



Professional Piano Education in Chinese Piano Music Culture

Changkui Wang

Art Department, Normal College of Shenzhen University

Shenzhen 518060, China

Tel: 86-755-2653-6309 E-mail: wangchangkui@163.com

Abstract

The development of Chinese piano music culture including professional piano education is based on the traditional culture of “neutralization”, and in the researches about the professional piano education in the 21st century, the research of the piano teaching in normal colleges is the most active one, and it is mainly centralized in the piano teaching reform, the teaching mode, the vamping, the teaching materials and teaching methods. In this article, above aspects are classified and analyzed, and the future development direction of the piano teaching research in higher normal colleges in the 21st century is discussed, and it should be studied more seriously.

Keywords: Chinese piano, Professional education, Music culture, Teaching research

1. Literature review of the researches about Chinese piano music culture

Chinese piano music is studied in the view of the culture in this article, and the research contents include Chinese piano music art (including creating and acting), Chinese professional piano education (including music art colleges and higher normal colleges), theoretical research of Chinese piano music, idea of Chinese music culture, Chinese piano manufacture. Since 1980s, the comprehensive theoretical researches about Chinese piano music culture mainly include most literatures of Chinese modern times music history about Chinese piano music and most papers and literatures of the special research about Chinese piano music culture. Wei Tingge’s paper in 1983, “The Development of Chinese Music Creation”, was the first paper to study the development of Chinese piano music, and his another paper, “The Introduction of the Concept and Relative Theoretical Research of Chinese Piano Art”, was the early paper about the theoretical research of Chinese piano music in China. In 1996, Bian Meng’s book, “The Formation and Development of Chinese Piano Culture”, was the first work to systematically study Chinese piano music culture in China. Feng Xiaogang’s paper in 2007, “Chinese Piano Music in the Half of the 20th Century”, was the most comprehensive research result to study Chinese piano music culture at present. In 2009, Wang Changkui’s work, “Chinese Piano Music Culture”, is the last work to generally summarize Chinese piano music culture based on numerous domestic scholars’ research results.

In this article, Chinese piano music and its professional education are studied as viewed from the culture, which produces special results, i.e. the development course of Chinese piano music culture is supported by Chinese traditional culture and dynamic western and eastern cultures in certain period, and Chinese piano music culture has obvious characters of cultural orientation such as “neutralization”, “femininity” and “verve”, and it is the result that western and eastern cultures reflect each other. This cultural orientation will certainly influence the development of Chinese piano music culture including Chinese professional piano education, and deeply inspire the cultural orientation of the piano music in the 21st century.

2. The orientation of Chinese piano music culture: neutralization

The original meaning of “He (Chinese, neutralization)” includes two aspects, and the first one is “seasoning”, and the second one is “mixing voice”. In the book of “Zhong Yong (Chinese, moderation)”, “Provided that is properly positioned under heaven, all things will grow and flourish”. Zhu Xi explained that “Zhong is the meaning of ‘even-handed’, and Yong is the meaning of ‘usual’”. The philosophies including Confucian, Taoism and Buddhism which represent the most essential and deep Chinese cultures are connected with the music culture, and this association point is the core theory in Chinese traditional cultures, neutralization (Wang, 2009, *Social Sciences Review*, No.7). As viewed from the philosophical meaning and music aesthetics of “neutralization”, the neutralization of Confucian, the “Wu (Chinese, nothing)” of Taoism and the “Kong (Chinese, empty)” of Buddhism all accept the cultural concept of “neutralization”, and the cultural ideal of “neutralization” always exists in the development course of Chinese piano music culture, and it is the core cultural orientation of Chinese piano music.

3. Development track of Chinese piano music culture

Chinese piano music culture has experienced following six development stages (Wang, 2009, *Chinese Piano Music Culture*).

Before 1919, when the “Peace March” created by Zhao Yuanren was published in the Science Magazine of 1914,

Chinese piano music culture begun to bud. To imitate and spread European music culture was the main cultural orientation in this stage.

From 1919 to 1937, when Mr. Xiao Youmei established the music department of Beijing Higher Normal School, the Music Practice Situation of Beijing University, the music department of Beijing Art Professional School and Shanghai State Music College, the music colleges which gave priority to European music system had been founded. He Lvting's "Cowboy's Piccolo" and other six works won prizes and explored the "neutralization" style combining Chinese style with European music theories and piano playing techniques, which was the mainstream of Chinese piano music culture in this stage.

From 1937 to 1949, the piano music branded the sign of the war.

From 1949 to 1966, nine music colleges and about hundred normal colleges established their piano departments in China, and the Shanghai Music College and the Central Music College centralized the most excellent first generation piano professors, and there were 18 persons to win a prize in international piano competitions. The government highly emphasized the construction of the music department in higher normal colleges, and the piano became the main lesson for normal schools. The flourish of the piano music culture was the cultural mapping that Chinese traditional culture "connected with the politics".

