

Dance as Alternative Content in Cinema

Jeesun Lee*, Ji Won Lee **

*Ewha Womans University, Korea, **Ewha Womans University, Korea

E-mail : kitri1118@naver.com*, wjoinlee@empas.com**

1. Introduction

Recently, a variety of live contents from the performances of operas, plays, dance, and pop songs to sport games have been screened in theaters, so the new concept of “alternative content” or “event cinema” has come to the fore. These contents are integrating the live and the recorded through filmic language and 3D technology. This study aims to discuss the aesthetic changes or prospects and the trends of producing the art of dance as alternative content in the new film market.

2. Emergence of Alternative Content and its Background

Alternative content is the collective name for the contents except the movie shown in the theater. It ranges from the performance contents like dance to video of lecture of famous lecturer or sports broadcasting. The work that first proved the possibility of alternative content was ‘Hannah Montana and Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert’ of Walt Disney Pictures, which was opened in 2008 and achieved box-office record of 65 million dollar only in North America. This work shot the concert highlight scene of Cyrus and Montana, the actors of America comedy musical drama series, in digital 3 D type, and has been evaluated as the first 3D alternative contents which achieved success in box-office market[2].

Alternative content provides differentiated experience to audience by maximizing the sense of realism through connection with the upgraded 3D technology. In addition, it explores its possibility as new content by presenting its possibility as new profit model to theater owner. There are three factors in the background where 3D alternative content emerges[3].

The first factor is creation of technical environment including development of 3D image technology, expansion of 3D screen and spread of digital image equipment. Second, change in awareness of users also can be a cause. As the needs of users for high-grade contents rises, there is more interest in 3D alternative content that can deliver vivid sense of field of performance. Third, it is the result of actively pursuing aggressive marketing strategy by the theater owner and art companies for creation of new source of profit.

3. Case and Trend of Production of Alternative Contents in Dance Area

3.1. Live Screening

Live Screening is the case of showing the live performance in HD digital image at theater and is the most general type in alternative contents market. In particular, Royal Opera House has planned separate brand of “ROH Live Cinema” since 2011 and has prepared the distribution structure that could enjoy opera or dance performed at theater real-time at the theater. Aggressive marketing has been performed to provide preview image at online site and to enable searching of available theater throughout the world. With support of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, “Art in Our Communities® programme” in 2011, ROH could perform live cinema screening of 6 operas and 3 ballet works at over 900 theaters in 32 countries during 2012/13 season.

3.2. 3D Screening

Meaning of alternative contents can be regarded completed when 3D technology is applied. While live screening is meaningful in screening of performance real-time, 3D screening emphasizes the vividness of dance contents through dimensional image. The case of producing the ballet first through 3D technology in the history of ballet is *Giselle* in 3D(2011). This film is made by shooting the live performance of Mariinsky Ballet at Mariinsky Theater and by producing it in 3D film. It was produced by NCM Fathom, presented by More2Screen, and shoot by Can Communicate. Movie audience could experience the vision of wilis in front of them in ‘a best seat in the house’ at the Mariinsky through 3D technology.

Popularity and value of dance as alternative content was recognized when the British choreographer Matthew Bourne, *Swan Lake*(1995) produced 3D film in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the ballet company in May 2012. This film made the live performance at Sadler’s Wells Theater in London as 3D movie in 2011, gaining favorable comment from audience with more live 3D image and sound than in actual performance theater. The role of Ross Macgibbon, the production director was great at the success of this film. His experience as dancer at Royal Ballet for 13 years and experience of producing dance image as the Head of Dance at BBC after he changed his job to dance film director served as the foundation for successful production of 3D alternative contents.

