

Min Opera: Embodiment of Cultural Values and Educational Inheritance of Chinese Local Operas in the New Media Era

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the digital age, the preservation and transmission of traditional Chinese operas face both challenges and opportunities, particularly with the rise of new media technologies. This study explores Min Opera as an embodiment of cultural values and a medium for educational inheritance, emphasizing the transformative role of new media in enhancing its dissemination, innovation, and audience engagement. By analyzing the characteristics of new media—such as fragmented communication, bidirectional interaction, and multi-platform integration—alongside the integration of digital technologies like virtual reality, augmented reality, and digital stage design, this research examines how modern technological advancements reshape the performance and viewing experience of Min Opera. The findings indicate that new media not only expand the reach of Min Opera to broader and younger audiences but also modernize its artistic expression while preserving its cultural essence. This study highlights digital technology's profound potential in sustaining Min Opera's vitality, providing strategic insights for its continued development, and contributing to the broader discourse on the preservation and innovation of Chinese local operas in the contemporary media landscape.

Key words: Min Opera, Cultural Value, Educational Inheritance, New Media Era

INTRODUCTION

The development of Min Opera has a long history and can be traced back to the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. At that time, folk opera art in Fujian was booming, and Min Opera was born with such a cultural background that it gradually developed into one of the most representative operas in Fujian. In 2006, it was listed in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List and has received wide attention and protection.

Min Opera, also known as Fuzhou Opera, uses the Fuzhou dialect as the main singing language and has strong local characteristics. It has rich forms of artistic expression, including singing, performance, makeup, costumes, props, and other aspects, which show the charm of traditional opera.

Fuzhou is long known as the "hometown of drama." Among them, Min Opera, as the representative of Fuzhou local opera, has a long development history and strong local color and is deeply loved by the local people. Protecting, inheriting, and developing Min Opera is significant to retaining Fuzhou's memory and promoting urban development (He, 2022).

The inheritance and protection of the artistic heritage of Min Opera should be innovated based on carrying forward the excellent traditional national culture, and this should be used as a valuable reference for the creation of new plays. At

the same time, we must strengthen our cultural confidence so that the art of Min Opera will blossom more brilliantly in the soil of the new era (Wang, 2019).

With the rise of new media, how people obtain information has undergone earth-shaking changes. Audiences can obtain diversified information anytime and anywhere through the Internet, social media, and other channels. This means that TV language communication is no longer the only way of communication, and accordingly, the communication strategy also needs to be improved and adjusted (An, 2023).

New media technology mainly refers to the help of the Internet, digital technology, and all kinds of intelligent terminal equipment, effectively providing users with all kinds of information and a series of technical means; service can also be understood to develop information dissemination, communication and marketing and a series of activities need to use a variety of new technology, including computer technology, mobile communication technology, and digital media technology (Liu, 2021).

Research Objective

This study aims to explore the development, cultural significance, and innovative inheritance strategies of Min Opera within the context of the new media era, emphasizing its

role as an embodiment of cultural values and a medium for educational transmission among Chinese local operas. The objectives are:

1. to examine the historical evolution of Min Opera and its transformation through integrating traditional artistic elements with modern technological advancements, analyzing key innovations in digital presentation and dissemination,
2. to investigate the multidimensional cultural values of Min Opera, including its regional characteristics, artistic aesthetics, and its role in cultural innovation and heritage preservation, to understand how it sustains its relevance in contemporary society, and
3. to explore the pathways for inheritance and innovation facilitated by new media, focusing on the digitalization and networking of transmission models, cross-disciplinary integration of technology, enhancement of audience interaction, and establishment of a comprehensive communication and innovation framework.

Through these analyses, the research seeks to provide strategic insights into the sustainable development of Min Opera and contribute to the broader discourse on the preservation and modernization of Chinese traditional performing arts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article uses qualitative research to study the classic Min Opera's cultural value embodiment and inheritance in the new media era. This study will collect data from relevant documents and papers, and in the field research, data will be collected through basic surveys, observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. Data obtained from the fieldwork studies will be data validated in the qualitative study, and the obtained data will be analyzed using concepts, theories, documentation, and related studies and classified according to study objectives by descriptive analysis methods. The research methods of concepts, theories, and methods are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the level of this research. This study in Min Opera as the research text adopts the cultural value for the research concept, discusses the origin of the Ji'an and development process, and explores the inheritance mode of digital and network, innovation mode of cross-border integration and technology application, interaction and participation mode and establish a complete spread of closed-loop innovation mode.

