

# The Impact of Internet Media on the Dissemination of Opera Art

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**Keywords:** Internet media, Opera, Dissemination

**Abstract:** In today's rapidly evolving Internet landscape, traditional methods for promoting opera are no longer suitable for adapting to information dissemination's new characteristics and situations. However, the development of Internet media has opened up new opportunities for disseminating opera art, fueling innovation in production methods and performance styles. This article delves into how Internet media has established a multi-dimensional perspective for appreciating opera and consequently has facilitated the dissemination and promotion of opera art.

## 1. Introduction

Opera is a captivating stage art that combines music, drama, scenery, lighting, singing, and performance. Its roots can be traced back to Europe at the end of the 16th century<sup>[1]</sup>. It is a unique art form that uses an independent musical structure as the foundation for its dramatic storytelling. It features different character settings, with the singing being the central focus, and employs specific dramatic and musical structures to drive the plot forward. Music and drama are the two fundamental elements of opera. The musical component includes vocal singing and orchestral performance. While vocals dominate in opera, symphonic music has increasingly become an equally important element as opera has evolved. As for drama, opera includes elements such as character and scene settings. Outstanding opera works typically feature rich character images, well-matched roles, and a well-crafted, complete dramatic structure. In Western music, opera is regarded as a pillar of the industry and has an extensive social base. Looking at the history of music, opera has played a very significant role in driving the development of music. It is often the breeding ground and testing ground for new melodies, harmonic languages, and orchestral effects. Many new musical concepts that have had a significant historical impact are often related to opera.

## 2. The Spreading and Promotion of Traditional Stage Arts

Whether in its early stage or the current stage of development into various types, styles, and languages, opera always maintains the characteristics of stage performance art. It requires the use of a theater environment, three-dimensional stage space, and the creation of a performance atmosphere. The existence of the stage not only helps to set up the scenery, allowing actors to perform better in the prescribed context but also facilitates the audience to appreciate the drama from multiple perspectives. Based on the stage attributes of opera art, the theater becomes an essential carrier for opera appreciation. Whether ordinary viewers or professionals, people must enter the theater to watch opera regardless of their identity. Therefore, the theater was a crucial social place in various European countries. In addition to relying on word-of-mouth, the dissemination of opera also has an important way of communication, such as in newspapers, magazines, and other media. In addition to the opera performance itself, which needs to be conveyed to the audience through theater performances, other opera information, such as performance announcements, reviews, and publicity, can be transmitted to the public through text through traditional media such as newspapers and magazines.

The development of information technology has led people into the era of information explosion,

where massive amounts of information are rapidly spreading through the Internet. The way modern people receive information has shifted from traditional media to emerging media, represented by internet platforms. Emerging media carries much more information than traditional media, and the impact of its communication reactions and social influence is also revolutionary. In China, mobile Internet users have reached 1,047 million <sup>[2]</sup>. Internet or social media provide a huge market for any information. In the digital age, people no longer need to leave their homes to receive new things and information. The number of people subscribing to newspapers and magazines is also decreasing. This social change has impacted disseminating of traditional stage arts, and opera is no exception. The traditional way of spreading opera, which mainly relies on theaters and print media for promotion, is gradually moving away from the dominant new media trend on the Internet. It has resulted in the loss of opera audiences, especially among young audiences.

### **3. The Assistance of Internet Media on the Dissemination of Opera Art**

The fundamental problem with the established method of disseminating opera art lies in the low efficiency and slow speed of information transmission. New media can help opera break through this limitation and make its dissemination more convenient and efficient.

