



CONSTRUCTING THE YI FOLK MUSIC FOR PIANO GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT KUNMING UNIVERSITY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were: 1. To study Yi folk music. 2. To construct Yi folk music for piano guidebook for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences 3. To experiment the teaching by using the Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences 4. To evaluate the teaching by using the Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences

This research employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative research component utilized interview guidelines to gather insights from six key informants, while the quantitative research component involved 15 first-year musicology major students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods, with the research hypothesis stating that the formative and summative scores should reach at least 70/80 points to validate the effectiveness of the guidebook.



The research findings were as follows: (1) Yi folk music showcases the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the Yi ethnic group, characterized by its diverse styles, beautiful melodies, and deep emotional expression. It is closely intertwined with local customs, beliefs, and everyday life. Yi folk songs can generally be categorized into narrative songs, labor songs, lullabies, folk songs, children's songs, love songs, and mountain songs; (2) the guidebook comprised five chapters, including an introduction, an overview of Yi folk music, a selection of Yi folk music adapted for piano, and three chapters of Yi piano works; (3) the experimental study was conducted over 15 lessons, with a structured lesson plan detailing time allocation and content for each session; and (4) the average formative test score was 75.60, while the summative test score averaged 84.07, demonstrating the effectiveness of the guidebook in enhancing students' understanding and performance of Yi folk music. By integrating Chinese cultural traditions and the musical expressions of the Yi people, this study highlights the importance of preserving and promoting ethnic folk music in contemporary music education, ensuring that students develop a deeper appreciation for the beliefs, customs, and artistic heritage embedded within traditional Chinese music.

Keywords: Yi Folk Music; Piano Guidebook; Arts and Sciences

Introduction

The Yi ethnic group in Yunnan is a major ethnic minority in China, mainly distributed in the southern Yunnan region of Yunnan Province. The Yi nationality is the seventh most populous ethnic minority in China, with a population of more than 8 million. Mainly distributed in Yunnan Province, especially in the mountainous and plateau areas of southern Yunnan. The Yi ethnic group uses Yi language, which is an independent language system divided into multiple dialects. Yi language is a part of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The Yi ethnic group has a rich and diverse cultural tradition, including unique clothing, architecture, cuisine, and handicrafts. Its cultural elements are often reflected in songs, dances, festival celebrations, and religious ceremonies (Li & Feng, 1993). The traditional





costumes of the Yi ethnic group are colorful and finely crafted, often reflecting the local geography and climate characteristics. The clothing styles of the Yi ethnic group in different branches and regions also have their own characteristics. Religious belief: The Yi people believe in polytheism and worship natural deities. Some Yi ethnic groups in certain regions still practice Buddhism and Taoism. Religious beliefs play an important role in their daily lives and cultural activities. The Yi ethnic group has many traditional festivals, such as the "Torch Festival" and "March 3rd", which are usually accompanied by rich celebrations such as singing and dancing, sports competitions, and banquets (Tan & Li, 2018).

The Yi ethnic group in Yunnan is well-known for its unique and diverse cultural characteristics, and is one of the rich and diverse ethnic groups in China. Yunnan Yi music has strong ethnic characteristics, reflecting the long history and unique cultural traditions of the Yi people. Yi ethnic music is often accompanied by traditional instrumental performances and dance performances. Instrumental instruments include the clarinet, lusheng, whistle, etc., while dance is often a vivid and ritualistic performance that conveys the lives, beliefs, and social interactions of the Yi people. The Yi ethnic music tradition is mainly passed down orally, incorporating folk stories, myths and legends into music through generations, forming unique songs and dances. The religious beliefs of the Yi people are also reflected in their music. Music performances in some religious ceremonies and sacrificial activities carry reverence and prayer for the gods (Yang, 2005).

The culture of piano originated in the West and has formed a complete piano culture system, so piano learning around the world uses this Western piano culture system. Although China's piano music culture has undergone significant development and improvement over the past half century. In the training of primary and secondary schools affiliated with the Conservatory of Music, students' professional abilities have been continuously improved with high quality. The curriculum construction and planning of professional music colleges and top-ranked comprehensive universities' piano majors have also made a qualitative leap, covering courses such as music theory knowledge, piano skills, music history, chamber music, etc. The teaching level and faculty have been



