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The Role of the Chinese Piano School in the Formation of the Chinese Piano Art

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Abstract---The relevance of the study is that the integrative role of compulsory piano learning in music education acquires the knowledge and skills of conscious work, which is considered the mainstream of the formation of the art of pianism in China. Most of it is conducted and implemented in territorially different environments of music schools to acquire knowledge, themes of perception of musical text, recognizing the degree of use of inherent potential of additional piano features related to increasing the effectiveness of learning activities. In the context of piano schools, a large number of students perceive the subject only as a hobby. For them, these measures are often reduced to the implementation of appropriate programmes. The piano, like any other subject, develops musicality and promotes reflection on the music piece. For some, the musical art of pianism acts as the only way to stimulate the harmonious imagination through which it is possible to learn to listen to chords. The piano is a unique source of inspiration for further musical development. The aim of the study is to reveal and examine the role of the Chinese piano school in the formation of Chinese art of pianism. In the course of the study, such methods as culturological, hermeneutical, and dialogical were applied. The basis of this activity should be the work on the instrument as a means to an objective, which has its own beginning and end. It is a never-ending process that is a means of individual expression and artistic mastery. Tangible results help to realise the growing musical potential, acquire desire and enthusiasm for the subject in the stages of learning to play the keyboard instrument. Piano lessons often make adjustments to the technical work that is done on the main instrument. This practice is a proof of the need for the formation of Chinese art of pianism and confirmation of the process that has begun. The practical significance lies in the optimal and productive use of the Chinese piano school in order to develop the Chinese art of pianism.

Keywords---creativity, culture, instrument, learning, music education.

Introduction

Dynamic changes in society, civilizational progress and transformations within the Chinese art of pianism force us to look at music education and point to the need for its creative and pedagogical linkage. The artistic postures of space condition for schools a rich and varied experience that is lived and mediated today. The notion of experience serves to define elementary phenomena and material states, which should be the basis and guarantee of the truth and certainty of cognition, rather than being a well-defined concept. Despite the appearance of directness, obviousness and originality, it is more of a theoretical and systematic concept that acquires specific content only within a certain world viewpoint. The possibility of feeling art and expressing oneself in a contemplative and receptive way somehow actively influences the role of the Chinese piano school (Banner & Cannon, 2018). Such musical works fulfill various functions, including aesthetic, social, didactic and therapeutic. Combined with pianistic craft, it is not only a means of learning about the world, but also a stimulus to meet the needs of experiencing, which is especially important for human beings through various forms of aesthetic education. The main focus area is the Chinese piano facture, which places fundamental performance implications on the final structure of the works in order to elevate the sonic materials. The unifying components determine the final performance and the characteristically high demands on the performance of a piece of music on a technical level, as well as the decoding of the meaningful idioms hidden within it, which explain the meaning and resolution of many problems.

Chinese music classes are a unique opportunity to integrate musical communities, as during teaching and playing music together, young people not only learn the traditions and culture of their country, but also have the chance to make lifelong friends with it (Cooper, 2000; Soares et al., 2007). Despite cultural differences, the universal language of music transcends communication barriers. In traditional Chinese music, the rules for reading a piece within a style are clearly defined, influenced by a deliberate process and analysis of perception with the development of technology, science, industry, and changes in social consciousness that have conditioned many trends and styles in art in its broad sense. Essential to the interpretation of a work is the hidden meaning that is formed in the individual musical elements, and contributes to the development of the final form and reception of the artistic activity. Stylistic diversity does not make it easy for future musicians who interpret works well, they need to form their own well-established method of work and perception. The pianist, who begins to work on his/her works, should notice those components of the sound material that serve the function of creating form in the process of work, mastering and interpreting (Maslow, 1970). Their use in the texture is characterised by specific control, including: rhythm, the sphere of melody and chords, articulation, independent plan formation, raising dynamics, the specific use of instrument registers, and the temporal organisation of the musical space (Buysse et al., 1989; Zaza et al., 2000).

