

# DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY PIPA PLAYING TECHNIQUES IN STYLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT GENRES OF CHINESE PIPA

Guan Rui<sup>1</sup>, Chutasiri Yodwised<sup>2</sup>

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University,<sup>1-2</sup>  
Thailand<sup>1-2</sup>

**Email:** nicha.musiced@gmail.com<sup>1-2</sup>

**Received:** May 26, 2023; **Revised:** October 2, 2023; **Accepted:** November 20, 2023

## Abstract

This academic article is innovative and explores the current situation of pipa teaching. Improve and strengthen the teaching system of lute ensemble in colleges and universities, explain the causes, the use value, development direction, and strategies of lute ensemble specialty, and provide a reference for educators to study the way of lute ensemble in the future. The article's topic includes the Style and characteristics of different genres of Chinese pipa, the current situation of contemporary pipa teaching, the performance of pipa in different art forms, and the development of contemporary pipa playing techniques. This article can provide a reference for relevant departments to formulate strategies to set up pipa ensemble courses.

**Keywords:** Contemporary pipa playing techniques; Genres; Chinese pipa

## Introduction

The pipa is a plucked musical instrument among the Chinese national musical instruments, handed down for over 2000 years in China. In the long historical transformation, the pipa has been constantly changing and developing in shape, string, playing tools, names, and even playing methods to meet social progress needs. The well-known traditional pipa music, such as Ambush on All

Sides, Overlord Dismantles His Armor, and Xunyang Night Moon, has a long history and strong appeal and are still popular today.

The back of the pipa we are playing is made of hardwood, generally rosewood, rosewood, and rosewood. The panel is spliced with tung wood, and wood boards with uniform grain and similar hardness shall be selected for splicing. The pipa is made of bamboo, usually bamboo from the south. Other parts of the lute (such as the head, the phase, and the four chords) are practical and decorative. Hence, piano makers often choose materials based on their aesthetic awareness and the wood materials needed to make the lute. Generally, the materials used include horns, animal bones, hardwood, and ivory. The pipa's playing techniques have also developed quite complex, with more than 50 playing methods on its right hand, which is second to none among Chinese and foreign instruments (Qiu, 2019).

## **Style and Characteristics of Different Genres of Chinese Pipa**

In the Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties, in the early Qing Dynasty, the development of pipa reached another peak, and north-south transmission schools with different styles appeared. Since the 1950s, the grade of the pipa has increased to 6 phases and 24 products, and the modern pipa grade is mostly arranged according to the average law.

In modern times, due to the establishment of national bands and the establishment of the school, the professionalism of pipa was greatly strengthened, and a large number of pipa players, educators, and professional composers emerged, as well as many large-scale works of modern themes and genres, which expanded the new skills of the pipa (Li, 2003).

The southern school, namely the Zhejiang school, represented by Chen Mufu, used the representative music of "Haiqing," "Unarmor," "Moon Gao," "Pu a Mantra," "General Order," and so on. The Northern School, namely Zhili School, is represented by Wang Junxi as a representative, and the representative music of "House of Flying Daggers," "Sunset Xiao Drum," "Xiao Pu An Curse," "Yan Le: True Sound" and so on. In addition, the development of the north-South missionary school has the following factions:

Wuxi School: Wu Xi Hua Qiuping and Hua Zi learned from the North and South schools and compiled three volumes of the Secret Book of the North and South Schools, the earliest pipa spectrum in China.

Pinghu School: It played a role in the inheritance and development of the pipa. Represented by Li Fangyuan, he compiled the New Music of the Pipa of the North and South School, which was passed down from generation to generation by Li Qiyu, Li Fangyuan, Wu Mengfei, Wu Baijun, and Zhu Qingqing. Zhu Qingqing pioneered using the left hand to press the method and broke through the small finger not to press the sound of the forbidden area.