continuously improved (Li, 2017). Students have the opportunity to be exposed to piano performances of different styles and periods. However, in private universities, some students do not start learning piano from a young age, and their piano foundation is weak. They have very limited choices in the purpose of playing music, and most of them come from common textbooks such as "Piano Fundamentals Tutorial", "Czerny Etudes", and "Baer". There are very few textbooks on how to play ethnic minority music styles, and the styles of the songs in these textbooks are relatively single. In order to enable students to play piano works in more diverse styles while improving their performance skills, it is necessary to explore them in depth in future teaching (Bian, 1996). In the past two years of teaching, researchers have become increasingly eager to promote this goal. At the same time, leveraging the advantages of Yunnan's numerous ethnic minorities, combining piano performance with Yunnan's ethnic minority piano works, and showcasing the tone and style of Yi music through piano performance will be one of the focuses of this article. There are many excellent local composers in Yunnan, but representative composers who have conducted in-depth research on Yi music and accurately grasped its style include Liu Xiaogeng and Zhang Chao. Therefore, this article starts with the works of local composers Zhang Chao and Liu Xiaogeng in Yunnan, selects piano works representing the Sani and Nisu branches of the Yi ethnic group in Yunnan, and constructs a set of Yi music piano performance teaching guidelines suitable for the piano foundation of first-year students in Kunming University of Arts and Sciences.

Research Objectives

1. To study Yi folk music.
2. To construct Yi-Folk music for piano guidebook for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences.
3. To experiment the teaching by using the Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences.
4. To evaluate the teaching by using the Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences.





Literature reviews

Yunnan Yi Music: Due to the historical origins of the Yi ethnic group, there are numerous branches and widespread distribution. Due to differences in human and natural environments and influencing factors, various aspects of music genres, titles, musical forms, classifications, etc. present complex and special characteristics. Therefore, the complexity of music of the Yunnan Yi ethnic group is also rare in China's minority music culture. In the Sani and Axi branches of the Yunnan Yi ethnic group, the two ethnic groups have different languages, culture, and customs, but due to regional differences, there are some differences and similarities in music, dance, and artistic functions.

Folk Songs: Yi ethnic folk songs are songs created and sung by the people of various branches of the Yi ethnic group in their production and life. Initially created orally, these songs were also passed down through the folk of each branch of the Yi ethnic group through oral transmission. As they involve various aspects of the lives of the ancestors of each branch of the Yi ethnic group, these folk songs are mainly narrative songs, often focusing on singing epics, history, characters, and stories. They are also used in festivals, weddings, and various sacrificial activities. Their language is simple yet thought-provoking. From the perspective of usage environment, folk songs can be divided into labor songs - songs created during the process of labor and production, such as the following songs, cow songs, grinding songs, etc; Ritual song - a song performed at a sacrificial ceremony, mainly in the form of "Bimo" ritual songs; In addition, it also includes love songs, nursery rhymes, etc. Traditional Yi folk songs mainly use five-character and seven-character lyrics, with single, double-, and four-character phrases as the main musical phrases. Rhymes are usually borrowed from homophones of words and are performed in a pentatonic mode. Among the folk songs of the Sani and Nisu branches of the Yi ethnic group, the representative one is the historical poem "Ashima" that has been passed down in the Sani branch of Lunan County. The Nisu branch has famous dance and song suites such as "Xihe" and "Jiasu". At the same time, the Nisu branch is also the source of the four





famous tunes of the Yi ethnic group: "Haicai Tune", "Yam Tune", "Wushan Tune", and "Four Tunes" (Li & Feng,1993).

Song and Dance Category: As a nation that pursues spiritual pursuits far more than material pursuits, the Yi ethnic group's song and dance play a very important role in their daily lives in terms of creation, use, and influence. Each branch has its own representative song and dance music, which can be roughly divided into four types: "Jumping Three Strings", "Jumping Strings", "Singing", and "Luo Zuo". Among them, the songs and dances of the Sani and Nisu branches are collectively referred to as "Jumping Moon" or "Jumping Music". This ethnic style of song and dance is mainly popular in Yi ethnic settlements such as Honghe Prefecture in Yunnan Province. It is a popular social activity for young men and women of various Yi branches during festivals. During the dance, Yi young men play the big three strings or play the flute, and dance with Yi-women.

The traditional song and dance of the Yi ethnic group consists of two parts: music and dance. Dance is further divided into elderly dance and youth dance based on the speed of rhythm. The main accompaniment instrument used in elderly dance is the small three-stringed instrument, which is characterized by slow movements and smooth rhythm; The main accompaniment instrument for youth dance is the Big Three Strings, with a lively and cheerful rhythm, and jumping as the main movement. The traditional dance of the Sani branch of the Yi ethnic group is called "Sani Jumping Music". The Sani people express their love for the "Sani Three Strings" dance by saying, "If a person does not dance music, they will live in the world for nothing; if they can see the sound of the three strings, their heart will be delighted and their feet will itch; The traditional social dance of the Nisu branch is also known as "eating fire tobacco". Men and women eat fire tobacco at night and sing songs, hence the name "cigarette box dance". It means joyful dance (also known as jumping moon), accompanied by bamboo flute, three stringed huqin, moon qin, three strings, cigarette box and other instruments (Yang, 2005).





