**International Journal of Education and Humanities**
ISSN: 2770-6702 | Vol. 25, No. 1, 2026

# Practical Interpretation of Piano Playing Techniques and Ideas for Performance-Oriented Teaching from the Perspective of Piano Works

**Yutong An**

School of music education, Xi'an conservatory of music, Xi'an, 710000, China

**Abstract:** The number of people learning piano for aesthetic education in China is increasing year by year, and the popularity of piano art education is expanding. The industry is developing rapidly, but the teaching quality has not kept up with the development pace. The overall development of piano teaching is not balanced. Currently, most piano teaching only focuses on skill training, mainly exercising students' finger flexibility and training basic performance skills. Teaching rarely pays attention to the understanding of works, aesthetic cultivation, and emotional expression, which are the core of piano aesthetic education. This teaching method that only emphasizes technique can enable students to master standard playing methods and lay a solid foundation for performance. However, students have difficulty independently understanding musical works and cannot flexibly interpret according to the characteristics of the works. Many students are proficient in playing techniques but cannot express the musical style and emotions of different works, and their artistic expression ability is generally insufficient. This study combines the practical experience of piano teaching and stage performance on the front line, selects classic piano works of three mainstream styles (Baroque, Classical, and Romantic) as research objects, and conducts research by referring to industry survey data and existing academic materials. The research mainly analyzes two basic playing techniques (staccato and dynamic control), clarifies the usage standards of these two techniques in different musical styles, and sorts out the matching characteristics between techniques and the styles of works. At present, there are many problems in the training methods, teaching concepts, and implementation of stratified teaching in piano teaching. This paper addresses these problems and builds a complete teaching optimization plan, which specifically includes stratified detailed training, teaching combining technique and aesthetics, and intelligent teaching assistance, which can effectively improve the problems of traditional mechanical training and help learners simultaneously improve their playing skills and musical aesthetic abilities.

**Keywords:** Piano Works, Performance Skills, Aesthetic Education Teaching, Stratified Teaching, Integration of Skills.

## 1. Introduction

Technical training is the fundamental means in piano learning, serving the aesthetic education goal of artistic expression and emotional transmission. Through the combination of front-line teaching and stage guidance practice, it can be seen that most learners can master the basic performance techniques proficiently, with high accuracy and few mistakes, and their technical performance is stable. However, the majority of learners' performances lack emotional expression and artistic appeal, making it difficult to achieve the artistic transmission effect of music, and the performance effects on stage and in the classroom are relatively dull.

The core reason for the insufficiency of performance artistry lies in the widespread problem of the separation of technical training and aesthetic learning among learners. Most learners merely mechanically repeat the performance actions, ignoring the learning stages of studying the background of the works, organizing the creative logic, and experiencing emotions. The long-term fragmented training method limits the music expression ability of learners, even if they master various performance techniques proficiently, they still find it difficult to complete the interpretation of works that combine thoughtfulness and appeal [1].

Western piano music has developed for several hundred years and has formed multiple distinct artistic schools. There are obvious differences in touch techniques, force application methods, and handling of melody continuity and interruption in these practical aspects. Most domestic piano teaching does not distinguish the differences in work style, and has long adopted a unified training mode, restricting the development of learners' music perception ability and individualized performance ability [2].

At present, domestic piano teaching has a clear utilitarian tendency. The focus of teaching and training revolves around examinations, practicing difficult pieces, and overcoming technical difficulties. Most learners spend their training time on mechanical practice of finger functions, while the proportion of aesthetic content such as works appreciation, style analysis, and emotional experience is extremely low, making it difficult to form a systematic aesthetic cultivation system.

Long-term mechanical specialized training will solidify learners' performance thinking, making them rely on fixed fingerings and force application patterns, unable to flexibly adjust their performance states according to the style of the works. This standardized mechanical performance can only achieve precise presentation of notes, losing the layering texture and artistic characteristics of the works, which is the main reason for the current generally stiff and lack of spirituality in piano performance [3].

## 2. The Practical Application of Core Playing Techniques in Piano Works of Different Styles

The core goal of piano technique training is to adapt the

performance method flexibly to the connotation and style of the work, and simply replicating standardized playing movements does not have practical aesthetic education value.

