

Guzheng Teaching Based on the Orff Approach

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Abstract:

This paper primarily studies the application of the Orff Approach in music class and integrates its basic concepts and methods into Guzheng teaching. The characteristics of the Orff music method emphasize students' active participation and creative expression. Music can cultivate students' musical abilities as well as their intellectual, emotional, social, and other developmental aspects. Influenced by traditional teaching models, many Guzheng instructors tend to focus too heavily on skills, neglecting the essential nature of rhythm and the actual needs of students, which ultimately affects teaching outcomes. Therefore, integrating the Orff Approach into Guzheng class may help improve the current situation.

Keywords: Orff Approach, Guzheng teaching, rhythm, music.

1. Introduction

The Orff Approach emphasizes the combination of music with other art forms and highlights the critical role of music in the overall development of students. [1] Although the Orff Approach has been widely applied in music classrooms, its implementation and research in the teaching of traditional Chinese musical instruments, especially Guzheng, could be improved. Researchers such as Zhang Yue, Li Huicong, Lu Zixuan, and Zhang Lisha have mainly studied the application of the Orff education method in Guzheng teaching [1, 2, 3, 4]. Additionally, Qie Yue, Wang Xinjie, and Yang Zitong have surveyed the application of Orff training in the context of general music classrooms [5, 6, 7].

Based on this research context, this paper aims to challenge the traditional teaching methods used in Guzheng instruction and explore the application of Orff training in Guzheng classrooms. Drawing on

a 2022 study about the application of the Orff Approach in junior high school music classes [5], this paper organizes the concepts related to Guzheng teaching within the Orff framework. After summarizing the rhythm training aspects of Guzheng instruction, the author presents insights into the combination of the Orff Approach with Guzheng teaching.

2. An Essential Idea in Orff Approach

2.1 About the Orff Approach

The Orff Approach is a music teaching method created by Karl Orff that emphasizes "learning music through experience." Participants' imagination and creativity are stimulated through rhythm, singing, recitation, and instrumental ensemble [6]. This approach underscores the integration of music with

other art forms and highlights the vital role of music in the overall development of students, as it not only cultivates their musical abilities but also promotes their intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

2.2 The Characteristics of Orff Approach

2.2.1 Improvisation

Improvisation is a core feature of the Orff Approach. It aims to break the constraints of traditional education and provide students with a broad platform to stimulate their imagination and creativity. Through improvisational music creation, students can enhance their interest in learning, achieving the goal of self-expression and musical integration. However, improvisation is not arbitrary; when implementing this teaching method, educators should create an environment for students to explore while setting specific learning requirements and goals. Orff emphasized that teachers should actively guide students to engage in deep thinking during music teaching activities, encouraging divergent thinking and the use of imagination rather than limiting them to the mechanical acquisition of music knowledge and skills.

2.2.2 Comprehensiveness

2.2.2 .1 Integration with Other Art Forms

The Orff Approach is not confined to music alone but integrates various art forms, including dance, language, drama, and visual arts. In teaching, students learn music knowledge and skills while also expressing and interpreting music through dance, dramatic performances, painting, and other means.

2.2.2 .2 A Variety of Teaching Methods

The Orff Approach employs diverse instructional strategies to engage students' interest and love for music. These strategies include rhythmic games, instrumental ensembles, and dramatic performances, each serving a unique role. Together, they form a cohesive and dynamic music-learning system.

2.2.2 .3 Comprehensive Improvement of Knowledge and Ability

The Orff Approach emphasizes not only students' mastery of music knowledge and skills but also the improvement of their comprehensive qualities, such as musical sensitivity, appreciation, expression, and creativity. Through participation in various activities, students can learn basic music knowledge and skills while developing a strong team spirit and collective consciousness.

2.2.3 Indigenization

Indigenization refers to advocating for the combination of

foreign elements with the actual conditions of a country, nation, or region to create innovative integrations, absorption, and adaptations that result in a new model with distinct regional characteristics. In the process of Chinese indigenization, the Orff Approach emphasizes integrating elements of traditional Chinese music, dance, and other cultural forms into the curriculum, making the course content more locally relevant [6]. This concept not only addresses local cultural needs but also retains the original connotation of music education. The Orff Approach emphasizes that teachers should closely integrate local languages (including dialects) with musical elements during instruction. By using nursery rhymes and folk songs as foundations, educators can continuously explore and innovate teaching content and methods to promote the localization of music education.

2.2.4 Primordial Nature

Original music is not simply music; it is closely combined with various elements such as movement, dance, and language [6]. This comprehensive form of music makes music learning more lively and engaging, aligning more closely with natural human expression. Original music emphasizes active participation; individuals should engage with the music themselves rather than merely listen. This active participation transforms music learning into an experiential process that increases learners' interest and motivation. Original music is rooted in nature and everyday life; it is a pure form of music that does not require complex structures and is accessible for everyone to learn and experience. The simplicity and participatory nature of original music make it well-suited for students, helping them harness their imagination and creativity while promoting their physical and mental well-being.

