

# COMPILING PIANO EXERCISE BOOK FOR YOUNG STUDENTS AT SHANGHAI MATCH MUSIC SCHOOL

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## Abstract

Compiling a piano exercise book for young students at Shanghai Match Music School must consider cultural beliefs and religious practices, which can influence the selection of repertoire and teaching methods. Incorporating culturally relevant music and respecting religious sensitivities in the exercise book can enhance students' engagement and foster a deeper connection to their cultural heritage through music education. The research objective was 1) to study piano teaching method for young children from key informants, and 2) to compile piano rhythmic exercise book for children. The research methodology was qualitative research method research that consists of document studies, interview, and teaching.

The research findings were through the research on this topic is “Compiling Piano Exercise Book for young students at Shanghai Match Music School”, piano students can pay attention to the importance of rhythm when playing the piano, and can solve the rhythm problems of piano students. Learn to play piano more effectively. The sense of rhythm connects people and music. For children, music can convey movements. Their feelings about music are usually first expressed through movements. First, children hear musical elements such as beat and speed, then perceive the pitch and rhythm of the melody, and finally perceive the type of music.

**Keywords:** Compiling; Piano; Exercise Book; Young Student; Shanghai Match Music School

## Introduction

Because Match Music School in Shanghai, China, does not have a rhythm workbook for children to play the piano, we hope to improve the rhythm accuracy of children when playing the piano through research and production of rhythmic exercises. As a piano teacher, having solid playing skills is essential. First of all, in the piano class, need the teacher to demonstration and play, correct standard demonstration and playing, can help students to establish a good auditory consciousness, the repertoire can have a more profound feeling, when the student practice, also can imitate the teacher playing music, better understand the meaning of the repertoire, improve music aesthetic. When the students do not know how to play the music, the teacher playing correctly can inspire the students to think positively and feel the charm of the music more intuitively. When the students do not play correctly, the teacher playing correctly can help the students find the playing problems, so as to improve the students' playing ability. Piano teacher corrects standard performance, set a good example for students, but also can mobilize and stimulate students 'interest in learning, has a great impact on students' enthusiasm in learning piano. Students admire their teachers very much, which turn them into enthusiasm for learning piano. They want to become players with good playing ability like teachers, so as to constantly improve their piano playing skills. Secondly, the piano teacher has solid playing skills, which shows that the piano teacher has a profound-research and understanding of the content taught. With students on repertoire, can from the repertoire itself vividly explain the background, meaning, content, at the same time, the piano teacher can also from their own experience, tell students the difficulty, emphasis and should pay attention to the content, and the correct method of playing, compared different playing methods, can bring students more imagination, and thinking about the development of the repertoire (Wei, 1986).

Although preschool children are also an age that focuses on groups and games, it does not mean that the cultivation of their learning awareness can be ignored. Piano music scores are quite complex. For beginners, it is not an easy task to read two lines of music scores at the same time, pay attention to the rhythm and rhythm, and play. It requires long-term support of perseverance and endurance. How to help beginner children recognize music scores more quickly, solve practice difficulties, stimulate enthusiasm for playing, and encourage parents to more easily accompany their children to practice piano are the important significance of writing this textbook (Zhao, 1986).

The purpose of piano education is to cultivate students 'healthy aesthetic sense, develop students' ability to appreciate and create beauty, cultivate students 'noble sentiment and civilized accomplishment, develop their interest and interest in music, cultivate students' sentiment, cultivate students 'observation, imagination and creativity, and promote the development of students' intelligence.

## Research Objectives

1. to study piano teaching method for young children from key informants.
2. to compile piano rhythmic exercise book for children.

## Literature Reviews

**Current Pedagogical Materials and Methods in China:** With the popularization of the piano over the years, there have been fairly big changes in the selection of piano textbooks for young children. In the 1980s, when more children were starting to learn how to play the piano, many instructors were still using textbooks introduced in China during the first half of the twentieth-century, such as *Elementary Instruction Book for the Pianoforte* by Ferdinand Beyer and *Practical Method for Beginners, Op. 599* by Carl Czerny. During this time, John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course*, a popular American piano method series published in 1953, was widely adopted as a beginner's textbook for children that best represented the educational theories of its time (Ding, 2022). However, it was not introduced into China until 1986, when it was republished by the People's Music Publishing House. As a result, it did not have a

widespread impact in China prior to that. Representative textbooks of that time period include *The Young Children's Piano Course*, compiled by Feilan Li and Gangrui Dong published by the People's Music Publishing House (1983) and *Beginning Piano Lessons for Children*, compiled by Jianyi Sheng, Suning Yang, Yongqing Zhang, and Wenying Zhou, published by Shanghai Music Publishing House (1984).

