

Research on the Value and Strategy of Integrating Music Education and National Music Culture

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Abstract: China's traditional national music is an art form formed by the working people and art pioneers to express their emotions during thousands of years of productive labor. National music not only contains emotional stories that are capable of evoking praises and tears, but also has a profound understanding of the lives of sages. In summary, integrating college music education with national music culture can allow students to deeply discover music, thereby stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning music, improving students' learning quality, mastering the core parts of music learning, and helping students to go a long way in music. This article mainly focuses on the characteristics and educational value of national music culture, and its effective integration with music education in colleges and universities. This article can help relevant workers in college music education and promote the sustainable development of music education in colleges and universities in China.

Keywords: Music education in colleges and universities; National music culture; Effective integration; Teaching value

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1. Introduction

The situation of music education in our country's colleges and universities is not optimistic. Only a few students who apply for music majors every year have a pure love for music. Most students study music for various purposes. In the process, we do not pursue the "intrinsic beauty" of music but unthinkingly pursue the so-called "skills." Such a learning mentality that ignores the basics and prioritizes the result has led to the current situation of music education in colleges and universities that requires development. Integrating national music culture with college music education can pass on the traditional artistic spirit that has flowed in national music for thousands of years and has not been forgotten by the world to students so that students can realize the "inner beauty" and "external beauty" of music. It is equally essential to ensure the overall teaching quality of music education in colleges and universities and provide students with more comprehensive music teaching.

2. Characteristics of Chinese national music

The following are the characteristics of Chinese national music.

(1) Improvisation

Most Chinese national music is born in labor or is based on the praise of sages or the description of the emotional stories of celebrities. It is highly sung among the working people. Therefore, as individuals have different understandings of national music, singing, and performance, different styles will also make national music show another angle of “inner beauty.” Take the famous erhu song “The Moon Reflected In Er-Quan” as an example. The performance by its author, Hua Yanjun, reveals emotions such as sadness and high-spirited indignation about suffering, but it is also full of longing and love for future life. Another erhu player Min Huifen’s interpretation of the performance is different from that of the author of “The Moon Reflected In Er-Quan.” In addition to the longing and desire expressed by the author, the middle section of Min Huifen’s version of “The Moon Reflected In Er-Quan” also contains a sense of indifference to current life, making it more crisp and clear than the original author’s. The unique bowing technique presents “The Moon Reflected In Er-Quan” from another angle, which is the improvisational nature of Chinese national music. Any erhu player can incorporate their own understanding and style into the performance, and the public will also show sufficient tolerance based on the performance of the player. Therefore, the improvisational nature of Chinese national music also represents the public’s tolerance for the “improvisation” of national music to a certain extent ^[1].

(2) Folklore

The folklore of national music can be understood in three parts. First, national music is affected by culture, beliefs, and customs in different regions, and its styles will be completely different. For example, the traditional folk song “Embroidered Purse” is highly sung in Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces. However, the Shanxi version of “Embroidered Purse” contains bright and radiant joy due to regional customs and cultural differences. In contrast, the Shaanxi version of “Embroidered Purse” is full of simplicity and has a sense of desolation. The first part of the folklore of national music is the variability caused by the influence of regional environment customs and culture ^[2].

Secondly, our country is multi-ethnic, and each ethnic group has its customs and habits. For example, the northern ethnic factors are influenced by the cheerful character of the northern people, and their music types are mainly fast-paced and highly active. On the contrary, the southern ethnic factors are influenced by the long-lasting and timeless elegance, thus southern folk music is dominated by graceful and slow-paced music. The second part of the folklore of national music is the locality determined by local feelings.

Lastly, 56 Chinese ethnic groups are distributed over 9.6 million square kilometers of land composed of plateaus, basins, mountains, and forests. As an art form for people of all regions and ethnic groups to express their emotions, ethnic music is closely related to the formation of folk music. Singing will be affected by regional influences. For example, people living in Northeast China are cheerful and optimistic, and the “black land” provides people with a prosperous life. The “Errenzhuan” formed by this region mostly centers on the story’s content, which may be tragic or humorous, to enrich people’s amateur entertainment needs. The vast Loess Plateau mostly bounds the northern Shaanxi region. People who grow up in this land are naturally optimistic and always maintain positive thoughts in the face of difficult life. Therefore, “Xintianyou” is filled with the longing for love and the belief in striving for freedom in the face of oppression of the northern Shaanxi people. The third part of the folklore of national music is the regionality affected by the geographical environment ^[3].

(3) Harmony

Harmony is one of the representative characteristics of traditional Chinese national music. Unlike

Western music, which pursues conflicts and subjective struggles, “harmony” is an essential core of Chinese art forms. For example, in the famous national music song “Moonlit Night on the Spring River,” the whole song takes balance and symmetry as the central core, and the elements of harmony are permeated into every part of the music. People watching the performance can also experience the expression of harmony in the “Moonlit Night on the Spring River” by the creators and performers in the music. Our country’s traditional culture determines the harmony of national music. Our country has been promoting the culture of “harmony and coordination” since ancient times. The national music that has emerged continuously in the long history has also been influenced by traditional culture, and “harmony” is the highest art form ^[4].

(4) Emphasis on artistic conception

The most important feature of China’s national music is the emphasis on musical artistic conception. China’s national music is an art form born by working people or creators to express their own emotions. At the beginning of the birth of music, the so-called “requirements” and “norms” were not existing. It will only involve the standards of singing and playing after it was “systematized” and “standardized.” However, contrary to Western music, Chinese music continues to pursue progress after being “systematized” and “standardized.” After the formation of the “system” and “standard” of our country’s national music, the pursuit of artistic conception spread in the music has not fallen behind. Therefore, the characteristic of our country’s national music that emphasizes artistic conception is obvious ^[5].

