

PIANO TEACHING IN PRIVATE MUSIC SCHOOL UNDER COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION IN CHINA

Yu Xiao¹, Nicha Pattananon², Thanyawat Sondhiratna³

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University¹⁻²

China,¹ Thailand²

Email: nicha.musiced@gmail.com¹⁻²

Received: June 21 2023; **Revised:** October 7 2023; **Accepted:** February 26 2024

Abstract

The continuous development of Chinese music education cannot be separated from the joint efforts of generations of music educators and musicians. In recent years, the overall goal of music subject teaching that has been fully implemented in China is to "cultivate personal beautiful sentiments, cultivate basic musical abilities, cultivate a love for music and rich musical perception, musical expression ability, and rich musical appreciation ability. Specifically, children's learning focuses on guiding students to get close to and perceive music. The piano training institutions studied in this article mainly adopt a commercial training model, which uses piano training as a means and aims to make profits, mainly focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises. This article explores the current situation of piano course teaching in off campus training institutions in the post pandemic era.

Keywords: Piano teaching; private music school; COVID-19; China

Introduction

The learning of music in the youth stage emphasizes the combination of learning experience, the cultivation of musical interests, and the shaping of personality. Moreover, the training direction should focus on the extension of musical skills, awareness, and depth. The music teaching activities during childhood are the beginning of all aesthetic education, and the importance of its foundation is self-evident. Music is a window for people to express their inner world, using sound to express the joys, sorrows, and joys of daily life. Music can reflect various aspects of life and also express national integrity.

To this day, academic performance in cultural courses is no longer the only requirement of Chinese parents for their children. The pursuit of comprehensive artistic literacy has made music education more valued, and the status of aesthetic education has also been elevated to a certain extent. Although music education started very early in the history of our country, it has not formed a unique teaching model and prominent teaching characteristics. Therefore, music teaching activities in China should strengthen the "input" and "output" of art education in the social context of the "the Belt and Road Initiative", and cultivate more high-quality talents to adapt to modern society. As pointed out in the "Music Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education", "Music curriculum is a compulsory course in schools and an important way for schools to implement aesthetic education. The primary purpose of music education is to stimulate students' interest in learning and gradually cultivate their emotional understanding and expression of music. Music is a life rather than a subject for students, which is also the uniqueness of music education.

This is also the reason for the large number of off campus quality education and training institutions in China. As a supplementary education for campus education, off campus music training schools have received the pursuit of many parents. Moreover, due to the increasing pressure of higher education, many parents will sign up for many off-campus training classes during their children's primary and secondary school years. Piano courses, as the top priority of music grading, are almost the first choice for every parent to register. However, since the spread and outbreak of the COVID-19 at the end of 2019, many off campus art training schools have failed to attend classes, and the epidemic prevention risk control policies have changed, leading to the closure of a large number of off campus training institutions. This article explores the current situation of piano course teaching in off campus training institutions in the post pandemic era.

Private Piano Training Institutions

Private piano training institutions are a for-profit educational organization that primarily serves piano teaching and is certified by the education regulatory department to obtain social and commercial educational qualifications under training conditions that meet national regulations. Piano training institutions have functions such as improving academic qualifications,

enhancing abilities, cultivating skills, and providing certification training. According to their operating modes, they can be further divided into three types: skill training, business training, and extracurricular tutoring training. The piano training institutions studied in this article mainly adopt a commercial training model, which uses piano training as a means and aims to make profits, mainly focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises.

Private Music Teaching During COVID-19

In the context of the epidemic situation, the survey on the status of private art training centers in relevant regions is relatively rare. The author searched the relevant literature database with keywords such as "COVID-19", "art training", "piano education", and "status survey". There are few literatures that are consistent with the overall research direction of this article. Only when one or two keywords are searched in parallel can a small number of literatures be retrieved.

At present, research on the current situation of piano education in the field of music teaching in China during the post pandemic period mainly focuses on three aspects. One is the exploration of online piano teaching in universities during the epidemic period, and the main literature is published in journal form, such as Kuang Yongsheng's "Where to Go for Online Piano Teaching in Universities After the Epidemic?" and Sun Chao's "Analysis of Online Piano Art Guidance Class for Vocal Performance Students in Universities After the Epidemic". Liang Yiran's "Current Situation and Related Strategies of Online Teaching of Vocational Preschool Professional Piano Courses in the Context of the Epidemic", Zou Yuying's "Current Situation and Related Strategies of Online Teaching of Vocational Preschool Professional Piano Courses in the Context of the Epidemic", Ma Baolin's "Practical Exploration of Online Piano Performance Classes in Universities During the Period of" Suspension without Suspension ", and so on;

The second research direction focuses on the transformation, reform, and practical exploration of piano teaching models, such as Jin Hui's "Reflections on National Piano Network Teaching under the Epidemic", Lin Ying's "Innovative Exploration of Online Piano Classes in Universities under the Background of Epidemic Prevention and Control", and Liu Zhu's "Exploration and Practice of

Online Piano Improvisation Accompaniment Teaching under the Epidemic” Zeng Ruowan's “Analysis and Reflection on Online Piano Teaching Mode during the Epidemic Period - Based on Public Piano Curriculum”, Jian Danting's “My Opinion on the” One on One “Teaching Reform of Social Preschool Piano - Taking Dalian Art Training Institution as an Example” (Jin, 2020).

