

論羅伯威爾森和優人神鼓的

《鄭和 1433》中的文化再生

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中文摘要

在2010年二月，台北國立中正文化中心製作了一齣名為《鄭和 1433》的戲劇。這齣戲是由美國享譽盛名的劇場導演羅伯威爾森和優人神鼓合作的演出。《鄭和 1433》的原創劇本是由劉若瑀所寫，並由優人神鼓演員黃誌群及歌仔戲演員唐美雲擔任演出。這齣戲是關於中國歷史上的偉大航海家鄭和的故事。優人神鼓、台灣歌仔戲演員、及台灣的觀眾有一個機會從一個西方人的觀點——威爾森的觀點——進入鄭和的內心世界。本論文探討《鄭和 1433》的跨文化元素，同時，進一步肯定在這種跨國合作下《鄭和 1433》中的文化再生。

關鍵字：羅伯威爾森，優人神鼓，《鄭和 1433》，鄭和，跨文化戲劇，文化再生

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The Cultural Regeneration in Robert Wilson's

1433—The Grand Voyage

with the U Theatre of Taiwan

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Abstract

In February 2010, National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center in Taipei produced a play called *1433—The Grand Voyage: A Music Theater Work Inspired by the Story of Admiral Zheng He*. The play was directed by the prestigious American theatre director Robert Wilson with the collaboration of the U Theatre of Taiwan. The original script written by Ruoyu Liu, and starring the U Theatre's Zhiqun Huang and Taiwanese Opera singer Meiyun Tang, *1433—The Grand Voyage* is a unique theatre work about a famous Chinese sea explorer of the Ming dynasty, Zheng He (1371-1433). From the perspective of the western eye—Wilson's eye, the local Taiwanese performance artists and the Taiwanese audience had a chance to enter the interior of Zheng He. This paper intends to discuss the intercultural elements in *1433—The Grand Voyage* and further confirms the cultural regeneration in such cross-cultural collaboration.

Key words: Robert Wilson, U Theatre of Taiwan, *1433—The Grand Voyage*, Zheng He, intercultural theatre, cultural regeneration

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1. Combining Past and Present in a Global Attempt

In February 2010, the National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center in Taipei produced a play called *1433—The Grand Voyage: A Music Theater Work Inspired by the Story of Admiral Zheng He*. The play was directed by the prestigious American theatre director Robert Wilson with the collaboration of the U Theatre of Taiwan. With an original script written by Ruoyu Liu, and starring the U Theatre's Zhiquan Huang and Taiwanese Opera singer Meiyun Tang, *1433—The Grand Voyage* is a unique theatre work about a famous Chinese sea explorer of the Ming dynasty, Zheng He (1371-1433). From the perspective of Wilson's western eye, the local Taiwanese performance artists and the Taiwanese audience had a chance to enter the interior of Zheng He. This paper will discuss the intercultural elements in *1433—The Grand Voyage* and the cultural regeneration² in such cross-cultural collaboration. This paper argues that *1433—The Grand Voyage* has produced three major benefits: Robert Wilson's absorption of Chinese performing arts and Chinese history, the rejuvenation of the local theatrical professionals and the rereading of Zheng He's history. This intercultural collaboration has therefore empowered cultural regeneration in Taiwan.

^{1*} I thank the three reviewers for their comments and corrections. I also thank Ms. Belle Jingyi Hsu of the National Theatre and Concert Hall for her kindness in answering my interview questions and Mr. Bin Xu for generously allowing me to use the photographs of *1433—The Grand Voyage*.

² I choose the term "cultural regeneration" but not "cultural reproduction" to refer to the revitalization of culture. As Chris Jenks states, "...the majority of contributions to [the field of the sociology of culture and cultural studies] have developed the metaphor of reproduction as copy or imitation rather than as regeneration or synthesis" (2). I in the present research use "cultural regeneration" to emphasize the power to revivify and rejuvenate our cultural capital in this joint international performance project.

After Britain drafted laws to develop their creative industries in the 1990s,³ many countries East and West began to be aware of the tremendous influence and profits cultural production could bring. The government in Taiwan also began launching plans related to cultural production and creativity in 2002; meanwhile, it started to promote cultural industry along with the fast pace of globalization. This joint effort of Robert Wilson and the U Theatre of Taiwan—the so-called flagship project of the National Theatre and Concert Hall (NTCH) for the 2010 Taiwan International Art Festival, consequently followed this guideline of cultural production in the context of the trend of interculturalism.

