

# Northern folk song teaching in the high school in China

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## Abstracts

Northern folk songs are closely related to the development of China's traditional culture, and music comes from life. Northern folk songs crystallize the local people's continuous exploration of art forms. Therefore, the northern folk songs integrate the different local people's artistic expression form and cultural connotation. Folk songs make the students more understanding of the art of music understand the focus of music practice, can promote students' knowledge in practice, deepen the understanding of northern folk songs, also consolidate their learning, enhance their art management and their value, at the same time to strengthen the inheritance of the northern folk songs.

**Keywords:** Northern folk song; high school, China

## Introduction

With the development of music education, the reform of music subject education, including folk song teaching, has been further promoted in the stage of music education in middle schools. In the past, teaching folk songs was limited to in-depth research on the methods of singing folk songs and other problems. In teaching folk songs in middle school music classes, there are still some problems, such as difficulty promoting folk singing teaching, low classroom feedback, and poor teaching quality and effect. In 2014, General Secretary President Xi Jinping pointed out at the symposium on literature and artwork that "The fine traditional Chinese culture is the spiritual lifeblood of the Chinese nation, and it should be carried forward in light of the conditions of the new era." The report to the 19th CPC National Congress stressed: " Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. "Local folk songs are diverse in type, rich in emotion, and profound in cultural connotation. They are a unique musical form and an important part of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. They write about the Chinese nation's origin, prosperity, and development and embody the Chinese temperament. Northern folk songs originated in the northern region of China and are artistic songs with unique artistic charm formed by the working people in the north daily. Therefore, northern folk songs have an important artistic, historical, cultural, and educational value. However, with the further acceleration of globalization, the living space of the northern folk songs is gradually shrinking and even faced with a situation that no one was sung or heard about. Therefore, it is very necessary to effectively inherit and protect the northern ethnic songs by infiltrating the northern ethnic songs in high school music teaching.

### **The significance of northern folk songs in high school music curriculum**

#### **1) Improve the comprehensive quality of students**

High school is an important period for students' physical and mental development and a key stage for cultivating their comprehensive ability. Folk songs of different regions and different types have rich ethnic characteristics. In learning northern ethnic songs, students can improve their ability to observe and appreciate different cultures and stimulate their inner interest in creating northern ethnic songs. Northern folk songs have a long history and culture, rich connotation, contains rich historical culture, national culture, folk culture, music culture, etc., such as "Yang Father and son sigh ten, " Liu Zhuang Tragedy," "the little sister joined" reflects the real historical story, help to enrich students' historical and cultural knowledge, expand their cultural horizons, etc., to promote their comprehensive knowledge. At the same time, students can improve their own cultural observation, artistic appreciation, and artistic creation ability while learning the northern ethnic songs. Thanks to the rich resources of northern ethnic songs in China, high school students can also let them feel the rich regional culture of China and enhance their emotional experience of different ethnic customs by studying and appreciating northern ethnic songs.

#### **2) Cultivate students' patriotism**

High school is the key stage for shaping students' outlook on life, values, and world outlook. As an important part of Chinese folk art, northern folk songs contain a rich moral value, moral sentiment, and cultural connotation. Infiltrating northern folk songs into high school music teaching can create a good atmosphere of folk songs, make students learn more about national culture, make students like local music more, stimulate their love for their hometown, and cultivate patriotism. For example, the content of the northern folk song "Songhua River" is to praise the heroic deeds of the young students in the eastern Hebei province for actively participating in the war to protect their hometown and resist aggression. Teachers infiltrate folk songs in the music classroom, teaching and guiding students to learn folk songs, not only mastering the music knowledge but also can deepen to uus.

#### **3) Carry forward the excellent local traditional culture**

Xiong Shiyi (2020) pointed out that northern ethnic songs are songs with distinctive regional characteristics created by working people in daily life and production. It embodies the crystallization of the wisdom of the Chinese working people and is also an excellent representative of the local traditional culture. Due to the distinctive regional characteristics of the northern ethnic songs, teachers introduce folk songs to guide students to feel the various national cultures and understand the unique national spirit and aesthetic characteristics of the people of different nationalities and regions. Therefore, integrating northern folk songs into high school music teaching can enhance the student's sense of identity with the local traditional culture and stimulate their interest in the excellent local traditional culture. At the same time, this is also the implementation and set of the new curriculum standards for high school music teaching to carry forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation's requirements. For example, the northern folk song "Back to the Mother's Home" tells the local culture of the daughter returning to her home in northern China after the Spring Festival through humorous and interesting lyrics and catchy musical melodies. In the witty and interesting singing, students can not only feel happiness and learn music knowledge but also deepen their understanding and understanding of local culture and feel the charm of local traditional excellent culture so that students become inheritors.