Instrumental music: The traditional instrumental music of various branches of the Yi ethnic group mainly serves the traditional folk songs and folk song and dance music of the Yi ethnic group. There are more than thirty types of instruments, and their performance forms are mostly solo, rarely ensemble. In terms of playing styles, traditional Yi musical instruments are mainly divided into four types: wind instruments, playing instruments, pull instruments, and percussion instruments. Among them, wind instruments include hulusheng, bamboo flute, suona, bawu, grass pole, yi flute, copper horn, horse cloth, etc. Playing instruments mainly include guxian, yueqin, and sanxian. Pull instruments mainly include hujia and sihu, and percussion instruments include octagonal drum, copper bell, drum, cigarette box, gong, cymbal, etc. Among the numerous Yi musical instruments mentioned above, the Yueqin, Kouxian, bamboo flute, and Sanxian are widely circulated.

Research Methodology

This research was a mixed-method between qualitative and quantitative research. The research tools in qualitative research were interview guideline and an observation form which was conducted by interview six key informants. In quantitative research, the population was 15 first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences. The sample was 15 students which was selected by using purposive sampling method. This research used descriptive statistics to analyze the data. statistics analysis for analyze the data. The research hypothesis was formative score and summative score must be 70/80 point to pass the hypothesis.

Results

Studying Yi folk music: The style of Yi music is diverse, with beautiful melodies and a rough emotional character. A typical characteristic of it is its close integration with local customs. For example, there are various traditional tunes in Yi folklore, such as Pa shan diao, Jinmen diao, and Ying ke diao. Some of these tunes have fixed lyrics, while others may feature impromptu lyric creation.





From the perspective of song types, Yi folk songs can generally be divided into narrative songs, labor songs, lullabies, folk songs, children's songs, love songs, mountain songs, and songs for coaxing children. These songs are created by the Yi people in their daily lives and labor, with melodies and lyrics filled with the essence of life. Yi music features a variety of forms, including narrative songs, mountain songs, love songs, dance songs, and children's songs. Narrative songs are typically used to sing about creation stories, ethnic history, and rituals such as Ji long and Ji shan. They tend to have short structures, narrow vocal ranges, and limited melodic variations, exhibiting strong narrative qualities. Mountain songs, on the other hand, have free rhythms, wide vocal ranges, and lively melodies.

The rhythm of Yi music is rich and varied. The rhythm of mountain songs is free, with wide vocal ranges and undulating melodies. Singing forms include solo, duet, trio, and collective singing. After duets conclude, they often continue with choral or group responses. These songs are typically sung softly and melodiously, with lyrics frequently being either improvised or derived from traditional verses, creating vivid imagery. Specific Instruments and Musical Forms. The instruments used in Yi music include drums, Pipa, wooden xylophones, San xuan, Er hu, flutes, bamboo flutes, and Suo na. The Tong gu shi er diao is a comprehensive art form that combines different instruments to produce a range of rhythmic and melodic combinations. The Tóng gǔ shí èr diào mostly consists of folk songs characterized by bright, powerful melodies that are bold and full of local flavor.

Historical Background and Cultural Significance, Yi music not only records the history, science, production life, traditions, and philosophies of the Yi ethnicity but also possesses strong emotional appeal. Yi folk songs are an essential carrier of Yi culture, featuring diverse forms and rich content. For example, narrative songs are common in singing about creation, ethnic history, and rituals like Ji long and Ji shan, while love songs are often performed in social contexts between men and women. With their beautiful melodies and engaging vocal styles, Yi folk songs have captivated many listeners' hearts. As the economy develops, they continuously innovate, gaining new contemporary significance.





Constructing the Yi folk music for piano guidebook for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences: The Yi folk music for piano guidebook Main content as follow: 1) Historical and Cultural Background of Yunnan Yi folk music, 2) Basics and Techniques of Piano, 3) Yi folk music for piano-Huo ba jie, 4) Yi folk music for piano-Tiaoye Ge, 5) Yi folk music for piano-Shan Tong and Lesson plan. Before using the guidebook for teaching, researchers have the evaluation of the guidebook by the experts before using it in the experimental phase, the result of the evaluation showed the overall average score of 4.64, which signifies a high level of approval from the experts regarding the quality of the educational content. Key strengths include clear teaching objectives, strong cultural and artistic values, and effective integration of theory and practice.

Experimenting the teaching by using Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences guidebook: Four tests were administered in the " Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students " teaching experiment, including three formative tests, which were administered after the 5th, 8th and 11th lessons, and one summative test, which was administered in the 15th lesson.

