

The Contemporary Development of Music Education in China: A Critical Review



Yin Jing Jing¹, Ooi Boon Keat²

¹Graduate School of Management, Management and Science University, Malaysia

²School of Education and Social Sciences, Management and Science University, Malaysia

ABSTRACT: This article briefly discusses the development of music education in China and various theoretical aspects of music aesthetic ability. Exploring the current problems of music teachers in music teaching can help identify existing issues in music appreciation teaching. In the context of contemporary music education development, in order to enhance the musical aesthetic ability of college students and drive the optimization and development of the theoretical system of music appreciation teaching in colleges and universities, full attention should be paid to different music concepts such as ethnic music and ecological music. Based on previous research, put forward one's own opinions and suggestions to improve students' music aesthetic ability. By constructing a diversified music teaching system in universities, we aim to explore important breakthrough points for comprehensively improving the quality of music pedagogy for university music teachers and the musical aesthetic ability of students.

KEYWORDS: Music Education, Music Appreciation, Musical Aesthetic Ability, Music Literacy, Music Performance

INTRODUCTION

With the significant improvement of people's spiritual civilization and material living standards, the artistic atmosphere they come into contact with is increasing, highlighting the importance of students' musical aesthetic ability. Music appreciation courses shoulder the mission of improving students' comprehensive abilities and music literacy in higher education. Therefore, it is necessary to explore and research the cultivation of students' Music Literacy, Music Appreciation, and Music Performance from the perspective of teacher professional teaching, in order to promote the comprehensive improvement of their students' Musical Aesthetics ability. In the concept of comprehensive education, promoting the development of music appreciation teaching in universities requires integrating the educational philosophy of "educating people through aesthetic education" into the music education system. By catering to students' personalized music learning needs and focusing on cultivating their music hobbies, we aim to build a life oriented and diverse music education platform and learning environment for them.

THE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN CHINA.

The development of music education in Chinese schools in various periods of the 20th century is closely related to the social, political, economic, cultural, and educational developments of that period. The period from 1901 to 1919 was the embryonic stage, and the rise and development of school music was the main symbol of the origin and development of modern school music education in China. (Li Xiangyu, Huang Rong, 2021) The development of School Songs has made music classes an indispensable component of the school education system, laying the foundation for the later development of school music education. School Songs has opened up the learning of Western music in school music education. The development of School Songs has introduced the music education systems of modern schools in Europe, America, and Japan, making music education and teaching in Chinese schools systematic and standardized. In September 1912, the government of the Republic of China adopted the educational policy of combining moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and aesthetic education proposed by educator Cai Yuanpei as its educational purpose. (Liu Zhangjie, 2015) This is the first time that aesthetic education has been included in the educational purpose of schools,

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which is a groundbreaking achievement with profound significance in the history of education in China.

In the early 1950s, during the establishment of China, the Ministry of Education of the Central People's Government formulated the policy of "implementing comprehensive development of education including intellectual, moral, physical, and aesthetic education". (Li Xiangyu,Huang Rong,2021) The position of aesthetic education in the comprehensive development of education in schools has been established, and music education in schools has achieved healthy development. Actively carry out extracurricular music activities, and the mass singing activities are very active. On the other hand, due to the weak foundation of music education in China and the uneven development of music education in various regions, there are inevitably many problems. (Shi Linye,2017) In terms of learning from the experience of the Soviet Union, the phenomenon of completely following the educational experience of the Soviet Union and ignoring the national conditions of our country at that time, and deviating from the actual teaching in terms of teaching syllabus, teaching content, teaching methods, etc. After the 1980s, school music education made certain progress in creating a school music education system with Chinese characteristics based on China's national conditions, which is reflected in the reform of school music education regulations, teaching management, teaching modes and methods, music textbooks, and other aspects. (Zheng Jinyang,2019) After the mid-1980s, education committees in various provinces and cities across the country successively established institutions in charge of school art education, equipped with full-time art education management cadres and music teaching and research personnel, which formed a top-down music education management network for school music education in various provinces and regions. Since the 1990s, school music education in China has developed rapidly, and there has been an unprecedented prosperity in school music education. (Li Jiao,Meng Zhuo,2023) The important position of music education in the comprehensive development of school education has been established.

Since the 21st century, exam oriented education has gradually developed towards quality education, and in the changing educational concepts, various aspects of Chinese and Western music education will gradually be further integrated. Music education is an important way and content of implementing aesthetic education, and an organic component of quality education. In the 21st century, China's music education will undergo a series of changes in educational concepts, educational ideas, educational goals, curriculum structure and textbooks, educational management methods, educational teaching methods and techniques, and examination and evaluation systems. (Li Xiangyu,Huang Rong,2021) Change the way music knowledge and skills are learned, and incorporate them into vivid and concrete music practice activities to make students interested in learning. The reform of basic education has also promoted the transformation of music education, and the situation of music teaching has undergone earth shaking changes. People's interest in learning music has increased, music courses have become more standardized and systematic, and music facilities and equipment have gradually been improved. Fully utilize the developed multimedia music computer software for classroom music teaching and improve teaching effectiveness.