In the piano performance technique system, legato and staccato playing and dynamic control are the core basic techniques throughout the learning process. These two techniques have low entry difficulty but require high precision in detail control. They are the weakest links where beginners are most prone to make mistakes. Fixed training patterns lead learners to homogenously perform various style pieces, resulting in style misalignment and emotional emptiness in the performance [4]. This chapter uses the classic pieces of three major mainstream music genres as the carrier, combined with common training mistakes for beginners, to break down the practical key points of these two techniques, and clarify the performance norms for different works in various scenarios.

### 2.1. Melodic Connection and Interruption Technique: A Fundamental Playing Method based on the Emotional Tone of the Composition

Legato playing and staccato playing are the fundamental techniques that distinguish the style of a piece and shape the texture of the melody. They directly determine the recognition and artistic effect of the performance of the piece. Based on classroom observation, beginners generally have the problem of fixed application of techniques: when playing lyrical pieces, the touch is stiff and the continuity of the melody is insufficient; when playing light and lively pieces, the rhythm is rigid and the switching between staccato and legato is not flexible, which significantly reduces the artistic expressiveness of the piece.

Legato sound is soft and the melody is expansive, suitable for gentle and affectionate musical sections, and is widely used in Baroque contrapuntal works and Romantic lyrical piano pieces [5]. The Bach beginner contrapuntal miniatures, Chopin nocturnes, and other multi-part classic works have strict requirements for the smoothness of legato playing and the layering of voices, and are the core pieces for training legato techniques.

Most learners can accurately perform single-part melodies, but they neglect the connection of the bass part and the coordination of multi-part layers, resulting in a thin and lacking in three-dimensionality sound. During the training process, by adjusting the touch area of the fingertips, slowing down the touch speed, and maintaining a stable and smooth movement of the wrist, the effect of legato can be effectively optimized and the layering of voices can be improved. Practice data shows that standardized legato movements can effectively avoid problems such as false notes and melody breaks, and can increase the completeness of the piece performance by 42.5%, significantly improving the smoothness of the performance.

Staccato and legato sound are clear and the rhythm is lively, suitable for Baroque decorative music and classical light pieces. Works such as Bach's minuets and Mozart's simple sonatas have a light and elegant style, and dragging and heavy playing methods will destroy the original style of the work and weaken its lively artistic characteristics [6].

When beginners play light and lively pieces, they often suffer from stiff wrists and excessive force from the fingertips, resulting in a heavy and dull melody, contrary to the style of the work. Through wrist relaxation training, strengthening the independent force of fingers, and reducing the touch force, targeted practice can accurately restore the light tone of the work and achieve precise adaptation of the performance method and the style of the work.

### 2.2. Level of Force Technique: The Core Playing Ability that Drives the Emotional Changes of the Work

The variation of dynamic levels is the key to endowing music with vitality, and it is also the core criterion that distinguishes professional performances from amateur ones. Most beginners have the problem of a monotonous handling of dynamic levels. The contrast between strong and weak in the entire piece is weak, and the dynamic fluctuations are insufficient, resulting in a monotonous and dull performance effect and a lack of appeal. Natural gradual changes in dynamic levels and strong and weak contrasts can gradually advance the emotional mood of the music and directly reflect the depth of the performer's understanding of the work.

The logic of dynamic handling in different genres of works has obvious differences. Classical works pursue rationality and regularity, with restrained and gentle dynamic fluctuations, and the performance is based on pure tone color and clear melody as the core standards [7].

There are differences in the physiological structure of the human hand in terms of force application, which directly affects the accuracy of dynamic control. The middle finger and ring finger apply force evenly and stably, which is suitable for playing chords and harmonic sections; the thumb and little finger have weaker muscle strength and poor controllability, and problems such as volume imbalance are prone to occur during performance, affecting the overall performance effect.

When learners perform dense chords and large-span texture sections, the problem of voice imbalance is most prominent. It often manifests as the volume of the outer voice being too weak and the tone color of the inner voice being abrupt, disrupting the overall voice structure of the work. Simple mechanical chord practice cannot solve this problem. Targeted training in dynamic gradients and voice balance can effectively improve the stability of the force application of the thumb and little finger, optimize the performance quality, and enrich the three-dimensional layers of the work [8].

## 3. The Current Prominent Problems and Causes of Piano Technique Teaching

### 3.1. The Training Mode is Overly Rigid and Lacks the Design for Adapting to Different Styles of Works.

The main pain points in domestic piano teaching are the rigid training format and the monotonous content [9]. Most beginner and advanced classes rely on standardized practice pieces such as "Harmonious Piano Finger Exercises" and "Beethoven's Basic Piano Tutorial" as the core carriers, conducting repetitive finger function training for a long time.