#### **3.1 The Internet Promotes the Spreading of Opera News**

The internet has provided convenience for the dissemination of opera art from a news perspective, making the promotion and publicity of opera more diverse. Currently, the main force of opera news dissemination has shifted from traditional print media to online platforms. Information on new opera premieres, new performances of classic operas, and opera performances featuring famous musicians can be more widely and timely disseminated through Internet platforms. Audiences can directly obtain opera information through online platforms. In addition, opera reviews and critiques published and disseminated through the internet can also attract new audiences to enter the theatre. From a news perspective, compared to the past when information was published on traditional print media, the timely update of performance information, reports, and other content through internet media platforms such as theatre websites, news apps, and social media eliminates the tedious process of traditional print media layout, printing, distribution, and sales. Opera news is edited on electronic devices, and information can be spread and shared with just a few clicks. People can obtain the latest opera performance information without waiting for the publication date of newspapers and magazines, which undoubtedly accelerates the promotion of opera. In addition, internet technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and intelligent algorithm recommendation can help people quickly retrieve and collect opera performance information, and this electronic information has a storage capacity, which can be referenced at any time. With the advancement of data processing technology, people have more opportunities to receive Opera related information <sup>[3]</sup>.

With the emergence and development of digital media, opera art has entered a new realm of dissemination. New media has impacted the presentation and dissemination of traditional stage art, but more importantly, it has brought new vitality. Under the influence of new media carried by the internet, the dissemination of stage art presents characteristics such as sharing, interaction, speed, and openness. The uniqueness of opera, which is disseminated through the theater as a carrier and stage performances as content, needs to be fixed.

#### **3.2 Digital Media Changes the Perspective of Opera**

The most significant help that the internet has brought to the dissemination of opera is the change in how it is viewed. In recent years, influenced by the innovation of multimedia technology, major opera houses worldwide have launched high-definition opera video production projects, bringing live opera performances to the big screen. “Web-based technology has now reached the point at which high-quality live and delayed video of productions can be offered, whether free.” <sup>[4]</sup> In 2006, the Metropolitan Opera in New York launched the “Live in HD” project, which uses state-of-the-art film production technology to produce real-time high-definition movies of live

opera performances at the Metropolitan Opera House and broadcast synchronously in selected theatres in the United States and other countries <sup>[5]</sup>. Audiences can enjoy excellent performances without necessarily going to the Metropolitan Opera House, providing more people with the opportunity to enjoy high-quality performances. Traditional Opera audiences may be concerned about this broadcasting style, but most accept live Opera <sup>[6]</sup>. Currently, the productions recorded by this project have been shown in more than 2,000 movie theaters in over 70 countries worldwide. Movie theaters have become another venue for audiences to watch live opera performances besides theaters.

Opera film is an important practical project that leverages technological development to promote artistic dissemination: Firstly, It breaks the venue restrictions and time for the audience to watch the opera. Secondly, Compared with traditional opera's appreciation perspective, opera film's appreciation perspective is more innovative. The audience's perspective changes from the overall view of the theatre mode to the concrete outlook of digital flatness. Although people are watching from a closer angle, the distance between the audience and the opera singers has also been reduced. Additionally, Opera film overcomes the constraints of expensive theatre ticket prices and poor seating viewing angles for opera appreciation, which invisibly accelerates the speed of opera art dissemination and promotes the popularity and promotion of opera art.

The influence of live streaming on the Internet has far exceeded that of traditional media and surpassed the standard methods of communication. With the digital platform, Live streaming can use the Internet and social media to spread <sup>[7]</sup>. It has established an interactive internet media information integration platform and even spawned new professional categories based on its dissemination characteristics. Live streaming has the characteristics of fast transmission speed, timely communication, and convenient dissemination channels. For opera art, in the era of information explosion, live streaming platforms are also a fast, effective, and intuitive medium for opera dissemination.

The digitization of opera allows for the preservation of rich audiovisual materials, enabling audiences to collect different interpretations of the same opera, such as versions by different singers, conductors, orchestras, and stage productions, thus achieving multidimensional appreciation of the same opera work <sup>[8]</sup>. At the same time, online resources provide a way for beginners to preview and understand the music and plot of operas and for opera enthusiasts to compare and appreciate different production versions of different opera works. Digitization can also convert live opera performances into recorded content, allowing people to enjoy opera anytime. The preservation of digital audiovisual materials not only breaks the constraints of time and environment for opera appreciation, making it more convenient, but also realizes the online sharing of opera resources, facilitating the broader dissemination of opera art.

