

A Study on the Stage Costume Design of the Opera <Oh, Hamel>

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Abstract

In this study, based on Choi, Jong Rim's script <Oh, Hamel>(2000), the main characters' stage costume designs were presented with 15 illustrated pieces in terms of compounding the images of Korea and West. I considered the main characters' social status and personality by each act and scene, as well as the correlation of the stage costume's minor theme, color and material.

In expressing the stage costume, this study has chosen the formational method of the comparative design dimensions between costumes in 1650s Joseon and baroque period and used the joinder of flat pattern and draping in various parts of the costumes.

Key words: Hamel, 1650s Joseon and baroque, San-hong, stage costume design, the joinder of flat pattern and draping

I. Introduction

1. The Purpose of the Study

In modern industrial society, The culture is very easily regarded as the same with a product of the cultural industry. Everything can be commercialized - not only festivals and performances held in small cities and villages but even also sports, movie, cartoon, disk and Kimchi.¹⁾

This study aimed at introducing the stage costume, which can be a connective bridge of the past and future customs and can be commercialized as performance culture by bringing the needs of the times into opera stage costume. Therefore this study was set up not only just stage costume, but also an overall effect to fashion design of modern society on each small

item as well as higher-value added of fashion.²⁾

The meaning of the word 'opera' in Italian is 'work of art'.³⁾ When Opera first appeared, it was referred to as 'Dramma per Musica'. Thus we have to understand opera as a composite play and art which is of dramatic tension closely planned with musical factors, and we should grasp that stage costumes symbolize the character's profession, economical and social status, age, taste, hobby, intellectual and sensible insight, and etc.⁴⁾ The stage costume ultimately leads to a greater ability to express the ideals or artistic atmosphere naturally, and through the symbolization of color and pattern,⁵⁾ it does not only visualize the character of each actor but also suggest the relationship between characters, Even if the period of time represented by the play is fixed,⁶⁾ and especially in historical

play, it is meaningless to reuse the costumes of past fashions in the modern stage, thus it is a good idea to apply modern fashions of costume, hair style and makeup based on references of past fashion but not to surpass the level of modern people's esthetic capacity.⁷⁾ The original production of the opera <Oh, Hamel> was to produce a play to rival productions for Korea such as *Madam Butterfly* for Japan, and *Turando*⁸⁾ for China. The production had been prepared for over 4 years by the passionate playwright, Choi, Jong-rim and staff from Korea and overseas, and it eventually became the official opera of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan.⁹⁾

Despite that the opera <Oh, Hamel> is picturing the middle period of the Joseon Dynasty as its setting, due to the general flow of world's views towards the combination of cultural interests and needs presented by the stage of composite art, this study is willing to present the images of each social status and stage costume including aesthetic sense of Korean culture to combine these stage costumes with those of both eastern and western fashion based on historical costumes of the period.

2. The Method of the Study

Since this is the first performance that there are no official records of the past <Oh, Hamel> performances, the personal interview was attempted to reflect the intent of the playwright. First, This study analyzed main characters by analyzing the structure of the script <Oh, Hamel>, and it investigated documents, real costumes and pictures based on 17th Joseon and baroque's historical costume background. Considered the fashion of 16th-18th century in

some parts, the costumes of the characters were examined from the King to the common people. Second, the plot of the opera <Oh, Hamel> (written by Choi, Jong-rim, 2000. unpublished) was analyzed. Third, the main character's costume designs, which were different from each other in each Scene and Act ; 15 illustrated pieces were presented as the way of comparing Eastern costume with the Western according to the points of color, material, pattern, and costume composition.

II. The Analysis of the Opera < Oh, Hamel>

1. Historical Background

The setting of the opera was based on the 4th year of the King Hyojong (in the year 1653) and was based on the writings¹⁰⁾ of Andrick Hamel (from Holland) following his 14 years on Jejudo after an unexpected shipwreck. At that time in Manchuria, Chung(清) Dynasty replaced Ming(明), as a result, two Manchu wars broke out in the Korean Peninsula and everything was unstable and insecure. Before and after the two wars, Western civilization came across the peninsula from Beijing(北京) through the land route slowly.¹¹⁾ It was also when commercial trade corporations of East India Company of the British Empire tried to colonize oversea trade strongholds in India, Indonesia and Nagasaki Harbor through the sea route.