Pudong School: spread from Ju Shilin, with Ju Shilin, Ju Maotang, Chen Zijing, Ni Qingquan, Shen Haochu, and other teachers, there is "Ju Shilin Pipa," "Chen Zijing Pipa" and "Yangzheng Xuan Pipa" and so on.

Chongming school: "Yingzhou Ancient tune" pipa music. Chongming School has been passed down from generation to generation by Jiang Tai, Huang Xiuting, Shen Zhaozhou, Fan Ziyun, and Fan Shaoyun, and it is famous for its meaningful and beautiful style of literary music. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, Chongming Pipa inherited the Northern pipa of Bai Jae, and the local customs and customs influenced the evolution of its style. Liu Tianhua, a master of Chinese music, learned the pipa with Shen Shi. His work "Flying Flowers dot Green" played a very active role in promoting the pipa of Chongming School.

Wang School: Also known as Shanghai School, it has been an important pipa school in the history of Chinese music development since the 20th century, setting off the third climax in China's pipa development. Wang Huisheng initiated Wang Yuting's pipa skills. In the "Pipa Performance Method" written by Lin Shicheng, the Wang school was first listed as one of the pipa schools. The Wang School has cultivated many outstanding modern and contemporary Chinese pipa players, such as Wei Zhongle, Sun Yude, Li Tingsong, Cheng Wujia, and Jiang Fengzhi.

Wang Yuting's main contributions to the pipa are as follows: In terms of skills, the upper-hand wheel is first used, thus laying the foundation for the structure of the right-hand shape of the contemporary pipa. In terms of music, he

did not stick to the traditional playing method but carefully modified the ancient music to make it more concise. For example, he adapted the ten pieces of Yangchun Ancient Song of Li's Spectrum into seven paragraphs, which gave the whole music a new look and compact structure, and became a widely circulated pipa song. The now famous national music piece, "The Night on the Spring River and the Moon," was originally adapted based on his version. In the pipa song "House of Flying Daggers," he created "Feng nodding" and "Luo Zi."

## **Current Situation of Contemporary Pipa Teaching**

Nowadays, the pipa instrument has been influenced by many music lovers at home and abroad, so many international scholars are doing research in this aspect. In China today, there are two main groups: some are students, some major in this instrument, the level of pipa is generally high; some are the masses, most of them are interested in "fun," which is lower than the previous ones, and some even give up halfway.

Of course, we do not completely deny this traditional teaching mode. The reason why this mode can exist now must also have its advantages. This original teaching mode is a traditional teaching mode formed in a specific historical period, which has its positive side and its limitations:

(1) The teaching method is single, and the students have no horizontal comparison

As mentioned before, the traditional teaching model is mainly through one-to-one and face-to-face teaching. In this mode, the teacher is out of the absolute initiative, the teacher according to the level of students, arranges a song; students first practice for a week and then go back to the teacher to go back to class, then the teacher points out your "problem," and demonstrate on the spot, students look while learning, has been so back and forth cycling. The advantage of this method is that teachers can teach students by their aptitude and conduct different degrees of teaching according to different levels of students; targeted students' performance levels can be greatly improved. However, this method is relatively single and backward, and in the contemporary era, it has been slowly unable to adapt to it. It can only meet a small number of students,

and with the continuous growth of China's population, no matter what to learn, are a large group of learners. If one is still one-to-one, it is time-consuming and laborious, the investment of teachers is too large, the education cost is high, and it is difficult to implement in some relatively backward areas. This model also difficult to use modern facilities; the piano room is always so small, the site is limited, and modernization can-not be implemented (Shen, 2020).

(2) The teaching content is single, and the teaching materials are backward.

In traditional pipa teaching mode on a single content, the teacher in teaching is generally responsible for the song to teach you to play well; students learn just such a solo and related some playing skills; the final inspection is also just for students playing music integrity, the use of skilled, emotional expression ability, etc. However, it often ignores students' comprehensive quality, mastery of the instrument's characteristics and personality, mastery of different tunes, mutual use between instruments and Musical Instruments, and degree of control of instruments in different forms. Ultimately, the students play single; the band rehearses hard, the narrow vision, the collective consciousness needs to be stronger, and the teaching quality could be better.

