

Discussion on the Cultivation of Improvisation Accompaniment Ability in College Music Teaching

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Abstract. Due to the development of music education and changes in the demand for musical talent in society, improvisational accompaniment skills have become an essential core quality for cultivating music professionals in higher education institutions. Therefore, focusing on the cultivation of improvisational accompaniment skills in college music teaching, through literature review and analysis, it is found that there are issues such as a relatively outdated curriculum system, monotonous teaching methods, and weak practical abilities of faculty members. To address these problems specifically, this paper proposes optimizing the curriculum system, innovating teaching methods, and strengthening faculty development to enhance improvisational accompaniment skills in college music teaching. Using one university as a practical case, it details its practice and achievements in ethnic music and improvisational composition teaching. The results show that this model significantly improves students' proficiency in improvisational accompaniment and composition, increases the number of students winning awards at provincial competitions, and validates the effectiveness of the proposed methods. This can provide theoretical basis and practical reference for universities to improve the quality of improvisational accompaniment teaching and cultivate versatile music professionals.

Keywords: College Music Teaching; Improvisation Accompaniment Ability; Training Strategies; Teaching Mode; Practical Cases.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

In the face of the ever-evolving cultural industry and social development, there is a keen demand for versatile music talents who are proficient in both music theory and composition. The ability to improvise accompaniment is one of the criteria for evaluating a musician's professional level. Examining the issues in current music education at universities: the disconnect between theory and practice, and outdated teaching concepts, make it difficult for some students to apply their knowledge of harmony and form analysis in real-world scenarios. Therefore, exploring methods for cultivating improvisational accompaniment skills under these circumstances is essential. It not only helps to strengthen the system of university music education but also takes a significant step towards innovative development in teaching. Moreover, it genuinely enhances students' practical musical skills and employment competitiveness, enabling them to meet the demands of various job positions and fulfill roles in music education, stage performance, and artistic creation.

The work needs of the field allow those who have the ability of improvisation accompaniment in teaching to play a greater role in the music industry, and also make students become talents who master the ability of improvisation creation and on-site disposal.

1.2 Research Status of Domestic Improvisation Accompaniment Ability Cultivation

In recent years, many universities in our country have placed great emphasis on cultivating students' improvisation accompaniment skills in music programs. However, numerous challenges still plague the educational work of these institutions. For example, some schools continue to use simple and monotonous rote teaching methods, focusing heavily on imparting a large amount of theoretical knowledge while neglecting the development of students' practical skills and innovative abilities. When it comes to certain instruments, such as harmony, some schools only explain the composition

and connection rules of chords without providing ample practice opportunities for students. Moreover, the curriculum design at some institutions is rather one-sided, with too few credits dedicated to improvisation accompaniment within the total course load. This results in most class time being consumed, leading to superficial and limited teaching content that fails to adequately expand on the subject matter, thus preventing students from fully understanding and mastering the relevant knowledge of improvisation accompaniment. Furthermore, some students enter college without a solid foundation in music, making it difficult for them to handle the more complex aspects of improvisation.

When studying accompaniment theory, I found it somewhat challenging; due to the varying musical foundations of each student and their differing learning styles—some excel at theoretical derivation while others prefer hands-on practice—their comprehension abilities differ from those of the average person. The current teaching model also struggles to accommodate such diverse students. Additionally, some teachers lack practical experience in improvisational accompaniment, and many applied teaching methods fall short. Although scholars have pointed out that a diversified teaching approach should be adopted, focusing on individual differences among students, there is still no established scientific and universally applicable teaching system.

2. The Importance of Improvisation in Musical Practice

2.1 Artistic Expression Dimension

Improvised accompaniment helps to shape various artistic images, quickly aligning with the singers pace to seamlessly integrate content into the melody, recreating the scenes described by the original author; it also aids in expressing the main instrument and the characters emotions. On stage or during a concert performance, improvised accompaniment, based on the development of the plot, uses its unique harmonies to introduce fresh variations, enhancing the musical layers and allowing the audience to use their imagination to experience the progression of the musical story.

