

Analysis on the Development and Marketing Strategy of Chinese Classical Music Industry in the New Media Era

Xuanyang Zhi^{1,a,*}

¹The International Division of Beijing No. 2 Middle School, 15, St. Neiwubu, Dongcheng District, Beijing, China

a. hamilton185@163.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Classical music, renowned for its cultural and aesthetic value, faces significant challenges in maintaining its popularity in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world. In China, the classical music market is diverse yet fragmented, primarily appealing to an older demographic. This trend is exacerbated by minimal exposure among younger generations, limited classical music education in schools, and scant media coverage, all contributing to declining youth participation. This study evaluates the economic benefits and marketing impact of China's classical music industry, examining various income sources and current marketing strategies used by symphony orchestras and other organizations. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, the study proposes innovative marketing strategies to attract younger audiences and offers practical recommendations to ensure the growth and sustainability of classical music in China. The research acknowledges limitations due to reliance on secondary economic data, suggesting future studies conduct primary research for more precise insights.

Keywords: China classical music, marketing strategies, youth engagement, audience development, digital media.

1. Introduction

Classical music is highly regarded for its cultural and aesthetic significance, but it struggles to remain popular in today's fast-paced world. Consequently, the economic growth and productivity of the classical music industry, which largely depends on the real economy, have shown a downward trend [1]. In China, the classical music market is diverse but fragmented, with a predominantly older audience. This shift can be linked to social changes, as younger generations gravitate towards modern, technology-driven music genres. Research indicates that reduced exposure to classical music among young audiences has led to a significant decline in their participation and interaction in classical music performances [1]. In educational institutions, classical music education is often minimal, and media coverage is scarce, further diminishing its presence in young people's lives. The lack of accessible and relatable classical music content has resulted in a waning interest among the youth. It is urgent to revitalize the classical music industry and attract younger audiences to preserve its cultural legacy and ensure its future development.

This study aims to evaluate the economic benefits and marketing impact of the classical music industry in China. It will first assess various income sources for classical music, including ticket sales,

merchandise, sponsorships, and government subsidies. Additionally, the study will analyze current marketing strategies used by symphony orchestras and other classical music organizations to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It will also explore potential marketing strategies to attract younger audiences. Ultimately, this study seeks to provide practical recommendations for the growth and development of classical music and symphony orchestras in China.

2. Economic Impacts of Chinese Classical Music

2.1. Current status of Chinese classical music development

Classical music has a significant place in the larger cultural economy of China, and it is involved in the local and national money circulation. At the local level, performances of classical music increase consumers' expenditure on tickets, merchandise, and other related products and services in the hospitality industry [2]. Classical music festivals and other high-profile performances are tourist attractions that help in the generation of a large amount of revenue and boost the tourism sector as a whole [3]. However, government subsidies and sponsorship from private businesses are crucial to the survival of classical music organizations as they offer much-needed financial support that would allow these organizations to continue their core functions and community engagement. The performance venues for the classical music in China differ greatly depending on whether the areas are urban or rural. For example, in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, there are many professional concert halls and symphony orchestras that perform classical music on a regular basis. These urban centres are also likely to have better infrastructure and higher disposable income hence they attract international talents and larger audiences [2]. On the other hand, the availability and acceptance of classical music in rural regions are significantly lower. Fewer opportunities, fewer halls, and less funding mean that classical music is less present, which in turn affects its ability to engage with a larger audience.

This study has shown that revenue streams in the classical music industry are diverse. However, ticket sales and merchandise are not the only sources of income; corporations' sponsorships and philanthropic contributions are equally important for sustaining the symphony orchestras and concert halls. Another source of funding includes the government funding from both the central and the local governments contributes to the funding of classical music institutions [3]. Thus, one can note that compared to such cultural industries as pop music or film, classical music is less commercially supported, and this fact proves the necessity of the search for more effective funding and promotion models for this type of music.

2.2. Significance of the Development of China's Classical Music Industry

The development of the classical music industry holds profound implications for global and local culture and economy. Internationally, classical music concerts serve as cultural magnets that draw both domestic and international tourists, thereby bolstering tourism revenues and enhancing the overall economy. Events like concerts and music festivals not only elevate a city's appeal but also promote cultural values, solidifying its reputation as a premier tourist destination [4]. For instance, the Sydney Opera House, a globally acclaimed cultural icon, significantly influences economic development. Its classical music performances draw global tourists, stimulating tourism expenditures such as accommodation and dining, thereby fostering local economic expansion. Additionally, these performances generate employment opportunities and bolster the service industry. By showcasing Australian culture and artistic creativity, the Sydney Opera House enhances Sydney's international reputation and allure, playing a pivotal role in cultivating cultural soft power.

