

Research on the Problems and Countermeasures of Improvised Piano Accompaniment Teaching in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: The teaching of piano impromptu accompaniment is an important way to improve students' piano accompaniment ability, which has a direct impact on students' future study and work. From the current situation, there are some problems in piano impromptu accompaniment teaching. Based on the general situation of piano impromptu accompaniment, this paper analyzes the problems existing in the teaching of piano impromptu accompaniment from three aspects: students, teachers and teaching, and puts forward solutions to improve the teaching situation and improve the teaching effect of piano impromptu accompaniment.

1. Introduction

Music education is an indispensable part of aesthetic education and a necessary way to realize the function of aesthetic education. As an important part of music education, impromptu piano accompaniment is also a required course of music curriculum, which plays an important role in music majors in colleges and universities. Since the relevant teaching seminar in 1993 suggested that the lack of improvisational accompaniment ability affected the youth music education curriculum, many normal colleges began to tutor related content. In 2006, the Ministry of Education officially gave the teaching objectives and requirements. [1]. Now, after 16 years of baptism, people who are engaged in music major gradually realize the importance and practicality of improvisation accompaniment, and get more development. However, most scholars have studied the improvement of students' relevant abilities in normal colleges and professional colleges, and paid little attention to the cultivation of students' relevant abilities in ordinary colleges and universities. At present, as one of the main courses of music major in colleges and universities-piano improvisation accompaniment still faces a series of challenges. In this paper, the author's college is taken as the research sample, and the teachers and students of conservatory of music are selected as the research objects, so as to further explore the present situation and reform path of piano impromptu accompaniment teaching in colleges and universities.

2. Present situation and shortcomings of piano improvisation teaching in colleges and universities

The author of this study adopts the form of questionnaire and interview. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed, and 110 valid questionnaires. The subjects are 110 junior students in Conservatory of Music. The author divided them into experimental group and control group. The experimental group consists of 58 non-piano majors, while the control group consists of 52 piano majors. Both the experimental group and the control group are students majoring in music performance in institutions of higher learning and have taken piano impromptu accompaniment courses, which can provide some impressions and experiences after class, which is conducive to the investigation. In addition, four college music teachers were interviewed.

This questionnaire is mainly divided into two parts, with a total of 17 questions (see Appendix 1): The first part takes students as the main body, and the survey content covers 10 questions such as

learning attitude, learning foundation and ability; The second part focuses on teaching. There are seven questions in this part, including the selection and application of teaching materials, teachers' teaching methods, etc.

2.1. Students' learning motivation is insufficient

The questionnaire shows that among the non-piano majors, 48.28% like option A very much, 13.79% like option B, and 38.2% of the students are in average or dislike (Figure 1). Professional piano option A likes it very much and option B likes it, accounting for 40.38% and 51.92% respectively, and only 7.69% people choose average or dislike it (Figure 2).

Interest and inner drive are the important factors to learn this course well. Non-piano majors major in vocal music or other musical instruments, and they know little about piano, which may lead to students' lack of interest in it. When they encounter problems in their studies, most students in the piano group take the initiative to ask the teacher for advice (Figure 3), while most students who are not piano majors choose not to ask for advice (Figure 4), so that the problems of non-piano majors in the learning process can't be solved, which leads to a vicious circle.

Non-piano major

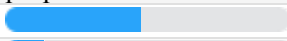



option	subtotal	proportion
A. I like it very much (80%-100%)	28	 48.28%
B. Like it (60%-80%)	eight	 13.79%
C. average (30%-60%)	18	 31.03%
D. Disliking (less than 30%)	four	 6.9%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 1 How much do you like the course "impromptu accompaniment"?

Piano major





option	subtotal	proportion
A. I like it very much (80%-100%)	21	 40.38%
B. Like it (60%-80%)	27	 51.92%
C. average (30%-60%)	4	 7.69%
D. Disliking (less than 30%)	0	 0%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 2 How much do you like the course "impromptu accompaniment"?

