

Original Songs Contribute to the Exploration of Shaping the City Music Brand of Dalian

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Abstract: Urban music culture serves as a crucial carrier for reflecting the spiritual outlook and cultural heritage of a city. As a coastal city with red heritage, marine charm, and tourism advantages, the music culture construction in Dalian should achieve innovative expression based on its regional characteristics. Urban cultural signs have been acquired through original music in many Chinese cities. While Dalian already has cultural resources like Liaonan Folk Songs and a professional arts troupe as a basis, the particularities of urban music branding still need to be further exhibited. Utilizing original songs as a connection to integrate red culture, marine culture, tourism resources, and traditional folk songs can help achieve the goal of forming the urban music brand of Dalian city. The relationship between original songs and the urban music brand of Dalian will be investigated in this paper.

Keywords: Original song; Dalian; Urban music brand; Shape

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1. Introduction

Urban music culture plays an indispensable role in the process of urban development. The construction of urban music culture is affected by the local culture and space environment, and it is able to create many different styles of music culture and reflect the advantages of spiritual attraction. In recent years, original songs have made rapid progress in the aspect of both quantity and quality. This is because of the following factors. To begin with, from the central government to local governments, they have understood the importance of using culture promotion to promote economic development, and hence they have invested a lot of money in cultural industry and the construction of the culture industry. Moreover, due to the continuous popularity of cultural and artistic education, people have the skills and desire to create music and lyrics, and thus original songs have become a new way to record their personal emotions and era development. Thirdly, the development of recording technology, MV production technology, as well as accessible, diversified online transmission platforms, has significantly lowered the production and dissemination thresholds of original songs. As a coastal city presenting youthful vitality, Dalian has received accolades such as the Best Tourist City and Cultural City, and has many music professional groups and creators, creating a favorable humanistic and geographical environment for the development of urban music culture through original songs^[1]

2. The intrinsic connection between the characteristics of urban music culture in Dalian and the creation of original songs

2.1. The red cultural heritage provides the spiritual core for the original songs

Dalian has a rich accumulation of red revolutionary history, which provides abundant spiritual nourishment for the creation of original songs. Red culture, as a key component of the spiritual essence of the Chinese nation, reflects the struggle trajectory and value pursuit during the revolutionary period ^[2]. During the development of Dalian, the red gene has been integrated into the historical context and spiritual temperament of the city. From the resistance stories of the revolutionary period to the striving journey of the construction period, and to the accumulated development achievements of the new era, it has created a unique red cultural lineage. The original songs take these red cultural materials as the core. Through the creation of melodies and lyrics, the red memories of Dalian are transformed into perceptible musical language, making the songs not only recorders of history but also carriers of the city's spirit. Thus, the beliefs and powers of the red culture are realized and presented in the music, endowing the original songs with profound spiritual connotations.

2.2. The advantages of marine culture provide a regional identity for original songs

Dalian, as a world-renowned coastal city, has marine culture as one of its most representative regional characteristics. The marine-strong city strategy developed in 2021 once again emphasizes the central role played by marine culture in urban development. The spectacular and energetic aspects of the ocean have rendered the essence of the city of Dalian open and energetic at the same time, and served as an inspiration in the process of creating original songs. The theme of the ocean in original songs has been brought about by the spectacular coast of the ocean, the wave motions in the sea, and the rich ecology of the ocean; thus, making the association between the ocean and the city musical. Three-beat music conveys the wave motion in the ocean; the usage of major keys in music conveys the magnificence of the ocean; the above-mentioned aspects of music allow the original songs to carry the essence of marine culture, and make listeners feel the characteristics of the ocean coast through music ^[3].

2.3. Endowment of tourism resources broadens the creative scope of the original songs

Dalian is located along the coastal region of the Yellow Sea and Bohai Sea and has numerous tourism resources. The city has been awarded the title of China's Best Tourist City. Several outstanding tourist attractions, distinct tourism products, and various local customs form an interesting tourism cultural chapter of the city. All these tourism resources offer an extensive material basis for the creation of original songs, broadening the multifaceted scope of the creation. In addition to expressing emotions in an abstract manner, the creation of original songs has included elements of tourism in the creation process. For instance, the scenery on the coast could serve as the setting for the melodies, while the lyrics could be written according to the cultural meaning of the local tourism products. This creation method means that the songs become musical expressions of the tourism resources, turning the static tourism images into dynamic musical performances. Under the background of cultural tourism integration, the combination of music and tourism has also become an important direction for the development of urban culture ^[4].

