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Effects of Multiculturalism: Piano teaching in Chinese Universities

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Abstract

Driven by today's international trend of multicultural education, the change from a single to a diversified music education curriculum in Chinese universities has become one of the most urgent issues to be improved and solved in Chinese music education. This paper analyzes the history of multicultural music education and its development status in Chinese college piano teaching. Finally, it puts forward new research suggestions to improve the quality of piano teaching in colleges and universities and promote the development of multicultural music education in China's colleges and universities.

Keywords: Multiculturalism; Multicultural Music Education; Piano teaching; Teaching reform

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1.0 Introduction

On 2 November 2001, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held its 31st session in Paris, which adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The adoption of this declaration demonstrates that the protection of human cultural diversity has become a fundamental consensus in the international community and that multicultural education has become a hot topic of concern for educational reform worldwide. That international understanding has become a key competence for students in the 21st century.

1.1 The history of multiculturalism

The emergence of multicultural music education is closely related to the worldwide trend of multiculturalism. "Multiculturalism" as a social trend dates back to the early twentieth century. Multicultural education emerged after the 1950s in Western countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States on a global scale. The emergence of multicultural education was related to the immigration and national revival movements. As a result, multicultural education was supported as a means of bridging the social divide. (Chen, 2017)

In the field of music education, multicultural music education was equally influenced by the social thinking of the time. A review of the conference themes of the International Congress on Music Education (ISME) over the years reveals that the worldwide interest in multiculturalism has not ceased since the 1950s. For example, the Donoghwood Declaration in 1967 and the American Music Educators Conference in 1970 both listed multicultural music education as an essential goal in the United States. According to preliminary statistics, more than 2,700 universities in the U.S. now offer multicultural-related music courses.

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1.2 The current development of multicultural music education in china

China has 56 ethnic groups, five thousand years of civilization history, and is a natural multi-ethnic and multicultural social background country. Therefore, it is natural to conform to the characteristics of multicultural development, which is a fundamental respect for the historical process. From the perspective of the development of music education in China, the start of multicultural music education in universities was relatively late, "with Mr. Shen Zhibai offering a course, oriental Music'at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in the 1960s. By the time the World Folk Music Society was founded in 1996, only four universities, namely the Central Conservatory of Music, the China Conservatory of Music, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Fujian Normal University, offered courses in this field. In the 21st century, however, with the concerted efforts of scholars such as Chen Ziming, Wang Yaohua, and Guan Jianhua, multiculturalism-related courses have developed rapidly. They are now offered in hundreds of universities. 'Foreign Ethnic Music is a compulsory course in colleges of music teacher training". (Guan, 2006) The World Ethnomusicology Society held seven annual conferences in Nanjing, Beijing, and Kunming, which attracted the attention of the academic community and had a broad and positive impact on the academic community, creating a new teaching and research boom. However, on the whole, music education in our universities has still not broken away from the situation where a single musical culture of the German-Austrian system dominates our music curriculum. "Prominent in our music curriculum is the focus on transmitting Western musical knowledge; the music curriculum is an ethnic add-on model', and Western music becomes the basis of musical learning. It is seen as a universal truth and 'world language ' ". (Zhu, 2008)

1.3 Problems in the teaching of piano in music education in Chinese universities

With the development of the times, technological revolution, and further research in ethnomusicology teaching, some new and profound challenges have arisen. The present era is one in which industrial civilization has shifted to a post-industrial society and the modern knowledge-based to the post-modern knowledge-based. Under the impact of the fourth wave of the industrial revolution, traditional ways of producing music, teaching methods, and learning have been profoundly affected. The wave of globalization has made the cultural choice of music education an inescapable issue in contemporary music education. The field of education worldwide is facing a new shift from focusing on knowledge and skills to developing core human qualities. The world's education curriculum reform calls for new teaching concepts, content, and methods.

The piano is not only an essential medium of musical formation in university music education, but in China, piano teaching is also one of the compulsory courses in university music education. It is therefore equally exposed to significant reform challenges in the changing face of multicultural music education. In summary, there are several challenges.

