

Analysis of the Emotional Narrative Effects in Music Variety Shows: A Case Study of Singer 2025

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Abstract: As a record-breaking music variety show, Singer 2025 has sparked a wave of enthusiasm among audiences both domestically and internationally. By centering on an immersive experience and introducing innovative concepts and formats, the program has pioneered four major interactive mechanisms under the "Nationwide" series. These initiatives deeply engage music enthusiasts and establish a participatory and interactive model for emotional storytelling.

Keywords: music variety shows; Singer 2025; emotional narrative; emotional resonance; emotional energy

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Introduction

With the development of the cultural content industry, music variety shows have emerged in an endless stream. Owing to their high levels of entertainment and interactivity, they have secured a distinct position among program genres. Upon its debut, Hunan TV's Singer series created a phenomenal prime-time event on weekend evenings, in which emotional narrative played a pivotal role.

Effective emotional narrative requires placing the audience in an affective state capable of yielding specific outcomes. By eliciting emotions and motivating audiences to engage proactively, such a narrative can achieve a sequential impact encompassing emotional cohesion, emotional appeal, emotional mobilization, and ultimately, emotional identification. It is through this process that music variety shows can achieve successful communication. Using Singer 2025 as a case study, this paper analyzes the effects elicited by the program's emotional narrative strategies, aiming to provide valuable insights for future practices in other music variety shows.

1 Anchoring Viewing Motivation and Eliciting Emotional Resonance to Achieve "Emotional Cohesion"

By leveraging the universal language of music, technology-enabled immersive experiences, and an in-depth exploration of music's essence, Singer 2025 has established a program paradigm that transcends national, technological, and cultural boundaries. This approach not only showcases the unique allure of music but also constructs an "emotional community" deeply connected to the audience's inner world.

1.1 Enhanced Audience Agency Elevates Emotional Anticipation

The flawless execution of a music variety show relies heavily on robust technical support, as innovation and breakthroughs in technology give rise to new interactive formats. Building upon the creative formula of its predecessor—full live broadcasts, uncompromised vocal performances, and no post-production pitch correction—Singer 2025 introduced technological innovations to enhance audience interaction. Specifically, it launched four major interactive initiatives, termed the "Nationwide Series," which include "Nationwide Watch Parties," "Nationwide Directing," "Nationwide Predictions," and "Nationwide Viewing." These initiatives leverage social media and live-streaming platforms to achieve an iterative upgrade in interactivity, significantly expanding the reach of its emotional narrative.

Furthermore, the expectations of younger audiences for music variety shows are shifting from mere "functional satisfaction" to "emotional resonance," from "content consumption" to "emotional investment," and from fragmented "contextual engagement" to deep "immersive experiences." The four initiatives provide a sense of immediacy, presence, and flow, making online viewers feel as if they are part of the live audience, resonating in real-time with the on-site spectators. For Singer 2025, the audience is no longer a passive recipient but an active participant in the narrative, an influencer of the plot development, and a co-creator in the program's evolution. This enhanced agency is a key reason for the show's sustained audience loyalty.

1.2 Cultural Diversity Fosters a "Global Village of Music"

In its construction of multiculturalism, Singer 2025 brought together singers from China, the United States, Japan, Brazil, Malaysia, and other countries. This approach not only highlighted distinct regional cultural traits but also facilitated cultural translation. By promoting the concept of a "global village of music," the program transformed its stage into a vibrant arena for intercultural dialogue. On this world-class platform, seasoned veterans and emerging new artists, familiar faces and surprising international talents, shared the spotlight. Their performances presented a mosaic of diverse musical traditions, demonstrating the compelling charm of blending different styles and thereby enhancing the show's efficacy in international communication.

When a singer stepped out of their "comfort zone" to courageously challenge a "new musical style," the underlying narrative of courage and breakthrough resonated deeply with audiences seeking change or striving to overcome their own adversities, thereby achieving a profound emotional connection. This emotional resonance serves as the fundamental impetus that transforms individual viewing behavior into active sharing and discussion on social media, laying the groundwork for subsequent emotional mobilization.

2 Interaction Between PGC and UGC Extends the Immersive Music Experience and Facilitates "Emotional Appeal"

Professionally Generated Content (PGC) provides the initial emotional framework, while User-Generated Content (UGC) highlights collective emotional collaboration. The effective synergy between PGC and UGC constructs a complete interaction ritual chain. This synergy transforms the program experience from being "watched" to being "participated in" and even "co-created," thereby broadening the dissemination of content and mitigating the risk of audience emotional fatigue.

2.1 Cross-Platform Interaction Reconstructs Media-Audience Relationships

Traditional television music variety shows relied on a one-way, singular communication model, which limited interaction with the audience and the reception of feedback. As the media environment evolved, audiences developed an expectation for "instant feedback," compelling music variety shows to innovate their interactive formats. Within the emotional narrative system of Singer 2025, the positive interaction between PGC and UGC forms a closed loop of content dissemination across traditional and new media, aggregating powerful emotional appeal and unleashing a fission-like communication effect.