In China, classical music plays a pivotal role in the cultural economy, exerting influence on both local and national economic systems. Classical music performances not only generate revenue

through ticket sales but also stimulate consumption in ancillary sectors such as hospitality and dining [4]. For example, the Zhuhai Grand Theater serves not only as a venue for artistic performances but also as a catalyst for economic growth. Initially, it draws a substantial number of tourists and spectators, who not only spend within the theater but also patronize local dining, accommodation, and other services, thus stimulating the local service industry. Furthermore, the theater's diverse array of performances, exhibitions, and events attracts artists and performance groups from both domestic and international scenes, fostering growth in related sectors such as cultural and creative industries, hospitality, and retail. Additionally, the presence of the Grand Theater generates numerous employment opportunities across various sectors, from performers and directors to logistics and security, thereby advancing economic diversification and enhancing the city's reputation. Hence, beyond economic advantages, China's classical music industry contributes significantly to cultural influence and societal welfare[5].

3. Navigating the Challenges in the Classical Music Industry

Despite its cultural relevance and appeal, classical music faces significant challenges in China. Historically perceived as a Western art form in a culture dominated by traditional music, classical music struggles to gain widespread popularity. The Chinese government supports cultural activities, yet promoting classical music alongside commercially successful contemporary genres remains complex. Initiatives such as those at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, which blend traditional Chinese performances with Western classical concerts, attempt to cater to diverse audience preferences while preserving cultural heritage. However, achieving sustained promotion of classical music encounters numerous hurdles.

Audience demand for classical music lags behind that for pop music and mainstream entertainment. This disparity severely impacts the funding available to classical music organizations, restricting their ability to invest in essential marketing and promotional activities required for effective competition in the entertainment industry[6]. Despite the cultural prestige associated with classical performances, major orchestras in China often face financial challenges in filling concert halls and maintaining high-profile events.

Establishing a comprehensive music education system is pivotal in fostering an early appreciation of classical music. This includes integrating classical music into school curricula and ensuring accessible music training opportunities. However, many schools in China currently do not prioritize classical music in their educational offerings, hindering efforts to cultivate future audiences and musicians.

4. Development and solutions of Chinese classical music industry

Solving the problems of Chinese classical music is a complex process that can be solved only through the use of various approaches, including the development of new marketing concepts, educational programs, and other social activities. The use of classical music in everyday life and popular culture and technology is one of the most efficient solutions. It is possible to work with contemporary artists in order to produce works that would be interesting to people who are not necessarily fans of classical music. For instance, integrating classical music with other types of music such as pop, rock, or electronic music can pull in young audiences who may not attend classical music concerts [7].

The adoption of digital media and social platforms has become crucial for broadening outreach and engaging younger demographics. Platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Bilibili enable performers to directly connect with potential audiences through interactive and multimedia content [5]. Effective marketing strategies are pivotal in overcoming these challenges, with innovative solutions offering the most promising avenues for success. Integrating classical music with elements of pop culture and

technology can enhance its appeal to contemporary audiences. For instance, incorporating classical music into modern movies and video games presents opportunities to attract new listeners. Educational initiatives and community outreach programs also play a significant role in raising awareness and fostering appreciation [8].