(3) With Less practice, teachers are content with the status quo

A student's performance depends on the level of playing on the stage, which is also a basic reference condition. Performing on stage is stage practice; stage experience can only be obtained through long-term practice. Due to the restrictions, most colleges and universities still need instrumental accompaniment, instrumental ensemble, ensemble, and other courses, which greatly reduces the students' stage practice 2.2.3 Basic methods of contemporary pipa professional teaching.

The pipa teaching in colleges and universities aims to implement students' basic skills and promote students to become outstanding talents in pipa playing. According to the current situation of pipa teaching, it is very important to cultivate what kind of talents for teachers. Many colleges and universities will master the basic theory of pipa playing as necessary learning content; its purpose is to encourage students to master pipa playing basic skills, to cultivate students

'stable scientific research ability, and pay attention to the cultivation of students' innovation ability, make students master good aesthetic ability and artistic accomplishment, help students become professional talents in pipa playing, and connected with the practical work of the future.

#### (4) Teachers of pipa teaching in colleges and universities

According to the current situation of pipa teaching in colleges and universities, there are two types of teachers. One is professional teachers; they mainly cultivate pipa students through the training of students to participate in the examination of the necessary grades. Professional teachers help students to be promoted from the level they have obtained, and the teaching content of teachers is mainly focused on the subjects of grade examination, so it is difficult for students to focus on their basic skills. It is difficult for such teachers to cultivate excellent pipa professionals. Another kind of college pipa teachers mainly cultivate associate students, divided into associate students with foundation and no foundation. The main majors of this kind of students are not pipa, but they also have their majors except pipa.

### **Performance of Pipa in Different Art Forms**

The biggest characteristic of music is that it is good at lyrics, and the pipa is a very expressive instrument, which can deduce not only traditional music but also express modern music and can not only solo but also cooperate with the symphony orchestra (Pang, 2019). Works with different themes and style characteristics can be embodied and lifelike by the pipa. Therefore, it is a very important link to study and understand the inner emotion of the music carefully. Only by accurately grasping the inner and profound emotion of the work can the work be expressed accurately, clearly, and vividly through different performance skills. The author understands that the external expression of music is the harmonious unity of the technical beauty of music and the external form beauty of music. At the same time, the direct reproduction of the inner emotional experience of the performer makes the voice full of craftsmanship full of emotional factors. The harmonious unity of the two will make the music expressed more infectious. Therefore, the second level of the artistic realm of music is the harmonious unity of internal emotional experience

and external musical performance. The internal emotional experience at this level is the harmonious unity of the author's own emotional experience and the external musical performance; for the performer and the viewer, it is the harmonious unity of the performer and the viewer and the external musical performance. Here, the work has not gone to the public, the performer and the viewer have not moved to the author's heart, or the depth needs more. However, the work has a life and a soul in this realm.

The inner emotional experience of musical works is a skill that requires a long time and various cultivation.

First, read the music score. Analyze the structural characteristics of the music, the structure and form of each phrase, phrase, and paragraph, the melody between the phrases and the phrase, the connection of "points" between the sounds, the flow of "lines," and the accurate understanding of various playing symbols of the left and right hands. These are very crucial to the accurate grasp and understanding of the music. Only on the premise of correctly understanding the work can we deeply understand the internal rhythm of the music, and we can have a real emotional experience. Then, we can skillfully control different timbre changes, strengths, and speeds in the music performance and coordinate the relationship between the internal emotional experience and the external music performance (Wang,2021).