Non-piano major

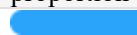



option	subtotal	proportion
A. Very important (80%-100%)	27	 46.55%
B. Important (60%-80%)	17	 29.31%
C. average (30%-60%)	11	 18.97%
D. Not important (less than 30%)	3	 5.17%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 3 Do you think the impromptu accompaniment course is important?

Piano major





option	subtotal	proportion
A. Very important (80%-100%)	35	 67.31%
B. Important (60%-80%)	17	 32.69%
C. average (30%-60%)	0	 0%
D. Not important (less than 30%)	0	 0%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 4 Do you think the impromptu accompaniment course is important?

2.2. Students' learning foundation is relatively weak

From the perspective of piano playing ability, the proportion of non-piano majors who can play more than Czerny 599 is 37.93% (Figure 5), and that of piano majors who can play more than Czerny 599 is 86.54% (Figure 6). Piano majors are exposed to more works and have a deeper understanding of music. They don't need to spend too much attention on playing, but only need to practice more in harmony arrangement, texture selection, and colorful experience. Therefore, it will be easier to practice piano skills when learning impromptu accompaniment. Non-piano major students have poor performance ability, even if they have a good grasp of theoretical knowledge or many good compiling methods, the music can't be presented due to the lack of performance level, so the performance ability of piano has a great influence on the performance level of impromptu accompaniment.

Non-piano major

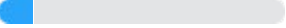
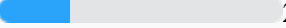
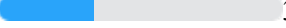
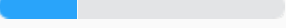
option	subtotal	proportion
A. playing the cherni 599 accurately	7	 12.07%
B. Play the Cherni 599 more accurately	15	 25.86%
C. Unable to play the Cherni 599	20	 34.48%
D. No piano foundation	16	 27.59%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 5 What is your piano level before learning impromptu accompaniment?

Piano major


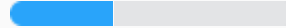
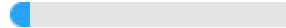
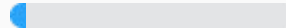
option	subtotal	proportion
A. playing the cherni 599 accurately	26	 50%
B. Play the Cherni 599 more accurately	19	 36.54%
C. Unable to play the Cherni 599	4	 7.69%
D. No piano foundation	3	 5.77%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 6 What is your piano level before learning impromptu accompaniment?

From the perspective of music theory learning and harmony creation ability, when arranging accompaniment for music, the wrong judgment of mode tonality and improper use of harmony connection will directly lead to the confusion of chord selection, the difficulty of harmonic progression and the disharmony of sound. The questionnaire survey found that about 30% of the students in the two groups mastered the degree of I-VI-IV-II-V-I (Figure 7). Even up to 25.86% of the students in the non-piano group don't have any foundation of harmony link (Figure 8). The main employment direction of this research object after graduation is music teachers in primary and secondary schools. In order to adapt to students' different ages, genders and voice characteristics, music teachers in primary and secondary schools often need to transpose music scores, and they need to perform and arrange all kinds of transpositions skillfully. If the knowledge of music theory and harmony is weak, it is difficult to be competent for the above tasks.

Non-piano major

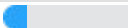


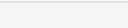
option	subtotal	proportion
A. Master all chord connections (100%)	5	 8.62%
B. Master most chord connections (70%-99%)	20	 34.48%
C. Only master the connection of the positive triad	18	 31.03%
D. No mastery and line connection	15	 25.86%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 7 How much do you know about the connection of chords before learning impromptu accompaniment?

Piano major


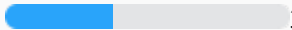
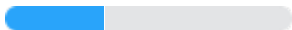
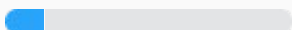
option	subtotal	proportion
A. Master all chord connections (100%)	7	 13.46%
B. Master most chord connections (70%-99%)	20	 38.46%
C. Only master the connection of the positive triad	18	 34.62%
D. No mastery and line connection	7	 13.46%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 8 How much do you know about the connection of chords before learning impromptu accompaniment?

2.3. The curriculum and assessment methods need to be improved

Improvised piano accompaniment teaching is closely related to curriculum setting and assessment methods. However, in many colleges and universities, the setting of teaching process is not reasonable, the coordination between courses is not good enough, the selection of teaching materials is not clear enough, and the assessment method of courses is single, which can't really improve students' ability of piano improvisation.