4.1. Social media platforms promote the development of classical music industry

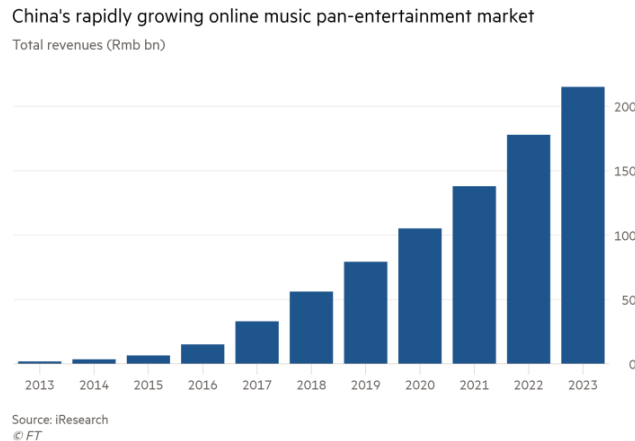


Figure 1: China's online music market is growing quickly

Classical music's survival and growth in China necessitate effective marketing strategies. Traditionally, symphony orchestras and classical music organizations have relied heavily on print media advertising and partnerships with educational institutions. However, in the digital era, there is a pressing need to transition towards more contemporary marketing approaches [5]. According to Figure 1, iResearch Consulting Group forecasts a significant expansion in China's online music entertainment market, projecting growth from RMB 33 billion last year to RMB 215.2 billion (US\$31.3 billion) by 2023, with a compound annual growth rate of 36.7%. This indicates that online platforms and social media are vital for promoting classical music.

Social media, in particular, provides a powerful avenue for reaching younger generations. Platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Bilibili are immensely popular in China and can be used to share a variety of engaging content that introduces classical music to a broader audience[9]. Sharing live concert streams allows audiences to experience performances in real-time, breaking down geographical barriers and making classical music more accessible. Interactive Q and A sessions with musicians can provide a personal touch, allowing audiences to connect with the artists and learn more about their craft. Behind-the-scenes content can offer unique insights into the preparation and dedication involved in classical music performances, making the genre more relatable and intriguing. Moreover, collaborating with influencers who have a strong following on these platforms can help attract new audiences. Influencers can share their experiences and passion for classical music, creating a ripple effect among their followers. Digital marketing techniques, such as targeted advertisements and engaging multimedia content, can further enhance the visibility and appeal of classical music.

4.2. Promoting participation in classical music through educational programs

Educational programs play a significant role in creating a positive attitude towards classical music among young people. School and educational institutions can involve classical music into the process of education and provide students with the possibility to get acquainted with the phenomenon of classical music and even attend concerts. Some examples include school concerts, music workshops,

and instrument petting zoo where children can see and touch instruments and try playing them. Moreover, formation of youth orchestras and music camps may offer practical experience and help to develop a love for classical music throughout one's life [10]. Other countries' successful experiences demonstrate the effectiveness of such approaches. For example, the Venezuelan project El Sistema has shown how music education and social involvement can change people's lives. As a result of offering free music education to children from all the strata of our society, El Sistema not only nurtured musicians of international standards but also fostered unity and cohesiveness as well as brought about positive social changes [8]. The same models could be applied in China to revive the interest in classical music and develop new generation of fans and patrons.

4.3. Promotion of classical music among the public

Outreach programs within communities are also crucial for expanding the audience base for classical music. Organizing and performing free or low-cost concerts in easily accessible locations can attract a more diverse group of attendees. Such events should be widely promoted, with the support of local organizations and businesses to maximize reach. For example, holding concerts in public parks, community centers, and schools can make classical music more accessible to people who might not typically attend a traditional concert hall[11]. Partnering with local businesses for sponsorships and promotions can further enhance visibility and community engagement. Additionally, creating opportunities for community members to interact with musicians can significantly enhance the concert experience. Pre-concert talks, where musicians discuss the pieces they will perform, can provide valuable context and deepen audience appreciation. Post-concert receptions allow attendees to meet the performers, ask questions, and gain a more personal connection to the music and the artists[11].

These interactions not only improve the overall concert experience but also foster a sense of community and commitment to classical music. By demystifying the genre and making it more approachable, these programs can help build a loyal and engaged audience base.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examines the current challenges and status of classical music development in China, offering solutions to advance the country's classical music industry. Despite its significant economic returns and cultural value, classical music in China faces critical issues that threaten its survival, such as cultural limitations of the audience, reduced participation, and funding challenges. Addressing these problems requires creative and systematic approaches. To secure the future of classical music in China, it is essential to implement measures to overcome these obstacles. Traditional print media advertising and partnerships with educational institutions should adapt to include digital media and social platforms. Educational programs are crucial in fostering an early appreciation for classical music, while community outreach programs are vital for expanding its audience base. By bridging the gap between traditional music and contemporary audiences, these strategies can ensure that the classical music industry continues to play a significant role in the development of China's music industry.

However, one limitation of this study is that the economic analysis relied on secondary sources, potentially introducing biases or inaccuracies. Future research should conduct primary economic research to provide more accurate and nuanced insights into the financial aspects of the classical music industry in China.

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