Often known for his avant-garde style in the 1960s and 1970s, the Theatre of Images, and his international collaborations with world famous artists, Robert Wilson has been considered one of the greatest theatre-makers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁴ In a local Taiwanese theatrical critic's term, Wilson is “an international name brand in the field of theatre” (Geng, *Robert* 217). Two of the reasons for his accomplishments are his incessant effort to break through conventions and his entrepreneurial collaborations with well-established artists in the world. Wilson often attempts to present his theatrical works from the perspective of a physically disabled spectator,⁵ an architect, or a photographer. He enjoys blending two totally diverse elements in his works to help inspire and enlighten the people involved in the performance as well as the audience. This radical but often innovative approach brings mutual benefits for Wilson and his collaborators. Favoring “the method of cross-culture” to bring forth deterritorialization (Wilson, Newman, and Schechner 113), Wilson has had many experiences working with internationally famous artists. In his book *Robert Wilson and His Collaborators*, Lawrence Shyer thoroughly records Wilson's long-term friendship and cooperation with “that international army of artists” (Brustein ix) up until 1989 and praises this American visionary.

³ Different countries use different terms to name this newly-arisen production. Britain uses “creative industries,” America “copyright industries,” Japan “content industry,” and Korea “cultural industry” and “content industry.” See Wang and Guan's “The Condition of Cultural and Creative Industries Development in the Major Countries of the World and Its Enlightenment on Taiwan.”

⁴ For his background and biography, see Robert Wilson's official website <http://www.robertwilson.com/>.

⁵ Because he had problems with language learning when young, because he once adopted a deaf-mute child, and because he worked several times with artists who are physically disabled (Wilson, Newman, and Schechner 113), Wilson pays particular attention to how the physically disabled people perceive the world.

Wilson began his contact with Taiwan in 2007 when he came for a lecture organized by the NTCH (Hsu),⁶ which was soon followed by his production of Indonesian epic *I La Galigo* in Taipei. In 2008, His collaboration with Taiwan's national award winner Peking opera diva Haiming Wei for the production of *Orlando* (also produced by the NTCH), instanced the first encounter between Wilson's "West" and Taiwan's "East."

Wilson was interested in the U Theatre because both he and the U Theatre emphasize body movements and physical performances rather than texts and dialogues.⁷ Founded by Ruoyu Liu in 1988,⁸ the U Theatre features the incorporation of drum-metered meditation and martial art forms (NTCH 19). This spiritual concern of the U Theatre transcending the realistic practice of European theatre tradition immediately appealed to the visionary theatre master Wilson, who always tries to find alternatives to conventional western theatre's reliance upon dramatic texts and words.⁹

2. The Intercultural 1433—*The Grand Voyage*

The fruit of the encounter between Wilson and the U Theatre is the inspiring musical theatre work, *1433—The Grand Voyage*, an ambitious integration of Wilson's Theatre of Images, jazz music, the U Theatre's drumming and acting, and Meiyun Tang's Taiwanese opera narration.¹⁰ With the exception of Naiwen Lin, who thinks the play's intention to revisit the story of Zheng He was not very effective, most local Taiwanese theatre critics reacted favorably to such intercultural theatrical collaboration. While Yiwei Geng lauds for the harmonious blending of many heterogeneous elements in the play, Hong Hong thinks highly of the aesthetic representation and anti-violence thematic concern. Genquan Ye also praises the new perspective in such collaboration when revisiting Chinese history.

⁶ Based on Belle Jingyi Hsu, the Executive Producer of the NTCH, it was also at this time that Wilson was introduced through the NTCH to the famous Taiwanese performance group—the U Theatre (NTCH).

⁷ Belle Jingyi Hsu also points out that Wilson was very impressed by the U Theatre's drum beat and the power embedded in their concentrated and tranquil body movements (NTCH).

⁸ For the information about the U Theatre, see their official website <http://www.utheatre.org.tw/>.

⁹ That Wilson is interested in Asian Theatre can be found in many of the books and articles on his theatre concept. Japan's Noh theatre is one example of his interest in Asia. He clearly expressed why he is interested in Asian Theatre in his interviews (Spiegel 100; Geng, "Interview" 23).

¹⁰ For more information about the biography of Meiyun Tang and her Taiwanese opera background, see her official website <http://www.meiyunt.org.tw/>.