Secondly, cultivating musical intuition is important for the harmonious unity of emotional experience and external performance. From a psychological point of view, perception is the ability to understand music directly without relying on the concept of language. Sometimes, people call this intuition musical. This is an ability to grasp the changing music movement form by feeling directly, and it can also be said to use the inner hearing to form sound movement images in mind. Therefore, in the pipa art, we should consciously cultivate, exercise and constantly develop our intuitive ability to music. At the same time, the cultivation of musical intuition can also continuously expand and enrich the ability of musical imagination and association. Through the imagination and association of the specific musical image, the experience and understanding of the emotion and artistic conception of the music, the internal emotion of the music can be naturally and truly expressed in the performance of

the music so that the internal emotional experience and the external performance of the music can be integrated into a whole.

Thirdly, external musical performance should pay attention to the natural reproduction of the work. Music's expression.

## **Development of Contemporary Pipa Playing Techniques**

Pipa as an important part of plucked instruments in China, began in the Qin dynasty, two thousand years of history; with the historical development and people's pursuit of art, pipa-playing technology changed with time change, and the traditional pipa genre influence later changed, with the change of social system, the spread of traditional art, form, living environment, playing great changes have taken place, the development of the pipa will also with the social concept of migration of qualitative change (Huang, 2019).

Influenced by political stability and cultural construction, the development of Musical Instruments will also have highs and valleys. The development of the pipa in China has had three peak times. First development peak, the Sui and Tang dynasties period social and political environment was good; the ruler was good at developing music and making ethnic music elements; Sui and Tang dynasties of quick music had a great influence on pipa development, Sue only woman as Zheng Yi song under pipa art, wan bao often changed the structure of the traditional pipa, founding the "eighty-four" theory, laid a foundation for the subsequent pipa development. During the Tang Dynasty, the pipa playing techniques changed from horizontal holding to vertical holding, producing many famous solo songs. In the second peak development period, during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the country was unified. The pipa flowed from the palace to the folk and became the accompaniment of folk rap and opera music. Since then, the pipa has developed into a complete musical culture system. The development and inheritance of pipa were dominated by families or teachers, which promoted the cultural exchange of ethnic music and derived various styles of pipa schools until they gradually declined in the 1960s and 1970s. In the third peak period of development, after China's reform and opening up, the professional music schools resumed the college entrance examination, attracting folk pipa lovers to

join the professional pipa teaching industry and recruiting students for social primary and secondary schools, laying a talent foundation for the development of pipa Musical Instruments. Professional pipa composers and performers have constantly adapted and created pipa art combined with contemporary elements, making great contributions to the development and performance skills of the contemporary pipa.

## **Conclusion**

In recent years, many students at home and abroad have been infatuated with the art of the pipa. Many outstanding pipa performers have been active on the international stage in the Year of Parents, carrying forward the art of the Chinese pipa. With its long historical connotation and rich national cultural accumulation, the pipa has demonstrated to the people of the world the charm of China's excellent traditional music culture. The wide range, rich playing techniques, and changeable timbre in performance form the unique style and various schools of pipa art.

Pipa is an important solo instrument in Chinese national instruments and plays an important role in various forms of instrumental ensemble, ensemble, and accompaniment. Especially since the 1970s, the pipa has produced extraordinary artistic effects in the concert with large symphony orchestras or national orchestras and has significantly impacted the international music stage.

## References

- Huang, W. (2019). **Research on the teaching mode of national instrumental music in colleges and universities.** Voice of the Yellow River, (22), 36-37.
- Li, J. (2003). **The art of Chinese pipa performance.** Shanghai. Shanghai Music Press.
- Pang, R. (2019). **Discussion on the theme of national instrumental music teaching reform in colleges and universities.** Tomorrow Fashion (17), 126.
- Qiu, Y. (2019). **Inheritance thinking in the teaching of national instrumental music in colleges and universities.** Artist, (11), 108-109).
- Shen, L. (2020). **Pay attention to the appreciation of national music and improve the aesthetic ability of music.** The Voice of the Yellow River, (13), 1.
- Wang, C. (2005). **Aesthetics of Music.** Beijing. Higher Education Press.
- Wang, M. (2021). **Five-step exploration of teaching national instrumental music appreciation.** The Road to Becoming a Talent, (12), 118-119.