The influence of Chinese art of pianism on human development and functioning in all spheres of life prompts scholars, artists, musicologists, and educators of various disciplines to link directly or indirectly the justifications of scientific or

research considerations to the educational contexts of experiencing the world (Izard, 1991). Artistic value, which refers to different stages of learning, substantiates the thesis that Chinese educational forms of artistic activities develop knowledge and competence in culture and art. Such activities integrate and involve all social groups and cultural institutions. With the entry of innovative voice programmes at secondary and tertiary levels of art education, as well as the realisation of subject colour sound and music, multimedia forms can become an alternative and inspiration for piano schools and art education practices (Rolinska, 2021). The schools act as a part of a broad discourse on art education and the possibility of using art as a means of creative development of human potential. They are intended not only for the general public, but also for children, young people and everyone who shares the conviction that experiencing the world of art is a source and factor of contemporary personal and social development. Art programmes are interesting because of their form of artistic activity, through which both creators and recipients develop their knowledge and competences (Alkon, 2002; Ding, 2016). The aim of the study is to reveal and examine the role of the Chinese piano school in the process of the formation of Chinese art of pianism.

Materials and Methods

During the research, the following methods were applied: culturological, hermeneutical, and dialogical. The culturological approach involves the perception and reproduction of Chinese art of pianism through the prism of the respective educational and cultural environments (Lysenko et al., 2021). It consists in anticipating all elements that address the individual as a creator of culture, treating this phenomenon as a scientific-methodological cognition that transforms the process of this activity into interconnected aspects of the personal, technological, axiological and creative. The formation of cultural values in the sphere of personal formation and art education is an important condition for the quality of the formation of Chinese art of pianism (Nyandra et al., 2018). The creative nature of culture is embedded in the essence of musical works with an orientation towards dialogue and knowledge of the self and the environment. The principles of educational schools in cultural studies are cultural creativity, cultural appropriateness, multiculturalism, and their application in artistic activities (Beghetto, 2007; Runco & Beghetto, 2019). The relationship between the concepts of “personality” and “culture” exists in contemporary musical craft under the condition of comprehensive development and maximum realisation of the individual, and this is only possible if the personal qualities of the individual are developed, i.e. the being of culture in the individual.

The hermeneutic method examines the theory of artistic considerations, interpretations and understandings of works. Its object is the transition from the fact of musical activity to the understanding sense, as well as the humanistic view of the human being. The key categories are comprehension, text, dialogue, understanding and interpretation. The contemporary stage of humanization of the Chinese artistic process marks a fundamentally new category of comprehension of the deep content of a musical work and its perfect embodiment. Capturing the meaningful essence in the fullness of holistic understanding is the result of the productive transformation of a work. The central idea of hermeneutics advocates

the inner world of the human being, which is revealed as a result of active learning, motives, natural factors and needs (Lewalter, 2003; Hedegaard, 2014). The application of the hermeneutic theory enables the identification of practical problems in the organisation of the formation of the work of individual elements of Chinese art of pianism and helps to improve suggestions as to how to achieve the objectives in the most effective and optimal ways. The heuristic potential consists in obtaining information about the essence of the musical work, laid down by the author.

The dialogic paradigm is characterised by the essence of the effective pedagogical process of the Chinese piano school, which depends on active and socio-personal learning activities (Widanta et al., 2016). The theoretical basis for the study of this approach is based on the principles of conscious activity and personal unity. They modify the idea of the tasks of the piano schools, seeing them not only in the provision of ways, values, knowledge and norms, but also in the unfolding of specific personal qualities and intellectual potential. The application of this principle focuses on appropriate technologies and their methods of application, which are found in the interaction of school relationships based on the creation of an information-cognitive aspect in order to encourage participation in learning new ways of artistic craft. The essence of the dialogical method is the assimilation of knowledge, skills and new practical conditions for the formation and promotion of Chinese pianistic craft.