New media can also guide opera appreciation, breaking the limitations of opera on stage. The traditional way for audiences to appreciate opera is to enter the theater and watch a complete opera work for about three hours. Most of the audience's understanding of the opera work remains in the performance process. The program information accompanying the performance is often relatively simple, only including a brief introduction of the plot and the cast. After the live opera performance is digitized and placed on the Internet, tracking reports and interviews of the singers can be added. Experts can be invited to comment and summarize the performance during the intermission and provide explanations and previews of subsequent plots and musical developments. Feedback from the audience after the performance can also be collected. These additional contents are an extension of the opera stage performance, which can make the audience feel more involved when watching the opera online. They can also allow the audience to feel and understand the work from more dimensions, enriching the viewing experience and making the viewing rhythm smoother. In addition to adding interviews and reports on specific performances, new media can add guidance content to the opera. Professional figures such as opera conductors, directors, singers, and music critics can act as narrators to introduce the opera's historical background, creative process, plot content, and production characteristics to the audience in simple and understandable language. They can also select classic singing segments in the opera for particular explanations, thus strengthening the

audience's perception of the opera's plot and music, promoting the popularization of opera art, and making opera art become a popular, understandable, beautiful, and beautiful, elegant art form.

Presenting the behind-the-scenes of opera production in the form of documentary films on Internet platforms is a new media technique that promotes transparency in the production process and attracts audiences to appreciate opera. Behind-the-scenes documentaries typically use “set visits” and interviews to take audiences behind the rehearsal hall and backstage scenes, providing a third perspective for appreciating opera. “Set visits” include live rehearsals with opera singers, conductors, and directors, as well as the authentic rehearsal states of the singers before they put on makeup. The interviews cover the perspectives of opera production personnel, including singers, conductors, directors, stage technology directors, and costume designers, presenting the source, production process, and version characteristics of opera production from the creative team's perspective. It also includes discussions of opera singers' collaboration experiences with conductors and directors. The opera production is presented on an internet media platform using a documentary format, leading audiences behind the scenes and enabling them to understand the production process from different perspectives. Behind-the-scenes documentaries can also showcase the various vital roles in opera production, such as opera singers, choir members, conductors, directors, choreographers, and stage producers, and how they communicate and collaborate during the production process, allowing audiences to appreciate the comprehensive artistic charm of opera further.

### **3.3 The Opera Production in the New Media Environment**

Opera directors are the overall commanders in opera performances. Said further criticized the destructive power of “restoration” that is not advanced in opera appreciation. “Directors and audiences (to say nothing of singers and dancers) retain a common realistic expectation of a piece's intactness. Otherwise, there would be no opera and no paying audience.”<sup>[9]</sup> In the current media environment undergoing significant changes, opera directors are also considering innovative approaches to opera production, trying to find more modern perspectives for opera performances.

In order to keep up with the development of new media, opera directors not only need to understand the historical background of specific operas and the composer's creative intent but also place the production of operas in the perspective of modern audiences. In the era of new media, people have access to more and fresher art forms and have higher demands for the visual impact of artistic presentation. It poses new demands on opera directors. Incorporating new media and digital technology into the classic plot and musical setting of traditional operas and generating the director's unique expression language is an innovative attempt by opera directors to modernize opera production. Nowadays, some opera directors boldly set the plot in a modern environment. For example, in 2005, the newly produced opera “La Traviata” at the Salzburg Music Festival used black, white, and red as the primary colour tones to create the tragedy of Violetta's love. In 2013, the Metropolitan Opera's production of “Rigoletto” set the scene in a Las Vegas casino in the 1960s, incorporating modern stage settings, lighting, and other elements. These stage innovations make opera works more visually appealing and bring them closer to the audience. The filming techniques of opera films make them more watchable, and the scene transitions more smoothly, which is more in line with the viewing preferences of modern audiences. However, because live performances are turned into films, the requirements for visual quality are brought into digital opera production. The audience's viewing perspective has changed, leading to a further increase in their aesthetic demands for details such as stage design, costumes, and props.