ISSUES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MUSIC EDUCATION.

Improve the Musical aesthetic ability of students through the study of music appreciation courses in music education, plays a very important role in colleges and universities education, has injected new vitality for the development of our country's education, so as to develop in the all-round way. In order to promote students' mastery of Musical aesthetic ability, the music appreciation course set up by colleges and universities is a teaching activity that touches students' emotional understanding and ideological cognition, so as to realize the ideal music teaching activity. At present, there are some problems in the field of music education in our country, such as the imperfect teaching system, the unscientific theory curriculum and the lack of music practice. (Yanfei Li, 2023) From the current teaching situation of music appreciation course in colleges and universities, the teaching mode adopted in it is relatively simple, and it fails to make full use of new media and intelligent teaching methods. (Yin Wang, 2022) This leads to the music teaching system in colleges and universities, and directly affects the quality of music appreciation teaching ability in colleges and universities. Music appreciation courses need to reform new media technology and smart teaching tools in a timely manner, and comprehensively improve the effectiveness of students' cultivation of Musical aesthetic ability by reconstructing music teaching space.

In the course of music appreciation in universities, there is a lack of deep integration between theoretical teaching and practical teaching, especially the lack of perfect practical application scenarios. This kind of teaching directly affects the students' understanding and cognition of relevant music theories, and can not apply the learned music theory knowledge to music appreciation. (Valentyna, Larysa, Anatoliy,2020) In the process of music education in universities, the teaching of music courses also

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faces the phenomenon that students' own musical technical level is different. In the course of curriculum development, many schools do not pay attention to the problem of different students' basic level, often in the teaching process of teaching content, for different students, whether they can improve their ability level, there is a certain difference in the impact.

The musical aesthetic ability of students contributes to the cultivation of human intelligence and healthy natural attributes, helps to cultivate morality, and improves the efficiency of human social attributes. Music learning motivation can be divided into intrinsic music learning motivation and extrinsic music learning motivation. Intrinsic music learning motivation refers to the strong learning interest that inspires the learning of music during the learning process, and interest is transformed into intrinsic motivation. (Chris Orange, 2022) For example, students' thirst for knowledge about music, interest in learning, and desire to improve and enhance their abilities will motivate students to take the initiative to learn. The extrinsic motivation of music learning refers to the motivation of music learning in order to achieve a certain goal under the action of some external factors. (Elisabeth & Paul, 2019) For example, some students study hard in order to get rewards or avoid punishment from teachers or parents, and their motivation to engage in learning activities is not in the learning task itself, but outside the learning activities.

American educational psychologist Ausubel believes that in the school situation, students' learning motivation can be analyzed from three aspects: cognitive drive, self-improvement drive and auxiliary drive: cognitive drive is a desire or motivation to meet cognitive needs and understand and understand the learning task itself. Self-improvement drive is a desire or motivation to improve one's status, gain respect, and gain an advantage in a peer group. Accessory drive is a desire or need for an individual to do a good job in order to maintain the approval or approval of elders. (Li Xiying, Xiong Jianping, 2015). From this point of view, learning motivation is of great significance to students' learning, which directly restricts students' learning enthusiasm.

THREE ASPECTS OF MUSICAL AESTHETIC ABILITY

i. Music Literacy

In the process of listening, the listener does not regard the sound heard as some isolated, unrelated and meaningless simple sound, but perceives it as an artistic complex with expressive significance. (Allison Skerrett, 2018) In the appreciation of music, we must first have the ability to distinguish the basic elements of music such as pitch, rhythm, strength, timbre, etc. In addition, according to the law of music, these elements should be synthesized into a holistic musical structure such as theme, melody, paragraph, movement, and even into a complete piece of music, which is a complete acoustic perception. Only with this kind of sound perception can we achieve the appreciation of the beauty of music form, which is not only the perception of pleasant music sound and ingenious music form, but also the premise and basis of the whole music appreciation. (Allison Skerrett, 2018) Because what people come into direct contact with from music is not anything else, but the musical sound and its structural form. This is the direct and necessary premise of music appreciation, and all the content and performance of music must be expressed through the music sound. Professor Guo Shengjian also said, "If you do not master the most basic music knowledge and skills in the acquired education, then a person may only hear the sound rather than music, he will be difficult to carry out a higher level of music appreciation activities, sensitive music ear is difficult to generate." (Guo Shengjian, 1992)

From the perspective of aesthetic psychology, aesthetic perception is a general term of aesthetic feeling and perception. When we feel a certain emotional experience when we hear the sound of music, the appreciator takes the sense as the starting point, the starting point and basis of individual aesthetic experience. Acute perception is most readily acquired in the observation of music, which is the most active, complex, orderly and diverse unity in art. (Sirke, Eva. et al, 2012) Therefore, consciously guiding students to know what kind of form is unique to music has become an important way to cultivate their aesthetic sensibility.

ii. Music Appreciation

Music needs not only to be heard with the ear, but also to be felt with the heart, to feel and appreciate the melody that puts each note together, to feel the true emotion expressed in the melody. The ability to appreciate music is also called "music appreciation ability". (William, Nicolas J, Elizabeth, 2023) Therefore, music appreciation is not only the understanding of music lyrics, but also the experience and appreciation of music emotions. Many people can find a sense of belonging in music, and can find the spiritual world missing in real life in music.