In addition, great emphasis was placed on Chinese composers in the 1990s when many of their works were beginning to be published (Feng, 2022). In 1997, Shanghai Columbine Communication & Publications published *First Lessons in Bach*. This book is designed for beginning level students to encourage correct practice habits. It includes 28 pieces, most of which are in two-voice polyphonic texture. Using this book enhances students' skills in legato, staccato, leaps, mordent and repeat signs. It is the pivotal book for polyphonic study.

These are all excellent textbooks brought into China from other countries. The following represents the best representative textbooks (Bian, 1996) used in China today and their distinctive features: *A Beginning Piano Course for Young Children* by Geng Xie. People 's Music Publishing House, 1993.

(1) Emphasis on landmark notes on the grand staff which provides standard reference points for note recognition and significantly improves children's ability to read music. These landmark notes have very distinctive positions that are easy to remember and can be used as reference points for learning the neighboring notes. This way, children are able to quickly expand their note reading across the whole keyboard from the very beginning.

(2) Introduction of intervallic reading at an early stage is featured through visual and tactile exercises, thus developing principles of fingering and sight-reading abilities at an early stage for children to observe the specific visual features of different intervals on the staff and then use these features to discover the principles of fingering, thus improving their sight-reading abilities.

(3) "Note bundles" are used as an entry point so students can experience how important the weights of the arms are in playing. This takes into consideration the fact that young children have weak fingers when they first begin.

(4) Basics of harmony and composition of simple tunes provides an opportunity to cultivate holistic music knowledge and develops musical abilities in a balanced manner instead of limiting students to simple and mechanical fingering practices. A Fun Piano Course for Children by Fumei Chen (Anhui Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999) features pieces with lyrics. This encourages children to have more fun while playing and singing at the same time. Most of the tunes and lyrics in the book are composed by the author, Fumei Chen. In addition, he offers arrangements of other tunes and supplies his own lyrics.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has witnessed more and more music activities related to the popularization of piano education, increasingly active piano competitions, and more frequent exchanges with foreign countries. As a result, an increasing number of foreign piano textbooks for children have been introduced and published in China. In 2000, the People's Music Publishing House published Bela Batok's piano method Mikrokosmos. In 2004, the same publisher printed Me and My.

Piano by Fanny Waterman and Marion Harewood. In 2005, it published Piano Lessons Book by Phillip Keveren, Fred Kern, Mona Rejino, and Barbara Kreade (translated by Shigu Zhang). These outstanding foreign instructional materials have brought Chinese piano teachers and children many brand-new experiences. Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching Beginners Most children who learn piano today have their first contact with a piano when they are four or five years old. At this age, children have already formed considerable comprehensive skills and self-control. Therefore, it is an appropriate and ideal time for starting piano lessons and learning about music. Many current research studies have found that learning to play the piano not only can help children develop mental concentration, but physical coordination of the whole body. In addition, piano study gives a solid foundation in music reading, as well as basic memorization skills. Organizational and problem-solving skills are also significant benefits of piano study. As a result, it lays an excellent foundation for future study in all areas (Li, 2023).

The following will introduce how guidance, interaction, and instruction are provided at the beginning stages when children are starting to learn the piano. Since the piano is what children are studying to play, it is necessary to explain the construction of the piano. The piano is composed of many different components which include keys strings, soundboard and hammers, so it is important for students to learn the function of each component. Many children are most interested in the pedals, so it is necessary to give a good explanation of the pedals' location and their function. A good rapport between the teacher and the student is essential for effective piano instruction and learning. The piano teacher should be friendly, creating an environment where the students are comfortable. The role of the teacher-someone who imparts knowledge, provides guidance, and answers questions-should come second. As young children are still at an early stage of cognition and understanding, the teacher should be able to communicate with them on their level of understanding. Teaching should start only after the child has obtained a fairly good understanding of the teacher's personality and style. With good rapport between the teacher and student, it is easier to transition into piano instruction. Through friendly conversation and simple, clear explanations from the teacher, as well as demonstrative teaching activities such as piano playing, children will gradually establish an affection and admiration for the teacher. As a result, the student will be more willing to follow the instruction from the teacher and be more comfortable with studying the various aspects of piano playing (Xu, 2005).