RESULTS

The Development and Presentation of the History of Min Opera in the New Media Era

The Origin and early development of Min Opera

Min Opera is the only opera sung and read in the Fuzhou dialect. Min Opera has a long history and is a living fossil of the Fuzhou dialect, a precious spiritual wealth of Fujian culture, and an important part of the history and culture of the Chinese nation (Zhao, 2023).

Table 1. Study level of this article

| Text | Min Opera |
|----------------------|---|
| Theoretical Concepts | Cultural value |
| Methodology | Qualitative research |
| Method | Basic survey, interviews, focus groups, observations, and diaries |

In the thirty-seventh years of Wanli in the Ming Dynasty, Cao Xuequan was proficient in music. When he lived in Fuzhou, he organized the Cao family class and invited local literati to the government to enjoy entertainment; people regarded the "Rulin class" as the earliest predecessor of Min Opera (Wang, 2007).

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, Fuzhou's Confucian, Jiangsu, and Ping classes were integrated, forming the "Min class." During the period of the Republic of China, Zheng Zhenduo sent "Purple Jade Chai" and "The Festival" to the Commercial Press for publication, replacing "Min Opera" with "Min Class." Since then, "Min Opera" became the unified name of Fuzhou's local opera (Guan, 2020).

The formation and development of Min Opera depended on the modern transformation of Fuzhou. As one of the earliest cities to open ports, Fuzhou's economy developed rapidly by relying on the tea and silk trade. Machine factories, such as the shipbuilding and electric power industries, provided the industrial foundation for the city's industrial transformation. The modern prosperity of Fuzhou not only catalyzed the birth of Min opera but also exerted a particular influence on the rapid growth of the citizens' artistic character (Wang, 2013).

The rise and prosperity of the drama club is an important symbol of the prosperity of Min Opera. According to the Report on the Reform of Opera in the Past Three Trials in Fujian Province, published by the Fujian Provincial Bureau of Culture, there were more than 160 opera groups in the province and about 5,000 artists before the founding of the People's Republic of China. In 1952, there were 65 professional theater troupes in the province. By 1953, the number had reached 74. In 1953, the provincial Cultural Administration established four public troupes and nine private public-assisted troupes to carry out the drama work further. After 2005, the number of opera groups reaches 128, more than 6000 employees, more than 30,000 performances (the highest annual performance of a single performance group reached 450), an audience of more than 30 million, and an annual turnover of more than 100 million yuan.

Since entering the modern era, Min Opera has been constantly adapting to the changes and development of The Times, bringing forth the new and constantly broadening its performance field and audience group. Moreover, the policy guidance, financial support, and resources prompted a series of outstanding Min Operas, including the opera Modern Drama, outstanding in the 2019 National Stage Art Creation support project, won the 2019 China 15th Propaganda Department of Spiritual Civilization Construction; five project; outstanding works, also won the ninth China drama award in 2023, Cao Yu script (Zhang, 2022).

In particular, the release of a series of policies and plans also prompted the Protection Regulations of Min Opera promulgated in the Fuzhou region, where Min Opera is located, in July 2021. The implementation of the policy paid great attention to the development of Min Opera from the government level and affirmed its cultural value. It can also be lateral to reflect the importance of the topic selection.

The Changes of Min Opera in the New Media Era

The historical changes of Min Opera in the era of new media are mainly divided into three stages according to the different stages of social scientific and technological development, as well as the influence of these changes on the dissemination and development of Min Opera:

The first stage, from 1990 to 2000, was a period of rapid social development and change. This stage focused on the transition from traditional performance forms to modern media forms, mainly relying on traditional media, but it has also influenced television and radio.

From 1990 to 2000, Min Opera's historical changes in the era of new media were full of challenges and opportunities. Although the influence of new media technology is limited, Min Opera has begun to try to use new media for communication and promotion, laying a foundation for its future development.

