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Kodály Method Empowers Aesthetic Education of Public Traditional Chinese Music in Higher Vocational Colleges

-- A Case Study of Classroom Practice with the Guzheng and Piano Concerto "Ling'an's Regret"

Jianjun Zhao

Department of Arts, Qiannan Preschool Education College for Nationalities, Guiding, Guizhou, 551300, China

Abstract: In the context of global multicultural music education, the Kodály method has become a mainstream pedagogical model for preserving indigenous musical traditions worldwide, thanks to its practice-based activities that stimulate multisensory synesthetic responses. Currently, public music appreciation courses for vocational college teacher education students in China commonly suffer from weak theoretical foundations in music fundamentals, limiting their ability to deeply engage with traditional Chinese music and resulting in superficial analysis. This disconnect between aesthetic education and professional training is further exacerbated by the natural compatibility between Kodály's movable-do solfège system and China's pentatonic scale. Therefore, this study focuses on public aesthetic education courses for vocational college students majoring in primary English education, using the cross-cultural guzheng-piano concerto "Ling'an Yihen" as a teaching vehicle. It applies a localized version of the Kodály method's three-P (Preparation-Presentation-Practice) instructional model, integrating simplified stick notation, Curwen hand signs, body percussion, and AI-powered digital percussion sound effects into the curriculum. Empirical teaching results demonstrate that this localized Kodály approach effectively lowers the barrier for beginners in appreciating traditional Chinese music while enhancing students' abilities to discern timbre, rhythm, and emotional expression. Moreover, it provides future teachers with high-quality tools for aesthetic education, achieving an integrated educational goal that combines appreciation of traditional Chinese music, cultural identity, and patriotic values. The study also fills a gap in empirical research regarding the integration of Western teaching methods—such as Kodály—with Chinese national concert works within vocational higher education aesthetics education, offering a localized Chinese model for global diverse music education.

Keywords: Kodály Method; Higher Vocational Public Aesthetic Education; Traditional Chinese Music Appreciation; "Ling'an Yi Hen"; Digital Music Education.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Problem Statement

With the deepening of global cultural exchange, music education increasingly emphasizes the coordinated development of multicultural understanding, cross-cultural communication, and the inheritance of local culture. Drawing on the experience of mature foreign teaching methods does not mean simply imitating or copying them. Rather, it requires taking Chinese musical culture as the foundation and creatively transforming these approaches according to the musical language, aesthetic characteristics, and educational objectives of Chinese national music.

Relevant Chinese educational and cultural policies have proposed adhering to mutual learning, openness, and inclusiveness, while promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture on the basis of maintaining cultural subjectivity. Such policies also encourage traditional arts, including Chinese opera and folk music, to engage with international art forms, creative approaches, and teaching methods. In the field of higher vocational education, public arts courses are expected to combine a Chinese standpoint with an international perspective, enhancing students' comprehensive qualities through aesthetic, cultural, and practical education and enabling them to experience the spirit of national culture through aesthetic activities.

Originating in Hungary, the Kodály Method developed in close connection with Hungarian folk songs, linguistic rhythms, and cultural traditions. Zoltán Kodály believed that the fundamental goal of music education was not merely to cultivate a small number of professional musicians, but to enable every ordinary person to understand, participate in, and enjoy music. Therefore, the Kodály system emphasizes singing and aural training, using movable-do solfège, Curwen hand signs, rhythm reading, and body movement activities to help learners gradually develop musical perception through integrated participation involving "listening, singing, seeing, moving, and thinking" [1]. Forrai noted that the core of Kodály's philosophy lies in enabling children and ordinary learners to develop inner hearing through high-quality and culturally rooted musical materials, thereby building musical literacy through continuous practice [6]. Choksy further argued that the value of the Kodály Method lies not only in its specific tools, but also in its educational logic of progression, understanding through experience, and internalization through practice [7].