In terms of curriculum design, most of the students in the two groups think that music theory, solfeggio, piano foundation, harmony and other courses are closely related to impromptu accompaniment courses. However, these courses are not connected and integrated in the specific teaching process (Figure 9, Figure 10). Students learn music theory, solfeggio and piano in the first year of their freshman year to lay the foundation. Sophomore piano impromptu accompaniment course and harmony course are carried out simultaneously. However, the study of impromptu accompaniment needs to apply the knowledge of harmony, and at the same time, students should have a certain degree of piano playing ability. Under the premise of the above-mentioned curriculum, it is easy for knowledge and skills to be connected and applied. For example, the chord links needed in improvisational accompaniment may be that students have not yet learned relevant knowledge in harmony class; Students are still in the process of basic piano playing methods and basic finger practice, and fail to achieve the piano playing ability required by the impromptu accompaniment course.

Non-piano major

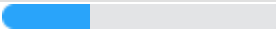
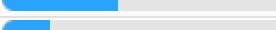
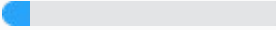
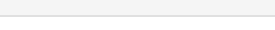
option	subtotal	proportion
A. There is great coordination (80%-100%)	18	 31.03%
B. There is greater synergy (60%-80%)	24	 41.38%
C. There is a little synergy	10	 17.24%
D. There is no synergy	6	 10.34%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 9 Do you think there is any synergy in music theory lessons, harmony lessons, and other impromptu accompaniment courses?

Piano major

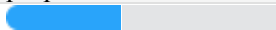
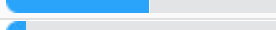
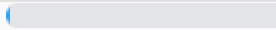
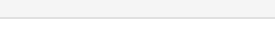
option	subtotal	proportion
A. There is great coordination (80%-100%)	21	 40.38%
B. There is greater synergy (60%-80%)	26	 50%
C. There is a little synergy	4	 7.69%
D. There is no synergy	1	 1.92%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 10 Do you think there is any synergy in music theory lessons, harmony lessons, and other impromptu accompaniment courses?

In the aspect of assessment, at present, most colleges and universities' piano impromptu accompaniment assessment is to play a piece of music at the end of the semester to judge the score. Students don't use their learned accompaniment ability, put their accompaniment knowledge into practice, and don't integrate with other related disciplines, so the assessment method is relatively simple. As a result, students may not be able to play songs outside the curriculum, and their learning is too rigid.

2.4. The teaching level of teachers needs to be improved

Improvised piano accompaniment class belongs to the category of piano teaching, and many colleges and universities are taught by teachers of piano teaching and research sections in their schools. Teachers' teaching level directly affects the teaching effect and students' interest in learning. In this paper, four teachers from different universities were interviewed and exchanged in the form of interviews. It focuses on how to improve the quality of classroom teaching, and in the process, some problems of teachers in teaching are also found.

On the one hand, teachers can't really teach students in accordance with their aptitude. In the process of classroom teaching, three of them are found by teachers that because of the differences in students' foundation, students with good foundation will have nothing to do after mastering new knowledge, while students with poor foundation cannot master knowledge and skills in every class. Every week's 100-minute class hour excludes the teacher's lecture time, so students have less time to practice piano, and teachers can't teach each student according to his or her aptitude. One teacher divided the class into three groups: excellent group, medium group and slow group. But it still can't completely solve the problem of students' progress.

On the other hand, teachers' impromptu accompaniment teaching is less targeted. In the interview, four teachers reported that there were few special impromptu accompaniment teachers in the school, and most of them were piano teachers who took impromptu accompaniment courses. There is no doubt that piano teachers have a good command of piano skills, but when teaching courses in class, they will focus on teaching piano skills practice and simple music application in impromptu accompaniment. It can't teach the impromptu accompaniment course correctly and inspire students' creativity. Most students are in a rote mode of accompaniment, and few students can really improvise.

