

# Development and Reflect on the Course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in College Music Education

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**Abstract:** This passage mainly analyzes the Course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in college music education, discusses the current status of its development in colleges and provides some related suggestions.

**Keywords:** Colleges; Music education; Piano Improvisational Accompaniment

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## 1 Introduction

Piano Improvisational Accompaniment is an applicable and comprehensive course in music education. It is a comprehensive art that integrates skills of piano performance, musical knowledge, theories of harmony and analysis on the forms. Meanwhile, Piano Improvisational Accompaniment is practical, instant and flexible. It plays a very key role in both classroom music teaching and extra-curricular music activities. It is a compulsory course in China's college music education, and it is also an important basic training and one of the most practical courses for music teachers. Piano Improvisational Accompaniment includes certain harmony and texture according to the established melody of the song without writing a specific musical text. It is used to support and enrich the melody and strengthen the integrity and artistry. Piano improvisational accompanists need to exert their skills of playing the piano, vocal skills on the keyboard, knowledge of composition theory and their

understanding as well as practical experience. The development of this course in China is not long-term, and there are also various problems in the practical teaching, including systematically clear setting and teaching systems of this course. Therefore, continuous improvement of the course setting and optimization of the teaching system are deserved.

## 2 The Status quo of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in College Music Education

The course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment was formally integrated into the music teaching system in China's universities in the 1980s. Through continuous development and exploration for more than 30 years, some achievements have been made. With the development of society and the continuous reform of the college educational system, theoretical research in music has made progress; people have paid more and more attention to music, and the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment has gradually become the focus and a compulsory course in college music education, and even some schools have taken it as a professional subject for students. However, some schools still do not pay enough attention to this course, and some teachers and students still consider it as a supplementary skill. Some teachers and students believe that in playing the piano, improvisational accompaniment does not matter, resulting in students' insufficient ability to practice piano improvisation. Therefore, in college music teaching, related content about piano improvisation accompaniment cannot be developed in a short time. At present, there are

still some problems in the practical teaching of piano improvisation in colleges, for example, the traditional teaching form is rigid and related professional teaching materials are not authoritative and comprehensive. So, it is necessary to strengthen teachers' and students' attention to piano improvisation.

## **2.1 Unclear Status of the Course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in colleges**

Due to the impact of the traditional piano teaching, students and teachers regard Piano Improvisational Accompaniment as a supplementary course, without giving enough attention. It is considered that piano improvisation is optional. In addition, there is not much demand for piano improvisation. This is also a reason for teachers and students to pay less attention to piano improvisation. However, with the rapid development of society and the improvement of people's understanding of music, Piano Improvisational Accompaniment has received increasing attention. Meanwhile, it is a combination of multiple courses in the field of music as well as a comprehensive art of practical skills. So, in music education, it is necessary to increase the emphasis on the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment, which will promote teachers and students to have a deeper understanding of it, and thus improve the status of piano improvisation in music.

## **2.2 Teaching Situation and Teachers of the Course of Piano Improvisation in Colleges**

### **2.2.1 Lack of professional teachers for the Course of Piano Improvisation**

Piano Improvisational Accompaniment requires the learners to combine the melody, rhythm, and tempo of the song with an applicable course for understanding. So the basic knowledge of music, musical theories and skills for piano performance become demanding. At present, in China's music colleges, most teachers who teach Piano Improvisational Accompaniment are part-time. It is rare to hire professional teachers for teaching Piano Improvisational Accompaniment, which is also the reason for the low popularity of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in colleges. In addition, it should be noted that the relationship between piano improvisation and piano solo is fundamentally different, but in terms of technology for performance and cognitive system, the two are

inseparable. Therefore, it is necessary for colleges to regard Piano Improvisational Accompaniment as a professional course in teaching, and to develop a professional teaching team to continuously improve and innovate the teaching methods, so as to promote the sustainable development of the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.2.2 Unauthorized Textbooks**

At present, the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in China's universities doesn't have a certain teaching system, and the teaching materials are not authoritative. This has severely hindered the teaching of this course to a great extent and the cultivation of the related talents. However, in the course of practical piano improvisational accompaniment, there are differences from student to student, such as differences in basic musical theories and performance skills, etc. These differences affect the teaching quality to a great extent. Though there are differences from student to student, the teaching method is unified. So the students with good foundation can be effectively improved, but the learning quality of students with weak foundation cannot be satisfying. Therefore, teachers need to properly arrange the teaching courses based on the students' actual knowledge and practical experience. Therefore, for the teaching of piano improvisational accompaniment, we should not only innovate the course, but also the teaching materials.

