

Research on the Development Characteristics and Current Situation of Chinese Piano Music Culture

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Abstract:

To explore what is characteristic of China's development in piano music in the present era, This paper takes piano music in China as the object of study. It utilizes the literature research method to understand the history of the development of piano music in China, to grasp the current situation of piano music in China, and to think about what strategies will be used to innovate in the future. The research results show that since the piano was introduced to China, piano music has developed in China, and now it has become an important part of the world's piano culture and art. However, peering at the problems behind its current situation, piano music still has great room for development in China. This paper hopes to provide a theoretical and practical reference for the development of Chinese music by revealing the unique artistic charm and cultural significance of Chinese piano music culture.

Keywords: Piano Music; history and development; chinese music culture; innovation.

1. Introduction

Throughout the five thousand years of the history of Chinese national culture, Chinese music culture has always possessed its unique national style and characteristics. As one of the representative instruments of Western music, the emergence of the piano in China has greatly enriched Chinese music culture, reflecting the collision and fusion of Chinese and Western music cultures. Chinese piano music is not only an important part of Chinese music culture, but also an essential part of the world's music culture. Under the circumstance that China's economic development level is constantly improving and people's living standards are getting higher and higher

quality, the piano is gradually going from the upper society to the folk, and the popularity of piano music is getting higher and higher. The group of Chinese pianists is slowly getting bigger and bigger, making new achievements in the international arena, demonstrating the piano level of Chinese musicians and the unique charm of Chinese piano music, and thus Chinese piano music is gradually showing the trend of internationalization and diversification.

However, in the process of Chinese piano music development, because of the lack of attention to the Chinese culture, piano education technology is not mature, etc., can not avoid encountering some developmental difficulties. Based on this, this paper elaborates

rates on Chinese piano music culture from the overview of the historical development of Chinese piano music culture and its development status quo and innovation strategy, to have a more comprehensive understanding of the Diversity of Chinese music culture and the tortuous course of change, and to deeply understand the importance of the inheritance and innovation of China's unique music culture, to provide a more solid theoretical basis for the subsequent development of Chinese music and a richer practical experience. The program will provide a thicker theoretical foundation and richer practice for the subsequent development of Chinese music.

2. Overview of the Historical Development of Chinese Piano Music Culture

2.1 The Budding Stage of Artistic Creation

The history of piano music in China can be traced back to the late Ming Dynasty when the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci brought the strummed ancient piano to China. However, as a foreign musical instrument, it was played in the court and was an "aristocratic musical instrument". The general public did not have the opportunity to learn about this new musical instrument, so it did not have a great impact on the general public.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, to promote Christianity and other Western cultures, music as part of the culture, the piano and other Western musical instruments began to be imported into China. With its unique sound and playing style, the piano began to spread widely in China in the early 20th century under the impetus of the "School Music Song" movement. Under the influence of this strong Western musical and cultural trend, several musical societies appeared in Beijing and Shanghai, and more systematic and formalized piano courses were offered in higher education institutions. In 1927, the National Conservatory of Music-the predecessor of today's Shanghai Conservatory of Music-was built as the first school of higher music education in China [1], employing Chinese and foreign piano teachers such as Chaharov and training the earliest batch of Chinese pianists such as Ding Shande and Wu Leyi [2]. A group of patriotic and enthusiastic musicians such as Li Shutong, Wang Guangqi, Shen Xinguang, and Xiao Youmei set off a vigorous new music movement. Chinese musicians soon began to challenge the integration of traditional Chinese musical elements into Western piano culture, attempting to create piano music with Chinese characteristics.

Zhao Yuanren, as one of the representative figures of this period, composed and arranged an organ piece "Flower

Eight Panels and Xiangjiang River Waves" in 1913 when he was studying in the U.S.A. The piece was derived from Chinese folk music tunes and was publicly performed at an organ recital at Cornell University in 1914, which represented the beginning of the enlightenment of China's keyboard music creation. In 1915, he composed "Peace March", the first Chinese piano music composition. Although it is said that the compositions at this time still lacked distinctive Chinese characteristics, after all, Chinese piano music is still in the immature stage of exploration, and some unsatisfactory situations will inevitably occur [1]. In any case, at this time, Chinese piano music had begun to sprout.

2.2 Growing Period of Artistic Creation

In the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese piano music entered a new phase. During this period, many Russian pianists and piano educators came to China and helped to train many Chinese piano musicians. Chinese musicians continued to combine Chinese and Western cultures in their compositions, adhering to the idea of "using the West for China". In 1934, in a competition organized by the Russian-American pianist Zilpin, He Luting's "Piccolo for Shepherd Boys" marked the beginning of a new historical period in Chinese piano music creation, and can be considered an important milestone in the history of Chinese piano music. He used the European classical polyphonic writing principle, but the specific counterpoint relationship and harmony were composed in the style of Chinese music [1]. This piece also became a model of the combination of Chinese and Western music, and such a successful creation also had a profound influence on later Chinese piano works. In addition, Qu Huai's "Flower Drums" was composed with the folk music "Fengyang Flower Drums" and "Jasmine Flowers" as its theme, which successfully expressed the local flavor of China with the piano [3].

