

The Achievements and Prospects of Thematic Anhui Huangmei Opera Creation (2012-2023)

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Abstract

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, due to the demands of social background and political orientation, Anhui Huangmei Opera has emerged numerous thematic plays in line with ideological propaganda. The new plays focus on hot topics such as poverty alleviation and the centenary of the founding of the Party, aiming to praise the spirit of fighting poverty and the immortal achievements of the Party and the people. These created works highlight the Chinese national spirits and fine traditions. Such plays adhere to the people's creative orientation, demonstrating the regional culture represented by Anhui Huangmei Opera; and the innovative use of theatrical techniques, making it far from the norm. This study reviews the existing achievements of Anhui Huangmei Opera's thematic creation, summarizes the shortcomings and defects of the creation, and then puts forward suggestions in order to promote the further development of Huangmei Opera's thematic repertoire creation.

Keywords: thematic plays, Huangmei Opera, Opera modernization

1. Introduction

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has become the theme of the times, and the writing of the new epic and the depiction of the new era landscape, etc., have become vital features of artistic creation. Therefore, Anhui Huangmei Opera artists have responded actively to the needs of the times, creating many thematic works that review the cause of poverty alleviation, and praise the glorious history of the Communist Party of China in the past hundred years, and look forward to the road of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In recent years, Anhui Huangmei Opera's thematic repertoire creation has been optimized in such aspects of content and narrative mode and has won many awards. For instance, *Duck Sister-in-law* was selected for the national stage arts excellent production exhibition for poverty alleviation; *The Eternal Sunshine* was chosen for the "Centenary Hundred Works" stage art masterpiece creation project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China; *Deng Jiaxian* was selected as a candidate for the Wenhua Awards, and so on. The thematic repertoire creation of Huangmei Opera focuses on the typical events experienced by the people and conveys positive values to the society, to some extent, which achieves the prosperity of the repertoire.

Anhui Huangmei Opera's thematic repertoire is of great significance in carrying forward the theme of the times and leading the new social customs. Currently, the research on Huangmei Opera repertoire focuses on traditional repertoire, cross-cultural adaptation and single-play appreciation. However, systematic studies on the creation of thematic repertoire are not enough. Based on the existing practice of Anhui Huangmei Operas thematic repertoire, this study reflects on the works, summarizes the experience, and then puts forward suggestions to enhance the artistic level of the thematic repertoire and promote the sustainable development of Anhui Huangmei Opera repertoire creation.

2. The Creative Achievements of Anhui Huangmei Opera Thematic Repertoire

The appearance of major historical milestones, such as the decisive battle against poverty and the centenary of the founding of the party, has placed Anhui Huangmei Opera in a new developmental context, presenting thematic creative features. Such dramas adhere to the people-oriented approach and highlight regional culture. The clever use of theatrical techniques keeps them away from being stereotyped. The new plays bring the audience closer and demonstrate fresh creative vitality.

2.1 Adhering to the People-Oriented Approach and Highlighting Regional Cultural Heritage

The creation of thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera adheres to realism, promoting the spirit of the times, addressing contemporary concerns, and showcasing the people's value positions. While embodying the theme of the era and demonstrating the people-oriented approach, it has distinct creative characteristics.

Firstly, drawing inspiration from people's lives and reflecting on their essence is essential. General Secretary Xi Jinping once pointed out during a discussion on literary and artistic work that "placing the people at the centre means taking meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the people as the starting point and foothold of literary and artistic work". The creation of thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera is rooted in the people's lives, serving their spiritual needs. The dramas draw from typical events experienced by the people for artistic creation, conveying positive and uplifting values to society. For example, *Duck Sister-in-law* tells the story of Zhang Manxiu, who has achieved poverty alleviation and prosperity by raising ducks. She actively helps others overcome poverty in mindset and life, leading the people of Duck Village towards a new life. The play is centred around "integrity" and "hard work for prosperity," exploring the meaning of life in the process of poverty alleviation, and portraying warmth and kindness in human nature. Similarly, in *Blossoming Rice Straw Stacks*, set against the historical backdrop of the Crossing of the Yangtze River during the Chinese Civil War, the play emphasizes depicting the conflicts and misunderstandings between Liu Sijie, an underground Communist Party member in Tongling, and her husband while safeguarding revolutionary intelligence. It showcases the beautiful and kind-hearted emotions of southern Chinese women from a perspective of human nature and relationships, shaping the heroic image of the protagonist with a "dedicated heart." Additionally, works like *Crackdown and Promotion of Goodness* depict the typical struggle against organized crime; *My Village, My Loved Ones* portrays the dedication of healthcare workers during the fight against the pandemic; and *My Heart Shines Bright* pays tribute to the remarkable deeds of a retired county teacher. These dramas, with their delicate strokes, compose an anthem of heroism for ordinary people.