#### 4) Form an open teaching concept of folk songs

Northern folk songs are the precious wealth of Chinese music and an important part of China's intangible cultural heritage. Introducing local folk songs in high school music teaching concretely implements "intangible cultural heritage on campus" (Su, 2016). At present, some high schools have yet to pay attention to the teaching of folk songs. The penetration of northern ethnic songs in high school music teaching can make up for the shortage of existing music curriculum resources in schools to broaden a new way of inheritance of northern ethnic songs, which is conducive to forming an open concept of folk song teaching. Northern ethnic songs are rich in variety, forms, and characteristics and are open and inclusive (Zhang, 2020). According to the northern ethnic songs in the region, the school has developed "supplementary textbooks" suitable for local schools to create a relaxed and open teaching atmosphere of folk songs and to provide a good environment for the penetration of northern ethnic songs in high school music teaching.

#### **The dilemma of northern folk song teaching in senior high school**

##### 1) Teachers' understanding of students is not thorough enough

Teachers' understanding of students is not thorough enough, so they take the concept of "students do not like traditional music, and skills are difficult to learn" and apply some traditional teaching methods to regard the folk song class as an ordinary singing class or appreciation class. Students have lost their subjectivity, interest, and confidence in learning folk song singing (Zhang & Ma, 2017). Teachers do not pay enough attention to northern folk songs and have few professional courses, which leads to the gradual loss of consciousness and motivation for the inheritance of northern ethnic songs. They devote all their energy to exploring Western music teaching systems and teaching methods. The lack of attention paid to cultivating students' aesthetic ability of traditional northern ethnic songs and the inheritance of traditional ethnic culture leads to the low teaching effect of folk song singing (Ding, 2018).

##### 2) Single teaching mode

In the teaching mode, most of the traditional passive music teaching mode, "teachers speak, the mode of students listening, teachers do a demonstration in the lecture room. Students imitate under the platform, are single, and need more innovation. The simple use of traditional teaching methods will ignore students' initiative; teachers can only rely on the existing textbooks that cannot be combined with the specific classroom environment. Make a careful plan before class, rather than teach according to the specific class, completely rely on the music in the textbook so that students can only passively choose the textbook. The atmosphere is dull, and it is difficult to stimulate students to take the initiative to explore singing skills and learn how to sing folk songs. With the development of The Times, traditional folk song classroom teaching can no longer meet the needs of contemporary middle school students.

3) The professional ability of folk song singing and the educational theory level need to be improved

Huo Lei (2017:1) believes that the most prominent problem in folk song singing teaching is that some music teachers cannot sing and cannot sing national style for students. Some teachers have received music education since childhood, have relatively little basic knowledge of cultural quality, and need more understanding of the historical background, regional characteristics, spread, and development of some folk songs, so they also have certain limitations in lesson preparation. Some music teachers need help combining folk song

knowledge with practical teaching after entering middle school. As a result, even if the music teachers have mastered some basic music teaching technology, they still need to be more skilled in mastering folk songs. The level of music teachers is uneven in terms of singing, and many non-vocal music major teachers need to be more competent. Li Zhenhua (2016:1) pointed out that some music teachers can sing simple songs but need help to control slightly more difficult songs. With vocal music skills, they can express the musical feel of the works well. Due to the limitations of the teacher himself, it is impossible to provide scientific guidance for singing folk songs to achieve a good folk song singing effect.

The teaching of folk song singing needs to be more professional, or the teaching of folk song singing is directly equivalent to the singing teaching, and the teaching objectives need to be more complex. These two phenomena are the need for curriculum concepts and educational concepts. Students in this period were not satisfied with the music teachers blindly teaching music in the music class. This will cause the students 'to reverse psychology, affect the effect of teaching, and reduce the students' learning efficiency.

#### 4) Students' consciousness is affected by many factors

In the middle school stage, students' thoughts gradually mature, students' self-awareness is enhanced, and middle school students have a certain musical aesthetic ability and gradually form their aesthetic tendency. With the development of The Times, there are more and more kinds of music. Under the influence of Western music, especially pop songs, most middle school students prefer simple, melodious, and melodic pop music. That folk songs need to be updated, we do not want to learn to sing folk songs, plus the sense of distance and strangeness causes the age of folk songs. The song is too old, too soil, not easy to listen to, and not in line with their interest.