The second phase, from 2000 to 2010, was the popularity of information technology, the Internet, and new media. The rise of the Internet and the development of network media have provided a new communication mode and platform for local opera, especially Min Opera. Min Opera has been trying to self-promote and promote itself through online platforms.

New media technologies such as the Internet and mobile devices have rapidly developed during this period. Although traditional TV and radio still dominate, the Internet has been trending to replace traditional media. Min Opera began to use video websites, social media, and other platforms for online dissemination and promotion.

From 2000 to 2010, the period was full of opportunities and challenges. Min Opera made remarkable progress and achievements in communication, innovation and development, inheritance, and protection.

The third stage is from 2010 to now. With the popularity of smartphones, social media, and short video platforms, for Min Opera, this stage is a critical period for traditional culture to realize communication innovation, audience expansion, and cultural regeneration with the help of new media.

Since 2010, new media platforms such as short video platforms, live broadcast platforms, and WeChat public accounts have risen rapidly and become important channels for disseminating Min Operas.

The historical change of Min Opera in the new media era is a process of continuous exploration, innovation, and development. We should actively embrace the era of new media and use new media technology to promote the innovation and development of traditional art so that traditional art can glow with new luster in modern society.

The Embodiment of the Multi-dimensional Cultural Value of Min Opera

The representativeness of local Opera Min Opera in regional culture

Fuzhou dialect, the language basis of Min Opera, has strong regional characteristics. In the performance of Min Opera, the application of the Fuzhou dialect makes the whole art form more closely related to the local culture of Fujian and reflects the local characteristics.

The Min Opera "Soul of Ma River" is based on the historical events of the Sino-French naval battle 1884. In this naval battle, although the Fujian naval army was almost destroyed, the battle showed the army's unyielding spirit, fearing the strong enemy and fighting to the end. The patriotic spirit of "although the ship is dead, the flag is still there" influenced generations of Chinese people. The changes of rhyme and the ups and downs of intonation of the Fuzhou dialect make the characters' inner world to be shown more delicately.

Min Opera is an opera of the Fuzhou people, who have a very strong ability to assimilate foreign culture. In its formation, Min Opera not only absorbed the essence of Kunqu opera, Heyang Opera, Anhui Opera, and Peking Opera but also continuously transformed it in its use, making it develop into today's colorful art of Min Opera. It well reflects the city spirit of Fuzhou: "The sea accepts all rivers, tolerance".

The diversity of the artistic style of Min Opera

The diversity of the artistic style of Min Opera is reflected in its rich musical singing, unique performance mode, exquisite costume design, and stage art design, which has its most artistic characteristics.

The singing of Min Opera is mainly composed of foreign songs, river tunes, funny and minor tunes, etc. These songs have their characteristics, beautiful melody, and distinct rhythm (Lin, 2018). The dance performance of Min Opera has a strong local style, beautiful movements, and moderate range, reflecting the soft charm of southern opera. In the performance, the actors pay attention to the use of the basic program of hand, eye, body, method, and step and strive to show a beautiful figure and reflect the characters' inner world through their appearance.

The costume of a Min Opera can directly show the gender, age, status, and personality characteristics of the characters and help the audience perceive the character image accurately (Lin, 2023). The embroidery in the costumes of Min Opera is delicate, and traditional patterns such as dragons, phoenixes, and more are common, implying auspiciousness and dignity. The exquisite embroidery enhances the costumes' artistry and helps the audience better understand the characters' social identity and cultural background (See Figure 1).

The design of Min Opera's stage art organs has an important position in modern Chinese opera art history. Mr. Yu Dafu, in his article "The Scenery of Min Opera," spoke highly of the stage art of Min Opera precisely based on its unique stage effect and artistic innovation. He believed that the stage

design of Min Opera in Fuzhou brought him unprecedented visual impact and artistic feeling. In particular, he mentioned “the flash of magnesium light, a change in the stage surface, magical and strange movements, and the half-true and half-false transformation of the scenery,” which fully reflected the uniqueness of the stage design of Min Opera at that time (Zhou, 2021).