Secondly, emphasizing the regional cultural heritage is another important aspect of creating thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera. These dramas draw from the people and are deeply rooted in the land of the Yangtze River in Anhui, showcasing regional culture within the framework of real-life story prototypes. For instance, *The Mother of the Eighth Route Army* is based on the revolutionary martyr Chen Guizhen from Houchong Township, Guanzhuang Town, in Qianshan City. It narrates her touching story of receiving and adopting wounded soldiers from the Eighth Route Army and the People's Liberation Army from 1941 to 1949. Similarly, *Snowstorm at Baicao Cave* takes a Japanese invading aircraft crash at Baicaodang in Taihu Lake, Anhui, as the background. The play revolves around the search for "Operation Plan No. 5" by both the Japanese and the Communist Party. Characters like Pan Yinfeng and Pan Jinsong actively assist the guerrillas in finding the battle plans, engaging in a life-and-death struggle against the Japanese invaders and ultimately foiling their conspiracy. This drama portrays the image of the courageous and determined women of the Dabie Mountains, facing demons with valour and embracing death fearlessly. The character portrayal and event presentation in revolutionary-themed works are central to creating thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera. While depicting the fearless dedication of revolutionary martyrs, they also highlight the essence of traditional culture along the Yangtze River, characterized by the spirit of unity, inclusiveness and perseverance, possessing both contemporary significance and regional cultural characteristics.

2.2 Breaking Shackles and Innovating Creation Techniques

In the context of the new era, artists in Anhui Huangmei Opera have strengthened their efforts in creating thematic works that lead to mainstream social values. Traditionally, when it comes to art that follows the main melody or serves a celebratory purpose, creators tend to choose significant historical events or famous figures, which can influence the audiences' senses strongly. However, the widespread familiarity with the story content might reduce the element of surprise for the audiences. Thematic drama creation in Anhui Huangmei Opera departs from this model. It starts from the small, using theatrical techniques of "seeing the big in the small," continuously shifting the focus downward. It reflects the spirit of dedication of ordinary individuals and portrays the ideals and perseverance of revolutionaries, constantly exploring the diverse expressive potential of Huangmei Opera art.

Firstly, selecting central events emphasizes "seeing the big in the small." The anti-poverty campaign and the

revolutionary struggles led by the Communist Party of China are typical events that occurred among ordinary people. During these periods, numerous exemplary individuals emerged, including renowned figures and countless ordinary people who made relentless efforts. Thematic dramas in Huangmei Opera revolve around such themes, drawing inspiration from typical events happening in the lives of ordinary people. By meticulously portraying these small events within the ebbs and flows of dramatic plots, it brings about a stirring of the soul. For example, in the 8th China (Anqing) Huangmei Opera Arts Festival, which primarily focused on performances related to poverty alleviation, *The Elderly Village Chief* follows the story of Lao Gen, a village chief nearing retirement who hopes to do more for the villagers before stepping down. The play realistically depicts a rural cadre who understands and addresses the urgent needs of the people, such as helping Niuniu with her school registration and assisting Lanhuadie with medical treatment. Similarly, *The Jade of the Green Hills* narrates the story from the perspective of a graduate, showcasing the spirit of striving in the new era through the protagonist's efforts to return to his hometown for entrepreneurship and reforesting barren hills. Another play, *When the Swallows Return*, focuses on university graduate Liu Yan's return to her hometown for entrepreneurship in the new era, highlighting the conflicts and complexities between Liu Feng and Liu Yan, sisters with differing perspectives on life and values, and emphasizing the positive significance of building a beautiful countryside.

