



SURVEYING ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PIANO COURSES AT HENAN PROVINCE ELDERLY UNIVERSITY, HENAN PROVINCE, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract

The research purpose was to survey on the current situation of piano courses at Henan province elderly university, Henan province, the people's republic of China. The research methodology was qualitative research. The research tools were the interview form and observation form. Key informants were three piano teachers. The data collected was analyzed by using content analysis method. **The research finding** was teachers' course designs should fully take into account the physiological and psychological characteristics of the elderly, and the content explanations should be easy to understand. Before starting teaching, teachers need to understand the learning foundation and motivation of the elderly. During the teaching process, teachers' teaching methods should take into account the physiological and psychological factors of the elderly, adjust the teaching progress based on their feedback, and actively recognize the progress of the elderly.

Keywords: Surveying; The Current Situation of Piano Course; Elderly University

Introduction

According to the data of China's seventh national population census, in 2000, the elderly aged over 60 accounted for 10.33% of China's total population, and the elderly aged over 65 accounted for 6.96% of China's total population. In 2010, people aged 60 and above accounted for 13.26% of China's total population, while people aged 65 and above accounted for 8.87% of China's total population. In 2020, the total population of elderly people aged 60 and above in China was 18.7% and 13.5%, respectively. In daily life, the school gate is often crowded with elderly people picking up and dropping off children, and elderly people chatting or exercising can be seen everywhere in the community and parks. (Office of the Leading Group of the Seventh National Population Census of the State Council, 2020).

With the increasing population of elderly people, the Chinese government attaches great importance to elderly education. In order to promote a harmonious society, develop elderly education, improve the quality of life of the elderly, actively respond to population aging, and meet the learning needs of the elderly population, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the "Development Plan for Elderly Education (2016-2020year)" in 2016 year, emphasizing lifelong education. Increase financial investment and establish special funds to ensure stable education funding. Develop multi-level and multi type forms of education. Support senior universities and community open universities. Integrate existing public facilities and educational resources to provide support for elderly education. (General Office of the State Council, 2016)

As of 2018, there were about 62000 senior universities in China with a total enrollment of over 8 million people. More than 5 million students participated in online learning, forming a network of education at the provincial, municipal, county, and township levels. Many elderly people, despite their age, still crave to learn. The courses offered at senior universities are very diverse, such as painting, photography, music, dance, yoga, with hundreds of categories available. Some elderly people are unable to study due to being busy with work

when they were young, while others are unable to learn due to inadequate hardware conditions when they were young. Many regrets left by the elderly in their youth can be addressed by studying at a senior university. For the elderly, a senior university is not only a place for learning, but also a place to maintain communication with the outside world and progress together with the times. Here, they can make more friends, participate in various cultural and sports activities organized by the school, and travel. At the same time, elderly people can apply the knowledge and skills learned in senior universities to their daily lives, participate in community activities, volunteer services, etc., so that they can reintegrate into society, enhance their sense of self-worth, and greatly help promote the physical and mental health of the elderly. China's senior universities are the main battlefield for elderly education (Xin Hua Office, 2018).

Henan Senior University is a multidisciplinary, multi-level, public welfare comprehensive senior university under the supervision of the Henan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China's Senior Cadres Bureau. Currently, it offers 11 departments and 77 majors, with music majors accounting for a large proportion. Music education plays an important role in senior universities, and piano is one of the most popular courses for the elderly to learn. Learning piano can exercise the elderly's brain, limb coordination, and bring joy to the body and mind, enhancing self-confidence. After investigation, learning piano for the elderly is different from learning in regular compulsory education. Their purpose of learning steel is more from themselves rather than the outside world, but their various bodily functions are declining, such as hearing loss, decreased finger mobility, decreased vision, decreased comprehension, and lack of energy. In addition, the piano classes at Henan University for the Elderly are all collective classes, each with a different identity, background, and experience. The learning psychology and self-esteem of the elderly also vary greatly. So, when elderly people learn piano, they cannot directly apply the ordinary teaching mode. It is necessary to teach according to the physical and mental characteristics of the elderly, teach according to their aptitude, understand the current situation of music education for the elderly, whether it is suitable for their physical and mental characteristics, whether the teaching content is deeply loved by the elderly, and whether the existing teaching methods still need improvement. All of these need

to be understood. Therefore, a survey was conducted on the current situation of piano classes at Henan University for the Elderly. Data was collected and analyzed through interviews with informants and classroom observations to summarize past experiences, identify existing problems, and provide opinions, in order to promote the good development of music education in elderly universities (Xia, 2017).

