

The teaching practice of piano accompaniment skills for choral high school students at Taiyuan Art School in China

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Abstracts

Piano improvisation has been a subject of interest for teachers and students in colleges and universities since 1980, when it was introduced into the curriculum. With this, the theoretical research results and related monographs on piano improvisation accompaniment have come along. The research objective was to study teaching practice of piano accompaniment skills for choral high school students at Taiyuan Art School, China

The research method was qualitative, with three expert reviewers identifying interview topics and six teachers specializing in piano accompaniment and choral conducting, collecting data through observation of teaching and interviews that were finally used in the teaching practice of the "Nightingale" choir rehearsal and piano accompaniment course at Taiyuan School of Culture and Arts.

The research findings were both vocal and piano accompaniment courses should be offered as major courses, and teachers should make changes in the curriculum to improve students' personal skills when training them in piano accompaniment courses. At the same time, teachers can implement different levels of teaching programs for different piano accompaniment music.

Keywords: The teaching practice; Piano Accompaniment Skills; Choral High School Students; Taiyuan Art School; China

Introduction

With the development of art songs in the 19th century, the richness of the piano harmony and the melody of the singer to achieve a different aesthetic effect was gradually discovered by the composers, thus appearing to use the piano alone to accompany the song, a new art form - piano accompaniment was born, it became an important tool for composers to enrich the melodic weaving of the song, set the mood of the singer and enhance the aesthetic effect of the emotional expression of the song (Chen, 2012).

In recent years, piano improvisation accompaniment has taken a certain percentage of the exams and competitions, but it has not received as much attention as the piano discipline. Slow development in the schools (Guo, 2018).

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Piano accompaniment is a special and independent discipline, but also a comprehensive art, which plays an equally important role as singing for the perfect expression of a work. Piano accompaniment is not just a musical background, but an integral and organic part of the entire musical structure. A song to be sculpted into a perfect work of art, relying on the concerted efforts of the singer and the accompanist, tacit cooperation, and finally to achieve a perfect combination, the art of interplay. The important role of piano accompaniment in which is self-evident (He, 2010).

Because of the relatively short history of development, the existing teaching model and teaching philosophy still need to be innovated, and there are relatively few substantial teaching resources. Therefore, some teachers are only able to fill in the teaching mode as the main body, this kind of more mechanical teaching strategies and teaching methods seriously bound the cultivation and enhancement of students' music literacy, students cannot grasp the skills and essence of piano learning, personal piano improvisation accompaniment learning ability and level is relatively poor (Li, 2020).

This course is a professional course in music education with both theoretical and practical aspects. The course includes the education of students on art aesthetics, humanistic qualities, and music education concepts. At the same time, students' musical imagination and creativity are brought into play in practice. It is not only a course of skills and techniques. It is more a course to improve quality education (Zhu, 2008).

Taiyuan School of Culture and Arts was founded in 1957, with Ding Guoxian, a famous master of Jin Opera, and Zhang Huan, a people's artist, as its principal. The school has now become a comprehensive secondary art school that cultivates a variety of artistic talents and runs a diversified school. The school is located on the east bank of the beautiful Bin he Park, in the middle of the dense college district of Hezhou, with excellent humanistic and natural environment, and developed transportation and convenient living, and is the only public comprehensive art school in Taiyuan. The school has two levels of schooling: general art high school and general art secondary school.

Taiyuan School of Culture and Arts, focuses on the performance form of chorus. It not only cultivates people's aesthetic sentiment while promoting interpersonal communication, plays an important role in creating a harmonious society. Taiyuan Culture and Arts School has a choir named "Nightingale Choir", which was established in 2015. The author has been the only piano accompanist since the establishment of the choir. Every year, the "Nightingale Choir" participates in competitions, shows, charity performances, and flash mobs, and has received countless awards. As the choir continues to grow, more and more students want to join it, not only vocal majors but also piano majors.

During the continuous development of choral career, not only professional choral groups use piano accompaniment, but also more and more amateur choral groups have a fixed piano accompaniment for daily rehearsals and performances. Piano accompanist as a choral performance in the "second conductor", the artistic effect of the phrase for the piano accompanist to find the correct positioning (Niu, 2020). As we all know, the biggest difficulty for the conductor is that it is difficult to unify the attention, timbre and emotional expression of these three aspects effectively. The piano accompaniment can unify the choir's attention in

the performance more effectively and make the choir and the piano become one, the conductor mainly coordinates the cooperation between the choir and the piano, and the conductor only plays a bridge role. Therefore, in order to make the three harmoniously unified together, the conductor and the piano, the chorus and the piano, and the wisdom and the choir need more friction and integration.

