

The Application Research of Piano Accompaniment in Music Education

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Abstract: Piano accompaniment, as an essential form in music education, plays a crucial role in the music classroom. By reviewing literature and policy interpretations, China has shown increasing emphasis on music education, focusing on the comprehensive development of students' abilities. Employing piano accompaniment to showcase musical works to students, foster an understanding of the emotions and meanings within these works, create a favorable musical ambiance, stimulate students' enthusiasm and interest in music, and evoke an emotional resonance between students and composers. Additionally, it facilitates students' comprehension of music knowledge, broadens their artistic horizons, enhances the diversity of music classes, improves the efficiency of music classroom teaching, cultivates students' correct aesthetic taste in music, and elevates their artistic accomplishment. This paper begins with an overview of piano accompaniment, analyzes its current status in music classroom teaching, and then delves into its application and analysis in music education. It explores the identified issues and seeks effective improvement measures, thereby promoting the continuous development of music education in secondary schools and enhancing the teaching quality of music classes.

Keywords: piano accompaniment, music education, application of piano accompaniment

1. Introduction

Piano accompaniment is a unique and independent discipline, representing a distinctive form of music performance actively present on stage. It serves various arts, including vocal music, dance, and instrumental performances, making it a comprehensive art form. Rather than merely acting as a background for other art forms, piano accompaniment is an inseparable and integral part of the entire musical and artistic structure. It plays a significant role in enabling the complete expression of a musical piece and conveying the emotions embedded within it. Piano accompaniment is not limited to vocal accompaniment; it can also serve a wide range of other subjects, such as instrumental and dance accompaniment. Virtually any form of art related to music can benefit from piano accompaniment. Consequently, it is a comprehensive performance form with crucial significance. In the context of music classroom teaching, piano accompaniment is commonly chosen as a supportive element. [1] It not only enriches the content and form of classroom teaching but also cultivates and enhances students' sight-singing abilities, making it an ideal "teaching tool" for music educators. [2]

To excel in piano accompaniment, music teachers must possess a solid musical foundation and fluent piano-playing skills. By utilizing their musical sensibility, they can assist students in interpreting the essence of musical works and understanding the emotional aspects of songs. Thus, the integration of piano accompaniment into secondary school classroom teaching is mutually beneficial, as both aspects complement each other, forming an atmosphere of perfection within the music classroom.

2. Main Content

Piano accompaniment, as an important form in music education, faces challenges in its development. With the advancement of technology and progress in society, traditional music teaching methods, where teachers use instruments like the piano for instruction, are gradually being replaced by video and PowerPoint presentations. Moreover, music textbooks now come with beautifully produced audio, and there is a wealth of resources available on the internet. This has led to music teachers spending a considerable amount of time searching for pre-made resources on the internet, which they directly apply in their classes without any modifications, regardless of whether they align with the curriculum requirements. Over time, this neglects the development of teachers' music skills and fails to reflect the subject characteristics of music class, resulting in music classes becoming similar to other cultural courses, where students are in a passive state and lose interest in learning music.

Currently, the primary content in music classes in primary and secondary schools and public art education classes in universities is music appreciation. This involves experiencing and understanding music through practical activities such as listening and feeling specific musical works, enriching one's spiritual world through aesthetic experiences. Music appreciation courses are crucial for cultivating students' aesthetic appreciation of music. The objective of music appreciation classes is not to make students master specific music skills but to enable them to comprehend the emotions and content expressed in musical works through the process of listening and feeling. By gaining knowledge of composers' backgrounds and the creative context of musical works, students broaden their musical horizons, enrich their imagination and aesthetic experiences, and thereby cultivate a correct aesthetic perspective in music. This, in turn, sparks their enthusiasm and interest in learning music. [3] In this context, piano accompaniment plays a significant role in music appreciation classes. However, due to technological advancements and evolving times, appreciation classes have become more reliant on multimedia aids for explaining the background of music. While combining sound and image helps students understand the content of musical works, this approach often lacks physical demonstrations. Consequently, the learning experience usually relies on audio playback of musical works. In cases where students dislike certain pieces, listening to the audio repeatedly can lead to visual and auditory fatigue, causing a lack of focus or even drowsiness during class. However, the auditory experience of audio playback and live music performances are vastly different. It is akin to attending a concert in a music hall versus watching one on a phone; the auditory sensations are significantly distinct. Live performances have a more profound impact on captivating students' emotions. Thus, teachers should properly guide students and carefully select suitable accompaniment textures for different musical works. For example, in the opera "The White-Haired Girl," the selection of the aria "Yang Bailao" (Figure 1) has a slow and solemn melody expressing a sense of sorrowful grief. The live music performance can better capture students' emotions and intensify their emotional resonance with the music.