Folk song singing requires that language expression ability, namely the expression of the local language, and even the theme of folk songs are influenced by their tone. For example, when singing northern folk songs, the sound should be strong and smooth; singing folk songs, and so on. Folk songs will appear with many decorative sounds, breath use, and singing skills used in the national singing method of the common pronunciation and other skills; the technical requirements are very high, and different folk songs with sound and skills are also different.

#### 5) Singing in adolescence

In middle school, their physical fitness develops, and their bones, appearance, intelligence, and personality all change. Significant developments in cognitive ability, emotion, volitional behavior, and self-awareness exist. Chang Xiaohong (2017:2) pointed out that middle school students are in an awkward period of voice change and struggle to speak out. They feel their voice is bad and unwilling to open their mouths to hum. After many students enter the voice-changing period, they will have a certain influence on their singing, especially for the boys; this change is much more obvious. For example, the voice becomes low; the vocal range is smaller, and other limited singing problems. Many students who need to become more familiar with the voice change period will question their singing ability, which affects their singing confidence and enthusiasm. Some students have not received training in music since childhood, and think they do not have musical talent, so in the class escape cannot realize the pleasure of folk singing class; some students think they do not want to sing; some students are introverted, embarrassed to sing folk songs. These situations will greatly impact the promotion of folk song teaching in middle school music classes (Wang, 2017).

### **Northern folk music high School, the theoretical basis for teaching development**

#### **1) Orff Music teaching method**

The Orff method of teaching was produced in early 1920, and the founder of it was Karl Orff of Germany. The Orff music teaching method is not pointing to a specific method but an idea, which is an attitude toward music education (Zhang, 2020). Sun, H. L (2017) believes that Orff's open teaching concept and unique teaching methods can enable students to enter various music fields in a natural and relaxed state and personally integrate music and feel the music.

Orff's music teaching method shifts its attention to comprehensive music and gradually forms a concept of "overall art" music education that integrates language, poetry, music, and action. Wang, Y (2019) pointed out this teaching method; music includes not only rhythm and melody; it includes too much; it is a rich art world with nursery rhymes, recitation, dialogue, drama, rhythm, dance, painting, etc.; children may guide teachers, to follow, listen to and imitate the sounds from nature and life.

Yue, J et al. (2017) believed that Orff's original thought of music education was based on humanism. It is a core educational concept. They all need to start from the essence, a form of people constantly creating and accumulating in their daily life and labor. Music education is not the teaching of knowledge and skills; music education is the education of people. Starting from human nature, from the original human education, and from the origin of music (Guo, 2018). It is also believed that music is a tool for human beings to conduct emotional expression and emotional communication. Everyone has musical talent and the instinct to use music for emotional expression and communication. The Orff music teaching method is a combination of language and dance; regardless of age, the level can experience and learn the most natural form of music; the participation in the creation, that is, participants in this music mode must actively participate in music performance (Kyunghoon, 2016: 1-16).

#### **1.1) Concept and characteristics of Orff's teaching method**

Many scholars believe that the ideas of Orff's teaching method mainly include originality, creativity, comprehensiveness, and practicality.

First, the original nature. The Orff music teaching method advocates the "original sex" music education. This kind of open education has no fixed curriculum standard, teaching syllabus, no unified teaching content, not necessarily according to the textbook or a section of teaching, mostly in an impromptu way. Select the teaching content suitable for students' physical and mental development, combine it with their favorite learning activities, avoid single teaching and singing, and pay attention to the students' learning characteristics of teaching (Wu, X, 2019). This seemingly simple teaching mode has higher requirements for teachers. Teachers should not only carry out impromptu teaching but also have excellent classroom organization, coordination, and grasp ability.

The second is creativity. Impromptu is a human instinct, a reaction from people's hearts. In classroom teaching, respect the true reflection of children, and all study mementos were transformed into the child's own real experience. Teachers need to affirm children's individual differences, make children score music, choose their instruments, and create their own impromptu movements. They do not need to unify regulations and arrange to ensure that children's inner thoughts are fully expressed (Zi-Zhen, 2018). Therefore, Orff's teaching results are from the inner musical instinct of the children, usually created by the students themselves; without careful rehearsal, or fixed arrangement, it looks a little chaotic, but it is

very real.