Research Objective

1. To survey on the current situation of piano courses at Henan province elderly university, Henan province, the people's republic of China.

Literature Reviews

The research on surveying on the teaching methods of piano accompaniment in the dance course for first year students in Sichuan university, Sichuan province, the people's republic of China and related research materials. Hutchinson (2003) in his paper "The interaction of rhythm in dance and music", he found that in performances, dance and piano accompaniment often require a high degree of rhythmic synchronization. Studies show that the dancer's movements and the rhythm of the piano accompaniment must align in order to convey emotion and a sense of rhythm. Changes in the rhythm of the music can influence the dancer's physical movements, and when the dancer's actions match the piano's rhythm, it enhances the emotional impact of the performance. Smith (2008) in his paper "The role of piano accompaniment in dance performance", he found that piano accompaniment not only provides rhythmic support for the dancer but also plays a guiding role in the emotional expression of the dance. The tone, dynamics, and tempo variations of the piano can enhance the emotional transmission of the dance movements. For example, in a dance performance, a soft piano melody may make the dancer's movements more graceful, while a faster piano melody might prompt the dancer to execute more dynamic movements.

Jones (2011) in his paper "Piano accompaniment for dance: An exploration of stylistic variations", he found that different dance styles are closely related to the music style of the piano accompaniment. For instance, classical ballet often requires piano music to present a refined structure and elegant melody, while contemporary dance may require free and improvised piano playing to match the creativity and flexibility of the dance. Studies have found that piano performers need to make corresponding musical adjustments based on the dance style in order to enhance the performance effect. Keller (2015) in his paper "the role of improvisation in dance and piano accompaniment", he found that in certain dance performances, the piano accompaniment and the dance movements are improvised, influencing and stimulating each other. The improvisational creativity of the piano performer can inspire the dancer's spontaneous expression, and conversely, the dancer's movements may trigger the inspiration for the piano performance. Studies indicate that this interactive relationship not only enhances the expressiveness of both dance and music but also promotes the freedom of artistic creation.

Martin (2017) in his paper "The influence of piano accompaniment on dance training", he found that in dance education, the use of piano accompaniment plays an important role. The piano helps dancers perceive rhythm and coordinate their movements during practice, while the different styles and sounds of the piano can influence the dancer's understanding and expression of music. Research shows that piano accompaniment has a positive impact on the development of rhythm and musical sensibility in dance learners. Han (2024) pointed out in his paper "the Influence of Piano Accompaniment Music on the Psychology and Expressiveness of Sports Dancers" that music, as a fundamental element and the "soul" of sports dance, has a profound impact on its artistic charm and development. Through experiments, the study verified the significant role of piano accompaniment music training in the expressiveness of sports dancers. It analyzed the influence of related factors such as music training on the artistic expressiveness of sports dance, emphasizing that by enhancing dancers' perception of the rhythm of dance music, their mastery of movement sequences, their understanding of musical details, and their collaborative training between music and choreography, their artistic

expressiveness can be enhanced. It also suggested providing better artistic resources and professional accompaniment team support for sports dancers.

Yu & Pu (2023) explored in their paper “Learning Music - Dance Representations through Explicit - Implicit Rhythm Synchronization” the learning mode of the interconnection between music and dance through explicit - implicit rhythm synchronization. The study found that this kind of rhythm synchronization is crucial for understanding the expressive forms of music and dance, helping to deeply analyze how dancers adjust their movements according to the rhythm of music and how music provides a rhythmic foundation and emotional guidance for dance, revealing the internal mechanism of the mutual influence and coordination between the two at the rhythmic level. Li (2021) conducted a modeling analysis of the coping effect of dance piano accompaniment in “Modeling Analysis of the Coping Effect of Dance Piano Accompaniment”. The study shows that piano accompaniment in dance not only provides rhythmic support but also plays a key role in emotional rendering and atmosphere creation. By constructing relevant models, it analyzed the requirements of different styles of dance for piano accompaniment and how piano accompaniment can cooperate with dance movements through the changes of elements such as rhythm, melody, and harmony to improve the overall performance effect.