Different from the aforementioned critics' primary concern over the theatrical and aesthetic values, this paper argues that, in spite of the unknown dissemination effect of such costly cross-cultural collaboration, *1433—The Grand Voyage* has benefitted all parties involved. It has given Robert Wilson the opportunity to learn about Chinese culture and Taiwanese theatre, the opportunity for local artists to reinvent themselves, and the opportunity for audiences to reread the history of Zheng He. Wilson's Taiwan experience, the U Theatre's and Meiyun Tang's experiences presenting Zheng He in the "Wilsonian" way, and Taiwanese audiences' experiences reinterpreting Zheng He all contribute to the making of cultural regeneration. In the following parts, I will explicate the intercultural elements and cross-cultural dialogues in this play from three aspects: Wilson, local theatrical professionals, and Taiwanese audiences.

2.1 Zheng He in Wilson's Theatre of Images

When elaborating on intertextual clashes between East and West, Patrice Pavis notices "the dialectic of exchanges of civilities between cultures" (*Theatre* 2). He believes, "It is no longer enough to describe the relationships between texts (or even between performances) to grasp their internal functioning; it is also necessary to understand their inscription within contexts and cultures and to appreciate the cultural production that stems from these unexpected transfers" (Pavis, *Theatre* 2). It is not difficult to detect *1433—The Grand Voyage* abounds in such "unexpected transfers." No matter whether it is stage, lighting, costume, sound, and acting, Wilson presents Zheng He and history through a panoramic and all-embracing humanistic perspective.

Although the story of the play is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, the stage design of *1433—The Grand Voyage* reflects Wilson's consistent simplistic style. Thanks to such simplicity, Wilson gives us a straightforward and holistic approach to the story of Zheng He. A big bare stage, devoid of all but a few simple props allows us to enter the vastness of Zheng He's expeditions at sea and his journey of recollection. A few bamboo sticks combine with a huge piece of cloth hanging from the top to represent Zheng He's treasure ship and fleet, and the little platform surrounded by beaded curtains symbolizes Princess's Libo's palace. With an eye on the simple dreamscape, critic Yiwei Geng thinks this play is very "surrealistic" ("Memory" 61).

Wilson's lighting design creates greater emotional intensity through its directness. For example, with the huge back stage screen filled with the red light, the lighting suggests dangerous events enacted on stage (See Figure 1). Though famous for his intricate Chinese ethnic style, Oscar-winning costume designer Tim Yip

impresses the audiences with the exaggerating and geometrical puppet or sculpture style,¹¹ evoking a sense of stiff historicity in such a great historical figure.



Figure 1. Courtesy of the National Theatre and Concert Hall. Photographed by Bin Xu.

Wilson regards the actor as an “audience catalyst” who invites the audience to share the moments of his acting (Geng, “Interview” 23). Although he prefers slow and simple body movements, he still gives the actors of the play lots of freedom. The acting of this play is in line with both Wilson’s slow motion principle and the U Theatre’s slow and meditative body movements. The lead Zhiqun Huang most of the time assumes a mime actor, immobilized, slow, elegant, but most of the time stiff (See Figure 2). Critic Geng speaks highly of such acting strategy and believes Huang’s stiff body moves like the ones found in the “shadow show” bring not only alienation effects but also a sense of history (“Memory” 63).

¹¹ Yip mentions that Wilson’s principle of costume design in this play is “not just to be confined to the Chinese cultural background but also neutral abstract lines” and for makeup “neither Chinese operatic face paint nor African indigenous totem but a vague combination of both in geometrical shapes” (Liao 67).



Figure 2. Courtesy of the National Theatre and Concert Hall. Photographed by Bin Xu.

Most critics favor the sound design of the play, principally the sparkling music mixed with Ornette Coleman's free jazz, Dickie Landry's saxophone and ocarina, and Meiyun's Tang's Taiwanese operatic narration and arias (Geng, "Memory" 62; Li 70; Ye 2010; Hong 2010) (See Figure 3).



Figure 3. Courtesy of the National Theatre and Concert Hall. Photographed by Bin Xu.

Overall, the stage performance reminds one of the Theatre of Images, for which Wilson is famed. In many aspects, the play about this historical Chinese figure has a Chinese core, but overall, the play is still very dreamscape. The spectators might not get much about this great explorer's heroic deeds in detail after seeing the play, but with all the elements of the story defamiliarized, the audience for the first time feels estranged from the familiar story of "Eunuch Sanbao journeying to the western ocean (*Sanbao taijian xia xiyang* 三寶太監下西洋)¹²." Beneath the surface, Wilson has integrated Chinese elements of history and theatre into the performance.