The official accounts meticulously produced highlights, pre-show rehearsals, vertical screen focus cams, and behind-the-scenes footage, sharing them on platforms like Weibo, Douyin, Kuaishou, and WeChat Channels. Leveraging digital algorithms, this content reached and attracted a broader audience, providing unique aesthetic experiences and profound emotional value while accumulating greater traffic. Following the broadcast, users creatively edited memorable performance moments, posted reflections inspired by the music, and shared secondary creations such as music reviews, lyrical interpretations, song covers, and impersonations of the singers, leading to viral spread. This UGC creation process, which integrates program content with personal emotion, transcends mere replication of the original material. It becomes an act of emotional amplification and re-creation, constituting a collective discursive practice by the audience. Thus, in the age of social media, the content production model for music variety shows has shifted from producer-created content to co-created content.

PGC guides UGC, while UGC, in turn, enriches PGC. The two are complementary, with their boundaries increasingly blurring, moving towards a new stage of integration and symbiosis. Together, they form a cyclical content and emotional ecosystem for music variety shows. By efficiently integrating media resources and consistently occupying the audience's mindspace with high-quality content and emotional narratives, music variety shows can truly excel in the context of deeply integrated media.

2.2 The Interaction Ritual Chain Unleashes Emotional Energy Through Online Communities

The advent of information technology has extended the social interactions of audiences into online communities. As a virtual interactive space characterized by both spatial and emotional connectivity, the online community serves as a crucial platform for audiences to express opinions and share emotions. Within participatory culture, audiences are no longer merely passive recipients of cultural products but active consumers of media content. Like the program producers, they possess an equal right to interpret the narratives of music variety shows.

During live broadcasts, expression becomes the most direct way for individuals to convey their emotional attitudes. Audiences spontaneously establish or join groups on social media platforms centered around a specific music variety show. They follow the same topics, post bullet comments, engage in discussions, and participate in program-related interactions. By observing and responding to the feedback of other members, they continually adjust their own expressions. Ultimately, this process fosters emotional convergence within the same virtual space, leading to a collective euphoria and generating shared ritual solidarity. This dynamic forms an interaction ritual chain that translates music from an auditory experience into a cognitive one, and finally into tangible online engagement—completing a communicative cycle of emotional encoding, decoding, and reproduction.

Singers pour genuine emotion into every note, transforming music from a mere studio spectacle into a vessel for emotional dialogue. Music possesses the unique advantage of fostering emotional connection among audiences without the need for linguistic translation. Triggered by the music, audiences generate initial emotional energy, which is then amplified through interactions within online communities. This process culminates in a sustained sense of collective belonging, following a cyclical mechanism of "investment-amplification-reproduction" of emotional energy.

Functioning as an "emotional bond," these communities, activated by both PGC and UGC, create additional circuits for emotional energy to collide and resonate. This generates powerful emotional currents, constructing a coherent and intense narrative atmosphere that permeates the daily lives of the public. Consequently, music variety shows become significant spiritual sustenance for music enthusiasts.

3 "Emotional Mobilization" Facilitates the Breakout Diffusion of Hit Songs

Emotion serves as a mobilizable resource that can facilitate collective action. The process through which audiences, via emotional expression, stimulate or alter others' cognitive attitudes, evaluations, and even incite action during sustained interactions is termed emotional mobilization.

3.1 Nationwide Participation Opens the Valve for Emotional Embedding and Performance

Emotional mobilization begins with emotional embedding and performance. This ongoing emotional enactment drives the flow and dissemination of information, ultimately transforming individual perspectives into shared emotional resonance and meaning. Music, as a language of emotion, utilizes the rise and fall of melodies, variations in rhythm, and the application of timbre to swiftly capture audience attention, creating a fertile ground for emotional mobilization.

Simultaneously, the audiovisual enjoyment derived from music variety shows requires minimal cognitive investment from the audience, resulting in immediate emotional memories. This immediacy, however, often shortens the communication lifecycle of individual musical works. Within the fragmented media landscape, live broadcasting allows the audience to experience every moment of the competition alongside the singers. This sense of co-presence intensifies parasocial interactions, fostering powerful emotional resonance and mobilization

potential.

Singer 2025 established a technologically enabled interactive model based on its "Four Major Initiatives." This framework grants ordinary viewers, fan communities, and KOLs a form of "decision-making power," transforming them into proactive agents of emotional mobilization. This process generates intense emotional energy, leading to a proliferation of emotionally charged content and dissemination channels, which undoubtedly expands the program's reach and enhances the longevity of its musical impact. By facilitating a nationwide carnival of musical appreciation, Singer 2025 performs emotion on a grand scale—a key strategy for capturing significant public engagement.

3.2 Musical Works as Emotional Signifiers Diffusing into Social Discourse

When musical performance intersects with the socio-cultural context, it transforms into an emotional signifier, open to audience interpretation and re-creation. The emotions conveyed by songs performed on music variety shows can achieve genuine breakout diffusion—transcending the circle of music enthusiasts and entering broader public discourse—precisely when they resonate with social issues of widespread public concern.