While learning relevant knowledge, students can deepen their understanding of the deep beauty of music works, improve their aesthetic ability of music, and make their evaluation of music works more convincing, so that their aesthetic ability can develop in

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a healthier direction. In music appreciation education, it is necessary to cultivate students' aesthetic ability of music and guide students to have correct cognitive ability and feeling ability of music. (William, Nicolas J, Elizabeth, 2023) Ultimately, let the students have a certain foundation and level of appreciation and understanding of the nature of music.

iii. Music Performance

Music performance is the process in which musicians interpret musical works, and musical expressiveness is an important ability for musicians to convey the emotions and artistic conception of the works to the audience during the performance process. (Ashurov Marufjon Abdumutalibovich, 2021) The level of musical expression directly affects the artistic effect of musical works and the audience's feelings. Musical expressiveness involves many aspects, including sound and how the performer uses the level, intensity, rhythm, etc. of the sound to express the change of tone of the work. (Chris Orange, 2022) In music teaching, teachers should guide students to express themselves by means of songs, rhythms, images, etc. In terms of the nature of music, teachers can promote students' spatial awareness and deepen students' understanding, grasp and perception of the meaning of songs with the help of vocal rhythm.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC AESTHETIC ABILITY

Aesthetic education is the core part of music education. Liu Yilan (2019) believes that it can help students establish correct aesthetics and aesthetic taste, and enhance students' interest in learning music. (Liu Yilan, 2019) It can effectively improve students' aesthetic values and aesthetic ability, and shape students' correct values. Aesthetic ability is also a necessary skill for everyone in social activities. Scholar Dan Lili (2019) proposed that strengthening the cultivation of students' musical aesthetic ability in quality education in schools is conducive to the improvement of students' aesthetic level and the formation of students' correct values. (Dan Lili, 2019) Although the methods and angles of cultivating students' aesthetic ability of music are different, most scholars believe that the cultivation of students' aesthetic ability of music plays an irreplaceable role. In the process, students can not only master music knowledge, increase imagination and creativity, but also let students feel and understand beauty, improve aesthetic level, improve emotional moral values, and develop healthy and positive aesthetic taste.

REFLECTION ON IMPROVING MUSIC AESTHETIC ABILITY

First of all, music teachers should consider the learning needs of students in the process of education, and must not blindly instill their own ideas to students, otherwise it will hinder the improvement of students' appreciation. Teachers can help students with weak foundations in music knowledge start with basic knowledge, laying a solid foundation for improving their music appreciation in the future. (Dengerink J., Lunenberg M., 2020) For students with a certain foundation in music, teachers should start with the melody of the music, allowing them to be exposed to some deeper content, and thereby enhance their music appreciation during the learning process. Secondly, in the actual teaching process, teachers should combine the music itself with the music context for teaching, because this not only allows students to better appreciate the music, but also allows students to perceive the emotions reflected in the music through real images, thereby better understanding the music works and improving music appreciation.

Every excellent musical work comes from different countries, different ages and different social environments. The creation background is the basis for shaping the content and style of music. Teachers should not only cultivate students' appreciation ability from the music content, but also allow students to collect the creation background of music works through the Internet and books, and guide students to understand the connotation of music works from the background. (Sirke, Eva. et al., 2012) Teachers can also inspire students by using music works of the same theme but of different eras, so that students can feel the music creators' understanding of the same emotion or the same story in different styles.

Each student has a different perception of music. The same teaching model may not necessarily meet the needs of all students. This is especially true of the appreciation of musical works. The more artistic the curriculum, the more teachers need to carefully design the teaching content. Teachers can organize students to perform in their own way through the content or emotions of music works, and students who watch can also learn to find emotional expressions that are suitable for the music works in different interpretive atmospheres. (Sirke, Eva. et al., 2012). For example, teachers can use stage plays to group students to perform the same music story, or use the same music piece as background music to perform different situations. Each group of students will have different understandings and experiences of the same musical work, and experience the diversity of art through situational

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interpretation, enhancing their ability to appreciate music. This is also a teaching model that is in line with the taste of contemporary university students.

CONCLUSION

In the process of music learning, teachers' teaching methods and experience not only affect students' learning outcomes in musical aesthetic ability. At the same time, as the main body of music teaching process, students also have their own learning purpose and motivation in learning music appreciation. Therefore, students have a certain degree of autonomy, which will also have an impact on students' Musical aesthetic ability. In the era of all-round education, in order to fully combine the teaching of music theory and practice appreciation in universities, teachers need to focus on the theme of music teaching, pay attention to students' music literacy and music expression through multi-dimensional teaching goals, so that students can truly enter the music class and master the musical aesthetic ability easily and pleasantly.

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