The third research direction is to focus on the normalization of epidemic prevention and control, and explore the status quo of art training institutions around the country with cases as the main research, such as Liu Qianqi's (2020) Research on the Transformation of Children's Art Training Institutions under the Normalization of Epidemic Prevention and Control, Huang Yuru's Research on the Development of Tianjin Piano Training Institutions under the Background of the Normalization of COVID-19 Prevention and Control, Dong Yan's (2020) Research on the Development Strategy of Beijing Olympic Piano Center in the Post epidemic Period, and so on.

There are also some literatures on marketing strategies, brand upgrades, development strategies, and other aspects of a single large-scale art training institution, but this type of literature is not related to music education and belongs to the field of business management. For example, Gao Xing's "Research on Strategic Selection of Shijiazhuang Tianqi Art Training School", Yao Yilin's “Research on Marketing Improvement Strategy of Art Training School”, Ding Hui's “Research on Marketing Strategy of Art Training Institution”, and so on.

The normalization and repetition of the COVID-19 has posed a serious challenge to the business model and profit model of various private training schools or training and education institutions in China. Especially with the launch of the national double reduction policy in July 2021, the education and training industry of off campus course tutoring has experienced a large-scale wave of bankruptcy. At the same time, with the joint announcement of the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the State Administration for Market Regulation on March 3, 2022, on regulating non disciplinary extracurricular training, the country has further strengthened the training types, training plans, fee collection methods, and fund supervision of extracurricular training institutions, This has resulted in a large number of art training schools that relied on collecting long-term class fees to support the

operation of enterprise funds, lacking the main source of working capital. Although art training institutions are not within the scope of the double reduction policy, due to the impact of epidemic related policies, students are unable to attend school and teachers are unable to teach effectively, which greatly reduces the quality of teaching. In this case, parents of students will not renew their fees and may even seek refunds. In order to ensure the quality and progress of teaching, this forces art accompaniment institutions to seek new ways out in enterprise operation and teaching ideas. Many art training schools attempt to break traditional teaching models and carry out online or "one-on-one" teaching. The same is true for piano training. Many art training institutions are trying to reform the teaching mode of piano courses and exploring more methods to improve the level of online piano teaching in order to promote the normal profitability of enterprises (Liu, 2021).

Teaching Method during COVID-19

Flipped Classroom Teaching Mode: Flipped classroom is a new teaching mode in which teachers provide learning resources mainly in the form of teaching videos in an information-based environment. Students watch and learn from teaching videos and other learning resources before class, and teachers and students work together in the classroom to complete activities such as homework answering, collaborative exploration, and interactive communication. Flipped classrooms have shifted from “teaching first and then learning” to “learning first and then teaching”, and from "focusing on learning outcomes" to “focusing on the learning process”. In different stages of teaching, the teaching structure also has different characteristics. The teaching concept of flipped classroom centered on students is also a reconstruction of the teaching structure. Students complete learning tasks and conduct self-assessment through self-control and management. The new learning method has improved students' self-learning ability and greatly helped the development of innovative thinking. Throughout the entire learning process of flipped classrooms before, during, and after class, students can communicate with other classmates and teachers at any time to solve problems encountered during learning. This greatly increases the opportunities for communication with others, thereby enhancing students' communication skills and collaborative awareness with others. The pre class session of the piano flipped classroom is a micro video learning session. Firstly, teachers record micro videos before class or collect high-quality micro videos

online for students to watch before class. There are various ways to create micro videos, commonly used are mobile tablet cameras, teachers writing on paper or whiteboards to perform actual operations, using screen recording and recording methods, combined with PPT courseware to explain and annotate important areas; Or use computers and tablets to create micro videos through screen recording and recording. The teacher will send the pre made micro video to the students, and the students will understand the relevant knowledge based on the teacher's explanation. The classroom segment of the piano flipped classroom is divided into two stages: in the first stage, students complete the corresponding exercises by watching the pre class micro video assigned by the teacher, and solve the traditional post class part in class. In the second stage, the teacher conducts homework spot checks, and students mark fragments that they cannot complete and understand. They discuss problems that they cannot solve with their peers and answer each other's questions. One of the advantages of flipped classroom is that it allows students to use classroom time for communication and interaction on the basis of sufficient self-learning, improving learning efficiency. Teachers can observe students during the process of communication and interaction and provide corresponding assistance at appropriate times. Students solve learning problems through mutual assistance, and then record the difficult points by the team leader. Finally, the teacher counts the difficult points feedback from students and provides unified answers and supplements. Students can also raise questions based on their own learning situation, which can be answered by the teacher and other classmates. Teachers also need to adjust teaching plans based on students' reported learning situations, develop reasonable teaching designs, and arrange teaching progress reasonably (Lin, 2020).