2.5. The adaptation of teaching materials needs to be strengthened

The results of the questionnaire show that 41.38% of non-piano majors think that the textbook is average or does not match their own abilities (Figure 11). While 90% of students majoring in piano think that teaching materials match their abilities (Figure 12). Nearly half of the non-piano majors' own abilities can't match the teaching materials, and their music acceptance ability is weak in the learning process. As a result, the completion of class assignments is not high and the learning progress is slow.

Non-piano major

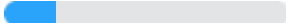
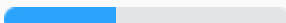
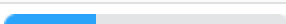
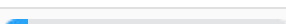
option	subtotal	proportion
A. Very good match (80%-100%)	11	 18.97%
B. Compare and match (60%-80%)	23	 39.66%
C. General matching (30%-60%)	19	 32.76%
D. Mismatch	5	 8.62%
This question is filled in effectively.	58	

Figure 11 Does the textbook content of piano impromptu accompaniment match its own knowledge and ability?

Piano major

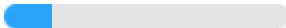

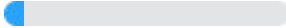
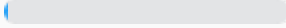
option	subtotal	proportion
A. Very good match (80%-100%)	9	 17.31%
B. Compare and match (60%-80%)	38	 73.08%
C. General matching (30%-60%)	4	 7.69%
D. Mismatch	1	 1.92%
This question is filled in effectively.	52	

Figure 12 Does the textbook content of piano impromptu accompaniment match its own knowledge and ability?

At present, the textbooks about piano improvisation on the market can be roughly divided into two parts. For example, Sun Weiquan's Introduction to Piano Improvisation Accompaniment. [2], Improvisation Accompaniment Tutorial by Yang Jinhao[3] The textbooks are mainly based on harmony. Practical Tutorial of Piano Improvisation Accompaniment edited by Ding Yundong[4] Other teaching materials are mainly types based on accompaniment sounds. No matter what kind of textbook, focusing on theoretical knowledge will ignore the keyboard practice, and strengthen the practical guidance, but it is slightly insufficient in theory. It can be seen from the questionnaire that most students' ability can't reach the level of the textbook content. Some students may lose interest in impromptu accompaniment at the beginning of the course if they teach according to the content of the textbook, and the textbook is not practical in music selection. Most music students in colleges and universities are employed as music teachers in primary and secondary schools after graduation, and they need a large number of applications of impromptu accompaniment in music teaching in primary and secondary schools. The focus of piano impromptu accompaniment teaching should be shifted to piano impromptu accompaniment teaching with strong practicability and no deep piano skills.

3. The Countermeasures for the Reform of Piano Impromptu Accompaniment Teaching

3.1. To stimulate students' creativity

Improvised piano accompaniment, as its name implies, emphasizes its improvisation. Students are required to have rich imagination and creativity. However, the lack of creativity is also one of the aspects in which China students are most affected by the outside world. China students often have obvious advantages in skills, diligence and so on, but sometimes it is inevitable to become rigid and lack necessary flexibility. For the senior undergraduate students, their basic skills training has basically become proficient. While continuing to strengthen the basic skills training, we should pay attention to timely and gradually shift the training focus to the independent creation of art, and guide them to summarize all their qualities into a stable and high musical thinking ability of personality creation. [5]. In the process of teaching, we should learn more about the cultural background of music, create a large-scale teaching situation and create a brand-new image. Let students think about the artistic conception of music from the composer's point of view, so as to stimulate students' innovative ability. In the teaching of piano impromptu accompaniment, it is the goal of teachers and students to develop students' creative thinking ability, so that they can provide more possibilities instead of playing piano in a regular and step-by-step manner. It is the goal of mutual cooperation and joint efforts of teachers and students to improve students' piano impromptu accompaniment ability from this aspect.

3.2. Improve the relevant curriculum groups and construct the knowledge and skills atlas

"Improvised piano accompaniment is an important embodiment of the practicality of piano

discipline, and it is also the foundation of a good music class in primary and secondary schools.

One of the abilities "[6]. The author believes that the relevant curriculum groups should be improved to help students construct the practical knowledge and skill atlas needed for piano improvisation accompaniment.