¹² "Sanboa" is Zheng He's other name. According to Lu He, "Sanboa" might be from a common Arabic name—Simbad (2005: 139). The story of Zheng He, however, is popularized through a vernacular novel called *The Popular Romance of Eunuch Sanbao to the Western Ocean* (*Sanbao taijian xiyang ji tongsu yanyi* 三寶太監西洋記通俗演義). For more recent research on Zheng He, see Fang and Li's *Meeting Zheng He on the Sea*.

In fact, one might detect Wilson's fascination in the figure of Zheng He since one of his favorite images is "voyage" (Holmberg 117). Furthermore, the special Chinese time space of the Ming dynasty reflected through Zheng He's loyalty to his emperor, the peace-mission imperial policy of the Yongle Emperor, old Zheng He's reminiscence of his whole life of ups and downs in his political career and his reticent love all make the Zheng He in archaic and immobilized history a man with flesh and blood. From a westerner's eye through the Theatre of Images, this Zheng He is different. Apparently, what Wilson has learned and would like to share with us in such intercultural collaboration is that Zheng He should be rediscovered as an ordinary man and should be respected as such.

In addition to his cultivation in Chinese history, the history of Zheng He par excellence, Wilson has had close contact with the performing art concepts and skills of the U Theatre and Taiwanese opera. Described as "the human sponge" by Maita de Niscemi, Wilson always learns through imitation and assimilation (Brustein xiv). It is expected that this great theatre master might incorporate this collaboration experience in future and help enrich the Chinese or Taiwanese cultural capital globally.

2.2 Zheng He to the Local Taiwanese Artists

Collaborating with Robert Wilson, the local artists learned fruitfully first to take a brand new look at Zheng He and second to liberate and rediscover themselves. Both the U Theatre and Meiyun Tang not only had a chance to know Zheng He more, but they also understood him more from the perspective of an "other"—a Caucasian director. One has to admit that, without the involvement of a Caucasian director, the story of Zheng He should be dramatic and fantastic enough as source materials for a modern theatre work.¹³ However, revisiting this part of Chinese history through Wilson's eye perhaps brings about a more profound understanding of Zheng He, since like Wilson, Zheng He is not Chinese. He is in fact a descendent of Persians. Moreover, the local theatrical professionals were told by Wilson to get rid of their traditional ideology and training background so that they could overcome themselves.

Judged by the informative and vivid information about Zheng He's life in "The Program," the original script writer Ruoyu Liu has probably benefitted most in relearning about Zheng He. She chooses to begin telling Zheng He's life from the time before his last voyage, a time that marks the break of his demoted life from his past glorious achievement of the six amazing expeditions to Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Africa. I agree with the reviewers' opinion that it is a well-chosen time

¹³ The story of Zheng He became a hot topic in Chinese TV production in the 2000s. It was made into many films and special TV programs, including *Zheng He* produced by China's Central Television in 2005. Even foreign media National Geographic Channel shot a program called *Zheng He* in 2008.

to dramatize the Admiral's melancholy in demotion (Lin 2010; Hong 2010). The play progresses directly and linearly without complicated plot arrangements because the life of Zheng He itself is dramatic enough.

In the prologue and the twelve scenes, Zheng He's late life moves chronologically from the time he was summoned by the Xuande Emperor for another voyage, the voyage itself, to his death on the voyage home.¹⁴ According to Ruoyu Liu, Zheng He's life is filled with contradictory and tragic elements (Liu 50-51). The thirty-seventh descendent of Muhammad, he was not only a Persian but also a Muslim, was castrated at the age of eleven after most of his family members were killed by the Ming soldiers, was brought to the palace, became the most favorite eunuch of Prince Zhu Di (later the Yongle Emperor), was promoted to be an Admiral leading 200 ships and over 20,000 people each of the six voyages westward, was demoted to be Defender of Nanjing for six years after the Emperor died, set sail again at the age of 60 at the seventh and final voyage, and then died at sea on his voyage back home.