Results and Discussion

The earliest classes in piano teaching began with the missionaries. They used the piano as an accompaniment instrument, widely used in music courses in church schools. At that time, the performance level of the missionaries was relatively insufficient and the method of teaching piano was relatively simple. They had only a basic performance level, so they subsequently used some textbooks brought from their country to teach Chinese children. In particular, the rise of the modern art school enabled the Chinese to gradually adopt piano instruments, which laid the foundation for the further development of the craft. The development of the art of pianism was closely linked to the creation of composers, the performance of the pianists and the training of teachers. Piano teachers have played a very important role in the development of the entire art of pianism. They are responsible for the inheritance of outstanding performance skills, style and culture. The rigid teaching system is very common in China, so it is important to encourage and open up new opportunities for this activity, no matter how well or poorly it is performed. The role of the Chinese piano school in the formation of the art of pianism plays an important role in proper pedagogy, the functioning of which is to ensure an influx of talented musicians both to music schools and to music university faculties (Hailin & Xiaoping, 2019). The main reason for these phenomena is the level of general culture in China, especially music education in primary and secondary education. With the introduction of Western music into China, traditional Chinese musical forms are gradually being eroded (Fong & Jelas, 2010; Panagiotakou & Pange, 2010).

Western music gradually became an integral part of Chinese musical and cultural life. The number of Chinese studying Western musical instruments is also

increasing to modern times. When studying Western instrumental music, it is worth paying attention to the theoretical and practical level of instrumental music teaching. The development of the piano teaching system in China to this day is incalculable. One such form of direct output is: performances, lectures, and the creation of groups of musicians for further study to bring back Western instrumental culture. After the introduction of Western music to China, the culture of piano education gradually began to form. With the introduction of piano instruments, China opened the history of piano education. After centuries of exploration and practice, Chinese piano education gradually formed schools, a teaching network and cultivated a large number of piano talents. In the current stage of development, pianism is steadily improving and piano education continues to develop vigorously. However, there are still many problems, which are manifested in the utilitarianism of learning objectives, the lack of teachers, the single method of teaching and its closed content ([Ginaya et al., 2021](#)). Given the situation with the introduction of an amateur piano examination system in mainland China, the rise of this creative activity has embraced the whole country with prevailing momentum. In the survey of musical instruments, piano learning accounted for 42% of all musical instruments. In recent years, an increasing number of young Chinese performers have taken to the stage of international piano competitions, whose success is admired by countless connoisseurs of this instrument ([Meng, 2018](#)).

The shocking rate of popularisation across the country helps to deeply sense the fundamental changes in the life of Chinese art of pianism. The schools concerned are not only strengthening the national culture of China, but also contributing to nationalisation throughout the world. However, Western piano education is still not compatible with the requirements of the nationalisation system and is linked to the current negative attitudes and promotion of the Chinese piano. The scale of piano schools is expanding and more and more people can learn the instrument, but with economic progress countless numbers of those who want to learn the basics of the instrument are eagerly awaiting lessons because there are very few qualified specialists. The base number of students has increased, so a decline in the average quality of education is behind this process. The situation, where the supply of educational resources exceeds demand, continues to this day. That is why conditions have been softening recently and the number of teachers has been expanding. The consequence of this expansion is that some workers who do not understand piano education have entered the industry. Piano education has entered thousands of households with a market economy, but of uneven quality. With the influx of capital, the whole art market became large and lively, but at the same time it brought noise and fuss. Times are moving forward and people's consciousness is changing, and past pastorals seem to have disappeared forever. Amid constant cynicism and irony about the self and the outside world, the qualitative education of the new era has staggered, transformed and started moving forward gradually.

With the development of modern technology, a number of new musical instruments with certain innovative features have gradually emerged ([Jianhua, 2020](#)). All of these products focus on autonomous and intelligent piano learning, raising the threshold of self-learning ability. The online education model is gradually opening up online piano learning companies. Education is, especially

quality education, as a multi-age programme, requiring a deep refinement of basic attributes that contradict the ever-changing Internet. The culture of light business in the country seems to have determined since long ago that the gap between capital and education is difficult to bridge in the public mind. Therefore, every time capital enters the field of art, various techniques and methods go through the stages of transformation and adaptation. Many famous music schools have been established, such as the Central, Shenyang, Guangzhou and Xi'an Conservatory of Music. Many higher normal universities have also established music departments. After these schools, pupils travelled to cities around the country, and the number of teachers increased somewhat and piano education fully penetrated into the public. During this period, the first set of music textbooks, "Preparatory Piano Course for Adults" and "Preparatory Piano Course for Secondary Schools", were also compiled (Daojin, 2019). With the introduction of reforms and the opening of Chinese branch schools, a wave of interest in the piano swept through and the degree of enthusiasm grew at a great speed.