For instance, singer Single Pure's performance, which ingeniously blended electronic "China-chic" with internet meme culture, featured her dramatically tossing red hair and passionately roaring the repetitive, spoken-word lyrics "So what? What can you do?" in a fantastical rearrangement of the song "Li Bai." In another example, Bai Jugang subverted the original song's subdued melancholy by introducing electronic soundscapes and symphonic elements to build an intense narrative. His rendition of "Seagull," delivered with raw, high-pitched vocals and powerful body language, reinterpreted the piece as a potent anthem of "freedom and resistance."

Such performances, rooted in artistic integrity and emotional authenticity, powerfully resonate with the collective psyche of the audience—their unconstrained spirits, their pent-up frustrations, and their chafing against societal constraints. In this process, music becomes a direct conduit for emotional release. A music variety show achieves its deepest level of breakout diffusion when it ceases to be a mere object of aesthetic appreciation and evolves into a signifier carrying social emotions that extend far beyond the performance itself.

4 "Emotional Identification" Safeguards Program Reputation and Viewer Loyalty

When a music variety show provides substantial emotional value to its audience, the audience, in turn, recognizes the program's intrinsic worth, leading to the development of emotional identification with the show. It is precisely this mechanism that allows emotional marketing to amplify the program's inherent value, extending its influence to a broader range of stakeholders and securing a central role in contemporary media marketing strategies.

4.1 "Conversational Currency" and the Strategic Integration of Emotional Marketing

Singer 2025 demonstrated expertise in leveraging a model of "hotspots + topics + interaction" to progressively build emotional identification, efficiently converting it into "conversational currency." This strategy enabled low-cost, high-return, fission-like dissemination across social media. The grand finale, "King of Singers Championship," achieved dominant ratings, securing the top position simultaneously across all key metrics for provincial satellite TV during its time slot, including China Audio-Visual Big Data (CVB), CSM National Network, Huan Network, and Cool Cloud. The live broadcast captivated national attention.

According to Weibo variety show data, the program sparked over 3 billion user discussions related to its narrative content, public reception, user-generated memes, pivotal events, and cross-industry collaborations. It collectively generated 1,240 trending topics on the main hot search list and 1,636 on the entertainment list, amassing 50 billion post reads and 12.9 billion video views. This dominant performance across the entire ecosystem cemented its status as the premier domestic music variety show of the year.

Interaction metrics on Weibo—such as engagement with hotspots, topics, videos, and discussions—serve not only as direct indicators of traffic but, more importantly, as evidence of high audience participation and emotional investment. This engagement provides a crucial emotional foundation for various commercialization avenues, including title sponsorship, advertising partnerships, membership subscriptions, digital cultural creations, derivative products, and industrial chain extensions. By prioritizing authenticity and connecting through emotion, music variety shows can effectively drive consumption based on emotional resonance, significantly enhancing the audience's willingness to invest financially in their emotional experience.

4.2 "Music Diplomacy" Facilitates the Program's International Dissemination

Traffic and data not only dominate fan culture and the fan economy but also increasingly influence cultural production and even political dynamics. As a vital form of popular culture, music serves as a solid spiritual foundation for cultural confidence. In international relations, it functions both as proof of a nation's soft power and a significant tool of diplomacy. Using music as a medium, Singer 2025 demonstrated full respect for the equality and cultural distinctions among different civilizations, engaging international audiences in dialogue on an equal footing. This approach contributes to constructing a distinctively Chinese discourse system for the international dissemination of music.

By comparing and connecting with diverse musical traditions within the framework of a "global village of music," the program identified universal points of emotional resonance. This strategy garnered significant attention and joint endorsement from institutions including UNESCO, the Department of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, the Embassy of Brazil in China, the Embassy of Malaysia in China, and Tourism Malaysia. These entities highly praised the program for building bridges for international cultural exchange through music.

By embracing openness and inclusiveness to break down barriers hindering cultural interaction, and by promoting the principle that all civilizations can appreciate their own beauty and that of others, the program undoubtedly fosters a deeper understanding and recognition of Chinese cultural values among global audiences. It demonstrates the power of music to reunite the world. Evolving from merely "expressing

China" to achieving "international empathy," Singer 2025 helps shift civilizational relations from confrontation to symbiosis, proving to be a powerful instrument for expanding diplomatic reach, enhancing diplomatic influence, and broadening the diplomatic stage.

It is particularly important to note that only when an audience's emotional identification with a program further develops into a constructed identity—encompassing self, ethnicity, and even nation—can a music variety show become an irreplaceable medium for mass cultural exchange and integration.

5 Conclusion

The ultimate aim of emotional narrative is to align with audience expectations. Only those music variety shows capable of fostering genuine emotional connections, providing emotional catharsis, and serving as a vessel for collective resonance can capture widespread attention, generate significant traction, and lead in their market segment. Against the backdrop of increasing global cultural exchange and integration, the Singer series offers a vibrant blueprint for the sustainable development of music variety shows, pioneering innovation and transformation in the operational models of the cultural content industry.

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