

Teaching Research on the Integration of Piano Playing Technique and Music Theory Knowledge

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Abstract: Discuss the importance, methods and practical significance of integrating piano playing skills and music theory knowledge. We analyze the current situation of the separation of the two in piano teaching, explain the positive effect of integrated teaching on the overall improvement of students' musical literacy, and mention the innovation in combination with the teaching cases, with a view to providing new ideas and methods for piano teaching, and cultivating piano talents with more comprehensive musical literacy.

Keywords: Piano playing skills; Music theory knowledge; Integrated teaching

1. Introduction

Piano teaching, as an important part of music education, has long existed the phenomenon of separating the teaching of playing skills and music theory knowledge. Students tend to focus on practicing playing skills mechanically and lack in-depth understanding of the theoretical connotations behind the musical works, resulting in a lack of emotional depth and artistic infectiousness in their performance. In actual music creation and performance, playing skills and music theory knowledge are complementary and inseparable organic whole. How to realize the effective integration of the two teaching has become a key issue to improve the quality of piano teaching and cultivate high-quality musical talents.

2. The connotation and between piano playing skills and music theory knowledge

Piano playing skills include finger dexterity, strength control, speed control, pedal use. For example, the fast and smooth playing of scales and arpeggios requires a high degree of finger independence and dexterity, and when playing strong passages, you need to reasonably use the weight of the arm and muscle power to achieve a full sound effect. These skills are a direct way of presenting the music to the listener and are the foundation of piano playing. Music theory covers the areas of music theory, harmony, composition, polyphony, and music history. In music theory, notes, beats, modes, etc. are the key to understanding the basic elements of music; knowledge of harmony helps to grasp the vertical structure of music and chord color changes; knowledge of composition enables one to analyze the overall framework of a work, such as the structural characteristics of the sonata style; knowledge of polyphony enables one to understand polyphonic music techniques and skills; knowledge of music history provides the background of the work's creation and stylistic features, which is helpful for accurately interpreting the meaning of the work.

Performance technique is the external manifestation of music theory knowledge, while music theory knowledge is the internal basis for the application of performance technique. For example, if you play the piano sonatas of the classical period, understanding the harmonic style (dominant music, strict functional harmonic system) and the structure of the piece (common three-part structure) can help the performer to better control the rhythm, melody, and intensity of the ups and downs of the rhythm, so that the performance skills are more in line with the musical style and emotional expression, and the exquisite performance skills can more vividly and accurately display the artistic charm of the knowledge of music theory to transform abstract theory into a concrete and palpable musical image. Abstract theories can be transformed into concrete and tangible musical images.

3. The current situation and problem analysis of the separation of the two in the current piano teaching

3.1 Single method of teaching

In traditional piano teaching, some teachers focus on technique training and often use a single method of teaching, such as repeated practice and mechanical imitation. For example, when teaching a new piece of music, they only demonstrate the technique for students to imitate, ignoring the knowledge of music theory, such as modulation, harmony, and form, etc. This makes students play but understand shallowly, and

their performance lacks personality and infectiousness. As a result, students are able to play, but their understanding is shallow, and their performance lacks individuality and infectiousness.

3.2 Inadequate selection of teaching materials

Some piano textbooks emphasize technique training and do not integrate enough music theory. For example, some practice pieces only focus on the progression of finger technique, with little theoretical notes and guidance. As a result, students are more likely to polish their skills and less likely to improve their theoretical knowledge, and it is difficult for them to establish the connection between skills and theory, so that they are unable to integrate them into a coherent whole.

3.3 Deviation in students' attitudes towards learning

Influenced by the examination or utilitarianism, some students learn the piano only for skills, thinking that it is fine to play difficult pieces. They regard music theory knowledge as boring and lack enthusiasm for active learning. This attitude makes students focus only on the notes and speed when they play, ignoring the emotion and aesthetics, making it difficult for them to appreciate the charm of the piano.

4. The piano playing skills and music theory knowledge integration teaching strategy

4.1 Selection of appropriate repertoire based on knowledge of music theory

In the selection of teaching repertoire, teachers should take into full consideration the students' performance level and the knowledge base of music theory, and select works that can not only practise playing skills, but also embody the rich connotations of music theory. For example, for students at the primary stage, they can choose some simple children's song adaptations or small sonatas, which have beautiful melodies, simple rhythms, and certain norms and typicalities in harmony, such as the common positive triad progression. Teachers can analyze the simple harmonic structure of these pieces in the teaching process, guide students to understand the role of harmonic support to the melody, and let students practice their playing skills while initially coming into contact with music theory knowledge. For students at the intermediate and advanced levels, they can choose some classic large-scale works, such as Beethoven's Piano Sonata and Chopin's Narrative. These works have complex playing techniques and cover a wealth of knowledge about harmony, pattern and polyphony in terms of music theory. Teachers can analyze the music theory elements of the works to help students fully understand the creative intent and artistic value of the works, so that students can overcome the difficulties of playing skills while improving their music theory literacy.