London & Wöllner (2023), in their work “Performing Time: Synchrony and Temporal Flow in Music and Dance”, focused on studying the time synchrony and time flow in music and dance performances. The book mentions that during the performance process, the rhythmic synchronization between music and dance is the key to presenting a perfect performance. The coordinated cooperation between different musical rhythms and the speed of dance movements can create a unique perception of time and artistic appeal, deeply exploring the core position of time factors in the integrated art of music and dance. Holland (2013) elaborated on the importance of musical fundamentals in dance in “Music Fundamentals for Dance”. This book introduces the basic elements of music, such as rhythm, beat, melody, harmony, etc., to dance practitioners and enthusiasts, as well as how these elements can be combined with dance movements. Through examples, it illustrates that different style of dance requires matching musical styles for setting off, helping readers understand the fundamental role of music in dance and how to use musical knowledge to improve the quality of dance performances.

Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research to conduct research through two types: interview form and observation forms. Research on “Surveying on the current situation of piano courses at Henan province elderly university, Henan province, the people’s republic of China”. This chapter establishes the research methodology, survey sample, survey questions, data collection, and analysis progress. This study collected data through three key informants, who met the following criteria. **Criteria for key informants** 1) Have master degree or doctor degree in piano major. 2) Have piano teaching for elderly people for over 5 years. 3) Have more than 10 years of piano performance experience. **Experts for verification** 1) Have master or doctoral degree in piano major. 2) Have associate professor or professor title in piano teaching. 3) Have piano teaching for elderly people for over 8 years. Based on the research objectives and research questions, develop an interview form with clearly designed questions centered around the research objectives. Use the interview form to access three key informants The interview questions mainly revolve around piano teaching methods suitable for the elderly, piano skills suitable for the elderly, and common questions when teaching piano to the elderly. **Data Collection:** 1) Literature collection data, the research went to study the document, book, thesis and Comprehensive understand the existing literature on the topic of "Piano Lessons for Elderly University". After the literature review, determine the research purpose, and formulate relevant interview forms based on the research purpose and research questions. 2) Interview: Collection information from three key informants by interview. 3) Observation: Collecting information from the teaching observation in student’s classroom performance. **Data Analysis:** 1) Literature analysis data, analyze, summarize, and organize the collected literature data on "piano classes in elderly universities" 2) Analyze the data obtained through interviews with three key informants, classify the themes of the collected content, then refine, analyze, and summarize each topic. 3) Analyze the data obtained through observation, classify the themes of the collected content, then refine, analyze, and summarize each topic.

Results

Before starting teaching, teachers should fully understand the music foundation, learnings ability, and learning goals of the elderly. If elderly people do not have any music foundation, teachers can start teaching from the most basic music knowledge and piano skills; if elderly people have a certain foundation in music, teachers can develop more targeted teaching plans based on their actual situation. Reasonably adjust the teaching schedule based on the learning progress and acceptance ability of the elderly. Older people may need more time to master new knowledge and skills, and teachers should avoid teaching too quickly, which can put too much pressure on them. At the same time, teaching content and methods should be adjusted in a timely manner according to the learning situation of the elderly to ensure teaching effectiveness. During the teaching process, teachers should patiently listen to the thoughts and feelings of the elderly, understand their purpose and expectations for learning piano. Teachers use demonstration performances to help elderly people have a clearer understanding of piano playing techniques and methods. During the demonstration performance, the teacher should pay attention to the standardization and clarity of movements, so that the elderly can clearly see the movements of each finger and the position of each button. If encountering complex songs, teachers can break down the complex songs and techniques into several simple parts, allowing the elderly to gradually practice.

This can reduce the difficulty of learning and make it easier for the elderly to master. Mobilize multiple senses of the elderly to participate in learning, such as auditory, visual, tactile, etc. In addition to letting the elderly listen to the teacher's demonstration performances and music recordings, they can also practice by watching the sheet music and finger movements, while feeling the touch of their fingers on the keyboard. As the memory of the elderly may be relatively weak, they need to practice repeatedly to consolidate the knowledge and skills they have learned. One explanation and demonstration may not be enough for them to fully remember and understand. Through repeated teaching, their memory can be deepened, the learning effect can be strengthened, and they can better understand and master piano performance.

Note timing, beat patterns, harmony, etc. Even if one remembers some music theory knowledge, due to limited learning and practice time, the forgetting speed may be fast, making it difficult to flexibly apply it in actual performance. Teachers strengthen the memory of elderly people through regular review and consolidation of learned music theory knowledge, classroom questioning, homework, exercises, and other methods. At the same time, encourage elderly people to listen to music more in their daily lives, cultivate a sense of music, and deepen their understanding of music theory knowledge.