To summarize the whole 17th century, Pan-international economic system appeared in Europe, but on the other hand, the northeastern Asia, where China was the dominant state of the balance of power, was gradually collapsing. In Holland, the hometown of Hamel and his

company, Federation of Dutch Republic was built in 1609 by the peace treaty of seven states, and liberal and democratic political system enriched the commercial agriculture of Holland because the federal assembly made important national decisions.¹²⁾ Holland with the trade merchants and the bourgeoisie as the central figure accomplished republicanism as its national system ahead of other European countries, which were still practicing monarchy and feudalism, and it could achieve much more successful progress as a commercial and industrial country based on republicanism.

2. Historical Costume Background

Because the play pictures the year of 1653 as its historical background, *Gonryeongpo*(崑龍袍) and *Danryeong* as for the King and military officers were based on *Gyeonggukdaejeon*(經國大典) and *Sokdaejeon*(續大典). Also as for heroine Sanhong, her dress and jacket were based on the two pictures, <Female Custom> and <Woman reading a book> pictured by Yun, Deok-hee, and excavated costumes and ornaments of 17 century. 1550s *Hojonangwan-gyehoido*(戶曹郎官契會圖) and 1730s *Ewongirohoedo*(梨園耆老會圖) were referenced for *Gisaeng*(妓生)s' costume. As for the costume of military general, Yangdang and *Gabju*(甲冑) were based on General Lee, Bong-sang(1676-1728)'s. To find out the costumes of lower class soldier, this study looked closely on 1786s *Anreungsinyeongdo*(安陵新迎圖) and 1795s *Hwaseongreunghaeng-dobyeong* according to their positions and places with *Deogre* and *Jeonbok*(戰服). About the sailors' costume, I took several pictures of a few people who used to come and go for Harbor Batavia and Nagasaki

as examples. Around that time, the costume from Holland gave big influence on European fashion, and it contributed to establish and generalize the practicality and rationality in mode, according to free civil spirit and Protestant principles of life. It also led the representative fashion style of Europe in 17th century. In the early and middle 17th century in European fashion, the style of Renaissance was still leading and dominant, but as the Holland spreaded its power to rest of Europe and led the European fashion. Before and after 1630s, aristocratic costumes were pourpoint, trunk hose, whisk, ruff, cape, and until 1660, cassock, falling band, rhinegraves, boots were found.

3. The Plot of Opera <Oh, Hamel>

The opera < Oh, Hamel> consisted of a total of 4 Acts and 6 Scenes. Although the main characters and their counterparts were not clearly introduced in the Scene1 Act 1, the main function of this first scene was to provide some indication towards the events to follow in the plot.¹³⁾ In Scene 2 Act 1, the events began to show signs of conflict. Hearing news of the search for the shipwrecked crew to capture and take them to Hanyang, Hamel asked the Jeju local minister's daughter, Sanhong to hide himself crawling into her room, to let him go back to his homeland or the port of Nagasaki. Sanhong hid him, and this provided some indication to the inevitable development of love between the two characters. In Act 2, King Hyojong as a powerful character was introduced and wished to separate the shipwrecked party and displayed the power and strength of the Joseon soldiers.¹⁴⁾ In Act 3, with Yonsil, Sanhong became a *Gisaeng* following the ruin of her family and coincidentally reunited with

Hamel's party who were looking for wood. Finally at this stage, the two discovered sure their love toward each other. If the first Scenes were detailing the conflict of Hamel and his crew in their desire to return to their homeland and the issues of the Emperor in the attempts to capture the crew, this scene and details carried a new theme of love and the conflicts that have risen within.

The escape of Hamel and his crew in Act 4 showed the nature of Sanhong's sacrificial love toward Hamel. It also detailed the conflict that Hamel faced in the decision between love and the return to his homeland. The fact that Sanhong was the one who strongly encourages Hamel to return, despite carrying Hamel's child in her body, she showed us the generosity and sacrificial nature of the Joseon women.