Furthermore, the portrayal of characters highlights "seeing the big in the small." Thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera demonstrate not only revolutionary leaders and exemplary heroes but also tend to focus on portraying ordinary individuals such as college students, rural village officials, frontline police officers, and more. These dramas present the exceptional character and patriotic sentiments of ordinary people from the perspective of the common folk. In the 9th China (Anqing) Huangmei Opera Arts Festival, focusing on showcasing revolutionary historical themes, *On the Sunlit Mountain* authentically portrays the transformative journey of an ordinary individual, Li An. It traces his evolution from understanding the revolution to assisting it, identifying with its ideals, and ultimately dedicating himself to the cause. This portrayal vividly brings to life a period of unforgettable and intense revolutionary years, passionately celebrating a resolute and heroic revolutionary anthem. Similarly, *Cottonwood Fluff in the City* narrates a middle school female teacher during the Revolutionary War, highlighting the revolutionary spirit of courage in dedication and fearlessness in sacrifice. Additionally, *The Huaihua Flower Ballad*, based on a revolutionary legendary story from Ma Cheng in eastern Hubei, revolves around the life and death love story of the Red Army soldier Chunniu and his lover Huaihua. The play portrays the joys and sorrows of ordinary people during the revolutionary period, using elements such as the large locust tree and Chunniu's red bellyband as threads in the narrative.

In Anhui Huangmei's opera, thematic dramas account for a significant proportion. These dramas often depict the perseverance of ordinary individuals in their work, the patriotic sentiments of the common people, and the portrayal of simple, wholesome family values. These narratives use the theatrical technique of "seeing the big in the small," employing delicate strokes to shape the patriotism of ordinary individuals. Through portraying small events, they illustrate the great images of poverty alleviation models and revolutionary martyrs, painting an immortal picture of the Chinese nation in its historical journey.

3. The Shortcomings in the Creation of the Thematic Repertoire of Anhui Huangmei Opera

Thematic plays in Huangmei Opera revolve around two significant historical opportunities: poverty alleviation efforts and the centenary of the Communist Party of China. They emphasize the contemporary theme through the genre of realistic plays. These plays are often collectively showcased during various art festivals and are relatively likely to receive policy support. Consequently, Huangmei Opera troupes in Anhui have been "trying their hand" at these themes, resulting in a growing number of productions. However, due to a tendency to hastily create works to coincide with events or festivals, there is a risk of overlooking the pursuit of artistic quality in the productions, leading to noticeable shortcomings.

3.1 Impatience for Achievements, Lack of Realism

The writing of modern epic narratives and the description of the contemporary landscape have become essential features in creating thematic dramas in Anhui Huangmei Opera. These dramas often emphasize real-life themes and are prominently showcased during the Huangmei Opera Arts Festival. For example, during the 8th and 9th China (Anqing) Huangmei Opera Arts Festival, a total of 55 Huangmei Opera works were performed. Among these, 12 focused on poverty alleviation themes and 16 on revolutionary historical themes, constituting a significant proportion. However, when looking at the overall repertoire, there are evident flaws in terms of instrumentalization and conceptualization, leading to a lack of realism in the dramas.

Firstly, one aspect is instrumentalization. The term "instrumentalization" refers to treating creation as a tool and means to achieve a certain practical purpose rather than starting from a desire for truth based on real-life subject matter. For instance, in the 8th China (Anqing) Huangmei Opera Arts Festival, which heavily emphasized themes related to poverty alleviation, six works such as *Gentle Breeze in the Southern Mountains*, *Reflecting the*

Red Glow of Dawn, Phoenix Slope, etc., were created during that year's festival. In the 9th China (Anqing) Huangmei Opera Arts Festival, which was dominated by revolutionary historical themes, plays like Eight Battle Bays, Bathing in Blood at Luohan Peak, Snowstorm in Hundred Grass Cave, and others premiered. To create performances for the smooth running of the arts festival, lacking the necessary artistic foundation and order, character portrayals tend to stay on the surface. For example, in the revolutionary historical theme play Flying Cotton in the River City, the conflict structure is strong, and the plot is full of ups and downs with a "dual-track" approach. The main plotline follows a young female high school teacher's transformation from an intellectual to a Communist Party member, while the subplot follows the underground party member, Comrade Jiang Fei, in his secret work. In the plot, it's evident that the two characters have known each other and had feelings in the past. However, when the underground party member, Jiang Fei, has to sacrifice his life for the revolution, and Liu Qingqing (the teacher) discovers by the river that Jiang Fei was her contact person and that she cannot save his life, the complex emotions of joy, surprise, regret, and reluctance to part with the old friend are not portrayed, lacking a deep expression of characters' inner feelings and lacking in realism.