From the fact that Zheng He was only briefly mentioned in the Chronicle of the Ming dynasty, and that there is no mentioning of his name in his family genealogy, Ruoyu Liu laments for Zheng He's fate and life. In spite of his unprecedented discoveries and amazing expeditions, Zheng He is intentionally forgotten, because of his ethnicity and his status as a castrated eunuch. Liu implies that both the Ming historian of Confucian ideology and the Muslim patriarchs of Zheng He's family discriminate against him even if, in our eyes of the twentieth-first century, Zheng He is truly a great adventurer and hero (Liu 51). Thanks to the advent of this intercultural performance, all can now approach Zheng He from a new light. It is not surprising to find the scriptwriter herself declares that she hopes to redeem history and to present Zheng He from a humanistic point of view (Liu 52).

Likewise, major actors Zhiqun Huang and Meiyun Tang were reeducated about Zheng He's story. Moreover, these local performing artists also learned more about performing through overcoming themselves from the clash of East and West. Because of the Wilsonian theatrical style, Zhiqun Huang (Zheng He) is asked to act in such a mechanical way in his robotic uniform with the white-washed motionless face that he appears to be quite flat. As a contrast to stiff Huang, Meiyun Tang (The Storyteller) is filled with vitality in narrating Zheng He's life in reminiscence. The contrast between static Zheng He and the agile Storyteller implies that even though Zheng He in history

¹⁴ According to "The Program" the twelve scenes are "The Lonely Tranquil Sea Temple," "Receiving the Imperial Edict again," "The Last Voyage," "The Moving City," "The Muslim 'Noble'," "Making Peace in Annam," "Atoning for the Palembang Incident," "The Tempest," "The Sultan's Banquet," "Farewell to Princess Hang Li Bo," "The Direction of the Mind," and "No Name in His Pedigree" (NTCH 11).

books is “flat,” our interpretation needs not to be so confined and lifeless. Indeed, it urges us to reread Zheng He with more space of imagination from different perspectives. As a consequence, Wilson has succeeded again in “breaking through” conventions and pushing the local artists to think.

In addition to understanding Zheng He more from a new and foreign perspective, the local artists had a good opportunity to challenge themselves by breaking through the conventional training they previously received because Wilson, not knowing the Chinese language and having no intention to know the language or to dominate the actors’ interpretation, usually gives his actors plenty of freedom in their acting. He simply wants “a certain distance” between the actors and the audience (Enright 17).

Among the local artists who have benefitted immensely from such joint production is Meiyun Tang. Transcending the boundary of gender, Meiyun Tang has been a *xiaosheng* (male lead) in Taiwanese Opera since young. Now in this intercultural work, she not only displays her brilliant acting, but she also has to improvise herself in singing or even rapping to Dickie Landry’s jazz music. As a critic puts it, as opposed to the puppet-like protagonist in the play, Meiyun Tang’s Storyteller is lively and versatile: “from an old man, a child, a Chaplin clown, a blind man, to a pub singer” (See Figure 4), Tang stuns us with her improvisation with the live musician (Hong 2010).



Figure 4. Courtesy of the National Theatre and Concert Hall. Photographed by Bin Xu.

Moreover, the result of Tang's "playing" with eastern drama and western music is in effect rather new and pleasant. As mentioned earlier, all the critics were impressed and pleased by the harmony in such musical hybridization. One has to confess that while all forms of traditional Chinese drama, including Taiwanese Opera, is declining due to the menace of big-budgeted movies and highly accessible video games, sitting in the National Theatre and listening to Tang's melodious Taiwanese operatic singing, such as Tang poet Tu Fu's "Writing about One's Feelings at Night on a Journey" (*Lu ye shu huai* 旅夜書懷), to the superb jazz saxophone music, is indeed a good way to ignite the audience's passion of, or to arouse the audience's interest in, the old forms of poetry and drama. The storyteller's Taiwanese operatic chanting and singing and the jazz musician's saxophone can spark each other and give the audience a very new and joyful experience, urging them to unlearn/relearn the familiar Chinese art. One critic mentions the positive outcome of such cross-cultural and cross-art-form contact is partly because both Taiwanese Opera and Jazz are free and flexible (Geng, "Memory" 62). Collaborating with Wilson thus brings unexpected cultural regeneration.