Third, comprehensive. Orff education has always emphasized the comprehensiveness of music. In Orff's class, music is an art of integrating language, movement, and dance; music teaching often starts with language, based on rhythm teaching, combined with the physical reaction, while exploring the musical talent in human nature (Xiangyang, 2018).

Fourth is practicality. Traditional music classroom attaches stress to too much knowledge and skills. Teachers are the center of the classroom. Students constantly repeat the exercises under the instructions of teachers to achieve the purpose of consolidating knowledge and improving skills. Orff education attaches importance to the teaching process and method, emphasizes the practicality of the music classroom; the classroom must be involved with teachers and students,

To dominate my subject position and express what I think and feel inside me (Wang, 2017). Yao, D. U. (2018) believes that in Orff's concept, music is not high above it but full of vitality, a part of real life, the way people express themselves, and the emotional communication and communication between people.

#### 1.2) Content of Orff teaching method

Orff's teaching method includes four basic contents: language combination teaching, action combination teaching, Orff Musical instrument, and listening training.

First, language combination and teaching. Ding, N (2019) pointed out that teachers can start with their familiar words, names, idioms, ancient poems, and children's songs and can also create sentences with children to do some simple rhythm exercises to cultivate students' sense of rhythm, exercise their language expression ability and enhance creativity while feeling the music.

Second, action combined with teaching. Brilliant teaching is a major feature of Orff's teaching. Zhao, Z. M. (2018) believes that in the teaching process, movement exercises can be combined with local artistic performance forms and dance, such as Yangko, duet, and students can feel the music through the body, release their inner emotions, and also enhance their physical coordination and reaction ability.

Third, Musical Instruments are combined with teaching. Wang, X. (2017) believes that Orff instruments are often set with simple percussion instruments that children can easily master, just like a small toy. The purpose is to allow children to personally participate in music activities and feel the joy brought by music. Orff instruments are simple to make, and teachers can make them with the materials around them. In self-creation and self-playing, children will get different musical insights.

Fourth, listening training. Liu, S. W. et al. (2018) believe that listening training in Orff music education refers to the cultivation of children's discrimination and perception under the guidance of scientific methods, which will greatly help children learn to play and sing in the future.

#### 1.3) Impact of Orff teaching method on high school music classroom

The important thing about Orff's teaching method is the concept. Under the guidance of the concept, Orff education has formed a complete education system in terms of guiding ideology, teaching materials, and teaching process. Wang, J. J. et al. (2016) believes that the concept of Orff's teaching method focuses on all children so that they can actively participate in music classes, discover themselves, and express themselves in music activities. In playing games, playing and learning, the children help and care for each other, forming a good classroom atmosphere of communication and cooperation. In teaching practice, many scholars

believe that the influence of Orff's teaching method on high school classrooms is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

First, Orff's music teaching method has transformed from teaching himself to the students. Fan, X. et al. (2017) believe that Orff's music teaching method eliminates the boring textbook knowledge explanation and realizes that combining teaching and daily life could get twice the result with half the effort. In essence, Orff teaching is a process of music learning, divided into four stages: exploration, imitation, improvisation, and creation; the purpose of music education is to educate music and music education. Educational music can allow children to open the door of music through language, singing, dance, and recitation, feel the charm of music, learn music knowledge, and embark on the road of professional development of music. Music education refers to education through music, harvesting the necessary qualities of non-music in the process of learning music, cultivating children's communication and cooperation ability in chorus ensemble, cultivating children's association and imagination ability in performance creation, and cultivating aesthetic quality in feeling and appreciation (Cai, 2018).

Second, the Orff music teaching method has realized the transformation from curriculum to development. Zang, Z. (2018) pointed out that in the previous curriculum paradigm, we paid more attention to the realization of curriculum objectives and ignored the development of people in the learning process; Orff music teaching emphasized the dominant position of people in the curriculum development process. Orff's curriculum view is an understanding of curriculum and life views with students as the main body of the curriculum, students' real-life experience as the optional teaching content of the music curriculum, and obtaining experience through students' self-experience, practice, reflection, innovation, inquiry, communication, and exchange. The music course of this understanding is more than just an independent, isolated course. Orff's teaching method integrates the content of the historical background and different ethnic and regional cultures.