The flipped piano classroom has to some extent achieved the principle of student-centered subjectivity and a more personalized learning approach. Especially under the influence of the epidemic, although classroom teaching cannot be conducted, through flipped classrooms, students can learn online and arrange their learning time reasonably according to their own learning progress. In difficult areas, they can repeatedly watch videos and practice multiple times to achieve proficiency in the tracks. Easy to understand areas can be fast-paced to consolidate their knowledge, and time utilization is more reasonable, giving students greater autonomy.

Online live teaching: Online live streaming teaching, such as MOOC, DingTalk, and Tencent Classroom, is an innovative embodiment of the highly developed information technology in teaching methods and a new teaching model in the current education industry. Traditional piano teaching is mostly based on classroom theoretical teaching and classroom practice, and students who want to learn outside of class will be limited by time, space, and learning resources. The emergence of live streaming online courses can effectively solve this problem, gradually shifting the teaching form that originally relied on the classroom to an online learning mode, promoting the reform and development of piano teaching. Especially under the influence of the epidemic, students are unable to return to school for learning, and the use of live online classes provides opportunities for students to learn online.

For students, learning the piano well is inseparable from theoretical knowledge and operational skills. So, in piano teaching, teachers should highlight the internal connections of music subjects, and integrate knowledge such as music theory, harmony, sight singing, and composition into piano playing teaching to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and help them improve their ability to understand music. By participating in classroom learning and extracurricular exercises, one can master the characteristics and changes of harmony and texture, stimulate students' creative enthusiasm, and enhance their creative abilities. In the live streaming online teaching mode, by setting course content, students can quickly grasp the key points of piano theory; With the help of micro videos, students can quickly understand the knowledge points of piano. Due to the unique nature of the piano discipline, the effectiveness of live streaming online teaching is quite significant. Under this teaching mode, students can quickly understand piano playing skills and common sense. In this situation, the integration of piano teaching and live online teaching is strong. Students can strengthen their understanding of the basic knowledge of piano through live online classes, laying a solid foundation for piano learning from the theoretical level (Yang, 2021). After entering the information age, the development of network technology has been rapid, and the channels for students to obtain knowledge have changed from a single channel in the past to multiple channels. The appeal of traditional classroom education has weakened, and the attractiveness of computer networks for college students' learning has increased, even surpassing that of school libraries. Some students have become accustomed to learning knowledge from the internet. Therefore, integrating live

streaming online teaching with piano teaching can enhance students' interest in learning. College students have relatively strong self-learning abilities. By implementing live streaming online teaching in universities, students can gain more freedom. In the live streaming online teaching mode, students can accompany and improvise, watch relevant piano videos on the campus network platform, independently grasp the learning progress and control the learning intensity. For example, when students are not familiar with the teaching content, they can repeatedly watch teaching videos to deepen their impression. The above approach allows for greater freedom and flexibility in learning, resulting in improved learning outcomes (Ling, 2022).

Through live streaming online teaching, students can experience the new teaching mode, directly communicate with teachers "face-to-face", and also establish learning groups with classmates. In this situation, the communication between teachers and students, as well as between students and students, is smoother. Through discussion and communication learning, students can recognize the gap between themselves and other classmates, identify their shortcomings in learning, and improve their initiative, pertinence, and effectiveness in learning. When organizing piano teaching, schools can also optimize the teaching mode based on students' learning situation and actual performance. Students can collect learning modes that are suitable for their own situation on the internet. After introducing this teaching mode, the school's network hardware resources and teaching resources will be more fully utilized.

Autonomous learning through the intelligent piano software application: Piano software is mainly divided into three categories: music score apps, simulated piano keyboard apps, and accompaniment teaching apps.