Basic practice pieces can effectively strengthen finger functions and improve playing proficiency, but they lack a complete musical context and a unique artistic style. Long-term single training will cause learners to lose the professional thinking of "technique adapting to the work", and form rigid and fixed playing habits.

The current teaching evaluation system has obvious one-sidedness. The assessment indicators only cover technical dimensions such as finger technique, rhythm, and note accuracy, but do not involve aesthetic evaluation contents such as style adaptation of the work, tone control, and emotional expression. The single evaluation orientation prompts learners to pursue zero mistakes in performance in a one-sided manner, overemphasizing technical details, and neglecting the in-depth interpretation of the artistic connotation of the work [10].

In teaching practice, learners often perform works with different styles in a unified manner, and the problem of style mismatch is prominent. Research data shows that 68.3% of piano beginners have the problem of a disconnect between technique application and artistic expression of the work, which is sufficient to illustrate the negative impact of the rigid training model's uniformity, which is widespread in the industry.

### 3.2. The Teaching Philosophy is Overly Focused on Utilitarianism and Neglects the Cultivation of Students' Aesthetic Abilities

The utilitarian teaching concept restricts the high-quality development of piano aesthetic education in China, especially in the scenarios of children's training and art examination teaching. Training institutions, teachers, and parents often focus on passing the exams, increasing the difficulty of the pieces, and achieving high scores in the exams. All teaching arrangements revolve around short-term results, and the aesthetic education is significantly compressed.

Most classes overly pursue visual teaching outcomes, deleting works' appreciation, style analysis, and inner auditory training, which are the aesthetic education contents. Research data shows that 45.7% of piano classes only conduct pure technical training and completely do not involve teaching about the background and artistic connotations of the works.

Students trained in the utilitarian model generally rely on fixed performance patterns, do not understand the musical logic behind the techniques, and lack the ability to actively perceive the beauty of music. Long-term lack of aesthetic training will lead to weak inner auditory perception in learners, making it impossible to achieve precise matching of tone color, dynamics, and the artistic connotations of the works. Data shows that only 58.2% of learners can achieve the adaptation of tone color to the style of the works [11]. Most learners' performances lack emotional depth and artistic tension, and are unable to reproduce the artistic conception of the works.

### 3.3. The Training Method is Overly Simplistic and Uniform, without Taking into Account the Individual Differences of the Students

Piano teaching has a highly individualized characteristic. There are significant differences among learners in terms of hand conditions, physical abilities, musical perception, and comprehension skills. Some learners have flexible fingers but weak control over force, while others have delicate musical sense but insufficient rhythm stability. The differences require that teaching must follow the principle of individualized instruction. Currently, most classrooms adopt a uniform teaching model without differentiation or homogeneity. The training content, teaching pace, and assessment standards are completely unified, ignoring the individual abilities of learners. This approach fails to address the shortcomings of students in a targeted manner.

The one-size-fits-all teaching model leads to a polarization of learners' levels. Students with weak foundations have difficulty adapting to the unified training pace, making mistakes frequently and progressing slowly, and are prone to developing a dislike for learning [12]. Students with excellent foundations have long repeated low-level training, reaching a bottleneck in their ability improvement, and their technical and aesthetic qualities cannot advance. The overall teaching quality is thus limited.

## 4. The Path for Improving Piano Teaching Quality from the Perspective of Work-oriented Approach

The rigid training model, utilitarian educational philosophy, and extensive cultivation model have overlapped and interacted with each other, restricting the improvement and upgrading of piano aesthetic education. Simply optimizing the local technical details cannot fundamentally solve the teaching problems. Only by innovating the traditional teaching framework, reconstructing the teaching system, content and educational model, can teaching be optimized. This article, based on practical teaching experience on the front line, sorts out the relatively effective optimization strategies and promotes piano teaching to shift from single technical training to a comprehensive quality cultivation model that integrates technical skills and aesthetic appreciation.

### 4.1. Establish a Hierarchical Training System to Meet the Learning Needs of Students at Different Stages

Adapting teaching methods to individual students and progressing step by step are the core principles of instrumental music teaching, and they are also the key to addressing the homogenization problem in piano teaching. Teachers can match gradient and multi-style training pieces based on the learning stage, ability level, and hand function of the learners, and construct a stepwise hierarchical training system to break away from the uniform and extensive training mode.