After a good rapport has been established between the teacher and the student, it is important to form a correct posture for playing the piano. Using the proper playing posture from the very beginning makes it possible for children to press the keys and make sounds using the body weight and strength correctly, therefore increasing freedom in playing in the future.

After children gain a basic understanding of the piano and form a basic sitting posture, the teacher can start having them sit at the piano and do some very basic learning. For example, to learn keyboard geography, tape color strips on the "Do" keys and allow the student to discover the location and number of keys that exist. As the student locates each key, they should be guided on the differences in sound as well as location. Another important step is to introduce them to the middle C of the piano and surrounding keys. It is also useful to the

student locate and sing aloud note names and the corresponding solfege syllable for each key (C= do, D= re, etc.). This is also a good time to introduce finger numbers.

There are specific features of how young children behave. Moreover, the psychology of young children also tells us that children who are four or five years old only have an attention- span of about twenty minutes (Dan, 2001). As a result, the instruction mentioned above-basics of the piano, requirements of the sitting posture, the position of the hands, and the initial contact with the piano-is conducted in two to three sessions so that children can master the fundamental concepts. Next is a detailed examination of common textbooks used in the beginning stage of a piano student's education, along with how they are used in the progression.

**Beginning Piano Textbooks:** The Young Children's Piano Course (revised edition) by Feilan Li and Gangrui Dong (People's Music Publishing House, 1999) is based on the Middle C approach. This is an effective and common teaching technique which allows the student to become comfortable with a small range of the keyboard before moving beyond the octave range of Middle C. The child learns the keyboard in a limited range of the piano, rather than over a larger range of two to three octaves. The method of starting with the third finger, learning to apply weight on the key, and then gradually broadening to the other fingers is widely recognized as the best approach in China (Li & Bai, 2023).

This textbook consists of two volumes and a total of six instructional stages. These textbooks progress from the beginning to the intermediate level of piano study. This takes an average of a year and a half to two years to complete. "Stage One" is titled "non-legato" and starts with the usual foundation of proper posture, fingering, and upper body movement. Both text and illustrations are used to show contrasts between correct and incorrect hand positions to facilitate understanding.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology is Qualitative research method research that consists of document studies, interview, and teaching.

**Key informants:** Criteria of the key informant: the key informant must meet with the following criteria:

- (1) More than 10 years experiences in early childhood piano teaching
- (2) Key informants must have a minimum of a doctorate degree.
- (3) Key Informants Publishing publishes three textbooks or monographs per year.

### (1) Professor Dr. Wang Qing

Wang Qing holds a master's degree in piano performance and a doctorate in musicology. Professor and master's tutor, the textbooks "Children's Piano Scales, Chords and Arpeggios" and the performance-focused edition of "Czerny Series Textbooks" compiled by him have become one of the most widely used textbooks in China.

### (2) Professor Dr. Jiang Chen

Jiang Chen, pianist, director of the Piano Department of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, teacher in the piano teaching and research section, professor, tutor of master's and doctoral students, and editor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music's social and artistic level examination series.

### (3) Dr. Cao Wenhan

Cao Wenhan, Doctorate degree, deputy director of the Keyboard Teaching and Research Section of the Keyboard Department of the Conservatory of Music of Jiamusi University. He has published 5 monographs and 7 provincial papers. He is a member of the Heilongjiang Provincial Musicians Association, a permanent director of the Piano Society of the Heilongjiang Provincial Musicians Association, and a member of the Jiamusi City Piano Association.



### **Data collection**

- (1) The research went to study the document, book, thesis and etc.
- (2) Design interview questions.
- (3) The researcher will check or evaluate the interview questions to the following people: 1 thesis supervisor, 2 education experts (leaders), 3 peers (send the interview questionnaire to the above three to confirm whether it can be used).
- (4) Interview with three key informants of Piano teacher.
- (5) Analyze the data collected during interviews.
- (6) Summarize the results.