The diversity of Min Opera’s artistic style is reflected in its musical singing, performance style, costume design, and stage art. This diversity makes Min Opera present its unique artistic charm on the stage and lays a solid foundation for its inheritance and development in modern society.

The social influence of Min Opera in the New Media Era

New media provides diversified channels for the communication of Min Opera. However, new media is a communication tool and has become a platform for Min Opera to play its social functions.

Through its innovative script, profound theme thought, and strong humanistic care, Min Opera shows the cultural influence of drama in modern society. In this society, Min Opera is not only a tool for entertainment but also bears a certain social responsibility (Liu & Zhang, 2021).

The popularity of media makes Min Opera not only limited to the inheritance of traditional culture but also more closely related to the needs of modern society. While promoting the development of traditional culture, Min Opera works shoulder the responsibility of guiding social values and promoting social harmony by paying attention to practical problems.

Inheritance path and Innovation Strategy of Min Opera through the Advantages of New Media

Analysis of the characteristics and advantages of new media communication

One of the biggest characteristics of new media is its “immediacy.” Compared with traditional media, Internet platforms and social media can realize the instant release and rapid

dissemination of information. This immediacy not only provides higher efficiency for the dissemination of traditional cultures, such as Min Opera, but also enables these cultural forms to connect with the audience for the first time.

Another remarkable feature of new media is its fragmented dissemination. Traditional media usually transmit information through long-term radio or periodical releases. For traditional art forms such as Min Opera, the presentation of fragmented content, such as short videos, texts, and short articles, is not only in line with the fast-paced life of modern people but also convenient for wide dissemination on social platforms (See Figure 2).

User participation and two-way interaction function attributes. The interactivity of new media makes communication not only one-way but two-way. The audience can give instant feedback on the performance and video content through comments, likes, sharing, and bullet screens.

In the era of new media, Min Opera has adapted to the fast-paced lifestyle of modern society with the help of simple content forms. With the introduction of modern technology, the traditional opera art form has obtained more abundant means of expression. Through virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology, the transformation of stage scenery presents a more diverse and modern visual effect.

In some innovative experiments, the emergence of virtual actors has opened up a new direction for expressing traditional Min Opera. Through three-dimensional modeling and the rendering of virtual characters, the performance of Min Opera is not only limited to the performance of real actors but also can show more unique and modern artistic effects through the participation of virtual actors and digital characters (See Figure 2). This technical integration makes Min Opera’s performance more flexible and rich, providing a more novel audio-visual experience for young audiences.

The role of new media in promoting the cultural communication and exchange of Min Opera

New media is a new type of Internet media, also known as the “fifth media.” It includes mobile phones, tablet computers,



Figure 1. Clothing of Min Opera
Source. Photographed by Xu Lin, 2025



Figure 2. Digital stage of Min Opera
Source. Photographed by Xu Lin, 2025

computers, IPTV (interactive network TV), etc., and has the characteristics of network interactive communication, using the network as the carrier for information dissemination (Zhou, 2021).

Based on the above content, Min Opera has used new media technology in communication and innovation. However, to better form and improve the overall closed loop of communication innovation, we can build an organic cycle from the communication source, process, and results (See Figure 3).

The application of new media technology enables Min Opera to be preliminarily promoted through various platforms and channels to attract the attention and interest of more audiences. On social platforms through WeChat public account platforms, held online lectures and performance trailers, attracted many audiences to interact with the actors, and can also enhance the publicity effect through social platforms such as Wechat group and Weibo.

When Min Opera culture begins to spread through new media, the next important stage is to further attract and cultivate the interest of the audience through innovative interactive methods and multi-platform integration so that not only the audience passively receives information but also the communicators and participants actively participate in it. At this time, the use of innovative technologies, such as digital stage design, virtual reality, and live broadcast interaction, has become an important bridge between the audience and the culture of Min Opera (Wang, 2019).

Through the live broadcast platform, Min Opera groups perform online so that the audience can watch the performance in real time and participate in the interaction. In the live broadcast, the audience can watch the play and interact with the actors through the barrage and comments section to ask questions or express their feelings. This two-way

communication interaction has dramatically enhanced the audience's sense of participation in Min Opera.