- a. Problems and challenges from teaching a single musical culture.
- b. Challenges from maintaining national unity and stable social development.
- c. The challenge of re-establishing new teaching models and teacher-student relationships.
- d. The challenge comes from developing students' core literacies and promoting cultural identity.
- e. The challenge of revitalizing China's excellent traditional music culture. At the same time, the choice of the topic "Effects of Multiculturalism: A Study on Piano Teaching in Chinese Universities" is based on Eastern and Western philosophy, Eastern and Western music aesthetics, sociology, music anthropology, and music education, which provide excellent theoretical support for this topic.

In summary, our conception of music is facing new changes. We still lack sufficient knowledge of multicultural music and attention to the different musical cultures of the same country and nation. As a result, we have not yet indeed implemented the concept of multicultural music education in the conception and teaching practice of piano teaching. Therefore, the selected topic has good multidisciplinary theoretical and practical support and ample research space.

2.0 Literature review

It organizes and analyzes the existing theoretical achievements in China around two keywords: multicultural music and piano teaching. It mainly analyzes the lack of multicultural music education in college music education majors and the current situation of Chinese piano development in multiculturalism to understand the development of multicultural music education in China in a multi-dimensional and comprehensive manner.

2.1 The lack of multicultural music education in universities music education major

In July 1952, the Ministry of Education issued the Trial Provisions (Draft), which made unified provisions on the direction of regular schools of higher learning across the country- -mainly cultivating music teachers in secondary schools. (Qu, 1991) The following is a comparison and analysis of secondary school music textbooks and the current Higher Education Curriculum for Music Education syllabus and compulsory courses:

a. Content analysis of middle school teaching materials

The new middle school music textbooks added the Han, other ethnic minorities, and foreign folk music to carry forward national music and understand multiculturalism. As an example, in Books 1 and 2 of the Full-time GCSE Textbook - Art Appreciation - Music, the textbook contains twelve units covering in time all the significant periods in the development of Western music; Highlight musical diversity and diversity in musical form; The content emphasizes the social function of music, the combination of music and sister art, this is also strongly advocated in the New Class Proposal. An example of the course content covered in one of the units, Han Chinese Folk Music, Minority Music, and Foreign Folk Music, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Ethnic Music Courses

The Han Nationality Folk Music Unit	Minority Music Unit	Foreign Ethnic Folk Music Unit
Sichuan folk songs, Shaanxi folk songs, Yunnan folk songs, Jiangsu folk songs, Taiwan folk songs, Hebei folk songs, Shandong folk songs, and three ancient songs	Eastern Inner Mongolia folk songs, Tibetan folk songs, Kazakh folk songs, Hui folk songs, Xinjiang Uygur folk music, Dong folk songs	Indian songs, Japanese folk music, Indonesian Bali folk music, Ghana secret music, Ivory Coast secret music, Cuban music, Peruvian folk music, American songs, and Napoli folk songs

(Source:) Full-time GCSE Textbook - Art Appreciation - Music 2012

Music textbooks of high schools attach great importance to the diversification of music, involving the representative music culture of many countries and regions in the world, and try to combine it with sister art. It also fully proves that the music teachers needed by primary and secondary schools should be the talents with the corresponding knowledge structure.

National undergraduate course guidance program of musicology (teacher education) in ordinary institutions of higher learning

b. Since the introduction of multicultural music education in 2004, to comprehensively implement the education policy and further, deepen the reform of the undergraduate music (teacher education) program in colleges and universities, the Ministry of Education commissioned the National Education Science "Tenth Five-Year Plan" Project Group to formulate the "Reform of Music Education in Primary and Secondary Schools and Colleges and Universities. The Ministry of Education entrusted the subject group with formulating the "National Curriculum Guidance Outline for Music (Teacher Education) in Colleges and Universities." The subject group drafted the Curriculum Program according to the reform and development needs of the music (teacher education) undergraduate program. The program has been implemented in musicology (teacher education) undergraduate programs in general higher education institutions (including comprehensive universities, teacher training colleges, and art colleges) since the autumn of 2005. The curriculum program includes relatively significant changes to the compulsory courses. (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2004)