3. Rhythm Training in Guzheng Teaching

Zhang Lisha suggested that in collective Guzheng instruction, students could sing music and keep time using solfeggio; teachers could utilize the Orff method to help students better internalize rhythm, facilitating the transition from "reading rhythm" to "playing rhythm." [4] Rhythm training typically focuses on even rhythms, which can be practiced using techniques like large pinches, hooks, and wedges. During group lessons, students should practice rhythmic patterns. Orff training can be employed to create a dynamic learning atmosphere, incorporating various competitions to modify rhythms, thus enhancing students' rhythm skills, endurance, and reaction times, while also improving their interest and avoiding the monotony often associated with rhythmic exercises. In ensemble teaching,

students first learn the rhythm before memorizing the melody, progressing to learn both rhythm and melody as the vocal parts become more complex. It's essential to focus on the overall rhythm to create a strong impression when playing in unison.

Long Ni proposed integrating rhythmic training into the etudes found in the third and fourth parts of the **Guzheng Performance Guide**, published by Mr. Zhang Gong in 1989. This guide incorporates varied rhythmic transformations that enhance players' speed and strength [8]. Zhao Yi's **65 Etudes for Guzheng** is divided into two categories: unique etudes featuring various complex rhythmic patterns, legato passages, two-handed finger sequences, and staccato techniques; and the first ensemble etude [8]. Long Ni argues that etude creation should emphasize musical performance, moving beyond mere rhythmic patterns, arpeggios, or syllables. Much like composing music, this approach can enhance performers' skills and cultivate their musical sensitivity. The process of playing etudes should be gradual, progressing from slow to fast tempos. Rushing to achieve speed may compromise rhythm and other aspects of performance, leading to challenges when playing music in the future.

Yang Zitong asserted that Guzheng group classes should emphasize skills while cultivating students' accurate sense of rhythm and intonation. This includes developing their musical expression and understanding, as well as continuously improving their basic theoretical knowledge and grasp of dynamics, tempo, and technique [7]. Rhythm is a fundamental aspect of music and poses significant challenges for beginners. Students must first learn to distinguish beats, incorporate them into speech, and utilize dynamics to convey rhythm. In rhythm training, the engaging nature of the Orff approach can deepen students' understanding, while movement and sound reinforce memory. Special rhythmic exercises can be implemented alongside clapping or tapping.

4. Guzheng Teaching Based on the Orff Approach

4.1 Teaching Philosophy

In traditional teaching models, instructors primarily focus on explaining and demonstrating techniques, emphasizing fingering and playing skills. This approach often follows a pattern of explanation, demonstration, and student imitation, resulting in a monotonous learning experience that fails to engage students' interest and does not foster emotional, attitudinal, or value-based development. Furthermore, this method can lead to superficial learning, where

students lack a deep understanding of Guzheng artistry. Quality education advocates a "student-centered, teacher-guided" approach, which prioritizes students' active roles in the classroom and encourages teachers to facilitate student initiative and independent learning.

In Guzheng teaching based on the Orff method, teachers should act as guides, emphasizing heuristic teaching and encouraging students to acquire knowledge through inquiry, collaboration, and comprehensive learning experiences. Educators can integrate rhythm training and music composition with language and movement, or combine traditional performances with games. Words, movements, and instruments can be synchronized for collaborative performances. This teaching approach can stimulate diverse learning potentials, enhance students' enthusiasm, and help educators identify students' strengths and advantages.

The Orff Approach emphasizes the holistic development of students, not only focusing on musical skill training but also enhancing students' musical literacy, aesthetic ability, creativity, and teamwork. Guzheng instruction grounded in the Orff approach allows students to master playing techniques while also deepening their musical understanding, expression, and compositional skills. In the classroom, opportunities for free creation and improvisation can stimulate students' creativity and imagination, allowing them to express their individuality in performance. Additionally, ensemble playing fosters students' sense of group consciousness and overall perceptual abilities. Guided by the "self-participation" concept in Orff Approach, teachers can design diverse activities tailored to students' individual differences, emphasize artistic experiences, and encourage active participation.

4.2 Bluff Training and Guzheng Rhythm Teaching

Orff's teaching method asserts that music education should not exist in isolation but should be integrated with other art forms, such as language and movement, to provide students with a more comprehensive musical experience. In Guzheng rhythm training based on bluff training, the focus is on allowing students to experience rhythm as a musical element. At the outset of instruction, teachers can select simple rhythms composed of quarter notes or half notes for demonstration. Teachers guide students to imitate these rhythms while incorporating various movements, such as hand clapping and foot stamping. As the instruction progresses, teachers can gradually increase the complexity of rhythm patterns or repeat exercises for certain rhythms multiple times.

Bluff training can create rhythmic sounds through body

movements, enabling students to intuitively feel the rhythm and melody of the music, thereby enhancing their understanding and appreciation of Guzheng music. A solid sense of rhythm is essential for successful Guzheng performance. Bluff training helps students establish a strong rhythmic foundation, improving their accuracy and fluency when playing. This engaging and lively training style captures students' attention and ignites their enthusiasm for learning Guzheng, making the learning process more proactive. Guzheng performance requires coordinated movement throughout the body; through body movements aligned with musical rhythms, bluff training helps develop students' physical coordination skills, laying a solid foundation for effective Guzheng performance.

5. Conclusion

The development of music education should extend beyond teaching materials and textbooks; it should also embrace flexible teaching methodologies. Educators must pay attention to students' opportunities for free exploration in music classes and recognize the importance of the classroom as a bridge in the music teaching process, returning to the fundamental principles of music education. This paper combines the Orff teaching method with Guzheng instruction by outlining key concepts in Orff Approach and rhythm training in Guzheng teaching. This integration breaks through the traditional Guzheng teach-

ing model, fostering greater student enthusiasm and facilitating well-rounded development in students.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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