In the interval between the cultural revolution and the market economy, the pan-human revolutionary ideals were gradually fading, and new cultural thoughts from abroad were also pouring into China, so the social and cultural atmosphere of the era lived in a small gap between the market economy, looking for spiritual fulfillment. People's general standard of living had improved considerably by this time and after years of monotonous patterns of rule, everyone had an unprecedented desire for new literature and art. It can be said that the product of the idealistic period in the era of market economy has laid the first layer of foundation for modern and quality art of pianism. To support piano schools, "The Programme for Reform and Development of China" was issued, which noted that primary and secondary schools should move from oriented education to all-round quality improvement, developing ideological, moral, cultural, scientific and work skills (Fumin, 2019). Amateur educational institutions with pianos began to appear in major cities. The largest piano manufacturer in China, "Zhujiang", began to gain momentum and develop rapidly. The influx of capital has led to a boom in various industries, and the art and education industry is no exception. With the construction of this culture, the industrial system of piano education follows capital, which spreads and penetrates into the lives of all sections of the population. With the advancement of reform and the discovery of piano production, China has taken the lead in the world in mastering this instrument. From the era of idealism to the present, piano education has undergone a process of gradual transformation oriented towards the civilian population.

However, the problems that remain after several modernisations and transformations of the sector are not only about the effectiveness of teaching, but also about the equity of education. For some families, pianistic learning is an indispensable element of quality education for children. Cultural and artistic performance preferences are class indicators, corresponding to an individual's position in society. People at every level develop their own aesthetic standards. For piano teaching and learning, the influx of capital promotes technological innovation and popularisation, developing both equity and an almost inevitable anxiety. Thanks to modern technology, not just progress, such upheavals are linked to the marketing propaganda of commercial capital that supports science and technology, and the popularity of the Internet has made the channels for

people to receive information increasingly wide. Promoting diverse advertising, the essence of the art of pianism and piano learning have undergone subtle changes. A first-class learning environment is the breeding ground for artistic talent, and first-class teachers are the key to students' growth. With the aim of developing outstanding young talent, piano schools strive to be a kind of discoverer of the Chinese art of pianism and an educational base for world-class young pianists. Leading music education schools in China, renowned abroad, cultivate groups of musical talents of high calibre in the country, who are gaining a high reputation all over the world. At the same time, a complete teaching system is constantly being developed through years of practice and experience. The cultural development strategy of municipal governments is to attract world-class higher art schools, such as the Central Conservatory of Music (Xu & Ma, 2007).

Targeted teaching enables candidates to quickly assimilate the content and skills of professional knowledge once they have compiled systematic training to enable them to pass examinations unhindered. The optimised development quality of pupils and students at major universities in the country and abroad provides a large number of outstanding professionals with excellent professional qualifications. Piano learning is divided into group lessons and one-to-one lectures. The work of the leader is quite interactive and specific, and paid according to the competent grade. Music and art develop and penetrate into each other. It was with the piano that the emergence of the art of pianism in China began. The musical culture and connotation of the country have been integrated into a certain national spirit; hence the art of pianism has strong Chinese characteristics. Influenced by moral theory and culture regarding aesthetic concepts, the Chinese show admiration for nature, tranquillity and peace. As the high state of Chinese aesthetics is the harmony between the human being and nature, new music promotes this craft to show Chinese characteristics and to draw the public's attention to today's realities. Piano learning improves the complex system of programmes in teaching practice, and quality small classes, an individual effective regime, careful planning of teaching methodology through systematic and scientific teaching organise individual guidance for different conditions to enable fast and high-quality mastering of instrumental knowledge (Wang, 2008). Innovative ways have started to be used in the process of mastering the piano.