This philosophy is highly compatible with the goals of public aesthetic education in China. Non-music majors at higher vocational colleges generally lack systematic training in music theory. Their music-reading ability, sense of rhythm, pitch discrimination, and musical expressiveness vary considerably. If teachers rely excessively on musical terminology, formal analysis, and one-way instruction, students may develop the impression that "music can only be understood by professionals" or that "folk music is distant from daily life." This problem is especially evident in the appreciation of large-scale Chinese instrumental works. After

listening to a complete piece, students may sense an overall atmosphere of tragedy, solemnity, or passion, but they may struggle to explain the origin of these emotions or distinguish the narrative functions of thematic materials, rhythmic textures, tempo changes, and instrumental timbres.

Public music appreciation courses in higher vocational teacher-training programs also have a professional dimension. Students are not only learners of aesthetic education but also potential implementers of aesthetic education in basic education in the future. Although students majoring in Primary School English Education are mainly trained in English teaching, they will also need basic abilities in organizing interdisciplinary activities, designing classroom interaction, carrying out cultural education, and supporting aesthetic education in primary school settings. Therefore, if public music courses merely allow students to "hear a musical work" or "remember several music concepts," their educational value will be difficult to extend into students' future professional development.

The guzheng–piano concerto Regret at Lin'an, composed by He Zhanhao, is based emotionally on the historical narrative of Yue Fei's resistance against the Jin Dynasty and his unfulfilled ambitions. Drawing upon the spiritual implication of Man Jiang Hong (Full River Red), the work combines the traditional timbre, performance techniques, and pentatonic melodies of the guzheng with piano concerto writing and Western structural development. It thus forms a musical work characterized by national style, narrative power, and dramatic tension. Guzheng techniques such as portamento, vibrato, plucking, and glissando delicately express the protagonist's inner emotions, while the piano part enhances dramatic conflict and structural tension through harmony, rhythm, and texture. Existing research has indicated that Regret at Lin'an integrates the language of Chinese instrumental music with Western concerto form and presents distinctive Chinese-Western characteristics in musical structure, timbral design, and emotional expression [5]. Therefore, the work is suitable not only for guiding students to appreciate the aesthetic charm of guzheng music, but also for connecting music teaching with classical poetry, Southern Song history, and education in national spirit.

This study addresses three main questions. First, how can the Kodály Method be adapted to Chinese instrumental works in public aesthetic education classes for non-music majors at higher vocational colleges? Second, how can Regret at Lin'an help students with no musical background move from merely "hearing emotions" to "analyzing musical elements and understanding the source of emotions"? Third, how can folk music appreciation activities be connected with the future primary school teaching practice of higher vocational teacher-training students? To address these questions, this study constructs and implements a 3P teaching model based on Preparation, Presentation, and Practice.

1.2. Review of Domestic and International Literature

International research on the Kodály Method mainly focuses on theoretical interpretation, teaching practice, and cross-cultural application. Relevant studies have pointed out that the Kodály system centers on singing and inner hearing, emphasizing the coordinated development of rhythm, intonation, music literacy, and aesthetic perception [1]. It is not a mechanical training method, but an educational system centered on musical practice and gradual development of learners' musical abilities [2]. Forrai emphasized the importance of mother-tongue music, local folk songs, singing activities, and high-quality musical materials [6]. Choksy discussed implementation paths across different stages, from infancy to adulthood, demonstrating the method's strong adaptability and accessibility [7].

With the development of multicultural education, international studies have increasingly examined how musical materials from different ethnic and regional cultures can be integrated into teacher education. Nethsinghe and Joseph pointed out that pre-service teachers' participation in listening to, singing, discussing, and designing lessons around music from diverse cultures can strengthen cultural understanding and foster an awareness of teaching diverse learners [8]. However, existing research has mainly selected European folk songs, children's songs, or short vocal materials. There has been relatively little attention to Chinese guzheng–piano concertos, and even less systematic classroom research centered on Chinese classical poetry, historical narratives, and the aesthetic appreciation of Chinese instrumental music.

Domestic research on the Kodály Method in China has mainly focused on primary and secondary school music education, preschool music education, and professional music education in universities. Existing studies generally affirm the role of movable-do solfège, Curwen hand signs, rhythm training, and body percussion in developing students' pitch sense, rhythmic ability, cooperation skills, and musical expressiveness. However, there is relatively limited research targeting non-music majors in higher vocational colleges. Higher vocational students have limited learning time, diverse academic backgrounds, and significant differences in musical foundation. Therefore, public aesthetic education courses cannot completely replicate the requirements of professional music training, nor can they simply adopt forms of music activities designed for younger schoolchildren. It remains necessary to explore how to extract the core mechanisms of the Kodály Method suitable for higher vocational public aesthetic education and transform them into lightweight, participatory, and transferable teaching practices.