2.3 Zheng He to the Taiwanese Audience

To the Taiwanese audience, *1433—The Grand Voyage* educates us to reevaluate and reinterpret Zheng He and to rethink the problem of history. As Ruoyu Liu puts it, most of the Taiwanese like her probably knew only superficially about the phrase “Eunuch Sanbao journeying to the western ocean” when it comes to the impression of Zheng He (Liu 50). It is really a shame that we Chinese did not know much about this great sea explorer until the advent of *1433—The Grand Voyage*. Within the life story of Zheng He, numerous dimensions are worthy of scrutiny.¹⁵ But this play teaches us that this Muslim Chinese hero at the age of 60 laments for his castration, for his past atrocity over the Vietnamese he massacred, for the unpredictability of life, and for being distorted and forgotten by history. Hence, when revisiting the same countries at the seventh voyage and his memories, Zheng He has repentance and reconciliation, as is manifested by the Storyteller’s sad and regretful tone of narration. Furthermore, this play teaches us that the significance of Zheng He needs to be rediscovered and remembered, and he needs to be respected as a human being.

One critic complains that the play, fragmented with Zheng He’s life episodes, does not give us a whole picture or further understanding of Zheng He (Lin 2010). I think otherwise. Both Wilson and Ruoyu Liu, through Meiyun Tang’s storytelling and Zhiqun Huang’s acting, want the audience to get rid of the old mindset and to interpret history with more flexibility. What then is the theme of *1433—The Grand Voyage*? What does the play want to tell us? A local theatre critic Hong Hong thinks one theme of the play is anti-violence or anti-imperialism (Hong). But he also agrees that the play encourages us to have “reflection and reconciliation.” Indeed, both the playwright and director simply leave the audience infinite space for interpretation and meditation. The many facades of Zheng He’s life in this play implicate history, or more precisely, the history of Zheng He, should not be buried, immobilized, or distorted; it should be open for revisitation and revision.

In an interview with Taiwanese local theatre critic Yiwei Geng, Wilson clarifies his production concept by saying, “In my works I hope to offer people a space to think. It involves flexible time; one either accelerates it or slows it down. It does not belong to intellectual knowledge; it is something you can experience” (Geng,

¹⁵ These aspects include the migration and adjustment of Muslims in China during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, the Chinese discrimination against and massacre of Arabs, Persians and Muslims, the Ming sovereignty’s policy of navigation and trade on sea, the Ming emperors’ peace mission and imperialism, China’s change from a high culture and super sea power to a closed country complacent with her declining power, the eunuch’s trauma, wounded masculinity, and mentality, and even the eunuch’s world of love relation, etc.

“Interview” 22). Wilson gives the audience a chance to think critically about “the great Chinese ethnic hero” Zheng He. As Geng puts it, *1433—The Grand Voyage* is transformed by Wilson into “a space of reminiscence” and also “a free voyage of inner memories”; Wilson, the captain of the voyage, invites the audience to sail with him (Geng, “Memory” 63). The play, with its new perspective and estranged episodes of Zheng He’s life, really gives us a lesson and invites us to actively search for more knowledge about this great man. In a nutshell, the local performing artists and audiences understand Zheng He more and have learned to approach Chinese history from a more liberal perspective.

3. Conclusion

While this intercultural collaboration has generated much cultural impact on local artists and audiences, critic Genquan Ye draws our attention not to be intoxicated and blinded by the aura of Wilson’s fame without examining what the true value of *1433—The Grand Voyage* is and what power and influence this intercultural collaboration with Wilson can bring for Taiwan (Ye 2010). Indeed, we should be self-reflexive and vigilant when the production expense of *1433—The Grand Voyage* must be alarmingly big.

But I think this collaboration is worth it. The first reason is that Wilson has absorbed Chinese art and culture. Second, Wilson is the right medium to market Taiwan’s soft power. When analyzing Wilson’s *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), critic Maria Shevtsova points out the trend of interculturalism in the field of theatre in this era of globalization and Wilson happens to be one who knows well how to combine theatre productions and global marketing (88). At the current stage, we are not sure about whether this flagship project theatre work is cost efficient or not; however, with the schedule of the play to be performed in Singapore and the Netherlands in the near future, *1433—The Grand Voyage* will allow more people, certainly foreigners, a chance to know this great Chinese explorer as well as the fantastic performing arts of Taiwan. Third, Wilson is a visionary. I agree with what critic Hong Hong has stated: “*1433—The Grand Voyage* is worthy of such big budget because this play ‘creates new visions’” (Hong 2010). Given the aforementioned advantages brought from such cross-cultural contact between Wilson, the U Theatre, and Taiwan opera, this play signals a new era in Taiwan’s performing arts. It also encourages the Taiwan government to engage in more projects of cultural regeneration and to connect with the global market.

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