Secondly, the other aspect is conceptualization. In 2020, a critical year for the decisive battle against poverty, "General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that poverty alleviation efforts should not only be done well but also narrated well". In response to the concerns of the times, artists in Anhui Huangmei Opera actively created numerous opera works that praised the model figures of poverty alleviation in contemporary society. The characters and themes were drawn as much as possible from real life, vividly presenting the spirited national ethos of the struggle. However, in the specific presentation, the storyline does not truly reflect real life and lacks genuine life logic. For example, in the poverty-alleviation-themed play Gentle Breeze in the Southern Mountains, the male protagonist starts with the fortunate events of leasing an orchard and his son gaining university admission. When everything seems to be going well, the father in the play is involved in a car accident, and the son gets entangled in a "campus loan" crisis. The female protagonist takes on the heavy burden, simultaneously resolving family financial issues and leading the villagers towards prosperity, ultimately achieving the goal of promoting the theme. However, it is worth pondering whether the plot setting, where the father has a car accident due to buying a suitcase and the lack of a detailed explanation for the rebellious behaviour of the university student in a well-behaved family background, is somewhat forced and whether the characters align with the logic of real life. It is noteworthy that this conflict structure is a usual pattern in creating poverty alleviation-themed plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera. When the protagonist is preparing to embark on a significant endeavour, there is always an event like a family member falling ill or passing away. "The characters' actions are driven by external forces rather than the natural logic of their own behaviour, and the formation of dramatic actions represents the conflict between the will of the poverty alleviation cadre and the family upheaval". This is used to depict how poverty alleviation cadres sacrifice their personal lives for the greater good, portraying them as exemplary figures of poverty alleviation. For example, in Warm Mountain Township, the protagonist Sun Jiancheng, during various poverty alleviation efforts, remains indifferent to his mother's hospitalization due to high blood pressure, creating a sharp contrast with his determination to take an injured villager to the hospital, depicting the "noble" image of the character, and so on. Overall, these plays are often thematic works that can promote the spirit of the times and sing praises to the poverty alleviation role models. However, in terms of artistic merit, they shape the protagonists of poverty alleviation themes into a "neglectful of family" towering figure, forming a conceptualized creative pattern. There are shortcomings in contemplating humanity and focusing on the essence of individuals, highlighting the need to enhance realism.

3.2 Insufficient Innovation in Programming, and Non-Standard Work Performance

Since the beginning of the new century, modern drama has become an important category for the creative practices of various traditional Chinese operas. Anhui Huangmei Opera is no exception in terms of thematic play creation. However, in the development of modern drama, "spoken drama with singing" has always been a focal point of discussion in its creative practice. The performance technique of "spoken drama with singing" originated in the early 1950s during the "drama reform" period. It generally refers to a style in traditional opera performances where the spoken lines are delivered with a dramatic tone, lacking the traditional operatic flavour. In this style, operatic craftsmanship is often discarded or downplayed, presenting in a more naturalistic form, keeping only the vocal style of traditional opera. At the same time, many scholars believe that "spoken drama with singing" is a major flaw in modern drama creation, as it weakens the essential characteristics of traditional opera, such as its programmatic nature and virtuality. Although some scholars argue that the performance style of "spoken drama with singing" can effectively broaden the thematic scope and intellectual depth of modern drama, with the proposal that modern drama should strive for a more "operatic" development, and the verification through successful related plays, "spoken drama with singing" remains a derogatory term in the development of modern drama and is something that should be avoided in its creative practice.

At present, the main creative genre for thematic plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera is modern drama. However, creating modern drama with distinct themes is a relatively new area for Huangmei Opera, and it has not yet

accumulated ample successful experiences. The “eager for success” creative attitude has resulted in insufficient innovation in the programmatic performance of modern drama and shown deficiencies in non-standard work performance during the creation of thematic plays.