Figure 1: Score excerpt of "Yang Bailao".

In many schools, piano accompaniment is seldom utilized in music appreciation teaching. In most cases, teachers rely on background stories or related materials to conduct their lessons, leading to a loss of novelty over time, and some students may become disinterested. Consequently, the subsequent teaching work suffers, and the quality of education is compromised. [4] On the other hand, incorporating piano accompaniment in class activities significantly enhances the classroom atmosphere and increases students' engagement during music classes. Piano performances make it easier for students to remember the works and deepen their understanding of them. Hence, the importance of piano accompaniment in music appreciation classes becomes evident. A competent music teacher should fully explore the core content of the textbooks and choose appropriate piano accompaniment textures to express the music's essence. This approach enhances the teaching quality, elevates students' musical cultivation, and allows them to experience the beauty of music. [5]

Furthermore, piano accompaniment plays a crucial role in music singing classes within music majors. Demonstrative singing by music teachers is an aspect of the class that students look forward to and an opportunity for teachers to showcase their abilities. It is an indispensable step in music education. [6] By adding elegant piano accompaniment to singing performances, an artistic rendering effect can be achieved. The primary objective of piano accompaniment is to guide students in familiarizing themselves with the melody and mastering the song's rhythm accurately. This enables students to independently, comprehensively, and correctly perform the songs. Effective piano accompaniment enriches the emotional expression of the music and enhances its evocative power. In the initial stages of music learning, piano accompaniment not only helps most students find the correct pitch but also provides a sense of psychological security for those who may lack a strong musical sense, boosting their confidence. Therefore, when choosing accompaniment textures for lyrical songs, broken chords, like in the song "Farewell" (Figure 2), are recommended. [7] The simplicity and vivid imagery of the lyrics, combined with the song's melodious and gentle melody, align well with the expressive nature of broken chords. This reinforces students' memory of the song's melody and enables them to perform with emotions under accompaniment.

The versatility and flexibility of piano accompaniment are advantageous for music teachers and

music activities. When encountering complex melodies and rhythms in song teaching, teachers should make full use of the piano's adaptability and choose suitable accompaniment to help students address singing challenges. For instance, when students are unfamiliar with the melody, the teacher should provide an accompaniment with the melody to facilitate repeated melodic exercises, reinforcing the impression. During the singing process, teachers should patiently address all problems encountered, allowing students to fully understand the song's difficulties and focal points. This approach promotes better understanding and performance of the song. To encourage student participation in learning, lively songs should be accompanied by more dynamic accompaniment textures to increase musical quality, creating a more cheerful rhythm and resonating with students, thus encouraging their active participation in music learning.

In conventional music singing classes, most teachers adopt traditional teaching methods or use multimedia as an aid, playing music for students to sing along, or teaching students line by line. These teaching methods completely neglect students' subjectivity and lead to a homogenization of educational approaches. As a result, student enthusiasm and autonomy in learning are affected, and the cultivation of students' imagination becomes limited, turning the learning process into a mechanical endeavor.

送 别

李叔同 词
〔美〕奥德维 曲

1=C $\frac{4}{4}$

The musical score is written in staff notation with numbered notes (1-7) and rests. The lyrics are in Chinese. The score is divided into four systems, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 长亭外，古道边，芳草碧连天。晚风拂柳笛声残，夕阳山外山。天之涯，地之角，知交半零落。一壶浊酒尽余欢，今宵别梦寒。

05

Figure 2: Score excerpt of "Farewell".

