traditional opera that anyone who cares can tune into to get their fix.

推广京剧的善意但错误的努力包括将十几首京剧唱段作为高中生的推荐听力材料。这可能有助于打破笼罩在这种艺术形式上的神秘面纱，但不太可能将他们中的许多人转变为真正的爱好者。接触机会肯定不是最大的障碍。有专门的传统戏曲电视频道，任何感兴趣的人都可以收看以满足他们的需求。

10 It is the “easing into it” that will help youngsters with the learning and appreciation process. And that's where the documentary may be an effective aid. It demystifies the art form while at the same time placing it under a thick halo. Para.

正是这种“逐渐进入”的方式将有助于年轻人进行学习和欣赏的过程。而在这方面，这部纪录片可能是一种有效的辅助。它在揭开这种艺术形式神秘面纱的同时，又将其置于浓厚的光环之下。

11 To a certain extent, western classical music, including opera, is in a similar dilemma. But it has its share of stars who can help sell out shows and entice new audiences. Peking opera needs its equivalent of Leonard Bernstein, whose televised lectures and demonstrations spawned a whole generation of classical music aficionados. As it stands, Peking opera does not have a star big enough to cross over to the general public. All we have is a few pop singers who occasionally foray into the Peking opera realm and snatch a few elements, such as melodies and makeup, to spruce up their tradition-embracing credentials, which is better than nothing. It hints to young people that Peking opera can be chic and that it's not just for their parents and grandparents. But sometimes this kind of practice is carried too far, for example, when a group of scantily clad girls don Peking opera headgear in a set of photos for a modeling contest.

在一定程度上，西方古典音乐，包括歌剧，也处于类似的困境。但它有自己的明星，这些明星能够帮助演出门票售罄并吸引新的观众。京剧需要自己的伦纳德·伯恩斯坦（Leonard Bernstein），他的电视讲座和示范培养了整整一代古典音乐爱好者。就目前而言，京剧没有一个足够大牌的明星能够跨越到普通大众中。我们所拥有的只是一些流行歌手偶尔涉足京剧领域，抓取一些元素，如旋律和妆容，来提升他们拥护传统的形象，这总比没有好。这向年轻人暗示京剧可以很时尚，它不仅仅是为他们的父母和祖父母准备的。但有时这种做法做得太过了，例如，在一次模特大赛中，一群衣着暴露的女孩戴着京剧头饰出现在一组照片中。

12 To find a true audience of the younger demographic, Peking opera has got to innovate in both form and content. Given Chinese loathing for tinkering with tradition, it would be unwise to “update” the old repertory to new versions. Keep them as they have always been. Sing and dance exactly as Mei Lanfang, the great master, did onstage. But create new shows that expand its

musical idiom and narrative scope.

为了找到真正的年轻观众群体，京剧必须在形式和内容上进行创新。鉴于中国人对篡改传统的厌恶，将旧曲目“更新”为新版本是不明智的。让它们保持一直以来的样子。像大师梅兰芳在舞台上那样唱歌和跳舞。但是要创作新的剧目，以扩展其音乐风格和叙事范围。

13 A few years ago, Chinese-American director Chen Shizheng staged a new version of Farewell My Concubine in Beijing, incorporating a multimedia backdrop and modern dance, among other new elements. The production was lambasted in the press. But Red Cliff, and the Three Kingdom Legend produced by the National Center for the Performing Arts, were met with universal acclaim. It's both old and new. The story, the tunes and the costumes follow the old conventions, but the presentation and even some of the messages are new. There is an anti-war theme in the grand finale. Now, that is something the modern audience can resonate with.

几年前，美籍华裔导演陈士争在北京上演了新版《霸王别姬》，融入了多媒体背景和现代舞等新元素。这部作品遭到了媒体的猛烈抨击。但是国家大剧院制作的《赤壁》和《三国传奇》却受到了普遍赞誉。它们既古老又新颖。故事、曲调以及服装遵循旧的传统，但表现形式甚至一些传达的信息是新的。宏大的结尾中有一个反战主题。现在，这是现代观众能够产生共鸣的东西。