## **Results**

**The principles of early childhood piano education:** Students can better learn the elements of playing piano, not only teachers, students, but also parents. With the cooperation of these three aspects, teachers teach students in accordance with their aptitude, scientifically proceed step by step, teach through fun, and master key technologies and music. Technology is a means and music it is a purpose cannot be put the cart before the horse. Students need to spend time training, as well as parents' companionship and promotion. We must understand that learning music through piano allows more piano children to feel the education of artistic quality. Cultivate piano children's love for music, master, comprehend, comprehend, and invest their own emotions to express, and help piano children Improve musical literacy and promote the improvement of other abilities.

**Ways to teach child piano learners to play the rhythm of a piece accurately:** Teachers can effectively improve the efficiency of piano teaching by adding children's songs and nursery rhymes to guide students in rhythm training. At the same time, according to the children's own development characteristics, we cultivate their sense of piano rhythm and musicality, combine "vocal momentum" and "body rhythm" to feel the rhythm of music and express it, thereby cultivating children's sense of rhythm. At the same time, small games and exercises of rhythm tapping are added to help piano children continue to consolidate rhythm practice and become familiar with various rhythm patterns.

**Requirements for teaching methods in the production of exercise books:** When designing and producing exercise books, first consider the overall appearance of the exercise book, which should conform to children's aesthetics. At the same time, the design of chapters should be "from easy to difficult" step by step. The arrangement of each chapter should be targeted. For example, from the perspective of rhythm, you can It is divided into basic rhythm exercises, difficult and error-prone rhythm exercises, and advanced difficulty rhythm exercises. The evaluation part of the workbook can be divided into two parts, from the teacher's perspective and from the child's self-evaluation perspective. For example, from the teacher's perspective, the child's imitation ability, understanding ability, logical thinking ability, image thinking ability, learning enthusiasm, etc. can be observed; from the child's own perspective, the child can self-evaluate his concentration in class, proficiency in repertoire, etc. Exercise books should be designed according to the characteristics of piano children.

## Discussions

The result showed manifesting in children's music learning courses by first clapping and stepping to the beat, and changing the speed of the movements to match the rhythm of the music. But it still takes a long time to be able to find the high and low rhythm of the melody and sing it. During this period, the main thing is to use changes in movements to respond to the musical works (Chen, 2022).

Appreciating music means repeatedly listening to and understanding the meaning of music with joy. To appreciate music, the most important thing is to have the interest, mood and preference to appreciate it. The next step is to have a better medium (audio) to appreciate music to get a better music experience. In fact, in the process of appreciating music, there is an interactive relationship between preference, willingness and ability: as appreciation ability improves, preference and willingness will become stronger; stronger preference and willingness will inspire people to actively seek better appreciation opportunities. The experience gained from it is also richer (Li, 2023).

## **New Knowledges**

Teachers should arrange for the progression of content difficulty from the perspective of interest cultivation, comprehensive literacy, and professional skills based on the child's own situation and the universality of age factors. The evaluation system in the exercise book should be objective and targeted. From the teacher's perspective, the child's imitation ability, understanding ability, logical thinking ability, image thinking ability, learning enthusiasm, etc. can be observed; the child can also be observed from his or her own perspective. Self-evaluate your concentration in class and proficiency in repertoire.

## **Conclusions**

When designing and producing exercise books, first consider the overall appearance of the exercise book, which should conform to children's aesthetics. At the same time, the design of chapters should be "from easy to difficult" step by step. The arrangement of each chapter should be targeted. For example, from the perspective of rhythm, you can It is divided into basic rhythm exercises, difficult and error-prone rhythm exercises, and advanced difficulty rhythm exercises. The evaluation part of the workbook can be divided into two parts, from the teacher's perspective and from the child's self-evaluation perspective. For example, from the teacher's perspective, the child's imitation ability, understanding ability, logical thinking ability, image thinking ability, learning enthusiasm, etc. can be observed; from the child's own perspective, the child can self-evaluate his concentration in class, proficiency in repertoire, etc. Exercise books should be designed according to the characteristics of piano children.

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