In the performance of choral works, piano accompaniment is the most common form of accompaniment, and the difference between piano and other instrumental music is its wide range and perfect integration of acoustics with the human voice (Zhao, 2020).

Piano accompaniment is an irreplaceable and critical part of a choral work. In this paper, six teachers with experience in teaching choral groups were interviewed, focusing on their teaching experiences regarding piano accompaniment techniques, interview transcripts and observation forms were created, and evaluated by three experts (with at least 20 years of teaching experience). The researcher used a qualitative research method to understand the background, history, current situation and future of piano accompaniment in choral singing by reviewing relevant materials through interview survey research, as well as discovering the role of piano accompaniment in choral works and accompaniment technique practices through observational research. The researcher summarized the abilities required for piano accompaniment through her own experience as a piano accompanist in a choir, and focused on several representative mixed choral works to analyze the importance of piano accompaniment in singing choral works, and also provided constructive suggestions for the future development of piano accompaniment in a choir.

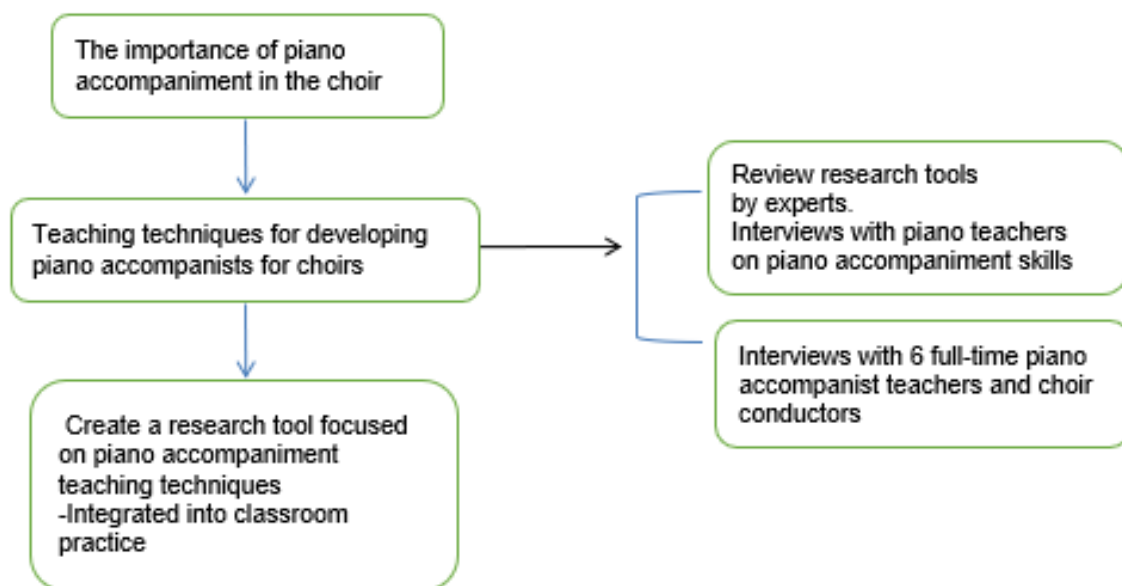
Research Objectives

To study teaching practice of piano accompaniment skills for choral high school students at Taiyuan Art School, China

Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research methods to collect data through observations and interviews. The purpose of the study was to examine the practice of teaching piano accompaniment skills to the choir of the Taiyuan City Culture and Arts School in China

Conceptual Framework



Research Scope

Time: Interview data collection from December 2022 to February 2023
Location: Taiyuan Art School, China
Person: High school piano teachers
Content: Piano accompaniment pedagogy, choral singing, music education, stage performance

Research Findings

1.1 Taiyuan Culture and Arts School

Taiyuan City Culture and Arts School is a municipal state-run comprehensive arts secondary school, the school's predecessor was founded in 1957, Taiyuan City Drama School, 1961 due to national streamlining institutions to compress the urban population, Taiyuan City Drama School closed, in December 1975, approved by the Provincial Culture Bureau, the school resumed as Shanxi Province Opera School Taiyuan City Arts Class. 1988 the school was renamed Taiyuan City Culture and Arts School The school is located on the east bank of the scenic Binhe Park, amidst the dense college area of Pingzhou, covering an area of 9350 square meters (14 acres), with excellent humanistic and natural environment, and well-developed transportation and convenient living. The school has majors in Chinese dance performance, opera performance, music, art, acrobatics, opera performance, photography and video, and mass culture and art performance.