In addition, choral singing is an artistic form where multiple individuals simultaneously perform polyphonic vocal works. It frequently appears in music classroom teaching. For instance, choral

singing is an essential component of middle school music education, both as a focal point and a challenging aspect. Choral art expresses the thematic ideas of musical works through the vocal performance of multiple parts. Due to its inherent flexibility, piano accompaniment can employ various playing techniques to exhibit different tonal qualities. It can immerse the singers in specific emotional aspects of the music, making it an indispensable element in choral art. Therefore, piano accompaniment plays a crucial role in middle school choral activities, enhancing the artistic nature of choral performances and improving the overall stage effect. [8]

For instance, in the first lesson of the 7th-grade textbook "One, Two, Three, Four Song" (Figure 3), which is a choral song, the emotions conveyed are positive, optimistic, and enthusiastic. In the introduction section, piano accompaniment could use block chords to accompany, showcasing the grandeur of the song and uplifting the students' emotions. In the antiphonal singing section, piano accompaniment could opt for broken chords to highlight the primary vocal part. In the solo and ensemble singing sections, piano accompaniment could use light chords and rhythms to accentuate the rap-like characteristics of the piece. The song concludes with a return to block chords, reinforcing the sense of grandeur towards the end, leaving the listeners immersed in the emotions of the song. [9]

1234歌

1 = C $\frac{4}{4}$ 简谱

(5 - 0 5 5 5 5 | 1 6 6 3 5 5 5 1 7 1 2 | 3 5 5 5 5 2 3 4 #4 | 5 5 5 5 5 5 0) |

3. 2 1 1 3. 2 1 1 | 1. 3 5 - | 6. 5 1 1 6. 5 1 1 | 3. 6 2 - |

二 三 三 四 二 三 三 四 像 首 歌 绿 色 军 营 绿 色 军 营 教 会 我

二 三 四 二 三 三 四 像 首 歌 这 边 唱 来 这 边 唱 来 那 边 和

3. 2 5 3 - | 1 6 5 3 - | 6. 5 1 2 3 5 3 | 2. 6 1 - |

唱 得 山 摇 地 也 动 唱 得 花 开 水 欢 乐

唱 给 蓝 天 和 大 地 唱 给 妈 妈 和 祖 国

3 3 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 3 | 3. 2 1 6 1 2 1 | 6 6 5 6 6 5 6 6 5 6 |

一 呀 么 一 呀 么 一 呀 么 一 把 钢 枪 交 给 我 二 呀 么 二 呀 么 二 呀 么 二

一 呀 么 一 呀 么 一 呀 么 一 条 大 路 多 宽 广 二 呀 么 二 呀 么 二 呀 么 二

6. 1 2 2 2 1 6 5 | 5. 3 3 3 - | 3 2 1 6 | 1 5 3 0 3 2 |

二 话 没 说 为 祖 国 三 呀 么 三 三 军 战 士 苦 为 乐 四 海

二 月 春 风 拂 面 过 三 呀 么 三 三 山 五 岳 任 我 走

1. 2 1 6 1 0 | x 0 x x 0 | 5. 5 3 6 1 - | 5. 5 3 6 1 - |

为 家 哪 哪 哪 哪 有 我 哪 哪 有 我

5. 5 3 2 | x 0 x 0 | x 0 x 0 | x x x x |

哪 里 就 有 一 二 三 四 一 二 三 四

x. x x x 0 | 5 6. 6 5 0 :|| 5 - - - | 5 - - - |

一 二 三 四 战 士 的 歌 战

6 - - - | 6 - - - | 5 6. 6 5 0 | x 0 x 0 |

士 战 士 的 歌 一 二

x 0 x 0 | x x x 0 | x 0 0 0 ||

三 四 一 二 三 四

结束

Figure 3: Score excerpt of "One, Two, Three, Four Song".

In conclusion, piano accompaniment as a teaching method plays a crucial role in music classrooms, where skillful piano accompaniment can enhance the charm of a song. Piano accompaniment skill is one of the essential skills for middle school music teachers. Through school internships and visits to nearby schools, it is observed that many music teachers lack solid piano playing skills, resulting in varied abilities in piano accompaniment. Some teachers neglect the improvement of their professional competence, lack clarity in basic chord progressions in accompaniment, and have limited understanding of keyboard harmony and musical form. They can only play the piano with one hand and are unable to provide effective accompaniment for songs, lacking the richness and variety in accompaniment patterns. [10]

Piano accompaniment is only one teaching form, and to apply it in teaching, the school's music classroom needs to be equipped with pianos. However, pianos are costly instruments, with good-quality pianos priced at over ten thousand yuan. Most ordinary schools cannot afford such high expenses. Moreover, regular maintenance and tuning costs add to the financial burden. As a result, some schools may forgo purchasing pianos or opt for cheaper electronic keyboards instead.