III. The Designs of Stage Costumes for the Opera <Oh, Hamel>

From the views of Cho, Ji-hun, reflecting the aesthetic nature of the Korean people - the term 'beauty', beauty arises from 'taste', and this sense of taste may be interchanged with pleasure to form the idea of beauty, and beauty arises from harmony, the division through size and self-harmony, and finally it reflects decoration, skills, changes in Actions, experience, and fashion. Beauty is also the pleasure of freedom of self-indulgence.¹⁵⁾ In the concept of past and present, Eastern and Western, and the limitations posed by the keeping regulation of tradition, we can find the beauty of Korea in this Opera <Oh, Hamel>. If the beauty of Japan is from 'its color', it may be said that the one of Joseon Dynasty is 'from its line'.¹⁶⁾ The nature of our art is characterized by

flow and motion, ultimately, beauty in itself. So that the beauty of line can be carried out through the costumes of opera <Oh, Hamel>, the materials were selected to expose their textures, and the colors were chosen to express frank but brilliant moderation. White and indigo colors were chosen for the choir and minor characters, and the more conspicuous colors were utilized only for the main characters to create a sense of conservatism and simplicity rather than the conflict in colors.

1. Costume Designs of Hamel, Cornelis, Jan, and Gerrit in Scene1, Act 1

1) Hamel

Minor theme: a symbol of passion

Color: red, emerald blue, dark brown

Material: silk gauze, corduroy, velvet

Character: a secretary and young man

Detail of design: Referring to real Cassock in Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, baroque slash on the shoulder, wrinkled ivory silk gauze at the end of the sleeve with falling band around neck stressed the crimson Cassock. The wide baggy pants were dark brown corduroy and embroidered with emerald blue in surface. The wide visor of the cap was decorated with peacock feather to bring out his status<fig. 1> .

2) Cornelis

Minor theme: rhythmical movement

Color: green, white,

Material: jacquard silk, raw silk, leather

Character: Dutch young crew

Detail of design: A green jacquard silk blouse with horizontal line and wrinkled white raw silk ruff was set under the collar. Baggy pants with white

<Table1> The main characters' costume design chart of the opera<Oh, Hamel>

Character	Status	Pantone color	material	Costume
Hamel	a secretary and young Dutch man,	18-4525tp, 19-1217tp, 19-1840tp.	corduroy, velvet silk gauze	Cassock, baggy pants, wide visor of the cap
Sanhong In Act3	Gisaeng(妓生)	14-2311tp	chiffon, raw silk	Dangui, wrap skirt, Galmo
Cornelis	Dutch young crew	15-0332tp	jacquard silk, raw silk	blouse jacket, baggy pants, ruff
Jan	Dutch old crew	17-1353tp, 11-4202tp,	Jacquard silk, raw silk, denim	cotton shirt, vest baggy pants
Gerrit	Dutch chief crew	17-1353tp, 11-4202tp, 19-4025tp	jacquard , cotton lace, denim.	cotton shirt, vest baggy pants falling band
King (Hyojong)	King in Joseon	16-0836tp, 18-1550tp,	Lame, brocade	Gonryongpo(袞龍袍) Ikseongwan(翼善冠)
Soldiers	General in Joseon	16-0836tp, 19-1321tp, 17-1553tp	polapolis, brocade	armors, helmet
Soldiers (Pojol)	lower class soldier in Joseon	19-3935tp, 13-5306tp, 12-0704tp.	Gapsa, denim Ikat silk	Goggal(교갈), Deogre(더그레) Jeonbok(戰服)
Yeonsil	Maid servant	19-3935tp, 11-0907tp	ramie, chiffon	Jeogori, long wrap skirt
Sanhong in Scene 1, Act 4	Pure Gisaeng(妓生) in Joseon Dynasty	19-4025tp, 11-0602tp	Gapsa, satin	Jeogori with stomacher, long wrap skirt
Sanhong in Scene 2, Act 4	Gisaeng(妓生) to farewell to lover	11-0602tp	Gapsa,beads, organza	strapless wrap skirt, shawl

shirring was designed to accentuate rhythmical movements when he moves. He wore a wool cap with narrow visor and leather boots of many cutting lines <fig. 2>.