“The programmatic nature of performance is the essential custom of traditional Chinese opera, and this unique aesthetic sense of programmatic feeling is a kind of folk enjoyment.” The lack of standardization in the “craftsmanship” performance is the main problem in creating thematic plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera. For example, in *Not One Less*, the character He Aiju has several solo performances, but there is an excessive focus on showcasing the vocal style, with inadequate coordination of body movements and finger techniques. Although various commonly used finger techniques in traditional opera were used, such as “Lanhua zhi” (Lanhua finger), “Lanhua zhang” (Lanhua palm), and “Wen zhang” (Wen palm), there were deficiencies in unclear presentation and lack of standardization in finger techniques. In another example, in *Fenghuang Po*, the seventh act, “Chasing the Ambition at Night,” is considered the climax of the whole play. However, in the opening segment of “hurriedly rushing out of the mountain gate,” the actors did not use the circular stage to portray the anxious emotion but instead pursued a running posture. Later, when the female actor fell, the technical programmatic actions on the stage were not ideal, with phenomena like “bent legs” occurring in movements such as “big jump” and “foot pillar,” resulting in an overall lack of standardization in craftsmanship. Furthermore, in *The Growing Gap*, after the Lanhua character finished singing in the second act, when Wensheng “recited a few lines of poetry,” during the process of running around the circular stage while pressing his right palm and lifting his left sleeve, the position of the arm was not standardized, and the sleeve was too tightly attached to the pants seam. Moreover, habitual running movements from daily life were mixed into the circular stage performance, lacking the basic adherence to the programmatic movements of traditional opera.

4. The Prospects of Theme-Based Play Creation in Anhui Huangmei Opera

The theme-based play creation in Anhui Huangmei Opera adheres to a people-oriented creative stance, actively responding to the concerns of the times, and achieving a prosperous development of new creative works. However, there have been issues such as a bias towards policy, catering to the needs of festive celebrations, resulting in a lack of realism and inconsistent craftsmanship in performances. In the future, it is essential for the creation of theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera to focus on enhancing the artistic quality of works and highlighting the fundamental characteristics of traditional opera art.

4.1 Strengthen Macro Management and Enhance Artistic Content of Plays

Theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera often exhibit characteristics of adhering to the mainstream theme, garnering advocacy and attention, and are relatively easier to receive policy support. Consequently, creators in Huangmei Opera tend to aim for achievements and awards in the creation of theme-based plays, leading to unavoidable shortcomings of “instrumentalization” and “conceptualization.” However, to meet deadlines for events and festivals without regard to the creative cycle, and simply catering to mainstream preferences, plays may lack depth in character development. Looking at historical development trends, the approach of emphasizing administrative control over the creative process, demanding themes to take precedence and conform to certain predefined patterns, and pushing for exaggerated character portrayals is not a viable path for the development of Huangmei Opera. Therefore, the creation of theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera should be optimized in the following ways.

Firstly, it is essential to enhance the oversight of creation to elevate the artistic quality of the plays. In recent years, Anhui Huangmei Opera has faced challenges such as a declining market, loss of audience, and an overall decline in heritage and development. In this context, the creation of theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera has shown an increase in the total number of new plays, leveraging the support from relevant policies. While this is an advantage, it has also led to issues such as a clustering of similar themes and incomplete character portrayals, necessitating reflection. Therefore, relevant authorities should adjust or introduce targeted policies to support plays. Specifically, they should strengthen the artistic oversight of plays with mainstream features, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach based solely on the theme’s significance. Instead, there should be a greater focus on enhancing the artistic quality of the works. Moreover, there should be control over the overall proportion of theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera during festivals and events, preventing an excessive number of plays with similar themes and avoiding the over-utilization of certain themes, which could lead to a mechanized approach. It’s crucial to guide Huangmei Opera artists to prioritize artistic aspects in the creation of operatic plays, continually strengthening the artistic quality of the plays.

Secondly, it’s important to summarize creative experiences to enhance the realism of the works. While Anhui Huangmei Opera’s theme-based plays have played a significant role in promoting core social values, some of these plays exhibit a “conceptual” creative flaw, lacking realism in their artistic aspects. To address this, relevant authorities can organize and guide artists in Anhui Huangmei Opera to summarize their experiences in creating theme-based works. They should contemplate the fundamental and core issues in contemporary theme-based

play creation and identify the key challenges in portraying modern life using Huangmei Opera. Currently, the creation of theme-based plays in Anhui Huangmei Opera needs to pay more attention to the construction of conflicts and contradictions within the works to enhance their realism. On one hand, it's essential to construct rational conflicts and contradictions. The conflicts and contradictions in theme-based plays of Anhui Huangmei Opera are mostly external, often setting up the protagonist in a dilemma through "natural disasters" or "man-made calamities" to demonstrate how they break free and ultimately promote the theme. However, such construction of dramatic conflicts goes against the natural progression of the plot, making it challenging to captivate the audience. Therefore, character actions should be driven not only by external factors but also by internal motivations, making the story more realistic and engaging. On the other hand, it's crucial to depict well-rounded characters. In previous plays centred around poverty alleviation and revolutionary themes, protagonists often became mere symbols or moral figures, with highly patterned and lacking depth in character portrayal. In contrast, in the poverty alleviation-themed play *Old Party Secretary*, the character of the old party secretary is portrayed realistically, showcasing both his warm-heartedness in serving the people and his stubbornness due to feudalistic beliefs, which add depth to the character. This nuanced portrayal, infused with humour, effectively promotes the spirit of the times, making the characters appear genuine and well-rounded.