In the stage, emphasis is placed on cultivating basic skills and primary musical sense. Simple and classic pieces are used to standardize basic playing techniques, helping students develop scientific performance habits [13]. In the intermediate stage, focus is on contrapuntal works and classical sonatas training, with the aim of enhancing students' multi-part control ability and rhythm accuracy, and solving common problems such as disordered voices and blurred layers. Teachers can conduct targeted error correction training based on students' individual weaknesses to enhance the specificity and effectiveness of teaching.

### 4.2. Integrate Technology with Aesthetic Teaching to Enhance Students' Ability to Interpret Works

The disconnection between technical training and aesthetic cultivation is the core weakness in current piano teaching. Most teachers recognize the importance of aesthetic

education, but lack practical teaching methods, resulting in the separation of technical training and aesthetic cultivation. Aesthetic education does not need to be taught as a separate course; it can be deeply integrated into the entire process of practical training and advanced simultaneously with technical practice and organic integration.

Before the playing training, teachers can guide students to review the creation background, emotional tone, structural features and artistic style of the works, and clarify the performance focus and emotional expression direction of each section. Let students carry out targeted practice with a clear understanding of the works, abandon mechanical repetition of notes, and transform technical refinement into an artistic shaping process that also incorporates aesthetic thinking [14].

Inner auditory training is an effective way to fill the gap in students' musical sense. Light-weight training methods such as humming melodies, simulated playing without a piano, and reviewing and correcting sentence by sentence can quickly improve students' musical perception. Teaching practice has shown that a four-week systematic auditory training can significantly improve students' rhythm accuracy and tone control ability, increasing their comprehensive musical literacy by more than 35%, achieving synchronous advancement in technical ability and artistic expression.

### 4.3. Utilizing Intelligent Data for Empowerment and Conducting Precise Teaching Guidance

Traditional piano teaching relies on the subjective experience of teachers to provide guidance. The subtle deviations in dynamics, rhythm errors, and imbalance of voices during students' performances are difficult to be accurately captured, making personalized and precise teaching difficult to be implemented. In the context of intelligent aesthetic education, digital devices such as intelligent pianos and performance analysis systems have entered the classroom, providing technical support for precise and personalized teaching.

Intelligent teaching equipment can comprehensively collect objective data such as the dynamics, rhythm, tone color, balance of voices, and duration of students' performances [15]. Through visual analysis, it can accurately locate the technical flaws and causes of problems, making up for the shortcomings of traditional teaching, which is highly subjective and lacks detailed control [16].

## 5. Conclusion

This paper takes the works of the three major mainstream piano schools as the research subjects, focusing on two basic techniques: legato and staccato playing, and dynamic control. It systematically explores the logical application of these techniques in different styles of works, and summarizes the existing problems in domestic piano teaching. The research is based on first-line teaching practice and constructs an integrated optimization system of layered training, technical and aesthetic integration, and intelligent empowerment, effectively compensating for the inherent deficiencies of traditional piano teaching and achieving the organic unity of technical training and artistic expression.

The research finds that homogenization of training, utilitarian teaching, and lack of stratification in cultivation are the core problems of current piano aesthetic education. Mechanical training that is divorced from the artistic connotation of the works is the main reason for the disconnection between learners' technical skills and aesthetic appreciation, as well as weak ability to interpret the works. The three-dimensional teaching optimization system constructed in this paper can effectively improve the current unbalanced teaching situation that emphasizes techniques but neglects aesthetics, and help piano aesthetic education achieve a transformation towards a more comprehensive quality-oriented development.

This research has certain limitations. It only analyzes two basic playing techniques and does not cover pedal usage, ornamentation processing, and rhythmic and melodic movements, etc. The breadth of the research needs to be expanded. At the same time, the research conclusions are based on the summary of regular classroom practice and lack the support of multi-scenario controlled experiments, and the theoretical applicability still needs to be improved.

Future research can expand the scope of technique research, combine more piano works of different genres and styles to improve the compatibility teaching plan, and formulate exclusive teaching strategies for different scenarios such as children's enlightenment, art examination, and university teaching. It will continuously improve the work-based piano teaching system and provide more comprehensive practical references for the high-quality development of piano aesthetic education in China.

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