Thirdly, the Orff music teaching method realizes the comprehensiveness and diversification of content selection. Chun & Bai (2017) believe that traditional music courses are detailed, separated among various knowledge fields, and independent; this also leads to the lack of the overall effect of music, which appears monotonous, boring, and boring. Orff music teaching method has found this problem, advocating the mutual integration and mutual promotion of various fields of music. In the creation, instruments can be used to verify the effect, and music appreciation can be used to deepen students' understanding of music and emotional resonance.

## 2) Kodaly Music education ideas

Zoltan Kodaly was an internationally renowned Hungarian composer, folk music theorist, and music educator in the 20th century. "Kodaly Teaching," named after him, is one of the far-reaching music education systems in the contemporary world. Kodaly Yi is an accomplished artist, a thoughtful theorist, and a practical educator. However, he chose to devote himself to music education in ordinary schools. His educational system has a very profound educational philosophy but also has a high standard of artistic and aesthetic requirements. Kodaly proposed and discussed a series of fundamental principles in music education. For example, the relationship between the growth and comprehensive development of art education, the role of music culture in all knowledge and culture, folk music thinking for the cultivation of national emotion and the significance in music education; the relationship between inheriting the national tradition and learning the study of excellent human art and

culture; what effective methods should be selected to achieve the educational goal; how to absorb and learn from the excellent traditions of foreign countries from methodology and practice."

Kodaly's education system has provided valuable experience for the value and development of music education in terms of theory and time. Kodaly's music education ideological system is huge and rich. To sum up, it mainly includes the following four aspects.

First, Kodaly will inherit and develop the folk music cultural tradition as the clear goal of his music education. He once clarified that "music is not only a means to develop the human soul and spirit, but also the education of Hungarian nationality, which any other curriculum cannot replace. At the same time, he said, we need a Hungarian music education from the perspective of Hungary and the world. The more Hungarian we are, the more likely we are to interest the world. This is the only path that can produce a Hungarian musical culture. With it, our music education is something. it could only provide a 'container' for foreign art." The above views are enlightening and direct, reflecting Kodak's extensive and profound thinking on music education. In his opinion, music education is related to the development of national culture and the progress of the nation and society, which is of great significance and far-reaching influence.

Second, Kodaly values the relationship between musicians and the people. He believes that "individual musicians do not create the musical culture of a country, but by the people of the nation, so everyone enjoys the right to inherit this precious property. Music is not the enjoyment of a few outstanding people but a source of spiritual strength. Music should not be the unique property of a few people but should belong to everyone, which is the highest ideal. All educated people should make it a public property.

Third, Kodaly believes that music is closely related to human noumenon. He pointed out that people's life cannot be without music; without music, there can be no perfect life. He believed that music expresses people's minds, meets people's spiritual needs, and is an organic part of daily life. Music can develop people's emotions, intelligence, and personality and enrich people's inner worlds. *Music* is the spiritual food that everyone needs. Therefore, he studied how to expose more people to good music. A full spiritual life is inseparable from music because some parts of the human soul can only be illuminated through music. He firmly believes that music can shape character and even transform people and that any language cannot replace its influence on people's emotions.

Fourth, Kodaly attaches importance to youth music education. During his research, he realized that teenagers being led to musical decadence was even worse than becoming musical illiterate. He once vividly said that bad tastes spread so quickly that, in art, it was not as harmless as in clothing. Because vulgar clothes on the clothing may not damage people's health, low-speed artistic interest is a real mental illness. It imprisons the human mind, making it impossible to touch the classic works and the 'nutrition' of life. Without 'nutrition,' the spirit will shrink or hinder development, and the whole character will be branded as weird. This disease is difficult to cure in most adults, and the only way is to prevent it, and immunization is the task of schools.



## Conclusion

Northern folk songs can help improve the aesthetic awareness of high school students. Music comes from life, through the expression of life emotion, and goes to life, is the best embodiment of human understanding of life beauty and the discovery of beauty. So, for music teaching, through the northern folk songs, to constantly explore the artistic charm of music and constantly cultivate students' ability to find and understand beauty. This way, it will greatly help the physical and mental development, quality cultivation, and self-confidence of high school students. Because music is the emotion, culture, and customs, through the northern folk songs for high school students through the expression of emotion, the music of the whole teaching process should not only focus on the music practice itself but more on folk songs, comprehensive for students to build an aesthetic space, cultivate the artistic aesthetic ability of high school students.

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