4.2 Uphold Tradition while Innovating, Emphasize Inherent Characteristics of the Opera Genre

In recent years, Anhui Huangmei Opera has shown a positive development trend with an increase in the number of newly created plays due to a focus on theme-based play creation. However, for creators and performers of Anhui Huangmei Opera, the creation of theme-based plays with a focus on mainstream values represents a new and challenging practice. It deviates from the traditional strengths of Huangmei Opera. The lack of experience in modern play creation has led to deficiencies in innovative processes and inconsistent craftsmanship, resulting in a departure from the traditional essence of opera.

Indeed, Huangmei Opera has always been oriented towards the public with its artistic characteristics of melodious tunes, entertainment, and folk elements. The character roles mainly revolve around the traditional three small roles: young male, young female, and clown. There is a lack of experience in creating theme-based plays with a focus on mainstream values, and the associated issues should prompt reflection among Huangmei Opera artists. As the saying goes, "In major drama genres, especially in deeply-rooted ones, it is essential to maintain their unique characteristics." Although Huangmei Opera has not been around for a long time and lacks deep-rooted traditions, a comprehensive view of the artistic development of Huangmei Opera suggests that works like *Tianxian Pei* and *Nü Fuma* have become classics due to the prominence of the young male and young female characters, emphasizing the vocal performance characteristics unique to Huangmei Opera. The folk charm of singing and dancing in such works has captivated a lot of attention. However, in theme-based Huangmei Opera plays, for instance, those related to poverty alleviation or eulogizing heroic models, the characters often portray strength and magnificence. When presented on stage, these characters may lack completeness and exhibit inconsistencies in performance, deviating not only from the distinctive artistic features of Huangmei Opera but also showcasing the limitations of Huangmei Opera in portraying characters with strong attributes.

In summary, it is crucial to emphasize the essential artistic features of Huangmei Opera, be rooted in operatic pursuits, and explore performance patterns that resonate with the times. In the creation of theme-based Huangmei Opera plays, a major challenge lies in inconsistent performances, and addressing this is of paramount importance. Incorporating elements of daily life such as finger techniques, hand movements, and body postures into the performance not only distances the audience from the plot but also diminishes the fundamental artistic charm of Huangmei Opera. General Secretary Xi Jinping places significant importance on the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture, calling on literary and artistic practitioners to "demonstrate new responsibilities based on the correct source and achieve new progress through adherence and innovation." It can be said that adhering to tradition while innovating is an essential path for traditional operas to transition into modernity and a fundamental principle for the inheritance and development of opera arts. Therefore, in the process of creating theme-based Huangmei Opera plays, it is important to adhere to the excellent traditions of operatic arts. The operatic patterns that play a prominent role in artistic expression should be preserved and continuously innovated, rather than being replaced by daily-life movements. Guo Hancheng once emphasized the need to "follow the laws of operatic arts, which means following the laws of patterns and being adept at using and creating new patterns." Therefore, in the creation of theme-based Huangmei Opera plays, active exploration of new patterns is essential. Building on the foundation of existing traditional patterns, it's important to create new patterns that suit modern life, enriching the ways in which patterns are expressed. This aims to highlight the essential artistic features of Huangmei Opera to the fullest extent and showcase the artistic charm of theme-based Huangmei Opera.

5. Conclusion

At present, the creation of theme-based plays is one of the significant artistic practices in the recent development of Huangmei Opera in Anhui. It not only can improve the dwindling status of the genre's development but also plays a significant role in promoting the mainstream of the times and showcasing the national spirit. It has garnered considerable social attention. In the future, the creation of theme-based Huangmei Opera plays should focus on further enhancing the artistic quality of the works and innovating modern patterns that align with them. It aims to meet the diverse aesthetic needs of the audience and better promote operatic stories.

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