Music creation at this time was also closely related to the dramatic changes and turmoil in Chinese society. Due to the prevalence of nationalism, musicians began to express their patriotic feelings and promote the spirit of the Chinese nation in piano music under the call of the times. For example, in 1945, Ding Shande composed the piano suite Spring Journey, which deeply expresses the Chinese people's hope for victory of the war of resistance [2].

2.3 Period of Development of Artistic Creation

After the founding of New China, along with the development of the whole of China, China's piano music career has also developed rapidly. The state began to emphasize music education and vigorously promoted piano education. Many music colleges set up piano majors to cultivate

more piano talents. Influenced by the policy of “a hundred schools of thought contend and a hundred flowers blossom”, composers actively collected folk music from all over the world created a batch of piano music with local styles, and tried to compose piano variations on the theme of Chinese folk songs, and “Variations” is one of the most representative pieces, which is also a classic work of pianist Liu Zhuang. Taking the beautiful Yimeng Mountain ditty as the theme, the nine variations keep developing and combining, showing a picture scroll full of artistry and ethnicity [1].

In addition to a greater variety of themes, the composer’s technique has also improved. They used rich weaves and varied rhythmic patterns, tried to use counterpoint and contrast, and explored the nationalization of harmony. The needs of a wider audience were met [3].

During the Cultural Revolution, the piano, as one of the representative instruments of the West, was branded as “bourgeois music”, which led to the persecution of many piano musicians and the cessation of their compositions and performances, and China’s piano music suffered a heavy blow, with pianists spontaneously adapting revolutionary songs and “bourgeois music”. Pianists spontaneously adapted revolutionary songs and “model operas” to seek opportunities for the survival and development of piano music. Yin Chengzong and a few other composers adapted China’s first piano concerto, the Yellow River, from the Yellow River Cantata. Later on, the composers began to imitate the performance characteristics of national instruments and attempted to make “Two Fountains Reflecting the Moon”, “A hundred Birds Praying to the Phoenix”, “Chasing the Moon with Colored Clouds”, and other works exploring the nationalization of harmony, which allowed the further development of Chinese piano music [2].

2.4 Boom Period in Artistic Creation

In the middle and late 20th century, China entered a period of reform and opening up, the economy developed rapidly, and people’s living standards improved greatly, more and more families began to pay attention to their children’s music education. At the same time, with the opening of China’s doors, internationally renowned pianists came to perform in China. Chinese musicians also made efforts to bring their music into line with the international scene, and exchanged ideas with foreign composers, to bring Chinese piano music to the world stage, and China’s piano music entered a stage of diversified development from monolithic to diversified. Yin Chengzong’s piano accompaniment piece “The Tale of Red Lanterns” is also one of the representative works, combining traditional

Chinese opera elements with piano music [4]. Works such as Wang Lisan’s “Tashan Collection” began to explore the approach of tuneless music creation, and modern works such as the piano suite “Reminiscence” and “Prelude and Fugue” appeared one after another, all of which reflected the new exploration and attempts to break through the traditional harmony, tonality, and rhythm of Chinese piano music creation at that time [2].

After entering the 21st century, China’s piano program continued to flourish. As the level of education and cultural needs of the people increased, piano education became more widely popular in China. Many Chinese pianists began to win prizes in international competitions, and as a result, the Chinese piano began to be recognized internationally. Chinese piano music has contributed to the world’s piano music culture with its own “Chinese program”. Until now, the development of Chinese piano music has become more and more prosperous in achievements. The more and more huge works library shows us the colorful picture scroll of the development of modern Chinese piano music.

3. The Current Situation of Chinese Piano Music and Innovative Strategies

Chinese piano music is inherited from European piano music and Chinese national music tradition and continues to move forward, its development prospects and research prospects have been optimistic today, Chinese piano music still occupies a very important position in the history of Chinese music, and its most notable feature is that it can reflect the people’s strong desire for music and art.

With the healthy development of Chinese piano music, the social influence of Chinese piano music has become more and more prominent, especially the creation and performance of piano works, which has now become an unavoidable focus of piano music culture. Throughout the development of piano music culture, Chinese piano music has attracted more and more people’s attention and interest. Based on the creation, performance, research, and teaching of Chinese piano music in recent years, we put forward immature views on the future development of Chinese piano music for discussion and reference.

As the material civilization level of the society increases, the spiritual civilization should also be developed accordingly. At the present stage, the space for piano music development is broader, and piano music creation is more innovative and diversified, and a batch of excellent musicians have emerged so that China’s piano music works are gradually known to the world.