1.2 Establishment of the choir

The art of choral singing is a bright pearl in the treasure house of human music and culture, a form of expression of the highest level in the field of vocal music, which can bring people the artistic enjoyment of multiple forms, multiple timbres,

multiple voices and multiple changes. That high degree of harmony and unity, intermingling, wonderfully demonstrates the different styles and profound connotations of musical works. In order to enrich the art form of music education, strengthen the function of aesthetic education, increase the connotation of school culture construction, and fully demonstrate the overall artistic quality and spirit of school music teachers, Taiyuan Art School officially established the "Nightingale Choir" on November 13, 2015. The choir currently has 56 members, with vocal students from the music department as the main group. The choir will take "promoting elegant art, singing the national spirit" as its purpose, "creating artistic excellence, showcasing the school's image" as its mission, and strive to create a "Taiyuan first-class, leading provincial cities We will strive to create a professional choir that is "first-class in Taiyuan and leading in the province.

Since the establishment of "Nightingale Choir", it has participated in various choral competitions, performances, and traveled to other provinces to participate in exchanges, such as participating in the "'Chinese Dream Labor Beauty' Citywide Cultural Construction Micro Contest" at Taiyuan Workers' Cultural Palace on November 27, 2015. For example, on November 27th, 2015, the company participated in the "'Chinese Dream Labor Beauty' Citywide Cultural Construction Achievement Micro Contest" at Taiyuan Workers' Cultural Palace, and was finally awarded the first place in the province through the online voting organized by Shanxi Workers' Daily; on May 21st, 2018, with the theme of "Praise the New Era, Chorus the Beautiful Shanxi, Sing the New Yang quan On May 21, 2018, the 13th Shanxi Province "San jin Spring" Choral Competition with the theme of "Praising the New Era, Choral Beauty of Shanxi, Singing the New Yang quan" won the gold medal of the "Spring Flower Award"; in September 2019, the choral competition of "Six Central Provinces In September 2019, it won the gold medal in the "Six Central Provinces" choral competition.

1.3 Choral rehearsal curriculum

The chorus has a set time each week for rehearsal sessions, usually 2 times a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, with 4 hours of rehearsal each time, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., while piano accompaniment is not set up in a separate session.

Through the observation of the teaching practice of "The Most Beautiful" choir in Taiyuan Experimental Middle School, the following results were obtained:

In 2011, the school established the "Most Beautiful Choir" to teach campus chorus, rehearse and perform choral activities. The choir is an outstanding student club in Taiyuan City and an early youth choir in Xinghualing District. The school's music teacher, Mr. Liu

Junjie, is responsible for the choral teaching of the "Most Beautiful Choir". Since its establishment, the choir has actively carried out various healthy and beneficial cultural activities and participated in many cultural performances, public service activities and choral competitions.

Chorus have participated in many cultural performances, public welfare activities and choral competitions. The choir has been personally guided by Ren Xinning, a famous conductor and composer, who is a professor of conducting in professional colleges and universities. We have participated in many national, provincial, municipal and district level vocal choral competitions and performances, and have achieved excellent results many times.

(1) Selection of piano accompanist and choir members: At present, the most beautiful choir has more than 50 people, the most beautiful choir members are all from the students of the experimental high school, one of them Some of the members are the special art students recruited by the school every year, which are the backbone of the choir, and some are students from different the other members are students from various classes of different grades.

Currently, the piano accompaniment for the choir is performed by the school's special students. The music teacher should have been responsible for However, since the school does not employ a teacher, the students are responsible for the piano accompaniment.

(2) Rehearsal time: The school's choral instruction is primarily in the form of choir rehearsals, which take place every Wednesday evening from 6 to 10 p.m. and last four hours.

(3) Piano accompaniment method: Most of the current choir rehearsals are conducted in the form of piano accompaniment. However, sometimes the accompaniment is adjusted according to the characteristics of the students and the requirements of teaching and performance, so as to choose the appropriate accompaniment.

(4) Selection of teaching works: Through the interviews we learned that the Most Beautiful Choir is able to study four choral works per semester, and the main selection principle is students' interest, and the works chosen are all choral works with piano accompaniment.

(5) Teaching environment and equipment: The school has a music room and an upright piano. Classroom music instruction takes place in the classroom or the music room, depending on the content, and school choir instruction and rehearsals take place in the music room.

The findings from interviews with six piano accompanist teachers and choral conductor teachers.

1) Piano accompaniment important in high school music teaching

The high school music curriculum involves a wide range of art forms and cross-pollination of course content. Whether it is music classroom teaching or extracurricular music teaching activities, the use of piano accompaniment is involved in teaching and artistic activities. It is very important for music teachers to master the relevant accompaniment skills to use piano accompaniment. So of course, it is important, it is just far from being valued.