Through continuous communication and interaction, the influence of Min Opera culture is constantly expanding, which can not only exert an influence on the domestic audience but also establish an influence on the overseas Chinese community and the global audience.

Through the promotion of new media platforms, such as Min Opera through TikTok, Weibo, and the Little Red Book platform, worldwide online activities, interactive discussions, and seminars, both offline or online live, all need video recording and then video slice secondary creation for online transmission again, expanding influence and strengthening cultural exchanges.

Through the above communication links, we can see that the communication process of the new media era of Min Opera is a continuous feedback and innovation cycle.

Extensive publicity and drama sharing through new media platforms in the initial promotion stage attract diversified audiences. In the interactive communication stage, through online interaction, innovative stage design, virtual reality technology, and other audiences are attracted to participate in discussion, online interaction, community construction, etc., to enhance the audience's sense of participation, which can be diverted to offline. Cultural influence and cross-regional exchange stage Through transnational cooperation, global live broadcasting, and other channels, promote the dissemination of Min Opera globally, promote the exchange and identification of Chinese and foreign cultures, and form a sense of cultural belonging.

The Educational Role of Min Opera in new Media Era

Min Opera, as a vital representation of Chinese local operatic traditions, carries significant cultural and educational value. Rooted in the Fuzhou dialect and deeply embedded in Fujian's historical and social fabric, Min Opera serves as an essential medium for transmitting traditional knowledge, values, and artistic expression. Historically, its educational role was primarily realized through apprenticeship models, familial transmission, and local performance communities. However, in the modern era, the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the widespread influence of new media have reshaped the modes of cultural inheritance, expanding the pedagogical potential of Min Opera beyond regional boundaries (Cai, 2021). Through digitalization, online learning platforms, and interactive media, Min Opera has transitioned from an exclusive cultural practice to an accessible educational resource, fostering a broader understanding and appreciation of Chinese opera among diverse audiences.

Integrating new media into the educational dissemination of Min Opera has facilitated innovative teaching methodologies that enhance theoretical learning and practical engagement. The development of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies has enabled immersive learning experiences, allowing students and practitioners to engage with Min Opera's performance techniques, stage design, and vocal styles in a simulated environment. Additionally, digital platforms such as short video applications, live-streamed

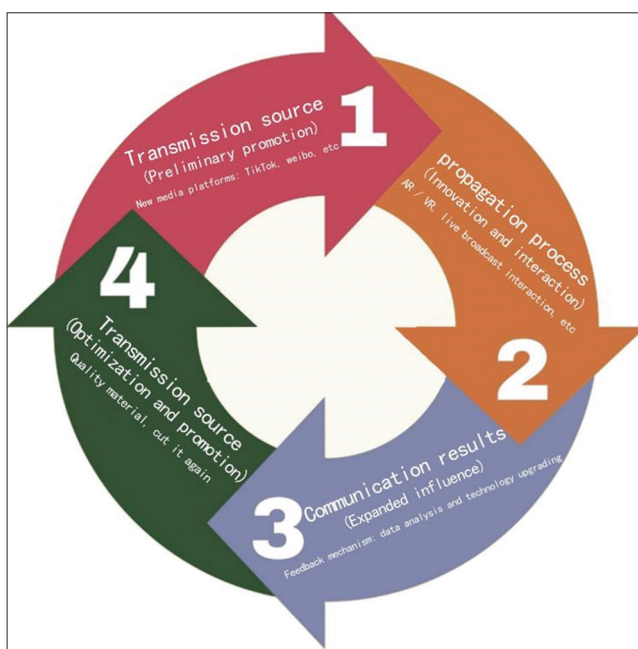


Figure 3. Schematic diagram of the propagation closed-loop
Source. Made by Xu Lin, 2025

lectures, and interactive social media content provide real-time opportunities for audiences to learn about Min Opera's history, artistic structure, and aesthetic principles. These new media tools contribute to the preservation and revitalization of Min Opera by making traditional performance techniques more comprehensible and accessible, attracting younger generations who may otherwise remain disengaged from traditional operatic forms (Zhang, 2022).