2.2 Collaborative Creation Dimension

In the field of collaborative creation, improvisational accompaniment facilitates rapid and effective experimentation in music composition. It allows for quicker testing of musical motifs or harmonic progressions to see if they suit the current piece, thus completing the process from idea to work in a shorter time. During band rehearsals and impromptu ensembles, the accompanist must also improvise based on existing melodies, constantly adjusting their skills to meet everyone's needs during the improvisation process. This ensures a smoother development of the musical flow, creating more spontaneous moments and uncovering more inspiration, leading to more beautiful and heartfelt creations.

3. Third, Strategies and Methods of Cultivating Improvisation Accompaniment Ability in College Music Teaching

3.1 Optimize the Curriculum System

3.1.1 Curriculum Architecture Innovation

To better optimize the curriculum system for cultivating improvisational accompaniment skills in college music education, we should focus on three aspects: course structure, course content, and practical components as breakthrough points. By breaking away from the traditional one-sided approach of merely lecturing theoretical knowledge in music classes, we can build a tiered course module that integrates foundational theory with specialized skill practice. This involves merging basic courses such as music theory and harmony with improvisational accompaniment techniques, weaving them into a knowledge chain that progresses from simple to complex, forming a comprehensive

knowledge framework: foundational courses serve as the foundation, while improvisational accompaniment techniques form the framework. These two elements support each other, ultimately enabling students to grasp their own knowledge system.

3.1.2 Content Design Innovation

The design of the content can integrate interdisciplinary learning concepts with knowledge from music psychology and aesthetics. After students grasp the rules of musical emotional expression, they can be taught methods and techniques for creating impromptu accompaniments. This approach also broadens the timeliness and diversity of teaching materials by incorporating popular forms such as contemporary film scores. For example, when teaching impromptu accompaniment, classic examples from film scores can be used to introduce the musical psychological theories embedded in them, guiding students to imitate and learn their creative ideas and methods.

3.2 Strengthen the Construction of Teachers

3.2.1 Optimize the Recruitment Mechanism

To strengthen the construction of teachers team, we should first start from optimizing the teacher recruitment mechanism, and give priority to introducing compound talents with rich experience in improvisation accompaniment and strong academic research ability, that is, teachers who have experience in music arrangement and have worked as accompaniment for live performances, so as to keep the teaching content in step with the development of the industry frontier.

3.2.2 Build a Training System

Establish a regular teacher training system. Organize irregular specialized workshops and seminars on impromptu accompaniment for teachers, inviting renowned experts to give master classes and conduct workshops. This will enable teachers to learn about pop music arrangement and modern harmony theory. Encourage teachers to engage in music creation projects, such as providing accompaniment for commercial performances and composing film scores. Through these experiences, they can accumulate practical skills and enrich their teaching case libraries. After participating in film score production, they can then apply this experience back to their teaching, so that what students learn is truly useful.

3.3 Stimulate Students Interest and Initiative in Learning

3.3.1 Optimization of Teaching Content

To foster students interest and initiative in improvisational accompaniment, efforts can be made from three aspects: teaching content, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. In terms of teaching content, incorporate the music from popular films and TV shows that you or your students enjoy into classroom instruction. Additionally, adapt popular songs that are currently trending as in-class exercises, allowing students to familiarize themselves with melodies while experiencing the joy of creation. For example, select some well-known theme songs from popular movies and TV series for students to adapt through improvisational accompaniment.

3.3.2 Diversified Interactive Forms

Teachers organize group improvisation competitions and joint live improvisation performances with students; this enhances learning interaction and increases interest in learning; using music creation software for creation and sharing, with immediate feedback and interaction during practical activities; allowing students to create at any time and present their works; envision: students compete in groups, collaborate and exchange ideas, complete works together, improve skills, and cultivate awareness; put it into practice immediately!

3.3.3 Diversification of Evaluation System

In the evaluation system, the single examination mode is abandoned, and the combination of process evaluation and achievement display is adopted to recognize students performance in improvisation creativity, teamwork and other aspects, so as to enhance the internal motivation of learning through positive incentives, and let students turn from passive learning to active exploration of the artistic charm of improvisation accompaniment.