The style and characteristics of the instrument can be applied to the expression of piano melodies, which has been pursued by the nationalisation of musical language, i.e. the thematic melody of piano music has been integrated into the background of traditional music, helping to promote a specific reference and foster deep expression in a three-dimensional order. Contrasting polyphony techniques and the support of Chinese folk art promote phase mixing. The nationalisation of piano composition techniques since the founding of modern China has offered an art policy of developing technical characteristics and pianistic works incorporating elements of Chinese folk music. The music is predominantly based on Chinese folk melodies, simple textures and shifting rhythms that take on opposing methods of creation, contrast and imitation of polyphonic composition techniques. New skills and techniques range from melody, to harmony and rhythm. Modulation skills for creative integration are adapted and the melody is adopted as a direct technique. Its characteristics can

be used to create a sustainable and continuous basic development. Aesthetic standards for the creation and performance of the piano craft act as a characteristic and inevitable phenomenon in China. The piano art was first spread from the West to China. Each country has its own style of making music, constantly unifying with people in the creative process. The content of ethnicity determines the piano art with certain Chinese peculiarities and compositions. Chinese life habits, traditional thoughts and pursuits of music art are focused on the Chinese characteristics of piano art, which in turn contributes to its sustainable development (Baisheng, 2008).

China discovered the history of Chinese piano music by the introduction of piano instruments by missionaries and business people in the 19th century. After more than 100 years of research, a piano culture with Chinese characteristics gradually emerged. Chinese piano music has a unique aspect in terms of performance skills, theoretical basis and creative thinking. Thanks to the great international exchange and spread of experience, the Chinese piano art has made a rapid leap. After a few years of study, many young Chinese pianists such as Lang Lang, Li Yundi, Chen Sa working on the international music scene are attracting the attention of the world music scene (Zhao, 2018). Piano schools are characterised by a complete, scholarly and clever system of creation, teaching and performance. The new understanding and acceptance of the art allows the courageous use of Chinese style and Chinese harmony in the creation of music and ways of thinking. A varied trend of piano art development was formed and a variety of musical elements and styles were reflected in it. Through the joint efforts of composers and pianists, the Chinese piano art is undoubtedly becoming more flourishing. The historical experience is a valuable cultural and spiritual wealth that can be turned into resources for the Chinese art of pianism, using them to flourish and develop the pianistic craft today. The real social status of the piano in China was realised in the “School Music and Song” movement in the early 20th century. It is an unprecedented musical movement in the history of Chinese music, centred on the school and the spreading influence on the whole society (Jun, 2007).

As an ideal instrument, the piano is deeply rooted in the country. Since then, many music clubs have been established in Beijing and Shanghai, most of which have teaching of the instrument. On this basis, some colleges and universities have also introduced more systematic and standardised lessons. For example, the Tianjin Chinese and Western Women's High School, the Beijing Sisiku College of Music, and the Music Department of the Beijing Art College have established modern piano courses on the basis of academic institutions. The new schools are actively engaged in piano teaching, their methods and content are fully transferred from the West, which is the oldest experience of piano teaching in China. Teaching activities are attracting attention as an important mechanism for introducing a number of European and American basic courses into China. Piano schools have recently devoted much attention to the study of Chinese piano music. A look back at it reveals that the important contributions made to the development of this work are characterised by partial European classicism and romanticism. The creative form of impressionism absorbs the traditional techniques of Chinese music, adopts folk music materials and enriches the forms of expression of the art of pianism. After decades of thinking and discussion, the

chronological division of Chinese piano music has reached a consensus. In terms of maturity, creative technique, style, and character, it can be roughly divided into three stages: budding, ripening, and flourishing (Zheng, 2021).