Studies on Regret at Lin'an mainly focus on its compositional characteristics, guzheng performance techniques, emotional expression, and Chinese-Western aesthetic integration. Relevant research has suggested that the work combines the timbral language of the guzheng with piano concerto textures, creating a dramatic and narrative musical expression that embodies both national character and modernity in melody, rhythm, and performance techniques [5]. These studies provide an important basis for understanding the work itself. However, research remains limited on using this work as a medium for folk music aesthetic education among non-music majors at higher vocational colleges, especially regarding how to transform complex performance techniques, concerto structures, and historical emotions into learning tasks that students can perceive, express, and apply.

In addition, public aesthetic education courses in higher vocational teacher-training programs still face insufficient connection between aesthetic education and professional competence development. Du Wei pointed out that aesthetic education concerns not only the acquisition of aesthetic knowledge but also the formation of individual emotion, personality, values, and spiritual life [3]. Peng Jixiang similarly argued that arts education can enhance people's

sensibility, understanding, and creativity through artistic images and aesthetic experiences [4]. Therefore, public aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges should not remain at the level of knowledge introduction. Instead, it should help students develop aesthetic competence and cultural awareness through specific works, practical activities, and cultural contexts, and further transform these abilities into teaching resources applicable in future classrooms

1.3. Research Significance and Methodology

At the theoretical level, this study expands the scope of cross-cultural localization research on the Kodály Method. The Kodály system emphasizes local musical materials. Its essence does not lie in using songs or scores from a particular country, but in selecting high-quality materials from one's own national musical culture that are appropriate for learners. Applying the method to Regret at Lin'an is therefore a response to the principle of "local music orientation." Through adaptations in material selection, tool simplification, classroom organization, digital technology, and professional tasks, this study attempts to construct a practical framework integrating Western music pedagogy with Chinese instrumental music.

At the practical level, the study addresses common problems in public music appreciation classes at higher vocational colleges: students may be hesitant to participate, unable to express their views, or unable to engage deeply with musical works. Stick notation, Curwen hand signs, and body percussion are used to transform abstract musical concepts into visible, audible, singable, and movable learning experiences. Man Jiang Hong and the story of Yue Fei connect musical emotions with students' existing historical and literary knowledge. AI-based digital percussion and online learning platforms expand interactive opportunities, while primary school classroom activity design tasks promote the transformation of aesthetic experience into teaching competence.

The study adopts four methods. First, the literature research method is used to review Kodály theory, public aesthetic education research, relevant policies, and analyses of Regret at Lin'an. Second, questionnaires are used before class to investigate students' historical and cultural knowledge, musical learning experiences, music-reading ability, and learning needs, and after class to assess their classroom experience and teaching transfer. Third, classroom action research is conducted by observing student participation, task completion, and learning difficulties during implementation of the 3P model and adjusting teaching accordingly. Fourth, semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected students after class to supplement quantitative data with students' aesthetic experiences and views on professional development.

2. Theoretical Foundations, Learner Analysis, and Teaching Framework

2.1. Localized Adaptation of the Kodály Method

The fundamental concepts of the Kodály Method include singing first, the combination of movable-do solfège and Curwen hand signs, rhythm literacy, progressive instruction, multisensory participation, and local music orientation. Its essential logic is to enable learners to establish direct musical experience through listening, singing, movement, and rhythmic practice before gradually developing the ability to read, analyze, and express music. For higher vocational students with weak musical foundations, this path—from experience to understanding and from participation to expression—is highly suitable.

However, the Kodály Method originated in the Hungarian music education context, and its original materials mainly rely on Hungarian folk songs and European tonal music. The learners and course objectives in higher vocational public aesthetic education also differ from those in professional music training. Therefore, this study adapts the method in four aspects.

First, localization of teaching materials. Regret at Lin'an is selected as the central musical work, while the story of Yue Fei and Man Jiang Hong serve as cultural threads. This allows students to enter the work through a familiar Chinese historical and cultural context and understand the relationship between musical emotion and historical narrative.

