

# The Current Situation of Orchestral Teaching in Primary School, China

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## Abstracts

Under the new form of education, the current school has gradually changed from exam-oriented to quality education, especially aesthetic education in the school education status is increasing. Music is the oldest, most infectious, and universal art form of human beings and is an important content of aesthetic education. The school actively set up the student symphony orchestra, the aesthetic education effect through this platform and carrier can effectively improve, and students' music artistic quality has been comprehensively improved. What the student symphony orchestra pursues is not only the individual performance level but also overall cooperation and coordination. It helps to enhance the students' spirit of unity and cooperation and collective sense of honor, better promote students' quality education, and promote students' all-around development and healthy growth.

**Keywords:** Orchestral teaching; Primary school; China

## Introduction

Orchestral music was gradually formed with vocal and instrumental music development in the 16th and 17th centuries. After the 18th century, Haydn established the orchestral arrangement and main music style. Mozart further affirmed that Beethoven wrote orchestral overtures in a symphonic and dramatic manner. From the 19th century to the 20th century, when orchestral music reached its peak, a large number of excellent composers and excellent works appeared one after another.

The basic orientation of orchestral activities in primary school should be considered from two aspects: the characteristics of orchestral activities and the developmental characteristics of students. First of all, in orchestral activities, it is mainly to do a good job of connecting, laying a solid foundation, and gradually carrying out instrumental music teaching activities to improve students' playing skills. Secondly, regarding the aspect of students, the primary school stage is the key period of emotional instability but also the development of aesthetic taste. Through feeling music, orchestral activities can promote the perfection of students' character and effectively develop students' ability of music perception.

Primary school orchestra is the key learning section of orchestra construction and the research hot spot. Chinese music educators have put forward suggestions one after another. Based on their expertise and experience, they have put forward solutions and suggestions for the current development status and problems of primary school orchestras in China.

European and American countries attach more importance to students' art orchestra activities and are also better at organizing and carrying out their traditional and characteristic music orchestra activities. For example, the United States took the lead in using the National Standards for Art Education as a programmatic document for the entire national art teaching in the form of a standardized document in orchestral activities aimed at its characteristic

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music. In the specific orchestra activities, with the help of the highly developed campus club culture, the music clubs in the primary school years and above in the United States, especially in the local music, develop well. According to incomplete statistics from the Instrumental Music Association of America in 2018, 76.4 % of primary school students in the United States have participated in music clubs, and 51.2 % of students can master or master at least one instrument. Europe is the cradle of music masters. In Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, and other countries, due to their good musical and cultural atmosphere, school education attaches great importance to music education for students. However, due to the limited time and content-carrying capacity of classroom music education, each country successively utilizes orchestra and other colorful after-school music activities. To exercise students' music quality and enrich students' instrumental music learning. There is little popular music in European music societies, dominated by classical and instrumental music. Compared with the music orchestra activities of European and American countries, the proportion of Chinese in Singapore is higher and certain achievements have been made in constructing orchestras. During primary school education, Singapore has invested much energy in instrumental music teaching of music teaching. Systematic orchestra activities were carried out as early as the early 1960s of the last centuries until the end of the 20th century. Singapore already has a wide variety of orchestras and a variety of orchestral activities. The development of foreign music societies still forms a system. There is indeed a lot for us to learn about the formation of societies, the spontaneity and professionalism of orchestra activities, the performance level of students, and the guidance level of teachers. For the development of this research, the ideas and achievements of foreign research have important, enlightening significance for this research.

## **Requirements for students to establish different types of wind bands**

### **1) Characteristics of primary school orchestra activities.**

First universality. Orchestra activities should be carried out for all students, not only for the extension and expansion of curriculum teaching but, more importantly, for guiding students to participate in extensive art practice activities and give full play to the universality of music education by enriching students' personal art experience.

Second, diversity. The orchestra activities belong to the category of extracurricular activities, which can be personalized content design and diversified activities arrangement if conditions allow. As the orchestra does not have to be constrained by relevant conditions, the organization of its activities can be flexible, and a variety of forms can be developed to suit the actual development needs of the university.