3) Jan

Minor theme: adjustable sea

Color: white, orange

Material: cotton, knit, denim

Character: Dutch old crew

Detail of design: He wore a white cotton shirt with wide stripes, width adjustable baggy pants by button, and a vest with diagonal stripes along the both sides of princess line. White fur was sewn around the vest neck and the line of width

of armhole. The cap and baggy pants were ochreous orange color to give uniformity <fig. 3>.

4) Gerrit

Minor theme: authority is emphasized

Color: red, dark blue, white

Material: cotton, lace, denim

Character: Dutch captain of sailor

Detail of design: A well-creased cotton shirt, and a vest covered with red bias tape showing white inner shirt. Puritanical collar of falling band covered the vest. Baggy pants was fixed by a pair of knee-length socks. Authority was emphasized in his costume by using dark blue color <fig. 4>.

2. Costume Designs of the King and Soldiers in Scene 2, Act 1

1) King (Hyojong)

Minor theme: the King of oriental world

Color: gold, great red

Material: embroidery, lame, brocade

Character: the king of the Joseon

Detail of design: The *Gonryongpo*(袞龍袍) with *Ikseongwan*(翼善冠) was a newly designed to emphasize the image of the King, that is, the sun and moon were put on the both arms with the five peak mountain arranges, and the pattern of waves expressed weight and dignity of the King. Embroidered *Ojoryong*(五爪龍) exposing toenails in each side of the shoulder was designed to show coercive image of the king of the Joseon. The color was out of the great red and usually gold referring to the *Ikseongwan* of the King Sejong of Ming (明) <fig. 5>.

2) Soldiers (General)

Minor theme: the powerful and dreadful Joseon Dynasty

Color: gold, red

Material: polapolis, brocade

Character: general soldiers

Detail of design: Opposite to the Dutch folk dance, the dance of soldiers emphasized to express the powerful and dreadful Joseon Dynasty. Referring to the costume of the 17C General, Lee, Bong-sang(李鳳祥), the design was focused on the Yangdang, which had protected buddhist *Palsinjangsang*(八神將像)'s breast. The armors were made by leather as well as synthetic fiber, polapolis light but bulky. Helmet with gold dragon and phoenix on the frame <fig. 6>.

3) Soldiers (*Pojo*)

Minor theme: beauty of soldier

Color: light purple, white, reddish orange

Material: Gapsa, denim, Ikat silk

Character: lower class soldier

Detail of design: To their position by the different colors of *Goggal*(고깔), *Deogre*(더그레) and *Jeonbok*, soldier1 wore white *Jeonbok* with reddish orange *Dongdari*(狹袖) and black *Goggal*(고깔), soldier2 wore cross stripe purple *Cheolik*(天翼) <fig. 7>.

3. Costume Designs of Sanhong, Yeonsil in Act 3

1) Sanhong

Minor theme: Sanhong's pleasure to meet Hamel

Color: pinky light, white

Material: chiffon, raw silk

Character: *Gisaeng*(妓生) in Joseon

Detail of design: The exaggerated winkled lotus' flower leaved the image of *Gisaeng*(妓生). The head cover was also designed to give *Gisaeng*'s dance rhythmical movements as a skirt and *Danguil*(唐衣)do. The wide peaked hood hat was transformed Galmo instead of *Jeonmo*(氈帽), to be efficient to do fan-dance <fig. 8, 9>.

2) Yeonsil

Minor theme: the faithfulness

Color: indigo blue, black

Material: ramie, chiffon

Character: maid servant in Joseon

Detail of design: Yeonsil, who obeyed Sanhong to the last faithfully, was simply represented as



<Fig. 1> Hamel in Scene1, Act1.
Cassock, baggy pants



<Fig. 2> Cornelis in Scene1, Act1. falling
band, blouse jacket, baggy pants



<Fig. 3> Jan in Scene1, Act1.
cotton shirt, vest



<Fig. 4> Gerrit in Scene1,
Act1. falling band,
vest, baggy pants



<Fig. 5> King in Scene 2, Act1.
袞龍袍, 翼善冠



<Fig. 6> Soldier(General) in Scene
2, Act1. armors, helmet,
buckskin boots

indigo blue skirt with the patched *Jeogori* in ramie fabric, and the upraised hair covered with black chiffon <fig. 10>.