Second, simplification of teaching tools. Typical rhythmic patterns, melodic excerpts, and contrasting emotional passages are extracted from the work. Complex ornamentation, performance symbols, and modal analysis are omitted. Stick notation is used to present long and short sounds, dynamic patterns, and rhythmic density, reducing the difficulty of reading complex scores.

Third, adaptation to students' professional background. The participants are students majoring in Primary School English Education. Therefore, the course should not only focus on their personal aesthetic development but also consider their future needs in organizing cultural activities, interdisciplinary teaching, and class management in primary schools. Accordingly, tasks are designed in which students incorporate Curwen hand signs, rhythm games, or Chinese cultural themes into primary school classroom activities.

Fourth, digitalization of classroom technology. In response to limited equipment, large class sizes, and restricted forms of participation, AI-based digital percussion effects and mobile rhythm tools are introduced. These tools provide stable beats, varied timbres, and immediate interactive feedback. They function as supplementary resources rather than substitutes for real instruments or teachers' aesthetic guidance.

2.2. Aesthetic Value of Regret at Lin'an

Regret at Lin'an is highly narrative and emotional. Based on the historical tragedy of Yue Fei's unfulfilled ambition and inability to serve his country as he wished, it combines the delicate expression of Chinese instrumental music with the dramatic conflict of Western concerto writing. Its historical figures, classical poetry, and patriotic emotions provide important points of entry for students' musical understanding.

First, the work possesses remarkable instrumental aesthetic value. The guzheng's timbre is bright and flexible. Portamento and vibrato can convey restraint, sorrow, and hesitation, while plucking and glissando can portray emotional outbursts. The piano, through its weightier timbre, harmonic background, rhythmic textures, and structural momentum, intensifies dramatic conflict. The dialogue, interweaving, and contrast between the guzheng and piano help students understand how timbre, technique, and accompaniment layers influence emotional expression.

Second, the work offers advantages for interdisciplinary integration. Regret at Lin'an is closely related to Yue Fei, Man Jiang Hong, and the history of the Southern Song Dynasty. Students are usually familiar with lines such as "My

hair rises in anger beneath my helmet," "I long to feast upon the flesh of invaders," and "One day, I shall recover the old rivers and mountains." Teachers can guide students to consider how "anger," "sorrow," "aspiration," and "regret" in the poem are transformed into tempo, dynamics, register, rhythmic density, and timbral changes in music. In this way, music appreciation becomes an integrated learning process in which literature, history, and art illuminate one another.

Third, the work has value-oriented educational significance. Yue Fei's loyalty, responsibility, ideals, and tragic fate should not be reduced to slogans. Instead, students should experience these meanings through music. In slow, low, and lingering melodies, students can sense oppression and helplessness; in sections with faster rhythm and stronger dynamics, they can sense grief, indignation, and resistance; and in the conclusion, they can experience the regret of unfulfilled ambition. Through such experiences, students can gain a more concrete understanding of the spiritual world of the historical figure.

2.3. Learner Analysis

The participants in this study were second-year students majoring in Primary School English Education at a higher vocational college. A total of 92 pre-class questionnaires were distributed and 92 valid questionnaires were collected, resulting in a valid response rate of 100%.

The survey shows a clear imbalance between students' historical-cultural knowledge and their musical foundation. A total of 89.1% of students reported that they had encountered the story of Yue Fei, Man Jiang Hong, or related historical contexts in Chinese language or history classes, or through film and television works. This suggests that historical and cultural resources can provide an important cognitive basis for understanding Regret at Lin'an.

In contrast, students' musical foundation was relatively weak. Only 54.2% of students reported that they could basically read numbered notation, recognize common note values, or distinguish simple rhythms. The remaining students had only vague understandings of meter, rhythm patterns, dynamics, and melodic direction. Some students had participated in choir, dance, or school arts activities, but lacked systematic music theory training. After listening to the complete work, most students could identify its overall emotions as tragic, oppressive, or passionate, but found it difficult to distinguish thematic sections, rhythmic changes, and timbral contrasts, or to explain the different functions of guzheng techniques and piano accompaniment.