Third, autonomy. Unlike compulsory courses, the development of orchestra activities follows students' interests and psychological development needs, and it is left to students to make independent choices. This choice is completely independent and free, and it can promote the development of students' self-awareness by mobilizing students' subjective initiative.

Fourth openness. Orchestra activities break down the barriers between class and class, teacher and teacher, and get to know each other through interest and choice. The whole club is open, free from constraints and restrictions, and encourages mutual communication and learning.

### **2) Student's learning psychology**

"Psychological quality education is to cultivate people's psychological quality, mainly refers to the intellectual quality and the quality of non-intellectual factors." ("China New

Generation Magazine of State Education Commission", 1992 : 64). The purpose of psychological quality education is to cultivate students' good character quality, develop their intellectual potential, enhance their psychological adaptability, stimulate their inner motivation, maintain their mental health, and make them develop good behavior habits.

Entering primary school from early childhood is a major turning point in the psychological development of pupils. Primary school is the primary stage of children's psychological development. The school's psychological quality education is very important to pupils. Planned to exert direct or indirect influence on the students' psychological state so that students maintain a healthy and positive mental state is the fundamental purpose of school psychological quality education.

First, improve the ability to self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is the main component and symbol of self-consciousness development. Most pupils lack the ability to self-evaluation. Parents and schools should pay attention to cultivating students' self-evaluation ability. As a collective organization, the band has certain competitions among students. Students self-evaluate by comparing with their peers and realize self-experience and monitoring in the evaluation. In addition, in the long-term performance activities of the wind orchestra, the praise of parents and the affirmation of teachers will undoubtedly make the students self-affirmation and improve the students' self-evaluation ability.

Second, get rid of inferiority. Inferiority complex, also known as self-denial, refers to students' low evaluation of their qualities and abilities. The formation of self-negation consciousness will harm people's mental processes and personality psychology. Academic performance is an important standard to assess students' learning ability. However, many teachers and parents pay too much attention to academic performance, leading to some students with relatively poor academic performance having a sense of self-denial. The goal of the orchestra is to train the members' playing ability. Many students have built up self-confidence in participating in the orchestra and can positively look at life and study, overcoming inferiority.

Third, improve communication skills. Primary school students' communication scope is relatively small, mainly school and family. The object of communication is mainly teachers, classmates, and parents. In communication, students should pay attention to communication etiquette. When the orchestra takes part in a performance or competition, it should bow to the audience to show basic courtesy, and the orchestra members should wait for the conductor to take a seat. These basic etiquettes make students understand the importance of respecting others, removing many obstacles in communication, and improving their expression and communication skills in rehearsal. To sum up, by playing wind music, students can adjust their mental state, prevent unhealthy psychological or violent tendencies, make them willing to help others, listen to others, cooperate with others, cultivate a positive and healthy attitude, full of friendliness, hope, and love for the society, and cultivate lifelong healthy and beneficial interests. Meanwhile, wind music learning also plays a certain role in preventing game addiction.

## Formation process of elementary school orchestra

### 1) Requirements for the establishment of wind orchestra

Zhao Yonggang (2017 : 3) points out in his paper that the establishment factor is the first mechanism to be considered in forming a wind orchestra. The size and arrangement of the orchestra mainly depend on the students participating. If there are 60-80 or more students, a large band can be formed. If the number of people around 40-60 can form a medium-sized wind band, and If the number of students is between 20 and 40, a small wind band can be formed. However, each voice part's balance should be considered in the orchestration process. From the perspective of the sound effect of the whole orchestra: First of all, the main instruments (such as flute, clarinet, and trumpet.) that usually play the melody part should be properly configured because the performance of the main melody part of a piece is the soul of the whole piece. The middle part is the core of the whole orchestra, and the main instruments are the French horn, saxophone, baritone, and trombone., just like the middle part position of the chord. It plays the role of harmonizing the harmonic part. Finally, it is the bass part of the whole orchestra. The main instruments are tuba, bass, and bass trombone. In order to achieve a balanced sound effect in the orchestra, the bass part is essential because the bass part plays a supporting role in the whole orchestra. If the bass part of an orchestra is strong, the orchestra's sound effect is relatively strong, while the wind orchestra's sound effect is very thin and tasteless without the bass part. Only by arranging the orchestra reasonably can the sound effect of the orchestra reach the best state. The following is the reference table for the scientific compilation of wind orchestras:

**Table 1**, Compilation of wind orchestra

Name of Instrument	All voice parts	Symphony wind orchestra	Large wind orchestra	Medium wind Orchestra	Small wind orchestra
Flute	1,2,3	4-9	4-6	3	2
Piccolo		1	1	1	1
Clarinet in the key of A	1,2	3	2	1	
Clarinet in the key of Bflat	1,2,3	18	12	9	6
Bassoon	1,2	4	3	1	
B flat soprano sax		1			
E-flat tenor saxophone	1,2	2	2	2	2
B flat tenor sax		2	1	1	1
French Horn	1,2,3,4	4-6	4	4	3
Trumpet	1,2,3	3-6	3	3	3
Trombone	1,2,3	2-4	2	2	1
Bass trombone	Play the third part of the trombone	1-2	1	1	
Cornet	1, 2	3	3	2	2

Name of Instrument	All voice parts	Symphony wind orchestra	Large wind orchestra	Medium wind Orchestra	Small wind orchestra
Tenor horn		2	2	2	1
Bass horn		1	1	1	1
Tuba	1,2	4-6	4	3	2
Kettledrum		1	1	1	
Snare drum		1	1	1	1
Big snare drum		1	1	1	1
Cymbal		1	1	1	1
Celesta		1	1		
Triangle		1	1		

## 2) Selection of orchestra personnel

According to Zhao Yonggang (2017 : 3) said : In terms of the selection of students, he thinks it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the selected students first because there are various kinds of Musical Instruments in the wind orchestra, and the requirements of playing skills are also different, the timbre and difficulty of each kind of Musical Instruments are also different, and the required musical theory accomplishment or basic musical sense conditions should be screened. These need to be evaluated and tested to select and classify the reality of each candidate member. This classification will profoundly impact the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of their subsequent wind learning and also improve the technical level of the whole group. The content of the examination is mainly based on the basic music literacy test, such as the concept of pitch, the sense of rhythm, the sense of teamwork, and the physical and mental quality test, such as the body shape, figure, weight, mouth shape, tooth shape and other two aspects of the test. Physical conditions also require corresponding musical instrument performance requirements. The wind orchestra's collective nature puts strict requirements on the discipline consciousness of each candidate member and requires a high sense of teamwork. Physical quality assessment: covering mouth, teeth, lips, hands, body shape, mental quality six dimensions.

## 3) Teacher support for wind orchestra.

An excellent team of professional teachers must guarantee the teaching of the wind orchestra. Teachers' teaching ability and excellent professional level will directly affect the performance level and learning interest of the whole band members. Zhao Yonggang (2017 : 3) points out in his article: In terms of the selection of orchestra teachers, the school should appropriately select wind teachers with more experience in leading the orchestra, higher professional standards, and stronger teaching ability. In the early stage of the performance and competition, the school can also hire wind teachers from universities or experienced wind experts from the song and dance troupe for regular guidance. Because primary school students are younger, their minds and outlook on life are not mature and stable, so the teacher, in the teaching process, must, according to the different characteristics of each student, put themselves in the students' shoes, only in this way can solve some problems encountered in the teaching process.

## Rehearsal Content

The orchestra repertoire is the most important part of the wind teaching plan. Whether the teaching materials are used reasonably or not will directly affect the orchestra's development. Specifically, it will affect the teaching plan of the orchestra, the teaching results of wind music, and the degree of students' love for wind music. Therefore, in selecting teaching materials, students' curriculum and orchestra composition should be fully considered, and the appropriate training repertoire should be selected according to the orchestra's training method and training degree.

The introduction of wind orchestras into China is relatively short, and the development of wind orchestras in recent years has been relatively rapid. However, wind orchestras come from western countries, and the development of Chinese primary and secondary school wind orchestras education is still in its initial stage. It leads to the need for rehearsal content, practical textbooks, and systematic and scientific textbooks, increasing wind rehearsals' difficulty. The wind music teaching materials shortage also greatly restricts teachers' teaching activities.

