

# Research on the singing art form and cultural inheritance exploration of Changde Dihua Drum

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**Abstract:** Changde Dihua Drum, as a rare theatrical genre, is an active municipal intangible cultural heritage in northwest Hunan. As a comprehensive folk rap art that combines song, dance, and music, it has a very long history and strong regional color. His lyrics have distinct artistic characteristics, such as stylization, improvisation, and humor. This paper studies the lyrics, artistic forms, and characteristics of Changde Dihua Drum from the perspective of promoting and protecting excellent folk music, and explores its inheritance.

## 1. Introduction

Changde Dihua Drum integrates songs, dances, and music, and is a comprehensive folk rap art with a long history and rich regional color. His lyrics have artistic features such as style, improvisation, and humor. “Dihua Drum” originated in the early years of Jiaqing in the Qing Dynasty, and flourished during the Enlightenment period, the development period before and after liberation, and the overthrow of the “Gang of Four”. It played an important role in the Enlightenment stage of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. It is an art form created by people through labor, developed from folk songs, minor tunes, and worker songs.

## 2. A Study on the Artistic Form of Dihua Drum in Singing

### 2.1 Form of expression

There are two forms of expression for flower drums, one is the performance form, and the other is the singing content. “Dihua Drum” has three forms: “Duizi Dihua Drum”, “Zhuma Dihua Drum”, and “Weilong Dihua Drum”. “Duizi Dihua Drum”, also known as “Danhua Drum”, stars a Dan character and a clown character respectively; The performance of “Zhuma Dihua Drum” and Dihua Drum is a combination of ugliness and dan, with a majestic scene and delicate performance. The dragon encircled floor flower drum and the floor flower drum are used to play with pearls, pull out wells, set columns, top butterflies, sleep Arhat and other patterns, or display the words “grain harvest” to enhance the festive and auspicious atmosphere<sup>[1]</sup>.

### 2.2 Singing content

The singing content mainly focuses on medium and short stories, For example, “White Peony”, “Sanda Zhujiashuang”, “Meng Jiangnu”, “Selling Grocery”, etc., they usually entertain themselves during leisure time in the countryside. They are often improvised lyrics, and they are often performed at folk festivals or weddings and birthdays without receiving any payment, such as “sending happiness” or “sending wealth”. With the continuous development of productivity and the growing demand of the people for cultural life, Han Shou's flower drum has undergone significant changes in both the singing form and content, and ultimately evolved into a comprehensive performance art that combines folk art and song and dance. For hundreds of years, it has been firmly rooted in the soil of the people and loved by the vast majority of the people.

### **3. The Lyrics and Artistic Characteristics of Dihua Drum**

The lyrics of Changde Dihua Drum are based on the agricultural production, daily life, and local love stories of the working people. Its content is mainly divided into two categories: love songs and folk songs. Love songs are the most representative songs of Changde Dihua Drum, reflecting the sincere and simple love of the working people; The content of folk songs is extensive and complex, mainly closely related to the customs and activities in the northwest region of Hunan.

#### **3.1 The Content and Characteristics of Love Songs**

Love songs occupy a considerable number in Changde Dihua Drum, and their content includes: mutual admiration, expressing love; Devoted to longing and pursuing love; Perseverance and loyalty to love, and so on. For example, "Clever Dressing" has three main characteristics in its content: first, the completeness of the story, telling a complete and interesting story, expressing the simple character of the working people and the optimistic spirit of playfulness and humor. The second is the coherence of the content, linking the entire story together through dialogue and dance. The third aspect is the oral quality of singing. Changde Dihua Drum adopts Changde Mandarin and adds some "local dialects" according to different dialects to enhance the rhythm and melody of the lyrics.

#### **3.2 The Content and Characteristics of Folk Songs**

There are many types of folk songs involved, mainly including: praying for good luck; Praising diligent farming; Expect a bountiful grain harvest next year; The longing for a happy life; Red and white happy events bring good omens and so on. Its lyrics also have three major characteristics: first, it has obvious stylistic features, with strong stylistic features in activities such as birthday celebrations and weddings. The second reason is that the language format is very stable, and rituals such as birthday celebrations and weddings have conventional characteristics, so the lyrics and melody in the song have also formed a stable format according to customs and habits. Thirdly, there are specific singing occasions, and most folk songs are performed on specific occasions.

### **4. Exploration of the Inheritance of Dihua Drum**

Changde Dihua Drum, as a popular music genre among the local people, has a deep historical foundation. Through the passage of time and regional differences, it has formed a unique style and artistic color in the local area. This also indirectly reflects the living habits and customs of the local people, combining Changde Dihua Drum with the local people's lives to form a true folk art.

#### **4.1 The Current Situation and Prospects of Changde Dihua Drum**

##### **4.1.1 Current situation analysis**

Changde Dihua Drum was listed on the municipal intangible cultural heritage protection list in 2006, which is an important symbol of national and ethnic historical and cultural achievements, and an important component of excellent traditional culture<sup>[2]</sup>. With strong support and encouragement from the country, county and local governments at all levels have also begun to attach great importance to traditional culture. Not only have they established a responsible group to protect Changde Dihua Drum, but the figure of Changde Dihua Drum can also be seen in various cultural and art festivals and competitions. However, this niche culture still has many limitations. Changde Dihua Drum has not been widely spread in the local area. Due to geographical and linguistic reasons, it is mostly passed down through the mouths of the elderly artists in the closed rural environment, and there is no opportunity to systematically reach the public's perspective. In the process of rapid development of the Internet, young people are more willing to accept novel and trendy cultures, and turn a deaf ear to traditional folk culture such as the ground flower drum, which is disconnected from the trend of the times. This adds more difficulties to the survival of folk niche culture.