Music score apps include "Play the Piano", "Global Piano Network", "Bug Piano", and more. This type of app mainly focuses on massive music scores, summarizing various piano scores, covering various music styles from classical piano to popular piano. Among them, Piano Bar and Bug Bug Piano can listen to piano music in real-time by playing MIDI files. When listening, the pointer of the score file will closely follow the current playing section, allowing people to understand which section and sentence of the music is currently in the score. However, unfortunately, the music does not have musicality and is more mechanized. Compared to the first two, Global Piano Network's score music

comes from recorded files of piano performers. Piano music is more musical, but it does not have real-time pointers, making it difficult to intuitively analyze the segments and phrases of piano music when unfamiliar with the music. In addition to covering a large number of music scores, all three platforms have added forum communities and paid piano courses from renowned piano teachers, which are relatively rich in content. Analog piano keyboard apps include "Ku Band", "Perfect Piano", "Piano3D", and "Piano Keyboard". These apps mainly control virtual piano keyboards by touching the screen of electronic products to perform, and their sound source comes from high-end piano audio recording files, with excellent sound effects. In addition to completing the keyboard simulation playing function in general apps, "Ku Band" can also perform chord playing. You can set the desired chord through the chord editing function, and then play the harmony by clicking on the chord marker. Some people even use it for accompaniment and accompaniment.

There are many types of accompaniment software, such as "VIP accompaniment", "Quick accompaniment", and "Little Leaf accompaniment", all of which are endorsed by Lang Lang. VIP Piano Practice "is an online one-on-one piano practice software launched by Shanghai Miaoke Information Technology Co., Ltd. in 2014. Through online live streaming videos, the accompaniment teacher interacts with the child online, observing the problems that arise during the child's piano practice, and summarizing and providing feedback on this accompaniment lesson. Xiaoye Peilian "is a piano accompaniment software based on AI artificial intelligence, which mainly uses the recording function of the phone to listen to children playing the piano for any mistakes. Before using the software, it will perform a piano standard tone calibration preparation. After calibration, use the search function to search for the desired track to play, and the relevant score will appear. After clicking on the relevant score, two functions will pop up: practice and test. The former mainly involves practicing the left-hand breakup three times, and during the practice process, incorrect sounds will appear in red marks in the real-time music score to remind the user of the mistakes. And testing is an evaluation system for the entire song, which will score based on various aspects of the rhythm and intonation of the entire song. The two methods of accompany training each have their own advantages. The former leans towards manual accompany training, with the advantage that communication is more humane and the teacher plays a good supervisory role; The latter tends to be accompanied by intelligent

machines, which are more refined and intelligent, and more suitable for users with stronger self-discipline.

Conclusions

"In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to piano teaching in private music schools across China. Throughout this article, we have examined the impact of the pandemic on various aspects of piano education, including the transition to online learning, the limitations of virtual instruction, and the importance of maintaining student engagement and motivation. Despite the difficulties faced, private music schools have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in their efforts to ensure the continuity of piano education. By leveraging technology and implementing innovative teaching methods, teachers have been able to provide valuable instruction and guidance to their students remotely. The adoption of online platforms and digital resources has opened new avenues for learning, enabling students to continue their musical development even in the face of adversity.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent limitations of virtual instruction and the importance of in-person interaction in piano education. While online learning has provided a temporary solution, it cannot fully replace the benefits of face-to-face teaching, such as immediate feedback, physical guidance, and the collaborative experience of ensemble playing. As the pandemic situation improves, it is crucial for private music schools to gradually reintroduce in-person lessons, ensuring the safety and well-being of both teachers and students.

Looking ahead, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the integration of technology in piano teaching. This trend is likely to continue even after the pandemic subsides, as educators recognize the value of blended learning approaches that combine online resources with traditional instruction. Private music schools should seize this opportunity to invest in technological infrastructure, provide professional development opportunities for teachers, and explore innovative pedagogical approaches that optimize the benefits of both virtual and in-person teaching.

References

- Dong, Y. (2020). **The current situation of the piano industry and the impact of the COVID-19 on the piano industry.** Musical Instruments, (07), 92-95.
- Jin, H. (2020). **Reflections on the Network Teaching of Piano under the National Epidemic.** Piano Art, (04), 11-14.
- Lin, Y. (2020). **Innovative exploration of online piano classes in universities under the background of epidemic prevention and control.** Daguan, (11), 120-121.
- Ling, H. (2022). **Feasibility Analysis and Research on Online Teaching of Basic Piano Course in Normal Universities,** [Doctoral Dissertation]. Yangzhou University.
- Liu, Q., & Ma, X. (2020). **Exploration of the Transformation of Children's Art Training Institutions under the Normalization of Epidemic Prevention and Control.** China Packaging, 40(11), 77-80.
- Liu, Z. (2021). **Exploration and Practice of Online Teaching of Piano Improvisation Accompaniment under the Epidemic.** Contemporary Music, (05), 13-15.
- Yang, Q. (2021). **Preliminary Exploration on the Application and Practice of "One on One" Piano Online Course.** Drama House, (23), 95-96.