Schools should attach importance to the comprehensive development of music education. General public schools receive government subsidies for education funding, and they should support and understand the investment in music education. In 2020, the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era," issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council, proposed plans to include art courses like music in the reform pilot of the senior high school entrance examination, known as "aesthetics in the college entrance examination." Music is an essential component of art courses, representing its significance in compulsory education at the middle school stage. Schools should not neglect music education and should strengthen the procurement and maintenance of music facilities, including pianos.

In rural music education, efforts should be made to promote the construction of the rural teacher workforce, implement professional skill training for teachers, improve their remuneration and benefits, and address the imbalance in teacher resources between urban and rural areas. When recruiting teachers for middle schools, it is essential to bring in specialized music teachers and strictly scrutinize their qualifications, improving the quality of the teaching staff. For music-related subjects, additional training should be provided in professional skills, laying a solid foundation for the development of music education.

Training in piano technique is a complex and arduous process. Possessing a certain level of piano playing skill is the foundation for a music teacher to perform piano accompaniment effectively. To become a qualified music teacher, one should focus on practicing basic piano skills regularly, enhancing piano playing techniques through exercises such as Czerny's etudes and piano teaching materials by Hanon. During the practice, attention should also be given to ear training, not merely pursuing speed but also improving the sense of sound quality, distinguishing between good and bad sounds. All piano techniques serve music, making piano technique training a process of "coordinating hands and ears." When encountering difficult technical passages, slow practice and repetition can help overcome them. [11]

In addition to improving piano playing techniques, one should also enhance the ability to analyze musical works. Understanding the genre of a musical work is a prerequisite for any type of music performance. Accurate analysis of the genre ensures that the emotions and rhythms expressed during the performance are appropriate for the musical work. For example, whether it is a march, narrative piece, or lyrical piece, the analysis of emotions, such as sadness, joy, or irony, during the performance should be accurate. The different genres will directly influence the melodies in the process of improvisation for piano accompaniment. Furthermore, one should analyze the structure of musical works. The most important aspect of the musical structure is tonality, which serves as the basis for arranging chords in music. Different tonal structures correspond to different chord structures. For the same musical work, the choice of Western major and minor tonalities, or ethnic music's pentatonic tonalities, will have a significant impact on the expression of the music.

As students' music listening skills further develop, the traditional major triads used in piano accompaniment may no longer fully satisfy their auditory perception. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to enhance their harmonic knowledge. In addition to learning harmonic theory, the theoretical knowledge should be combined with practice. Teachers should not only theorize but also practice on the piano, experimenting with different chords to explore different harmonic colors and sound effects, which can be better applied in teaching practice.

3. Conclusion

In the era of comprehensive quality education, music education has become increasingly widespread and significant in cultivating students' all-round development. Music is an art form characterized by diversity and rich expressiveness, and middle school music education is a continuous process of innovating teaching content and methods to facilitate the growth and development of students. As a teaching method, piano accompaniment embodies various musical elements and enriches the performance in music classrooms. Through piano accompaniment, teachers guide and inspire students, fostering their interest and enthusiasm for learning music, enhancing their perception and understanding of music, and instilling a genuine love and appreciation for music. The application of piano accompaniment also helps students to experience the emotions and feelings conveyed in musical works, enhances the expressiveness of the music pieces, and better showcases the essence of the works. Therefore, piano accompaniment serves as a means and artistic guidance for music teachers in conducting music education in middle schools. Its utilization requires the attention and recognition of the whole society and every music educator. Constant efforts should be made to improve and enhance teachers' professional skills and teaching proficiency in piano accompaniment, laying a solid foundation for their professional competence and accomplishments. This task is urgent and arduous, demanding collective efforts from all stakeholders in music education.

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