In terms of learning preferences, students generally did not enjoy extended one-way theoretical instruction. They preferred singing, rhythm imitation, group cooperation, video viewing, and digital interaction. Some students also expressed the hope of learning "simple, practical music activities that can be brought into primary school classrooms." Therefore, this course follows the principles of "culture first, experience as entry, tiered participation, and professional transfer." Historical culture provides the foundation for understanding; rhythm, humming, hand signs, and movement serve as entry points; tiered tasks address different ability levels; and lesson design activities facilitate professional transfer.

3. Construction of a Localized Kodály Three-P Closed-Loop Teaching Model

This study, grounded in constructivist pre-learning theory and differentiated instruction theory, establishes a comprehensive educational model based on Preparation-Presentation-Practice (P-P-P). Each phase focuses on core pedagogical mechanisms, minimizes fragmented classroom procedural descriptions, and emphasizes localized adaptation logic.

3.1. Preparation: Pre-Class Cognitive Priming

Prior to the aesthetic practice class, students complete preparatory work via the online learning platform "Xuexitong," moving beyond traditional lecture-based models. The preview materials are structured in a tiered format: one track presents historical texts related to Yue Fei, including an interpretation of "Man Jiang Hong," helping students build cultural context; the other shares a full performance video of "Lin'an Yi Hen" to establish early auditory impressions. A simplified stick notation is provided to help beginners familiarize themselves with the rhythmic patterns. Simultaneously, an online survey assessing students' prior knowledge in literature, history, and music literacy is distributed to accurately gauge their baseline proficiency.

3.2. Presentation: Tiered Aesthetic Practice

The classroom follows a sequence of context introduction, goal setting, differentiated aesthetic experience, and collective sharing. Simplified rhythm charts, Kodály hand signs, and AI-powered percussion instruments serve as learning tools. Heterogeneous group collaboration—pairing students with varying strengths—addresses gaps in music theory understanding. Learning progresses gradually from basic melody humming and fundamental rhythm perception to contrasting rhythms that reveal narrative shifts in emotional suppression. Finally, a multi-dimensional auditory experience is created through guzheng performance demonstrations combined with digital sound effects. Throughout, theoretical explanations are avoided; instead, teachers and students engage in dynamic, multisensory interactions—moving and playing together—to guide students in independently connecting musical elements (dynamics, accompaniment textures, tempo, etc.) with historical narratives.

3.3. Practice: Tiered Extension after Class

After class, tiered assignments are designed according to students' abilities and career needs. All students must complete foundational rhythm exercises to reinforce core rhythmic patterns. Advanced tasks, such as expressive humming, are optional and encourage students to explore emotional differences through variations in tempo and dynamics, deepening empathetic engagement. For teacher education students, specialized extension tasks require designing interactive English language games for elementary classrooms using Kodály hand signs and bodily rhythms, promoting practical application of teaching methods. All assignments are submitted online and reviewed by instructors.

3.4. Built-in Strategies for Addressing Key Challenges

The main instructional objectives are for students to master rhythm singing using stick notation, distinguish emotional expressions across different accompaniment textures, and understand how guzheng techniques shape mood. The primary challenge lies in students' limited grasp of music theory, which hinders their ability to discern textural changes during listening and affects rhythmic accuracy. To address

these issues, I employ simplified rhythm charts to reduce cognitive load, organize peer-assisted small-group learning to narrow ability gaps, use AI-driven digital percussion to enhance auditory perception, and leverage students' familiarity with "Man Jiang Hong" to anchor emotional understanding, thereby lowering the threshold for cultural empathy. Through interdisciplinary integration, abstract musical elements are made tangible, enabling students to perceive the ebb and flow of the music more intuitively while interpreting lyrical meaning. Digital tools provide real-time feedback on rhythmic accuracy, allowing students to correct errors iteratively and gradually develop internal rhythmic stability. This multidimensional intervention not only effectively overcomes theoretical barriers but also enhances students' aesthetic appreciation and practical skills, ensuring key challenges are resolved in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

4. Teaching Results and Reflective

4.1. Multidimensional Educational Outcomes

ValidationClassroom observation showed that most students actively participated in rhythm imitation, body percussion, and group discussion. Approximately 91% of students were able to complete imitation singing or hand-sign coordination for the main melodic excerpt under teacher guidance and could initially distinguish the emotional effects of syncopated, sixteenth-note, and dotted rhythmic patterns. Digital interaction broadened participation: even students with weaker musical foundations could join through clapping, movement, and rhythm chants. Classroom distraction was reduced.