There are three apparent changes in the adjustment of the required courses in the Program: First, the musical instrument class stipulates each Chinese and foreign instrument. A more comprehensive choice of compulsory instrument courses than in the current senior teacher music education curriculum and a balance between East and West can effectively alleviate the emphasis on a 'single major' in music education. Second, opening "Chinese national music" and "foreign national music" will compensate for the gap in college music education. On the one hand, we will promote national music culture and protect the traditional excellent music cultural heritage; On the other hand, studying music from all regions and peoples of the world reflects the unique value of forming a world view of music and art. Third, the setting of compulsory courses has dramatically changed the proportion of Chinese and Western courses, showing a symmetrical structure: Chinese instruments & Foreign instruments; Chinese national music & Foreign national music. Such a curriculum is more reasonable in the proportion of Chinese and Western courses.

c. Sampling survey of compulsory courses for music education in universities of China

From the inspection of music courses in primary and secondary schools and the interpretation of the Curriculum Plan issued by the Ministry of Education in 2004, we can have a general framework for the ideal curriculum for music education majors in colleges and higher universities. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education's circular on the issuance of the Curriculum Guidance Program for Undergraduate Musicology (Teacher Education) in National Ordinary Higher Education Institutions clearly states that "The Curriculum Program of the Ministry of Education will be implemented in the undergraduate musicology (teacher education) programs in ordinary higher education institutions (including comprehensive universities, teacher training colleges, and art colleges) nationwide from the autumn of 2005 ". (Ministry of Education of China, 2004) Although the plan issued by the Ministry of Education and the positive response of the majority of scholars, the curriculum of music education major in Chinese universities is still slow in reform, and the teaching results have achieved little effect. Take the curriculum of Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Central China Normal University, and Nanjing Normal University in Nanjing Normal University, for example; refer to Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of Curriculum for Compulsory Courses in Music Education

	Western Music Courses	Chinese music courses	Comprehensive courses
Wuhan Conservatory Of Music	Music theory, Solfeggio, Harmony, Music Form, and Work analysis, Brief history of foreign music and appreciation of music masterpieces, Chorus and Conductor	Appreciation of Chinese folk music, A brief history of Chinese music	
Huazhong Normal University	Music theory, Solfeggio, Italian Voice, Harmony, Chorus, and Conductor Foundation of songwriting, Polyphony, Foreign music history, and works appreciation Music Form and Work analysis	Introduction to folk music, Chinese music history, and works of appreciation	Impromptu accompaniment, Introduction to Art, Fundamentals of music aesthetics
Nanjing Normal University	Basic music theory, Solfeggio, Harmony, Chorus and Conductor	Introduction to traditional Chinese Music, History of Chinese music, World folk music	Songwriting method, Introduction to Art

On the one hand, only Nanjing Normal University has a course on world folk music as a compulsory course in the curriculum of these three universities. On the other hand, the mode of delivery of these three institutions is still dominated by the teaching of European music, and the ratio of indigenous Chinese music to European music is generally uneven in the compulsory courses. The structure of the music curriculum is still based on the concept of European music grammar to understand Chinese indigenous music.

In addition, compared with the three sections of music involved in China's middle school music textbooks—Han folk music, foreign folk music, foreign ethnic music, and Chinese minority music, these three colleges have been blank in Chinese minority music and foreign ethnic music.

2.2 *The development of Chinese piano education in a multicultural context*

With the flourishing of multicultural education in the world, the development of piano education in China since the twenty-first century has also taken on remarkable characteristics. This paper collates the results of piano teaching research relevant to the thesis in two main areas: Firstly, the research results in combining indigenous musical culture and foreign musical forms in Chinese pianos under the influence of multiculturalism. The other is published literature on piano education in higher education in a multicultural context from the last decade (2010-2021).

2.2.1 *The development of nationalization in piano education*

From the 1950s to the 1960s, the Chinese music scene focused on multicultural music education. Piano educators know that although piano education is an alien art and culture, it needs to actively draw on the essence of traditional Chinese music culture to form a distinctly nationalized piano in the process of localized development. The nationalization of the piano refers to the study and borrowing of outstanding foreign art forms and the creation of new compositions based on the absorption of indigenous musical culture, giving them a distinctly national character. Therefore, promoting ethnographic piano teaching and studying piano composition and piano education from an ethnographic perspective under multiculturalism has become a concern for many academic researchers.