3. Significance of the integration of Chinese national music culture and college music education

The significance of the integration of ethnic music and college music education mainly includes the following two points:

- (1) Inheriting traditional culture. National music is the description of their own emotions by the working people of our country and the ancient art sages. It flows with music knowledge and the wisdom of the ancestors on life, production, social form, and future development expectations. Through the connection between national music and college music education, students can comprehensively understand the connotation of national music, deepen their understanding of national music, develop a sense of national pride, and take the initiative to assume the vital task of inheriting traditional culture ^[6].
- (2) Providing students with more choices. Currently, music teaching in most colleges and universities is more inclined to Western music due to students’ interests and preferences. They will also pay more attention to the connection with “techniques” in the learning process. Integrating ethnic music with efficient music education can enable students to discover ethnic music. The “beauty” of music can improve students’ understanding of music. They no longer think Western music is more beautiful than Chinese national music. Instead, they should absorb the advantages of various music forms with an attitude of respect and learning, so that students can perform well in the future. Alternatively, having more choices in creation is an effective way to help students to go further on the road of music ^[7].

4. Effective integration paths between college music education and national music culture

There are several effective integration paths between college music education and national music culture.

(1) Carrying out situational teaching to improve students' understanding of national music

Situational teaching is a teaching method that deepens students' understanding of learning content by creating situations and allowing students to play roles or participate in creating situations, thereby improving the quality of teaching. National music is an integral part of China's traditional art culture. If students need help in understanding its meaning, it will significantly reduce its artistic standards and make it difficult for students to effectively absorb and internalize the core knowledge during the learning process^[8].

To carry out situational simulation teaching in college music education, teachers should first prepare teaching props, then quickly integrate into the characters through costumes and scenes, or immerse themselves in the emotions expressed by the music to maximize the effect of situational teaching. For example, using the national opera "The White-Haired Girl" as an example to carry out situational simulation teaching, the teacher needs to prepare costumes and scene layout props so that the student's image and surrounding environment can meet the image requirements of the opera characters, thereby ensuring that the students are in situational simulation teaching perception.

In the simulated teaching of the opera "The White-Haired Girl," students can deeply understand the helplessness and indignation of the ordinary people under the oppression of the landlord class, deepen their understanding of the song, and then maintain their enthusiasm for learning music courses, and improve the quality of learning and teaching effect of music education in colleges and universities^[9].

(2) Applying multimedia teaching aids to enhance students' understanding of ethnic music

With the rapid development of science and technology, current multimedia equipment has been integrated into the work of all walks of life. The education industry has widely used multimedia equipment as the cornerstone of social development. However, current educators still need to fully develop multimedia equipment for application methods in teaching work. To further achieve the effective integration of music education and national music culture in colleges and universities, teachers must make full use of multimedia teaching aids to ensure the actual teaching quality of music education in colleges and universities^[10].

In order to ensure the overall quality of music teaching in colleges and universities, teachers can help students to better integrate into the music learning atmosphere by making micro-lessons before the start of classroom teaching. For example, in "Yellow River Cantata," teachers can make micro-lessons containing anti-Japanese war film clips and stories of anti-Japanese war heroes, and echoing the emotions of the Chinese people in the "Yellow River Cantata" in the face of the invaders' strong resistance and the denunciation of the invaders' atrocities, thus allowing students to learn more than just national music. Its "technique" at the musical level is to understand deep emotions through the surface of music, thereby deepening students' understanding of music and improving the quality of teaching^[11].

(3) Organizing practical activities to increase students' recognition of national music

Practice is a necessary process to confirm the theory. Incorporating practical activities into music teaching in colleges and universities can further improve students' understanding of ethnic music and then identify the learning significance of ethnic music^[12].

Music teaching practice activities in colleges and universities should be held within the scope of the school. For example, with the theme of "Ethnic Music Appreciation," students of all ethnic groups in the school can participate in the activities and perform national characteristic songs and dances. During the practice activities, some Western music students should also be invited to perform together

in activities. Through music practice activities, students can break the limitations of their thoughts, witness the diversity and splendor of our country's national music, discover the different aesthetics of our country's national music and Western music, and maintain students' curiosity about national music. Then, students' enthusiasm for learning national music can be stimulated ^[13].

Chinese national music emphasizes the aesthetic presentation of ideology. It highlights regional cultural characteristics, while modern Western music highlights the freedom and change in rhythm, using polyrhythm and rhythm to express the unrestrained emotions of musicians. The original intention of practical activities is to show the beauty of Chinese national music. However, the ideological beauty of music can be shown through comparison with Western music. In that case, it can further enhance students' attention to Chinese national music, promote the spread of national music, and gain the praise by majority of teachers, and student recognition is also a huge help ^[14].

- (4) Conducting group discussions to deepen the connection between national music culture and college music education

Music is a precious artistic treasure left by our ancestors in the long history. The birthplace of music has national boundaries, but music itself should not have national boundaries. In order to improve the overall quality of music teaching in colleges and universities, students can form study groups for discussion. The groups can include students majoring in Western Music Performance, National Music Performance, Music Theory, Music Creation, and other music majors who will deepen their understanding of the commonalities between Western music and national music in terms of music theory, musical instruments, and music forms through analysis and discussion, thereby improving the teaching effect of music education in colleges and universities ^[15].

5. Conclusion

To sum up, ethnic music is one of many music forms. It carries the labor experience and social wisdom of various ethnic groups in China for thousands of years. Integrating ethnic music culture with music education in colleges and universities can promote traditional culture and inspire students to cultivate the love for ethnic music, while improving the quality of music teaching in colleges and universities. Inheriting traditional ethnic music culture is a meaningful way to ensure the effective development of music teaching in colleges and universities.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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