The completion rate for the basic post-class rhythm task reached 98.7%. Most students were able to maintain a basic beat and imitate the assigned rhythm patterns. More than 70% of students could express contrasting emotional states of restraint and indignation by adjusting tempo and dynamics. Some students began to use expressions such as "the tempo becomes faster," "the rhythm becomes denser," "the sound becomes stronger," and "the guzheng portamento sounds like a sigh." This indicates that they were beginning to connect subjective feeling with specific musical elements.

Questionnaires and interviews indicated that the localized Kodály model helped lower the threshold for folk music appreciation. Some students reported that they had previously considered Chinese instrumental works "difficult to understand," "too long," or "far removed from themselves." However, after poetic introduction, rhythm imitation, and hand-sign activities, they were able to perceive the character's emotions through melody, rhythm, and timbre. The contrast between guzheng and piano timbres also made the distinction between "inner emotion" and "external conflict" more apparent.

In terms of cultural identification, students generally approved of the integrated teaching of Man Jiang Hong and Regret at Lin'an. When learning the story of Yue Fei alone, students tended to remember historical figures and events. After experiencing oppression, passion, and sorrow through music, they developed a more concrete understanding of "unfulfilled ambition." This suggests that music can enhance the emotional impact of historical and cultural education.

In terms of professional transfer, students' rhythm games, hand-sign interactions, and poetry-based music activities still showed some shortcomings, such as imprecise objectives and overly simple assessment methods. Nevertheless, most groups recognized that primary school music activities should be low-threshold, highly participatory, repeatable, and culturally meaningful. Public aesthetic education can therefore provide practical resources for students' future class cultural activities and interdisciplinary teaching.

4.2. Limitations of the Model Implementation

This single-session teaching practice had several shortcomings: first, the limited duration of one class period restricted time available for small-group ensemble practice, leaving students with weak rhythmic foundations insufficient opportunity for reinforcement; second, differences in students' mobile phone models led to uneven experiences with the GarageBand digital sound library; third, the empirical sample covered only students majoring in primary English education, lacking comparative data across multiple disciplines, thus requiring further validation of the model's generalizability.

4.3. Iterative Optimization Pathways

To address these limitations, a systematic optimization plan is proposed: introducing online rhythm micro-practices before class, shortening in-class foundational training time, and equipping classrooms with standardized teaching tablets and uniform percussion sound templates to eliminate hardware disparities. Future work will expand into comparative teaching across disciplines such as early childhood education. Based on this model, a series of guzheng-based folk music teaching materials will be developed, forming a comprehensive institutionalized curriculum for folk music appreciation at vocational colleges.

5. Multidimensional Educational Value of the Localized Kodály Model

5.1. Innovative Value in Cross-Cultural Music Education

The core of the Kodály system is not to promote a fixed method in every country, but to emphasize that each nation should establish a music education system rooted in its own excellent musical culture and suited to its learners [6]. This study uses Regret at Lin'an, Man Jiang Hong, and the story of Yue Fei as core materials, applying movable-do solfège, Curwen hand signs, body percussion, and rhythm training to Chinese instrumental music teaching. It represents a Chinese interpretation of Kodály's principle of local music orientation.

The practice demonstrates that Western music education theories can become effective tools for understanding and disseminating Chinese musical culture, but only through adequate cultural transformation. The melodic language, modal features, timbral aesthetics, and historical narratives of Chinese instrumental works differ from those of European folk songs and Western tonal music. Teachers need to redesign rhythm materials, melodic excerpts, hand-sign activities, and contextual questions according to the characteristics of the work, rather than mechanically transferring existing teaching procedures. Through adaptation of materials, tools, contexts, and assessment, the Kodály Method and Chinese folk music can empower one another: the method provides a pathway for beginners to enter Chinese instrumental music, while Chinese works enrich the cultural content and cross-cultural practice of the Kodály approach.