3.1 Current Situation

Chinese piano music in the context of the new era has begun to form its unique style and is gradually maturing. Chinese piano musicians have gradually changed from borrowing techniques from Western pianists to exploring the development path of unique Chinese music with national characteristics. The musicians changed the original blind and lagging mode of learning, and combined the unique melodies and rhythms of traditional Chinese music with the harmonic effects and different patterns of the West, distinguishing Chinese piano music from Western piano music, injecting new vitality into the development of Chinese piano music, and greatly enriching the connotation of Chinese music [5].

However, there are some problems in the exchange and collision between Chinese piano music and world music. Fewer works that can truly integrate Chinese music and culture into piano music, and it is more mainstream to imitate Western works, so how to better present the characteristics of Chinese piano music and how to make Chinese piano music and world music better connect and exchange are all the focuses of industry insiders' attention nowadays [6].

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Emphasize Chinese National Music Culture

Chinese piano music, as a new music content in modern times, lacks theoretical and technical support compared to the West, especially in the compatibility of national styles and physical characteristics of the piano itself, such as timbre, the contradiction is becoming more and more prominent. Looking at the promotion and appreciation of piano music in China and the teaching and performance of piano music, foreign music works are still given priority in teaching, and the number of studies and performances of Chinese works is much less than the number of Western classical piano works. The selection is also limited to the old works with higher popularity and more research, such as "Sunset Pipe and Drum" and "Piccolo for Shepherd Boys" [7]. Until now, there have been no Chinese piano composers and piano music works that have influenced the world. The influence of Chinese piano music in the world is still far from enough, and the "Chinese style" is still difficult to be understood and appreciated by the international music world [8].

This shows that people are not paying enough attention to their own music culture. Therefore, while learning western piano music, we should also vigorously promote Chinese piano music, expand the scope of application of Chinese piano music, so that more people can appreciate, learn,

and play Chinese music, thus feeling the national culture contained in the music, enhancing the national pride of the masses, correctly recognizing the styles of Chinese piano music, promoting the combination of exchanges between different cultures, and promoting the innovation and development of China's piano music. Innovation and development of China's piano music.

3.2.2 Optimize the Piano Education System and Cultivate Musical Talents

Music culture education is an important way to integrate traditional music culture and piano music. Nowadays, the teaching mode, on the one hand, is still centered on Western music, and students study mostly Western works and master the Western tuning and style, but they have less contact with Chinese works, and students have no opportunity to contact more Chinese piano music. On the other hand, more competitions emphasize the technicality and accuracy of the works themselves, so teachers also pay more attention to improving the professional skills of playing the works when instructing, and the teaching is more mechanized and lacks the in-depth analysis of the works and the cultivation of the students' mood of the piano music [9], and the students tend to ignore the emotional expression and cultural connotation of the works. If students want to play Chinese works, it is always difficult for them to empathize with such works, resulting in easy limitations when playing, which is not conducive to the long-term development of modern piano music [7].

Therefore, when carrying out piano music cultural education, on the one hand, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the Chinese piano music discipline team, and actively cultivate and recruit a group of talents with hard professional knowledge and strong professional level. At the same time to broaden the research subject of Chinese piano music, more related content academic and research, for the development of Chinese piano music culture to lay a theoretical and practical foundation [10]; on the other hand, to help students fully grasp the knowledge and skills of piano works performance, teachers need to work on the connotation of the works of more in-depth analysis, so that students can learn to appreciate the traditional music and culture, and to encourage students to the combination of Chinese and Western music and culture, to promote the sustainable development of the sustainable development of piano music culture.

3.2.3 Developing Creative Techniques

The piano originated in Italy, and although the piano was introduced to China with relevant playing techniques and compositional methods, it was inevitably limited in the creation of Chinese piano music because of the lack

of understanding of Western musical ideas at that time. Compared with Western countries, Chinese piano music creation started later, so there are still many deficiencies. Therefore, combining piano composition skills with modern Chinese thinking can create music with higher acceptance.

Unlike polyphonic music, which emphasizes highlighting the main body, polyphonic music is more popular in terms of compositional skills, and it is easier for the audience to have a strong sense of immersion and increase their appreciation and understanding of the music. By focusing on the main key music, it is possible to shorten the gap with other countries' piano music creation in a shorter time [7].

4. Conclusion

To summarize, Chinese piano music is an important part of the world's piano culture and art, and the two are inter-related and can influence each other. Nowadays, although Chinese piano music is gradually maturing, there are still some problems that need to be solved and improved by people's joint efforts. For example, can composers actively create Chinese piano music? Can piano teachers incorporate more instruction and understanding of Chinese works into their education? Or from the perspective of Western music and world music, can Chinese musicians publicize Chinese music culture in the international arena, thus encouraging more Western composers to learn Chinese folk music and create new music?

In short, whether Chinese piano music can be recognized by the world piano music industry and become a genre in

the future requires the support and efforts of various people in the piano industry. Only by focusing on the integration of national culture and music, strengthening cultural inheritance, and insisting on innovation, can China's modern piano music have a greater space for development.

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