#### **4.1.2 Prospect analysis**

Changde Dihua Drum is an outstanding representative of local folk music. Its performance forms are very diverse, and the singing content is adapted from some trivial matters in life. With the erosion of time and the strong support of the country, it has developed its own singing style and system, and there are also Dihua Drum bands in various regions that belong to its own regions. Therefore, it can be seen that the development of Changde Dihua Drum has become more mature. However, with the continuous development of society, various niche cultural systems are gradually improving, and various problems are gradually emerging. The Changde Dihua Drum uses Changde Mandarin or local dialects during its singing process, which limits the audience of this culture to the surrounding areas of Changde and makes it difficult to reach a wider range of places, even internationally. However, Changde Dihua Drum itself is a niche culture of Changde folk culture, which has its limitations since its inception. During the low period of development of Changde Dihua Drum, the number of inheritors and actors in various Dihua Drum bands has been decreasing, mainly due to the decreasing number of folk artists who come into contact with Dihua Drum, and folk bands are also struggling to make ends meet. However, with the protection and support of the country and government, the enthusiasm for Changde Dihua Drum has reignited, and more and more young people are starting to bring fresh blood to Dihua Drum. After the central government proposed to sing the main melody and promote national culture, it gradually resumed its popularity. In the past seven years, through the rescue, excavation, organization, training, and performance of cultural departments, Changde Dihua Drum has been flourishing with its unique charm. China has left many cultural treasures in the long river of world culture, and Dihua Drum is also one of them.

#### **4.2 The significance and difficulties of inheriting Changde Dihua Drum**

##### **4.2.1 The significance of inheriting the music of Changde Dihua Drum in Hunan:**

Intangible cultural inheritance is a niche cultural expression that humans rely on for survival, passed down from generation to generation, and closely related to the lives of the masses. It reflects the individuality and values of the Chinese nation and region, and is also the basis for our national emotions and spirit. The history and origin of Changde Dihua Drum in Hunan have obvious characteristics of this, reflecting the living habits of the local people, and has unique cultural and artistic values that are close to people's lives. It reflects the people's yearning and pursuit for a better life at that time, as well as their spiritual state. Through the music of ground flower drums, it reflects their emotions and ideological sustenance. In addition, Changde Dihua Drum is considered a part of the predecessor of Hunan Huagu Opera. In the early years of the Republic of China, the singing style and vocal style of Hunan Huagu Opera had already been improved, which can be roughly divided into four types: gong style, Sichuan style (Zhenggong style), suona style, and minor style<sup>[3]</sup>. It can also be said that Changde Dihua Drum indirectly promoted the embryonic development and maturity of Hunan Huagu Opera.

##### **4.2.2 The difficulties in inheriting the music of Changde Dihua Drum in Hunan:**

Although Changde Dihua Drum is a folk art inherited from intangible culture and has important humanistic value and inheritance significance, due to the rapid development of technology, people are more willing to accept new and fresh things, and their living habits have undergone tremendous changes. However, the protection policies and measures for Dihua Drum are not yet relatively perfect, and the difficulty of protection is still very great. Firstly, with the development of society and the impact of various emerging cultures, folk niche art such as Changde Dihua Drum has gradually been replaced by modern and trendy culture. Secondly, due to the limitations of niche culture itself, the audience of Changde Dihua Drum is relatively narrow, so young people may also be unwilling to accept and learn this folk niche culture. Finally, due to the inadequate protection of Changde Dihua Drum, it is now in a state of resignation, with no one teaching or learning. Therefore, it is urgent to protect the inheritance of Changde Dihua Drum.

### 4.3 Protection Measures for Changde Dihua Drum

From the perspective of developing and inheriting Changde Dihua Drum, due to its own limitations, little is known about it from the outside world, and not many people want to know about it. The author believes that it is necessary to first expand the popularity of the entire region, leverage the advantages of tourism resources as part of promotion<sup>[4]</sup>, promote Changde Dihua Drum in many representative regional scenic spots, and perform some Dihua Drum performances, Enable tourists from other places to have a more intuitive understanding of the charm of the ground flower drum.

Incorporating Changde Dihua Drum in the form of local folk niche traditional culture into local primary and secondary school students and some learning journals can be used as a niche drama that must be learned in music classes in local primary and secondary schools. Students can also watch performances up close during certain festivals or arrange a fixed time to understand the front and back scenes of Changde Dihua Drum; Add a column on Changde Dihua Drum to academic or extracurricular publications, so that people of other age groups can learn about Changde Dihua Drum.

Changde Dihua Drum, as an intangible cultural heritage, is still in an unsaturated state for performing artists today. The author believes that local governments can be contacted to increase their efforts in protecting and promoting Changde Dihua Drum. We can invest some funds to carry out a stage singing model in schools, scenic spots, and places with high crowds of people. We can invite some well-known artists to perform on site and recruit some performers who are interested in China's traditional niche culture, in order to achieve the inheritance and development of Changde Dihua Drum.

### 5. Conclusion

Changde Dihua Drum has rich artistic and practical value. From the perspective of artistic value, the ground flower drum is rooted among the people and has promoted the development of Hunan Flower Drum Opera. From a practical value perspective, protecting and inheriting the Dihua Drum plays an important promoting role in revitalizing ethnic art, promoting ethnic culture, and promoting local economic development.

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