5.2. Value for the Reform of Public Aesthetic Education

Traditional folk music appreciation courses at higher vocational colleges may overemphasize knowledge introduction while neglecting aesthetic practice, prioritize complete listening while overlooking musical participation, and focus on teacher explanation rather than student expression. The Kodály 3P model emphasizes a closed loop of preparation before class, experience during class, and practice after class, helping students transform from passive listeners into active participants.

Students do not need a high level of music theory before participating in music through clapping, movement, humming, hand signs, and discussion. Bodily movement helps them perceive the beat; vocal imitation helps them understand melody; timbre comparison helps them identify instrumental differences; and historical context helps them understand musical emotion. This multisensory approach gives concrete support to abstract musical knowledge and accords with the accessibility, experiential nature, and educational value of public aesthetic education.

Chinese instrumental music should not be regarded only as professional stage art. It should also become a cultural resource that young people can approach, perceive, and express. Through participatory teaching, students can learn about the guzheng, understand pentatonic scales, experience poetic imagery, and gradually form emotional identification with fine traditional Chinese culture through concrete aesthetic experience.

5.3. Value for Collaborative Development of Pre-Service Teachers

The special value of public aesthetic education courses in higher vocational teacher-training programs lies not only in supporting students' individual aesthetic growth, but also in cultivating future resources for aesthetic education in basic education. Although Primary School English Education majors may not become specialist music teachers, they may still need to organize music-related activities in comprehensive practice courses, class activities, theme education, English culture classes, and campus arts events. Therefore, basic abilities in music organization, rhythm activity design, and Chinese cultural expression have practical value for their professional development.

After experiencing Curwen hand signs, rhythm chants, and body percussion in class, students are asked to adapt these tools into games suitable for children. This enables them to understand the organizational logic of teaching activities. Children's music activities should avoid complex terminology and should feature clear instructions, repeated practice, positive feedback, and cooperative participation. Chinese cultural content should likewise be presented through poetry, rhythm, stories, and contexts that children can understand easily. Such task design helps students shift from a learner's perspective to a teacher's perspective and lays a foundation for future educational practice.

6. Conclusion

This study takes public aesthetic education courses for students majoring in Primary School English Education at a higher vocational college as its practical setting and uses the guzheng–piano concerto Regret at Lin'an as the teaching medium. The Preparation–Presentation–Practice model of the Kodály Method is adapted to the Chinese local context. The findings indicate that, for non-music majors with little or no musical background, the use of simplified stick notation, movable-do solfège, Curwen hand signs, body percussion, group cooperation, and AI-based digital percussion can lower the threshold for participation in Chinese instrumental music appreciation. Students can gradually move from a general perception of musical emotion to distinguishing rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, and tempo changes.

The integration of Regret at Lin'an with Man Jiang Hong and the story of Yue Fei provides a concrete cultural context for students' understanding of Chinese instrumental music. Through poetry recitation, rhythm experience, melody imitation, and timbre comparison, students can more specifically perceive the protagonist's restraint, indignation, and unfulfilled ambition. They can also deepen their understanding of fine traditional Chinese culture and the spirit of patriotism through aesthetic activity. Thus, folk music aesthetic education, cultural identification education, and patriotic value formation can be organically integrated.

For higher vocational pre-service teachers, the value of this study also lies in the professional transfer of teaching methods. Post-class tiered tasks transform Kodály tools into rhythm games, hand-sign activities, and interdisciplinary cultural activities that can be used in primary school classrooms. Public aesthetic education therefore serves not only the improvement of students' artistic literacy, but also the development of their future teaching competence. The practice demonstrates that the Kodály Method is not limited to Western folk songs or basic vocal instruction. Through adaptation rooted in Chinese musical culture and aligned with the characteristics of higher vocational students and digital teaching conditions, it can become a teaching resource with broad application value in public aesthetic education courses.

This study is limited by a single class session, the scope of the research sample, and equipment conditions. Future research should expand the participant pool, conduct long-term tracking, develop a series of Chinese instrumental music courses, and extend the model into basic education internship contexts for further validation. Overall, the integration of the Kodály Method with Chinese instrumental works provides a practical path for reforming public aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges and offers a meaningful Chinese case for localized practice in multicultural music education.

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