From 1966 to 1976, the culture of "unification" was the only cultural orientation of the piano music. The professional education of piano in the whole country was in the status of stagnancy and regression, and the most special phenomenon appeared in the history. However, the spread of "The Red Lantern" accompanied by the piano made billions of Chinese people to know the "noble musical instrument" which they never saw, and because of that, the piano concerto "Huang He River" became famous in the whole world. The piano music recomposed by national instrumental music by Chinese composers artistically presented the cultural orientation of Chinese music aesthetics idea such as "harmony between man and nature" and "neutralization, esteeming human being and nature".

From 1977 to now, multiple cultural concepts made Chinese piano music culture to present historical pomp. The creations of piano music flourished unprecedentedly, and the professional piano education, the social piano education, the piano manufacturing, and the piano performance were in the best development stage in the history. Chinese piano music culture presented multiple and international situation that the government functioned well and the people lived in harmony, and the time endows the new cultural meaning to "neutralization".

In the tracks of the development of Chinese piano music culture, the cultural orientation of piano music has obvious commonness and continuity. The commonness was that Chinese piano music culture always harmonized, incorporated, but differed with western piano music culture by the form of "neutralization", and when Chinese piano music culture integrated with western music culture, Chinese piano composers and educationists kept the cultural consciousness of Chinese traditional culture.

4. Actuality and thinking of the theoretical researches about Chinese professional piano education

From 1920s, Xiao Youmei founded the initial music institutions of China, which adopted European professional piano teaching system including piano teaching plans, teaching materials, modes, and methods. In 1950s, based on European piano music teaching system, these music institutions adopted the style of Russian piano school, but the piano culture communication had not been opened in non-socialism countries. After 1980s, the professional piano education presented the status of opening, and on the one hand, the professional piano education accepted foreign piano music cultures by wide "neutralization" spirit, and on the other hand, combining with Chinese teaching practice of the piano education system, the piano education with Chinese characters have been largely developed in the cultural selection of "unity without uniformity".

4.1 Theoretical research results of Chinese piano music teaching

Liao Naixiong's paper, "Several Basic Stages in the Piano Teaching (1979)", was the first work to study Chinese piano teaching, and Ying Shizhen's "Piano Teaching Methods (1990)" was the first theoretical work about the piano teaching, after that, many works such as Situ Bichun's "Teaching Method of Piano (1999)", Zhan Jianguo's "Guidence of Piano Base Teaching (2004)", Dai Baisheng's "Piano Teaching Methods in Normal Colleges", Fan Hexin's "Theory of Piano Teaching (2006)", Jinying's "Teaching and Performance of the Music of 'Basic Tutorial of Piano'", Liu Qinggang's "Yangjun Piano Teaching Art Theory (2007)", Huang Dagang's "Zhou Guangren Teaching Art (2007)" occurred one after another. Fan Hexin's "Theory of Piano Teaching (2006)" of China College of Music was the most profound and applied work to study the teaching rules of piano from the angles of the education and the psychology. In Feb of 1996, the magazine of Piano Artistry started publication, which indicated that the theoretical research of Chinese piano music entered into a new historical stage, and the good research environment of Chinese piano music had been established basically.

4.2 Review and thinking of the theoretical research about Chinese piano music teaching in normal colleges since the 21st century (Wang, 2008)

In the professional piano education researches in the 21st century, the piano teaching study of higher normal colleges flourishes most. From 2000 to 2008, the research results of the piano teaching in normal colleges are classified and analyzed as follows.

4.2.1 Academic backgrounds

In 2000, the “Symposium of the Reform of Piano Teaching in Normal Universities” was convened in Beijing, and in 2004, the “Proseminar of National Forum on Piano Teaching in the Tertiary Educational Institutions” was held in the Capital Normal University (before the piano academic committee was founded, the piano teaching academy of Chinese Music Association had actively developed many academic activities), and in 2006, the “Academic Proseminar of National Higher Music Educational Lesson Development and Teaching Study” was held in Northeast China Normal University which also held the “2nd Proseminar of National Forum on Piano Teaching in the Tertiary Educational Institutions” (Xiao, 2006). The proseminar of 2006 was the vane of the research depth and width of piano teaching in higher normal colleges in China.

4.2.2 Research of the piano teaching reform

In the Symposium of the Reform of Piano Teaching in Normal Universities of 2000, Zhou Guangren said that the piano teaching target in normal colleges should be “expert in one thing and good at many”, but Wei Tingge thought that “the cultivation target of the music education in normal colleges should be ‘expert in many things and good at many’, and ‘good at many but not one is professional’ should not be the final ‘qualified product’ in normal colleges”. Ma Xiaohong said that the comprehensive lesson system of piano art in normal colleges taking the song accompaniment as the core, and the piano history lesson as the theoretical guidance. Situ Bichun thought that the masters of piano in normal colleges should emphasize the theoretical learning and study about the “History of Piano Art”, the “Teaching Method of Piano”, and the “Vamping Art of Piano”, aim at the target of “teaching style”, and grasp the applied talents combining with lesson setup, thesis writing, and educational practice. Du Sichun thought that the piano teaching should emphasize to study the piano music culture which was the topic that few scholars studied in the piano teaching of normal colleges.