4.2 Organic integration in the teaching chain

4.2.1 Pre-reading session

When students are previewing new repertoire, teachers can assign tasks related to their knowledge of music theory. For example, students can be asked to analyze the tonality of the repertoire, the characteristics of the beat, and the structure of the passage. For pieces with typical harmonic progressions, they can be asked to mark the main chords and get a preliminary feeling of the harmonic color changes. This will enable students to have a preliminary understanding of the theoretical framework of the piece before they formally learn to play it, and lay the foundation for the subsequent learning of playing skills.

4.2.2 Classroom teaching sessions

Teachers should incorporate music theory when explaining playing techniques. To teach legato technique, introduce the concept of melodic line, so that students will understand that legato is a way to keep the melody coherent, like the beauty of the lines in a painting. Combining notes and rhythms, explain the fingering and rhythmic control of legato. The use of pedals, combined with harmony, allows students to know that the pedals should change with the harmony, to prevent turbidity, to help palm pedal technique and deep understanding of the theory of harmony. In the classroom, the teacher analyzes the music theory of the work, including the form, harmony, theme, etc., and guides the students to use it in performance practice. After analyzing the form of the sonata, the students will understand the characteristics of the passage and emotional requirements, and use the intensity, speed and timbre changes to show the logic of the piece and the development of musical contrasts. In the middle of the performance, the teacher will pause at the right time, so that the students can review and think about the theoretical knowledge involved and make a strong connection.

4.2.3 After-class practice sessions

Teachers should assign assignments that can consolidate the integration of playing skills and music theory knowledge. For example, students are required to practice the exercises in sections according to the knowledge of the piece, marking the musical characteristics and key points of the techniques in the sections; or students are allowed to try out different harmonic arrangements of the same piece, so that they can feel the influence of harmonic changes on the musical style and emotion through actual performance, and deepen their understanding and application of harmonic theory.

4.3 Utilization of diversified teaching methods

4.3.1 Multimedia teaching method

Multimedia teaching tools, such as music software and videos, are used to visualize the combination of music theory knowledge and performance skills. For example, play a MIDI file of a piano piece through music production software, displaying music theory information such as notes, beats, chord progressions, and song structures on the screen, so that students can intuitively feel the synchronization of playing skills and music theory knowledge in the process of listening and watching. Teachers can also play videos of famous pianists' performances and explain how the performers reflect music theory in the use of technique and musical expression, so that students can have a more intuitive learning experience.

4.3.2 Group cooperative learning method

Divide students into small groups to work together on a number of learning tasks related to performance techniques and music theory knowledge. For example, students can analyze the music theory elements of a piano piece and rehearse the piece together. In the process of group discussion and rehearsal, students can share their understanding of the work and the application of playing skills with each other to promote mutual learning and progress. Through cooperative learning, students develop teamwork and musical expression, and gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between playing skills and music theory knowledge in musical works.

4.3.3 Heuristic teaching method

In the teaching process, teachers use heuristic teaching methods such as questioning and guiding to stimulate students to think independently and explore the integration of playing skills and music theory knowledge. For example, when teaching a new piece of music, the teacher can let students listen to the piece first, then ask them how they feel about the musical style and emotional expression of the piece, and guide them to analyze the source of these feelings from the perspective of music theory knowledge, such as the influence of tonal patterns and rhythmic characteristics on the musical style. When students encounter difficulties in practicing playing skills, the teacher does not give solutions directly, but guides students to find ways to solve the problems themselves by inspiring them to review the relevant music theory knowledge, so as to cultivate students' independent learning ability and creative thinking.

5. Conclusion

The integrated teaching of piano playing skills and music theory knowledge is an effective way to improve the quality of piano teaching and cultivate students' comprehensive music accomplishment. By overcoming the separation of the two in the current teaching, adopting reasonable repertoire selection, organic teaching link design and diversified teaching methods and other strategies, students can realize the mutual promotion and promotion of playing skills and music theory knowledge in the process of learning piano. This not only helps students to understand and interpret piano works more deeply, improve music expression and artistic appeal, but also develops students' musical aesthetic ability, analytical ability and innovation ability, laying a solid foundation for students' music learning and future development. In the future piano teaching, teachers should continue to explore and practice new models and new methods of integrated teaching, so as to meet the needs of The Times for the cultivation of music talents, so that piano teaching can radiate new vitality and charm while inheriting classics.

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