The early Chinese figures in the music scene, with the exception of S. Yumei and Y. Zhongji, who made major contributions to piano education and piano culture, are mainly students from Chinese art schools (Bauer & Dammers, 2016). Most of them graduated from Shanghai University, the music departments of other colleges, schools, and universities with certain influence in society and contributed significantly to piano education. In the work of piano music of the modern period, most composers use ready-made folk tunes with simple rhythmic patterns. The dual writing technique of counterpoint, contrast and imitative polyphony changes to give new artistic vitality to traditional folk songs, which is the main embodiment of the creativity of Chinese piano music. The Piano Society of the Chinese Music Association was officially established on September 15, 2013 and the first meeting was held in Yichang, Hubei province. At a general board meeting on that day, "The Piano Articles of the Chinese Musicians' Association" were adopted, and the first presidium of the Piano Association was elected under the chairmanship of Professor W. Ying. It is the first Chinese organisation in the field of piano art (Cipresso et al., 2018).

The main purpose of the Association is to concentrate and integrate the favourable resources of piano performance, study, creativity and theoretical research in the country and abroad, to mobilise the enthusiasm of talent in the field of piano art, and to maximise the benefits of all areas in the field of piano art in China. At the level of improving the construction of society, the career of Chinese piano education in the form of schools is further promoted to a higher and broader platform of modern development. It was European piano education that formed a relatively complete scientific system that encompasses the integrity of the structure, composition creation, methods, technique, style genres and evaluation standards of Chinese piano art education. In piano schools, teachers play an important role in forming the Chinese piano art and are responsible not only for the sound, but also for the language, style, accuracy, taste of the music and even the students' everyday life. They reproduce the long-term support of musical fundamentals in order to strengthen language and melody, rhythm and pitch. Indeed, the lack of practical learning of this craft can lead to a lack of teaching process. There is a large gap with international standards, which reflects the huge lack of piano learning in Chinese conservatories. One of the characteristics of the current professional development of music in schools is that the movement of rural areas and major cities is extremely unbalanced. The quality level gap is becoming larger and larger, leading to a proliferation of participants and stretching of the piano teaching process as their operating mechanisms do not meet international standards (Cook, 2019).

The living conditions of cultural ensembles throughout China are very different. Students who enter piano schools must develop their own skills, listen eagerly to others perform, and have great empathy and perception in order to feel others. Piano direction is a rare profession in the world. The greatest similarity between weekly one-on-one professional sessions for piano arts directors and solo directions is that the repertoire is shared. Also, all students should take the

innovative course “Musicians' Corporatisation”, which teaches how to lead their future careers and actively promote themselves (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). Understanding interpretation encourages making an overall analysis of the repertoire being studied or the repertoire of interest. This process denotes not only historical or theoretical significance, but also the development of the study of one's own thoughts in order to thrive in integrated thinking. Different ethnic groups have jointly created an outstanding culture with a unique noble artistic taste in the long-term practice of social life from ancient times to the present. The joint aesthetic quest and artistic taste have created unique art forms and traditions, laying a solid foundation for the development of Chinese pianistic culture.

Conclusions

Chinese piano culture is a crystallisation of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures in the context of the integration of education and science of modern China into the world educational space. While appreciating the successes of music education, the level of piano education has not yet reached the desired level. The high cost of tuition remains an unresolved issue, which affects choice, qualification, quality and duration of the activity process. The following remain pressing problems: the introduction of the latest school technology, the training of qualified specialists, the conceptual practical framework and targeted scientific research. The state educational documents and programmes of China point out that the prerequisites for the implementation of continuous piano studies are: providing unity, interrelation of content, coherence of goals and methods of teaching in the related educational stages. The attention to this is increased precisely in the aspect of the modernisation and formation of the piano as a whole through the formation of appropriate teaching and methodological support. A significant priority of the piano schools is to ensure and support the already existing teaching system, followed by the promotion of a sufficient level of development of the world art.

In this regard, it is important to guarantee schools to expand the list of disciplines, certified and highly qualified specialists, and the use of modern technology. The analysis of practical achievements and research works shows the lack of comprehensive theoretical and methodological support for piano learning in the Chinese piano education system, which has led to certain contradictions between: the real situation of piano education institutions; the increasing demand in modern society for qualified professionals capable of promoting world music art; the inconsistency in the organisation of piano education process in Chinese schools; and the lack of clear understanding of the world piano education system. The role of the Chinese piano school in the formation of piano art should be seen as a holistic, complex, and continuous process of transferring and assimilating knowledge, abilities, skills, and ways of playing the piano.

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