2) Special training can we piano teachers do in teaching accompaniment

The first thing must be the expansion of theoretical knowledge, because piano accompaniment is different from piano playing. Secondly there must be a need for improvement of technique, which requires more specialized teachers to tutor. The last thing is that one needs to listen to a lot of different styles in order to be able to distinguish between various styles of music.

3) The most difficult task in teaching piano accompaniment in the classroom

There are many difficulties, the first is that there is no complete system of teaching materials, our teachers often choose their own teaching materials, there is no standard; the second is that the school does not pay enough attention, not only the curriculum is very little, and most of them are group classes or group classes, I think the piano course must be a one-to-one format to be effective; the third is that the students' basic knowledge is not up to standard, there is no way to teach, because piano accompaniment must have a certain foundation for students to learn, most of the school students cannot reach this skill, the teacher's skills are also not a reference standard, this is the biggest problem.

4) Training in schools or educational departments for piano accompaniment lessons

We certainly hope that the school pays attention to this course, first of all, the curriculum, the best independent course, not always confused with the piano performance course; second is to recruit some professional piano accompaniment teacher to teach, ordinary piano performance teacher is not able to teach accompaniment this course; and chorus rehearsal course many students, we crowded in a small classroom is very uncomfortable, but also affect the chorus effect. I also advocate that the chorus rehearsal course should be held all the time, not only when we need to participate in the competition.

5) School's teaching resources and equipment adequate for teaching needs

School's teaching resources and equipment adequate for teaching needs can't meet the expectation. Nowadays, most choir rehearsal venues in Taiyuan schools are temporary. We have attended many school choir rehearsals, some in classrooms, some in playgrounds, and sometimes even pianos are not available, because most pianos are placed in piano rooms, which are very small and really rudimentary.

Recommendation

Theoretical Recommendation

At the beginning of the student's piano playing, it is important to build a good foundation. From the beginning, students should be asked to listen to their own voices, to distinguish whether they are round and nice, and to pay attention to the musical expression and accuracy of the piece. The teacher can use the four-handed combination with the students to increase the interest in learning, to develop a sense of music and to understand the accompaniment. In the process of piano teaching, according to the depth of the students' playing degree, they can learn improvisation accompaniment from monophonic

accompaniment, from shallow to deep, from easy to difficult, from simple to complex, rather than directly get the accompaniment score and start practicing, to progress step by step.

First of all, we should open the discipline of training piano improvisation accompaniment teachers in some conservatories, and secondly, we should create a platform for teachers to communicate with each other, to have academic exchanges, and to hold piano improvisation accompaniment competitions and concerts, etc. Therefore, teachers need to continue their education to improve themselves and learn from each other.

3)Textbook editing suggestions.

The preparation of teaching materials must be based on the characteristics of the subject to study the teaching methods, both theory and practice, to take into account the actual level of the accompanist, from the practical point of view, it is necessary to prepare teaching materials from the perspective of the hierarchy of high, medium and low levels of learners. At present, there are very few teaching materials that are suitable for teachers' colleges and universities at all levels and have practicality, so it is suggested that the relevant departments organize relevant personnel to compile a theoretical and practical teaching material as early as possible to solve the pressing problem.

Practical Recommendations

1)Teacher training for continuing education using modern networks

In complex lessons, it is recommended that study groups be formed to interact with each other and improve together. In piano accompaniment, music teachers can form groups of different sizes, choose a leader, and develop a complete learning plan to stimulate discussion and improve each other's performance. It also allows teachers to learn online anytime, anywhere, regardless of time and location, thus maximizing the sharing of teaching resources. Group leaders can prepare pre-assignments for learners before class, and learners can practice relevant assignments or musical accompaniment in advance. The group leader will create instructional videos, such as analyzing and arranging accompaniment and harmony, as well as accompaniment patterns that match the characteristics of the piece. In this way, learners can arrange and work on the piece in their free time offline and identify their problems in time. When forming study groups, each group should have a few higher-level teachers as role models to guide the group's discussions and help solve some of the teachers' learning problems. Therefore, the researcher recommends using online platforms to form online communication study groups. The education department could also assist teachers in creating a platform, similar to a live web-based video teaching dissemination platform, to add a multi-channel perspective to piano improvisation.

Special teachers or teachers with strong piano improvisation skills will record and upload videos of them accompanying the material. Since music teachers have different levels of piano accompaniment skills, they can record videos of the same piece at different levels of difficulty and categorize the pieces in the textbook by style and tonality. In this way, learners can select videos according to their accompaniment ability, find the pieces they need to learn quickly, and watch and study them repeatedly to improve their deficiencies. In addition to practicing the accompaniment of pieces, one needs to practice

basic skills such as scales and arpeggios in major and minor keys, chord inversions, etc. All these are helpful for the development of piano accompaniment.

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