2.4. The folk songs from the Liaonan region serve as the original songs' source of traditional elements

Songs from Liaonan folk are an important element of the music tradition of the area. In this sense, the historical and folk traditions of Dalian have been preserved through folk songs, and these songs can be truly seen as the true musical artistic tradition of this city. Folk songs of Liaonan show particular uniqueness in terms of melodic, rhythmic, and tonal features, which reflect particular cultural codes ^[5]. Many elements of folk songs were used during the process of composing original songs. In particular, melodies were arranged in a new way by combining traditional tonalities and rhythms, thereby allowing for a burst of vitality in these old songs in new works. Thus, the use of elements of tradition was not mere copying of original pieces of art, but on the contrary, through the use of a system of scientific and artistic composition, the

beauty of Liaonan folk songs became an integral part of the original songs, ensuring their strong traditional basis and at the same time the presence of a contemporary spirit, enriched with historical tradition of the area. The dynamic preservation of traditional music is an important problem for contemporary urban music development ^[6].

3. The manifestation of the value of original songs in the establishment of the urban music brand of Dalian

3.1. Enhancing city cultural identity and spiritual unity

With regard to the original songs, they have been created using the background of the history and culture of Dalian, and the language of music has contributed to the depiction of the city from a spiritual point of view and its culture in a lively manner. With this, the citizens can associate with the songs through the historical, flexible, and beautiful representations of the city; therefore, an identity with the city culture is formed. As the citizens participate in the process of popularizing the songs, they can come together in sharing the same musical experience. Thus, the citizens' values can be influenced as they are moved by the city spirit depicted in the songs – that is, perseverance, inclusivity, and innovation; consequently, a sense of pride and responsibility towards the city is developed.

3.2. Creation of urban music brand identity

When developing urban culture, being unique and away from sameness becomes a necessity in establishing the brand. With the help of unique attributes such as the red culture, marine resources, and Liaonan folk songs that Dalian possesses, unique music adopts special expressions to create the unique urban music brand. What distinguishes the original music of Dalian from other types of music includes oceanic tunes, Liaonan folk songs' attractiveness, and the sense of belongingness created by the red culture. Therefore, this generates unique music that differs from others and makes people associate the music with the uniqueness of the city of Dalian among the rest of the cities. Whenever people play the music, they will identify its relation with the uniqueness of the city of Dalian. As people continuously create and spread this music symbol, it will finally become the cultural identity of the city and aid in generating the unique urban music identity brand. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, musical performance can be considered a useful means for the building and spreading of the city brand image ^[7].

3.3. Empowering the integration of tourism economy and cultural industry

The original song creates a combination of tourism resources and the culture of Dalian and forms new songs with these elements, thus creating new driving forces for the tourism economy. The original songs made from the tourism attractions and local specialties as raw material, spread through music and lyrics, strengthen the tourism resources' appeal, and draw attention to pay closer attention to the attractions of the tourism resources in Dalian. The original songs themselves become a cultural product, which can be popularized through online and offline approaches, like performing the original songs in scenic spots and developing cultural tourism derivative products related to the original songs. The innovative approach where music is integrated with tourism resources has led to the deep combination of the culture industry and tourism industry, thus turning the original songs not only into cultural carriers but also into an instrument that would promote tourism consumption and drive industrial development. Urban music and local socioeconomic culture always maintain deep ties with each other ^[8].