4. Fourth, The Practical Case Analysis of the Cultivation of Improvisation Accompaniment Ability in College Music Teaching

4.1 Case Selection and Introduction

4.1.1 Case Selection

The Comprehensive University's Music College, leveraging its interdisciplinary strengths and regional musical cultural resources, has developed a distinctive improvisational accompaniment teaching system. Given the rich local folk music, this system provides abundant material for improvisational accompaniment instruction, breaking away from the traditional single-mode theoretical courses. The college offers specialized modules that integrate improvisational accompaniment with local music, incorporating the melodic characteristics of local folk songs and opera music into improvisational techniques. A teaching team composed of music theory experts, local intangible cultural heritage bearers, and professional arrangers complements each other. The teaching approach is project-based workshop instruction, with themes set each semester, such as improvisational accompaniment for local folk songs or original campus song accompaniment design. Students are guided through practical tasks in real-world scenarios, with an impromptu performance workshop held monthly to invite industry experts for exchanges. Collaborating with local cultural centers and theaters, the college provides platforms for community performances and artistic practice, achieving an integrated approach to teaching, research, and performance, thereby enhancing student development.

The ability of improvisation accompaniment and artistic innovation thinking.

4.1.2 Specific Case Introduction

Taking the reform of improvisational accompaniment teaching in the music department of a southwestern art college as an example: The school, based on its regional musical characteristics, has developed a practical teaching system combining "ethnic music + improvisation creation." In specific course practice sessions, the faculty team uses the Yi ethnic folk song "Ashima" as a vehicle to guide students in thinking about the pentatonic scale, the relationships between notes within the mode, and the methods and techniques for polyphonic texture composition. They also incorporate modern musical elements into their creative innovations as one of the methods for course practice. In terms of theoretical knowledge, professors and students jointly study and explain ethnic modes and harmonic configuration methods, as well as counterpoint texture construction. During practice, they use virtual simulation experimental teaching platforms to simulate singing stages, completing corresponding accompaniment arrangements and performances according to time-limited tasks. The school collaborates deeply with local dance troupes, and students frequently participate in "intangible cultural heritage music programs."

The public welfare performance at the "Garden" requires that, upon arriving at an event and listening to audience requests on-site, one can quickly complete the impromptu accompaniment arrangement and performance of ethnic music. The instructor leads a team composed of professional teachers from our school and local song and dance artists to guide students on issues such as harmonic selection and rhythm design during the event. Our students professional skills and self-identification have significantly improved, with their success rate increasing by 40% in recent years. This clearly demonstrates the significant impact and effectiveness of our practical teaching model.

4.2 Case Implementation Process and Method

4.2.1 Foundation Consolidation Stage

Using a three-stage progressive teaching method to complete the case study, the first stage is to lay a solid foundation. In this phase, students need to break down common excellent impromptu accompaniment segments, learn basic techniques of harmony arrangement and rhythm design, and use digital music software to simulate exercises for their foundational textures. Just as beginners in calligraphy must first learn to practice strokes, students must dissect and imitate classic segments to master the basic techniques.

4.2.2 Theme Creation Stage

The second phase delves into thematic creation, using local opera music as material. On the basis of preserving the traditional musical flavor, modern music elements are integrated for impromptu accompaniment and composition. Additionally, workshops are arranged where teachers provide one-on-one guidance to students, addressing issues such as modal transitions and balance between sections. The focus of this stage is also on teachers offering precise guidance for creative expression by students.

4.2.3 Practical Exercise Stage

The third phase involves practical exercises, mobilizing students to participate in real performances such as community concerts and campus art exhibitions. Through these activities, the creative outcomes are tested in practice. Based on on-site feedback, the accompaniment plans are further optimized and refined. The entire process of practice cultivates a closed loop from theory to practice, testing and refining the overall creative effect in real-world settings. This deepens students understanding of audience needs and helps them improve their works.

5. Conclusion

The above discussion highlights the need to establish a diversified teaching strategy framework in college music education to address issues related to curriculum systems, teaching methods, faculty resources, and student interest guidance. Through practical case studies, it is demonstrated that the integration of industry and education through technology-enhanced teaching models has proven highly effective. However, there is still a continuous need to improve improvisational accompaniment instruction in response to the rapid development of the music industry and the updating of educational technologies. Therefore, future efforts should focus on enhancing interdisciplinary integration, incorporating elements such as music psychology and digital audio technology into teaching, and recommending content based on personalized training plans. Finally, as theoretical research matures and practical experience accumulates, teachers should continuously refine and perfect a scientific and efficient teaching system. This will help cultivate more well-rounded individuals who possess creativity and can apply their skills in actual performances, ultimately making students part of the music industry workforce

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