4.2.3 Researches of the piano teaching mode and the collective lessons

In 2000, Hulv’s article, “Piano Teaching Mode in Normal Colleges (Explorations in Music, No. 2 of 2000)”, was the early attempt for the teaching mode in the new century. Helv thought that the causes of the reform of piano teaching mode in normal colleges included the special situation that the teaching resource was seriously deficient because of the admission expansion and the requirements of the cultivation in normal colleges, which were objective. He pointed out that the piano theory course, the piano collective course and the piano appreciation course should be established. By Gardner’s multi-intelligence theory, Wang Yihong tried to teach the piano collective course from new angle through the application of multi-intelligence theory in the piano collective course of normal colleges, which brought new research view and revelations. Yang Jing thought that the digital piano teaching system was the product of the piano with modern high science and technology, and it was a new teaching concept and school-teaching mode, and it combined organically with the knowledge of other subjects, and strengthen the transverse association and cross integration among different subjects.

4.2.4 Research of the piano vamping

In the Symposium of the Reform of Piano Teaching in Normal Universities of 2000, scholars generally thought that the eligible vamping teachers should be first cultivated first, and then the accompaniment teaching materials should be perfected. Wei Tingge proposed opposite opinion, i.e. “the vamping can not be taught actually, and only the piano technique and melody composing can be taught”, and the symposium disputed about this opinion. Zhang Hui emphasized to introduce “non-teaching factors” in the teaching course, and break the traditional teaching mode give priority to instruction in classroom, and adopt the introductory and heuristic teaching method was the effective mode in the accompaniment lessons. In the article of “Piano Vamping Learning Strategy in Normal Colleges (People’s Music, No. 1 of 2007)”, Jiang Ying thought that “the vamping ability which can exactly and quickly present the music in the music lesson of middle school is the most important ability of music teachers, and it is the first factor in teaching and examination, so the training of vamping lesson in normal colleges should surrounding these three emphases”. This opinion really reflected the key of the vamping lesson, and the colleges should cultivate music teachers’ vamping ability.

4.2.5 Researches of the piano teaching materials and methods

The lesson of “Piano Teaching Methods” in normal colleges is new lesson since the 21st century, and the relative researches are still in the initial stage at present. In Academic Proseminar of National Higher Music Educational Lesson Development and Teaching Study of 2006, Wang Changkui proposed that the pyramid teaching mode design theory of

the lesson of “Piano Literatures and Teaching Methods” in normal colleges (Xu, 2007), and Ma Tanghua thought that the lesson of “Piano Teaching Methods” gave priority to the teaching of theoretical knowledge sometime in the past, which was hard to stimulate and adjust students’ emotions and enthusiasms, and the students in normal colleges should study in practice. Since the 21st century, the researches about the piano teaching materials in normal colleges are deficient, and they often occurred by the form of introductory article.

5. Conclusions

For the research contents, above research results relatively follows the step of education reform with certain influencing power, but they can not deeply influence the research width and depth of teaching materials, teaching methods, teaching of Chinese works, and basic teaching. For the research methods, above results mainly adopt the method of experience summarization which is feasible and applied, but the empirical method was rarely applied, and some researches lack in believable data, and the proofs are not sufficient. For the research view, the comparative researches between Chinese and foreign piano teachings in normal colleges are deficient. And the new views are deficient, and few researches are based on the views of aesthetics, philosophy and cultures, and the academic depth should be further strengthened.

To future piano teaching research of normal colleges, the piano teaching materials and methods, and the teaching of Chinese piano works should be strengthened, and the multi-culture music opinion should be established, and the contents and range of relative researches should be developed, and the view of multi-music culture should be adopted to obtain new valuable orientation on deeper layer of the piano teaching research of China by the cross research of multiple subjects such as the modern education, psychology, sociology and cultures.

References

- Wang, Changkui. (2009). *Chinese Piano Music Culture*. Beijing: Guangming Daily Publishing House.
- Wang, Changkui. (2008). Review of Research Hotspot about the Piano Teaching in Normal Colleges in the 21st Century. *China Music Education*. No.8.
- Wang, Changkui. (2009). Study on the Inheritance and Transfer of the “Neutralization” Culture in Chinese Piano Music. *Social Sciences Review*. No.7.
- Xiao, Hui. (2006). The Profitable Problem of Piano Teaching in Normal University. *China Music Education*. No.8.
- Xu, Bing & Ma, Da. (2007). The General Situation and Expectation of the Development of Chinese Normal College’s Music Education. *People’s Music*. No.3.