4. Strategies for using original songs to shape the city music brand of Dalian

4.1. Deepen the exploration of local cultural materials to lay a solid foundation for the creative content

Deepening the exploration of local cultural materials is a core element for shaping the city music brand of Dalian. Only

by rooting in the local cultural soil can the music works possess distinctive recognition and long-term vitality. First, a systematic review of Dalian's red cultural resources should be conducted. Key memory symbols from the city's century-long revolutionary process, such as significant historical events and the past deeds of heroic figures, should be extracted. These elements with the spirit of the city should be transformed into the core materials of musical narration. The rise and fall of the melody as well as the expression of the lyrics could help to express the red stories vividly through songs and cause a collective resonance among the citizens with regard to the history of the city, and make red culture the spiritual center of the music brand. Secondly, emphasis should be put on the ocean culture that constitutes the core identity of the city. With the implementation of the strategic plan of developing the marine city, all the factors associated with the ocean should be explored effectively. Through the fluctuation of the rhythm of waves, the charisma of the port, as well as the pictures of fishermen's life, the spirit of open-mindedness, inclusiveness, and vitality of the ocean culture should be incorporated into the music creation so as to create distinctive characteristics of the coastal city. Ocean culture should become the most recognizable image and sound tag of the music brand. The coastal scenery, characteristic districts, and folk activities of Dalian should be transformed into concrete musical images. By relying on the changes in melody and rhythm, the tourism charm of the city can be highlighted, allowing listeners to feel the romance and vitality of the city through the songs. Third, an in-depth study of the folk songs of the Liaonan region, a precious treasure of local music, is necessary. The traditional tonality, rhythm characteristics, and emotional expression patterns of these folk songs should be systematically organized. The music elements full of local traits need to be polished to serve as nutrients of contemporary original songs in order to integrate the two and create music with rich cultural connotations for the brand. The comprehensive exploration of Red Culture, ocean culture, tourism resources, and local traditional music will enable the original songs to build up an abundant and three-dimensional content structure, which will pave the way for the establishment of the music brand of Dalian City. The music creation experience of local universities in Dalian is also of practical value to the development of regional music^[9].

4.2. Innovate music presentation forms and create distinctive style identifiers

Innovative presentation forms are critical to creating the distinctive style of the music for the brand. Some distinctive style elements would enable the city music brand to distinguish itself from other cultural symbols and become an important carrier that allows the listener to recognize and remember the song. For instance, the creation of rhythm elements must be based on some dynamics in marine culture. The basic construction of the melodic element uses a three-beat rhythm, while the changes in strong and weak rhythms would reproduce the imagery of waves, enabling listeners to feel the flexibility of the city through its rhythm. As regards the tonal key choices, the use of major keys would become the basis and open sounds of the music, matching the grandeur of the development of Dalian city, while minor keys would appear within lyrical parts of the song. The transformation of the tonal system would enrich the emotionality of the music due to the combination of the grandeur and gentleness of the city. In the first place, one should pay close attention to the integration of traditional and modern music features, specifically, the combination of the traditional folk melodies and sounds of the traditional musical instruments with modern pop music and other kinds of music like electronic music. The above-stated goal can be achieved through the application of the techniques of modern music arrangements, which will enable matching melody lines of traditional folk songs and preserving both their locality and fashionable qualities. Through this measure, one would satisfy the emotional needs of the older generation in terms of traditional music, as well as attract younger people who prefer fashion in their music. In addition, one needs to focus on the melody arrangement, making it simple and easily transferable. For example, one may use a traditional format of the melody, where one will distinguish major and secondary choruses, focusing on the repetitiveness of the main line. As for the enhancement of the representation of the chosen musical genre, one may introduce sounds of traditional folk music instruments suona and flute. Based on multiple aspects of innovation regarding rhythm, tonal keys, element combination, and structural design, the urban music of Dalian may establish an exclusive stylistic identifier.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the construction of urban music culture cannot be separated from the in-depth exploration of regional characteristics and artistic transformation. Judging from the rapid development trend of original songs in terms of quantity and quality at present, in the near future, original songs will undoubtedly become one of the core forces and important handles in the process of establishing and spreading the urban brand image. The red historical accumulation, oceanic romantic charm, diverse tourism resources, and Liaonan folk songs of Dalian provide rich and diverse materials for the creation of original songs. Through systematic creation, professional refinement, and combined with diversified dissemination, original songs can showcase the spirit of the city and also strengthen cultural identity and promote industrial development. Based on the existing research foundation and practical paths, continuously promoting the deep integration of original music and urban culture can endow the Dalian urban music brand with long-term vitality and promote the construction and development of urban culture to a new level.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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