### **2.2.3 Insufficient teaching system and teaching methods**

At present, there are two main methods of teaching piano improvisational accompaniment in colleges, collective teaching and individual teaching. Collective teaching is mainly based on the theory of narrative teaching. For the development of piano performance, individual lessons are preferred. How to effectively combine these two teaching methods to achieve teaching innovation of piano improvisational accompaniment has gradually become a key issue in the teaching reform of this course. It requires the learners to have high performance skills and musical literacy. In practical teaching, the application of digital piano classroom can effectively help teach students according to their situation. However, due to the lack of a teaching system, teaching method as well as the low emphasis

on practical performance, the improvement of students' comprehension is seriously affected.

### **3 Suggestions for the Development of the Course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment**

#### **3.1 More emphasis on the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment**

Nowadays, for the employment of students in music colleges, the demand for talents in piano improvisational accompaniment is gradually increasing. Therefore, students' piano improvisational abilities need to be highly professional. It can be seen that the the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment is practical. Good accompaniment can help teachers inspire students' imagination with less effort; good accompaniment can guide students to understand the content of music; good accompaniment can improve our music culture and cultivate our artistic emotions. When teaching this course, the first task is to make students and teachers fully aware of the importance of this course, and then increase the emphasis on this course. Schools can hire relevant experts for academic lectures and practical activities about piano improvisational accompaniment, so that teachers and students can further understand that piano improvisation is practical and necessary, laying a good foundation for students to enter the society<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### **3.2 More professional teaching team for the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment**

In teaching, teachers are the premise for teaching activities. If the teachers are not professional, they cannot provide students with professional teaching and practice, thereby failing to impart more professional knowledge. Therefore, in the teaching of piano improvisational accompaniment, how to improve teachers' teaching level and ability should be considered to improve the professionalism and standardization of the teaching. Developing a high-quality and high-level teaching team for the course of piano improvisational accompaniment and constructing a sound teaching system are also the guarantee for improving this course. The level of teachers directly affects students' learning interest and enthusiasm for participating in classroom teaching, thus affecting the quality of students' learning.

Although there is a certain connection between piano performance and accompaniment courses, there are also large differences. Therefore, this course needs professional teachers to teach students to improve the teaching effect<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### **3.3 Cultivation of students' ability to flexibly apply knowledge**

The course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment is one of the most practical, commonly used skills in piano accompaniment and is fast to master. The so-called "improvisation" does not require students to imitate certain things, but to actively develop innovative thinking through their understanding and their experience based on the style and characteristics of the work. Studies have shown that piano improvisation requires learners to analyze, be creative and flexible to apply knowledge. This requires stimulating and improving students' ability of improvisation. In actual teaching, teachers can use a series of famous works and classic accompaniment to teach students to appreciate and understand them, and then analyze the characteristics of their accompaniment. Based on this, teachers can guide students to use these accompaniment flexibly, and then create a certain accompaniment to meet their individual development. At the same time, teachers should also pay attention to students' ability of playing piano and knowledge of musical theories. In the teaching process, teachers need to find out the shortcomings of students in a timely manner, and then give guidance and reasonable suggestions to help students continuously improve their level of improvisational accompaniment.

### **4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the course of Piano Improvisational Accompaniment in colleges meets problems such as its unclear status in colleges, the lack of piano professional teachers, inadequate teaching systems and teaching methods, and so on. To improve the quality of teaching, the first task is to increase the emphasis on teaching piano improvisational accompaniment, to develop a professional teaching team and train students to apply the knowledge and methods. Moreover, we need to cultivate students' creative thinking and further improve students' learning quality and teaching effects, thereby promoting the development of this course.

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