First of all, in terms of piano performance, "at the beginning of the first school year, piano lessons arranged a practice of scale, arpeggio, main chord transposition in major and minor tones, increased vocal etudes in common tones, and three or four positive music accompaniment in each semester, so that students could be familiar with common tones before taking impromptu accompaniment lessons, and have some knowledge of accompaniment types." [7]Incorporating impromptu accompaniment into piano teaching or preparing for impromptu accompaniment in piano class can make students understand and master the basic playing skills of impromptu accompaniment more clearly, and at the same time, they can give back to piano class learning better.

Secondly, in the aspect of harmony creation, it is necessary to integrate the teaching of harmony class with the teaching of impromptu accompaniment, and guide students to apply the theoretical knowledge learned in harmony class to impromptu accompaniment step by step, so that students can more flexibly choose the type of voice they want to use, develop their harmony thinking and improve the level of impromptu accompaniment. "The so-called 'harmony thinking' is actually the imagination of harmony sound and the organization ability of harmony vocabulary". Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate and develop students' harmonious thinking in piano impromptu accompaniment teaching. Through long-term training, this thinking ability can be established, consolidated and improved.

3.3. Increase students' practical opportunities through multiple channels

Through "study-practice-re-study-re-practice"[8]Let students accumulate knowledge and experience in practice. In daily teaching, strengthen the connection with other courses and open up a practical platform for students. For example, students can independently "pair piano accompaniment" in vocal music courses. Many of China's national vocal songs don't have a fixed piano accompaniment, but only rely on the accompanist to improvise and create. In the absence of accompaniment spectrum, according to the needs of the song, the accompaniment can be played quickly and flexibly. This provides learners of piano improvisation with plenty of practical opportunities. For example, in dance classes, professional dance classes such as basic training of China folk dance or basic physique classes all need the presence of piano accompaniment teachers, who can play etudes in line with the basic skills training of students. Sometimes the commonly used special piano accompaniment spectrum of dance can't create an atmosphere that meets the dance teacher's requirements. At this time, the dance teacher will find out a melody temporarily, and ask the accompanist to immediately allocate a suitable sound type and play it completely, which tests the skills learned by the accompanist in the piano impromptu accompaniment class, and is also the way and means to apply it to the dance class. In addition, you can hold skill stage practice in the college every month, and combine vocal music, instrumental dance and other courses with impromptu accompaniment in stage practice.

3.4. Change "large class teaching" into "group teaching"

At present, the school takes different majors of vocal music, instrumental music and dance as teaching units, and teachers teach in a unified way. As a result, students who study well can learn new knowledge quickly, while students who study poorly take too long to accept new knowledge. In order to ensure the teaching progress, teachers can only choose to make the learning progress according to the learning situation of most students. Then, the number of students in each class is about 35, so the teachers of such a large class have limited energy and can't take care of each student's problems in a short time. If the students with good foundation finish the repertoire faster and express their problems or opinions more enthusiastically in class, the teachers will "take more care". Students with poor foundation finish the music slowly, so it is difficult to ask questions or give creative thinking to the music and communicate with teachers. In this way, a vicious circle will

be formed for students with poor foundation, and teachers cannot teach students in accordance with their aptitude.

Therefore, I think we can consider teaching in different classes according to students' learning ability and actual situation. Take the form of group class. In this way, students can learn from others' good experiences for their own use, and everyone can get more attention from teachers in class, and have more time to get individual counseling, which is more convenient for teachers to teach students in accordance with their aptitude, and also for teachers to conduct classroom management. Besides, group students can also discuss with each other and make progress together. In this way, students can set higher requirements for themselves, and members can have a more specific comparison, which is conducive to the formation of a benign competitive environment.

4. Conclusion

Improvised piano accompaniment is widely used in music classes in primary and secondary schools. For students majoring in music education, the study of this course is an essential knowledge and skill for their future career. However, there are still many problems in the present teaching situation of piano improvisation accompaniment. Based on the investigation data and my own teaching experience, the author puts forward corresponding solutions from the aspects of students, teachers, teaching materials and teaching. We need to face up to the shortcomings of piano impromptu accompaniment course and constantly explore new ways of teaching reform.

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