According to the above situation, the teachers of the wind orchestra of Shanghai Union Bilingual School fully consider the students' interest in learning, the repertoire's difficulty, and the teaching materials' actual situation when choosing the teaching materials. In the second half of 2022, the orchestra will perform *Fantastic Foster*, *Junknoo*, and *Two Chinese Folk Songs*.

## Orchestral teaching in school in China

According to the Research on the Practice of Orchestral Teaching in Primary School Orchestras, Zhao Jingyi (2013 : 7) found through investigation that orchestras have been gradually developed and improved in schools with conditions. The association organization has become increasingly standardized and widely welcomed by students. On the one hand, due to the limited activity venues and the limited number of students in some schools, or too little time for activities, It is challenging to meet the needs of students.

In the research on the Current Situation Investigation and Countermeasure Research of Primary School Music Orchestra Activities, Wang Jing (2013 : 43) found through the survey data that with the increasing attention of the country and society to the comprehensive quality and literacy of students at the present stage, parents and students also pay more and more attention to the cultivation of personal interests, especially the aesthetic demand represented by music literacy keeps rising. Therefore, there is a high interest in orchestra activities among students, and parents are willing to cultivate students in related music in their spare time. Moreover, they have great expectations for orchestral music.

Zhang Xiaopei (2014 : 4) also expressed similar views in Exploring How to Improve Students' Musical Literacy in Orchestra Activities and added that effective development of the rules of associations could improve students' comprehensive literacy. From the perspective of school moral education construction, it is also an important starting point and entry point for moral education activities and aesthetic education. For students to enhance their aesthetic taste and quality, accumulate certain aesthetic knowledge, love music, love national culture, and so on has important significance. It is an important means to promote our national cultural inheritance.

Research on music associations in foreign countries started earlier, and different regions have their characteristics. For example, European student associations in classical and instrumental music benefit from a good cultural atmosphere of music and develop prosperously. In the United States, musical diversity is evident because of the intermingling of many nationalities and cultures. In general, foreign student music societies started earlier and have more development experience. The related theoretical research and time development are also important in developing Chinese orchestras.

Li Lei (2015 : 53) proposed in research on the Status Quo of Shouguang Primary School Music Societies and Countermeasures that students should be the main body of orchestra activities and the autonomy should be returned to students. However, in terms of organization, management, and related security, schools and teachers should not be left to it and should act according to the school's relevant plans and norms. In Music Societies' Cultivation of Normal Students' Teaching Practical Ability, Chen Libei (2015 : 54) extended to the personal quality of grass-roots orchestra teachers through the training of normal university students and pointed out that orchestra activities should be teacher-led. However, the quality of teachers is uneven, so it is necessary to strengthen training and plan the professional development of teachers. It can fundamentally improve the quality of the orchestra's activities.

Primary school orchestra is the key learning section of orchestra construction and the research hot spot. Chinese music educators have put forward suggestions one after another. Based on their expertise and experience, they have put forward solutions and suggestions for the current development status and problems of primary school orchestras in China.

## Conclusion

The orchestra has a relatively wide selection of ensemble content, including film music, folk music, film music, and animation music. In a word, only when the interests of the orchestra members are fully considered can the enthusiasm of the orchestra members to learn new music be improved. The choice of repertoire will affect the development and level of the orchestra in the future, so the selection of training repertoire must be careful and comprehensive consideration must be taken. There are many winds band training tracks, ranging in difficulty from level 1 to Level 6. Some tracks even have versions of different difficulties that are "used by professional bands." Therefore, it is necessary to choose them to step by step according to the basic level of the orchestra. In addition, it should also consider the different interests and receptivity of adolescents and adults, the preparation of total scores, and score division. Wind teachers should broaden their horizons, pay attention to the healthy development of young people, understand the popular themes in today's society, actively seek and explore the content and materials of rehearsal, combine the actual situation of the orchestra, form their curriculum content system, so that students can learn more smoothly, teaching more standardized, training more scientific. The gradual improvement of the overall level of the band can make the performance content more adaptable to the trend of the times.

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