The book category on nationalized piano composition or teaching in China is represented by Wei Yang *On Musical Composition for the Piano in China*, which shows the style and characteristics of the earliest nationalized piano compositions in China. The book *"The Way of Piano Performance"* by Zhao Xiaosheng is a more innovative exploration of the style and characteristics of nationalized piano works within the second artistic practice of Western performance methods. It is also the first treatise that integrates the theories and performance practices of Chinese and Western piano composition. The book *"The Formation and Development of Chinese Piano Culture"* by Bian Meng is an innovative exploration based on the national piano culture.

There is also a wealth of research in academic journals on nationalized piano works and education. Some of the more representative ones are Jin Zheng's *"A Brief Discussion on the Nationalization of Piano Education in China."* Yan Yong's *"Reflections on the Nationalization of Piano Education,"* discuss the characteristics and connotations of piano teaching in the process of nationalization from the perspective of piano education in a targeted manner and address many problems in developing piano teaching in practice. Zhang Yan's *"Research on the nationalization of Chinese piano compositions,"* Luo Miao's *"The Composition Characteristics and Stylistic Evolution of Chinese Folk Songs Adapted for Piano in the Middle and Late 20th Century"*. They both explore the creation and development of the art of piano from an ethnographic perspective.

On the whole, piano academics have paid attention to the issue of advocating the development of ethnographic piano in a multicultural context. It has not only had a more profound impact on the theory and practice of the nationalization of piano education in China; It also promoted the development of multicultural music education in China. However, there is a lack of research specifically on applying the nationalization perspective to piano teaching in higher education institutions, and the references are not abundant.

2.2.2 *The development of nationalization in piano education*

This paper searched the literature published in the last ten years on piano teaching in universities in a multicultural context. The number of publications is far less than the research results on multicultural music education. An analysis of the trends in the number of publications in the literature shows a significant growth in research results. The content of the study can be broadly divided into the following aspects:

- a. Taking the concept of multicultural education as the background, according to the current situation of piano teaching in colleges and universities, put forward reform ideas , Such as *"Research on the Reform of Piano Teaching in Higher Education in the Context of Multicultural Education"* (Wang, 2010) and *"Reform of Piano Teaching in China's Colleges and Universities in the Perspective of Multiculturalism"* (Zhang, 2017);
- b. Study on the influence of multicultural education on piano teaching in colleges and universities, Such as *"Thinking about the concept of piano teaching in music education in China's colleges and universities under the view of multiculturalism"* (Wang, 2018);
- c. Under the background of multicultural education, the mother tongue music culture is used as the basis to examine piano teaching. It is called on contemporary Chinese composers to create more Chinese piano works in the construction of teaching materials, Such as *"Pianist Teaching under the Concept of Multicultural Music Education based on Mother Tongue Music Culture"* (Dai, 2005); *"Multicultural Integrator - Zhao Xiaosheng Piano Music Research"* (Peng, 2012).

3.0 Conclusion

With the acceleration of globalization, the world has entered a new era in history in terms of political, economic, and cultural development. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the international community has gradually formed a consensus to respect and protect human cultural diversity. The value of multicultural music education has been recognized worldwide. However, Chinese university music programs have long been influenced by mainstream European music culture, and piano courses' teaching has shown homogeneity problems regarding content, format, and assessment systems. This paper compares the history of multiculturalism, the current situation of the development of multicultural music education in Chinese universities, and the problems of piano teaching in universities. It then proposes new research objectives, research methods, and research implications. It is hoped that the subsequent research will fill the theoretical gaps in piano teaching in Chinese universities in the context of multiculturalism and propose practical and optimized reform measures further to promote the development of piano teaching in Chinese universities.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

Firstly, for the field of art, this article analyses the current situation of piano teaching in colleges and universities, which helps to change the teaching philosophy and provide teaching quality in Chinese colleges and universities.

Secondly, for the field of education, the article provides a more theoretical basis for improving music education in Chinese universities by sorting out the development history of multicultural music.

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