4. The Costume Design of Sanhong in Act 4

1) Sanhong in Scene1, Act 4

Minor theme: the eastern and western culture



Soldier1 Soldier2
 <Fig. 7> Soldiers(Pojol) in Scene 2, Act1.
 Deogre, Goggal, Jeonbok, Cheolik



<Fig. 8> San-hong in Act 3.
 Dangui, wrap skirt,
 Galmo



<Fig. 11> San-hong in Scene 1,
 Act4 Jeogori with
 stomacher, skirt



<Fig. 10> Yeonsil in Act 3.
 Jeogori, wrap skirt



<Fig.9> Gisaeng in Act 3
 Dangui, wrap
 skirt, Galmo



<Fig. 12> San-hong in Scene 2, Act4
 strapless wrap skirt, shawl

Color: ivory, indigo blue

Material: Gapsa, satin

Character: pure and firm Gisaeng(妓生)

Detail of design: ivory Jeogori was associated

Korean Jeogori's the dark blue ggeutdong(골동)

which stood for her son with western stomach,

The stomacher was stitched at 1cm intervals

symbolizing baroque. Indigo blue satin skirt was

made wrinkled and layered like western skirt <fig. 11>.

2) Sanhong in Scene2 Act 4

Minor theme: innocent first snow

Color: white

Material: Gapsa, organza, beads

Character: Gisaeng(妓生)to farewell to lover

Detail of design: A long hair, let down her wig, and waving long shawl in the wind containing grief, and decorated flower pattern brought up the image of innocent first snow. The strapless wrap skirt was sewed two-folded showing different color underskirt when lifted over the skirt. A small piece of breast cloth and purple fabrics were arranged with handmade embroidered small flower on the connected part with skirt to overcome simplicity of the dress. Transformed headdress, playing a shawl, was represented as a white, long and wide clothing like gown with Watteau pleat<fig. 12>.

IV. Conclusion

This study is willing to present the images of each social status and stage costume including aesthetic sense of Korean culture to combine these stage costumes with those of both eastern and western fashion based on historical costumes of the period.

The stage costume designs of the opera <Oh, Hamel> are as follows. The young Hamel's costume was designed with emerald blue and purple cassock that symbolize ocean and passion respectively to imply his passionate love toward Sanhong. Cornelis, Jan, Gerrit's were designed with the overall 17th century baroque's characteristic slash, whisk, falling band, ruff, loose

baggy pants, cassock, pourpoint and vest. *Gonryongpo*(袞龍袍) of Hyojong was designed with magnified *Ojoryong*(五爪龍) and *Ilwoloak*(日月五嶽) to symbolize his mighty power. The costume of the general was referred to a *Gapju*(甲冑) of General Lee, Bong Sang and designed to express the sharp volition of solid and strong Joseon by adding the Yangdang The colors of *deogre*(더그리) and *Jeonbok*(戰服) were differed in *Pojol's* costumes. Sanhong, who became *Gisaeng*(妓生) wore crinkle pleated skirt and long *Danguil*(唐衣) of rainbow-striped colors. *Gisaeng's* costumes were designed with such basic silhouette of *Sangbakhahu*(thin blouse and thick skirt) as Sanhong's . In Scene 1, Act IV, Sanhong's dress, patched with stomach in the *Jeogori* and Indigo blue skirt . In Scene 2, Act IV, she was dressed in white which symbolized her purity to express pure image of traditional lines and texture of Korea that symbolizes the immaculate love. She had to let go of Hamel by analyzing her feelings as the soft but strong image of everlasting first snow.

As above, patterns, materials, colors and silhouettes in the stage costume design are important to characters in opera. Moreover, we make it sure again that the stage costume designs based on historical investigation are necessary to opera, a composite art. The world becomes a daily living space recently. So, the culture of neighboring countries cannot remain as their own culture. Gradually the history of fashion as past affair is fading the meaning off, bridges a gap between past and future. And it is a mine of image resources which runs fashion culture business in capitalistic society through movies, operas, and media. I hope that the stage costume would become more specialized and individualized through a joinder of flat pattern and draping considering thorough historical records and materials

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