In recent years, innovative opera performances that follow the dissemination of short video platforms have emerged. New forms of opera, such as immersive opera and opera clips, have broken the constraints of traditional theaters. The concept of immersive theater originated in England and has become very popular internationally in recent years. It is represented by the immersive theater “Sleep No More” adapted from Shakespeare's play “Macbeth” and aims to create an immersive experience of the plot. Because of its complete dramatic structure, opera has derived immersive opera performances that conform to the Internet's quick and fast dissemination

characteristics. Immersive opera productions are more concise and can adapt to the dissemination mode of short video platforms on the Internet. Some simplified versions of small stage productions even break the “fourth wall” of the stage and interact with the audience during the performance, enhancing the audience's experience. With the help of fast and widespread dissemination on the Internet, immersive opera can contribute to popularising opera art, making it more convenient for the public to understand opera art.

From the perspective of stage design, whether it is modern opera productions, opera films, or immersive operas, they all shift opera from the three-dimensional theatre stage to flat media. Meanwhile, modern theaters or Opera stages are much more complicated than before <sup>[10]</sup>. The audience's perspective changes from whole to part, with a more focused view, and the distance between the opera performers and the audience is shortened. This change brings a more direct viewing experience for the audience and places new demands on the opera performers. The close-up of the picture amplifies the performance details, such as the actor's movements, expressions, and demeanour, which means that opera performers need professional singing abilities and excellent acting, character portrayal, and lyrics interpretation abilities. At the same time, when selecting actors, producers and directors of the production will also consider the actor's performance ability and fit with the character's image. Opera houses or projects tend to choose actors who match the physical characteristics of the role and consider this criterion as equally crucial as vocal technique.

#### **4. The Impact of the New Mode of Opera Art Dissemination on Aesthetic Education**

Fine arts education is the cultivation of aesthetic experience. Opera is one of the categories of vocal arts, and it is the product of the intuition and contemplation of composers and scriptwriters on “beauty”. We can start by examining the two main elements of opera, music and drama, to obtain aesthetic experience. Empathy is closely related to aesthetic experience. From a musical perspective, the melody, with its ups and downs and the rhythm, with its varying lengths and tempos, interact with the spontaneous rhythms in the listener's mind. The listener then projects their emotions onto the music, creating a resonance of different emotions such as joy, excitement, melancholy, and sadness, and this empathy produces an aesthetic experience. From a dramatic perspective, the scriptwriter's creation of the joys and sorrows of different characters enables the audience to have psychological activities such as emotion and will in the process of appreciation. Empathy with the characters in the opera forms an aesthetic experience. At the same time, the final stage presentation of the opera carries the secondary creation of artists such as conductors, singers, directors, and stage designers. Through their collective efforts, the aesthetic experience of opera art reaches its peak. Therefore, opera has become an excellent artistic medium for obtaining aesthetic experience.

Under the influence of new media, classical opera has incorporated more technological innovations in its production, finding breakthroughs in its stage presentation. For example, the opera “Tristan and Isolde” by Richard Wagner, jointly produced by the National Centre for the Performing Arts, the Metropolitan Opera, the National Opera of Warsaw, and the Baden-Baden Festival Theatre, has been innovated in its stage presentation. “Tristan and Isolde” premiered in 1865, and the opera's original setting was a kingdom. However, the new version sets a technologically advanced battleship on stage, where the story of Tristan and Isolde takes place. The new version also uses high-tech methods such as live filming and projection, combining modern stagecraft with music and drama to present this epic love story. With the help of new media technology, opera production displays exquisite stage performances, providing audiences with more visual impact and helping to stimulate their aesthetic experience of music and drama in opera art.

#### **5. Conclusions**

In the past, opera was considered a highbrow, niche art form with a limited audience. In recent years, opera has been increasingly inclined towards the direction of popularization, gradually blurring the boundary between popular culture and high culture. On the one hand, opera creators are

trying to remove the formulaic opera production model, allowing opera to enter into everyday life and achieve the transition of opera art from a niche culture to a mass culture. On the other hand, opera creators are committed to breaking through the information cocoon of fast food culture, using highbrow art to enhance general aesthetics and making opera art a vital means to construct a socialist spiritual civilization. The rapid development of Internet media undoubtedly helps to accelerate the spread of opera art. With its direct and fast transmission characteristics, the Internet can help opera art get closer to the public, especially to the lives of the new generation of young people, playing a positive role in popularising and penetrating opera art in aesthetics education.

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