Beyond technological innovation, new media has also played a crucial role in fostering community engagement and participatory education within the Min Opera sphere. The interactive nature of online platforms enables a two-way learning process wherein audiences consume educational content and actively participate in discussions, critiques, and creative reinterpretations of traditional performances. Online forums, digital archives, and multimedia content on platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok allow scholars, performers, and enthusiasts to collaborate in documenting and promoting Min Opera (Zhao, 2020). Moreover, educational institutions and cultural organizations have utilized digital platforms to conduct virtual workshops, academic symposiums, and performance-based learning sessions, transforming Min Opera into an evolving and interactive educational field rather than a static cultural artifact.

Applying new media in Min Opera education has broader cultural implications, reinforcing its role in shaping contemporary identity and intercultural communication. By leveraging digital outreach and global media networks, Min Opera has gained visibility among international audiences, contributing to cross-cultural understanding and exchange. This expanded accessibility enables the transmission of Min Opera's cultural narratives to diasporic Chinese communities and foreign scholars interested in Chinese performing arts. Furthermore, integrating Min Opera into modern curricula through online courses and interdisciplinary research projects has allowed for a more systematic and scholarly engagement with its educational potential. As new media advances, Min Opera's role as an educational and cultural bridge will further solidify, ensuring that this traditional art form remains relevant in an increasingly digital and globalized society.

DISCUSSION

The influence of the new media era on traditional art forms, especially local opera, is not only reflected in the innovation of technical means but also in the profound changes in the communication mode, audience group, and cultural identity, and it has entered a new stage.

The interactivity of new media technology has changed the traditional mode of "one-way communication." The audience is no longer passive information recipients but active participants and communicators. The audience broadcasts with actors, discreet scholars, and others in real time through live broadcasts, comments, bullet screens, and other functions. The audience's real-time response and interaction promote the innovation and optimization of Min Opera.

As a traditional art form in Fujian province, Min Opera's cultural value has been reflected in multiple dimensions. The

arrival of the new media era has further magnified the dissemination and expression of its cultural value. It also provides a new impetus for the artistic innovation of Min Opera. The introduction of AR, VR, digital stage design, and other technologies has enriched and upgraded traditional stage performance forms.

The multi-platform communication characteristics of new media have broken the communication boundary of traditional art forms and provided a broader space for the inheritance and innovation of Min Opera. Social platforms, short video platforms, video websites, etc., have become the leading communication positions of Min Opera. Through these platforms, Min Opera can reach audience groups of different levels, ages, and regions and broaden cultural communication channels.

CONCLUSION

As a significant embodiment of regional cultural heritage, Min Opera has undergone a dynamic process of development, transformation, and innovation in response to societal and technological advancements. Rooted in the Fuzhou dialect, it serves as a living representation of local traditions, reflecting Fujian culture's historical, aesthetic, and artistic values. Integrating Min Opera with modern technology has facilitated its adaptation to contemporary cultural landscapes, ensuring its continued relevance and accessibility. The transition from traditional performance forms to digital dissemination has expanded its audience base and reinforced its role as a medium for cultural education. Through policy support, artistic refinement, and technological advancements, Min Opera has maintained its artistic integrity while embracing innovation, exemplified by digital stage designs, virtual reality applications, and interactive social media engagement. These advancements illustrate the opera's capacity to evolve within the new media era, preserving its authenticity while fostering a renewed appreciation among modern audiences.

Furthermore, the new media era has redefined the methods of Min Opera's inheritance and dissemination, highlighting the importance of digital communication, interactive engagement, and global cultural exchange. The use of digital platforms, social media, and online broadcasting has enhanced audience interaction and facilitated cross-regional and international cultural exchanges, contributing to the globalization of Chinese traditional opera. This study underscores the significance of Min Opera as both a cultural artifact and an evolving artistic medium, demonstrating its adaptability in maintaining artistic excellence while navigating modern challenges. By leveraging new media, Min Opera has successfully expanded its influence beyond regional boundaries, offering insights into the sustainable preservation of traditional arts in contemporary society. As the digital transformation of traditional art forms continues, Min Opera exemplifies a model for the harmonious integration of cultural heritage with modern technological advancements, ensuring its continuity and vitality for future generations.

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