Evaluating the teaching by using Yi folk music for piano for teaching first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences guidebook: The evaluation of student performance through formative and summative assessments provides valuable insights into their learning progress and knowledge retention. Below is a detailed analysis comparing the three formative tests with the summative test scores. Formative Test 1 was 70.27, Formative Test 2 was 74.60, Formative Test 3 was 81.93, Average Score of Formative Tests was 75.60. and Summative Test Average Score was 84.07, The average score for the summative test is significantly higher at 84.07.

The data indicates a positive correlation between formative assessments and summative test performance, highlighting the importance of continuous assessment in the learning process.



Discussions

According to the findings, Yi music has a wide range of styles, lovely melodies, and a strong emotional core. Its strong ties to regional traditions are one of its defining traits. Yi folklore, for instance, contains a number of traditional songs, including Ying ke diao, Jinmen diao, and Pa shan diao. While some of these songs have predetermined lyrics, others might have lyrics that are written on the spot. From the standpoint of song categories, Yi folk songs can be broadly categorized as folk songs, children's songs, love songs, mountain songs, lullabies, story songs, work songs, and songs for luring kids (Cao, 2013). These songs, whose melodies and lyrics capture the essence of existence, were written by the Yi people as they went about their everyday lives and labor. Yi music features a variety of forms, including narrative songs, mountain songs, love songs, dance songs, and children's songs. Narrative songs are typically used to sing about creation stories, ethnic history, and rituals such as Ji long and Ji shan. They tend to have short structures, narrow vocal ranges, and limited melodic variations, exhibiting strong narrative qualities. Mountain songs, on the other hand, have free rhythms, wide vocal ranges, and lively melodies this consist with (Fan, 2005).

The research conducted on constructing a guidebook for teaching Yi folk music for piano at Kunming University of Arts. The research focused on constructing a guidebook for teaching Yi folk music on the piano to first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences. This approach aims to blend cultural heritage with modern educational techniques, acknowledging the importance of traditional music in contemporary learning environments. Research by Wong (2021) on piano instruction methods reveals that combining cultural pieces with classical techniques leads to better retention of skills among first-year students. This aligns with the Yi guidebook's integration of theory and practice, suggesting that culturally relevant materials can improve learning outcomes. The construction of the Yi folk music for piano guidebook represents a significant step toward integrating cultural education within music instruction at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences. Its positive evaluation suggests that it may serve as a valuable resource not only for teaching Yi folk music but also as a model for



incorporating other cultural forms into music pedagogy. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of using such guidebooks on students' musical proficiency and cultural understanding.

New Knowledges

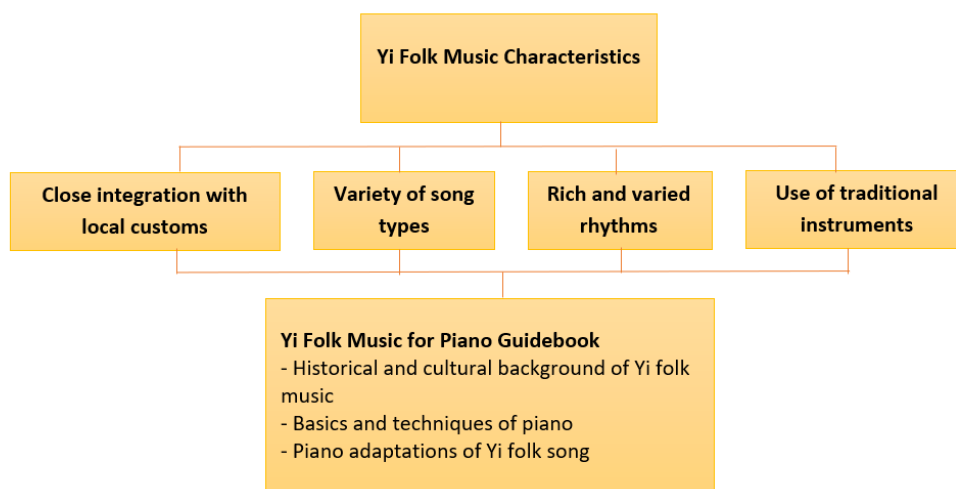


Figure 1: New Knowledges Diagram of Yi Folk Music for Piano Guidebook for Teaching First-Year Students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences.

Conclusions

the study and teaching of Yi folk music offer a rich exploration of cultural heritage through music, deeply intertwined with the Yi people's customs, history, and daily life. The Yi folk music for piano guidebook, designed for first-year students at Kunming University of Arts and Sciences, demonstrates the successful integration of cultural education and music theory, garnering high approval from experts for its content and teaching effectiveness. The teaching experiment, which included formative and summative assessments, highlights the guidebook's positive impact on student learning, as evidenced by the notable improvement in test scores over time. This reinforces the importance of incorporating traditional



music into contemporary music education, fostering both technical skills and cultural appreciation.



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