3.3. 3D Live Screening

The 3D live screening is the combination of live screening and 3D image presented above. That is, it shoots the live performance at theater in 3D film and shows this at several theaters real-time. Cameron Pace Group, which took in charge of *Avatar* film, participated as 3D technical team, at the *Swan Lake* 3D version of Mariinsky Ballet, produced recently in 2013. Macgibbon took the role of film stage director and completed this work. There was many limit in this version since it directly shot the live performance at the theater in front of the audience of paid theater. Despite this, their technical collaboration could create the best outcome in 3D live screening since the success of 3D work depends on the technology of editing, shooting type and transmitting 3D image live, rather than the number of camera. This film was released at the same time at about 900 cinemas throughout the world and about 150 cinemas in the UK upon performance at theater, showing the essence of Russia classic ballet to many world balletomania who could not directly visit the Russia Mariinsky Theater physically and economically.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In line with the overseas case examined above, interest in alternative content is intense recently in Korea. The mainstream in this trend is the case of simultaneous showing of concert live image of popular idol singers. In the pure art genre, the foreign contents are imported and shown, as the case discussed earlier. In this setting, the Seoul Art Center signed MOU for 'SAC on Screen' project with CJ E&M, CJ CGV, in last 2013, and actively launched production of alternative contents in high art field of Korea. 'SAC on Screen' project aims to discover excellent performances and exhibitions, broadcast them live or record them, and show in cinemas throughout the country as well as the local art hall, public library and school. Through this, it aims to expand the culture enjoyment of people and to promote popularization of high art by expanding the resource of culture and arts concentrated in Seoul.

Alternative content is not simply showing dance recording film in theater. In addition, it is differentiated from existing dance film. It should be accompanied by establishment of clear concept and new aesthetical approach from the position of the producers like film producer or choreographer or that of consumer, the audience. Since alternative content is the packaging of dance art in the form of 3D film, the major talking point is how the technological aesthetics of editing and camera work harmonize with the artistic aesthetics inherent in dance as the performing art and how it can present new image aesthetics along with the state-of-the-art of technology. While live dance performance emphasizes the dynamics and energy of movement, the dance as the 3D alternative content aims to realize the illusion of dance with fantastic three dimensional image capturing the eye of the audience and focuses on expression of delicate facial expression and body gesture of dancer through high-quality close-up image.

Alternative content can be regarded as one type of OSMU of dance. It is expected to become a way out for the pure art world to create new profit while they could survive only with the non-profit support. Live screening of theater and cinema can not only appeal the audience who cannot visit the dance theater easily, but also induce the audience of dance performance or movie only to enjoy the work in other media. That is, consuming products can be created in various forms and price range with one performance content, while dance performance market could accept the high priced performance ticker and one-time only performance. Now it is time when the classic ballet is regarded as not only the high-grade art where dressed up lady and gentlemen can enjoy at the opera house with dignity and pride of arts after they pass the red carpet, but also as the popular entertainment where anyone can enjoy in any form of clothing while enjoying popcorn and coke.

At this point of time, it is necessary to try planning that has alternative contents in mind from the stage of dance work creation. Then, it may result in expanding the contents production which was restricted to classic ballet to the area of contemporary dance, and developing new stratum of audience. Most cases of successes produced in drama, movie or musical as OSMU accompany the planning that considered the target audience, having this type of production in mind from the stage of planning. In particular, since 3D alternative content has aesthetic differentiation in terms of creation of fantasy and spectacle by suitable use of three dimensional image effect, selection of dance topic, choreographic style and movement technique that can emphasize such feature may become an important factor of success. Such planning and selection of topic is meaningful in that it can implement true 3D contents by identifying contents that can demonstrate more values and effects in 3D, rather than simple showing off of technology. It can be one of good solutions to dispel the criticism of dance critics that alternative contents subordinate arts to technology or cut its value by half.

5. References

- [1] Cookson, R., "Alternative content at cinemas draws in the masses", *Financial Times*, 2013. 6. 14, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f83bef68-d410-11e2-a464-00144feab7de.html#axzz310dNWflv>
- [2] Strabase, "Live Performance meets 3D, *Digital Future and Strategy* 70, 2011. 10, pp.3-4.
- [3] Korea Creative Content Agency, "A Case Study and Market Prospect on 3D Alternative Content", 3D/CG Issue Report, 2012. 8, <http://www.kocca.kr/knowledge/publication/3dcdg/icsFiles/afiedfile/2012/08/31/JV06roMOYNdm.pdf>