The piano foundation of elderly students varies greatly, and there are differences in their understanding and acceptance abilities, which makes it difficult to unify the teaching progress. Some students can quickly grasp new knowledge, while others require more time and practice to keep up. Teachers need to pay attention to the learning characteristics and difficulties of each elderly person and provide targeted individual guidance. Layered teaching method is adopted in teaching, and for students with good foundation and strong acceptance ability, some expandable learning content can be provided, such as more complex song fragments or skill exercises; For students with weak foundations, it is important to provide patient guidance, increase practice time, and offer one-on-one tutoring to help them consolidate their foundation. At the same time, encourage students to help each other and make progress together.

Discussions

Traditional piano classes are in a one-on-one format, but piano classes in senior universities generally adopt a collective piano class format, with approximately 20 students per class. Both teachers and students are equipped with an electric piano, and teachers mainly use lecture and demonstration methods for teaching. The form of piano group classes is deeply loved by the elderly and is also the main way for them to learn piano. Piano group classes can enable the elderly to communicate with peers, engage in interactive learning, communicate emotionally, and facilitate information flow while studying (Zhu,2017). Elderly people learning piano have physical limitations. In terms of hand shape and finger techniques, there is no need to strictly follow traditional teaching methods. They

can adjust their playing techniques according to the situation of elderly students, which does not prevent them from playing the piano correctly. (Liu, 2022) Interest is the best teacher. When teaching elderly people how to learn piano, teachers choose to focus on learning and playing a large number of music pieces, which will have better results. When elderly people encounter music they love very much, they will be more proactive in overcoming the playing techniques involved in the music. They will constantly practice the technical points, thereby improving learning efficiency and making it easier to gain satisfaction and a sense of achievement in learning, further enhancing their motivation to learn piano.

Usually, elderly people face a lot of psychological pressure when learning piano. These pressures mainly come from two aspects: on the one hand, they have to face the physiological phenomenon of their own decline and lack of confidence, and on the other hand, they have to face biases and assumptions about how aging will affect instrument learning (Liu, 2022). Many elderly people who learn piano are afraid that they will not be able to learn piano well, or in other words, they are afraid that they will not be able to learn piano well. They will put forward various assumptions before starting to learn, thus creating a lot of learning pressure. During the teaching process, teachers need to constantly pay attention to students' progress, give timely recognition, share successful experiences of peers learning piano with students, and establish a correct learning psychology.

New Knowledges

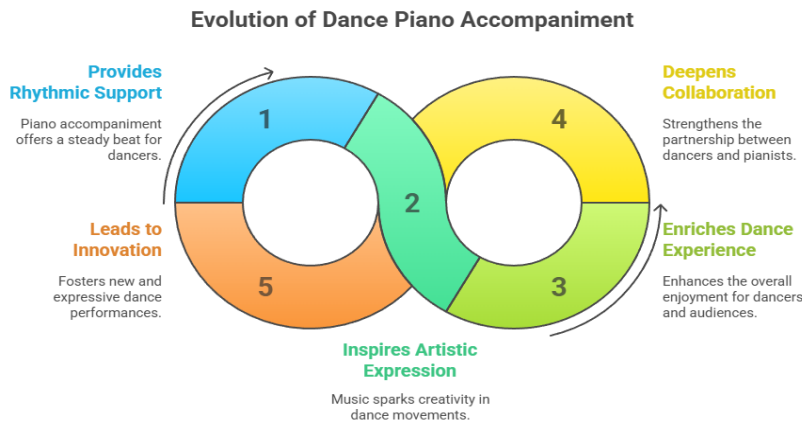


Figure 1: the teaching methods of piano accompaniment in the dance course for first year students.

Conclusions

The evolution of dance piano accompaniment reflects a growing understanding of its role in the artistic process of dance. By providing both rhythmic support and artistic inspiration, piano accompaniment enriches the dance experience for both students and audiences alike. As the field continues to develop, the collaboration between dancers and pianists will undoubtedly deepen, leading to even more innovative and expressive performances.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Suggestions

A systematic review of the musical characteristics of the dance music of the 56 ethnic groups should be conducted, and a "gene bank of ethnic dance music" should be established, detailing the unique rhythm patterns, modal features, and performance techniques of each ethnic group. Taking Mongolian dance as an example.

A standardized terminology system for ethnic dance piano accompaniment should be developed to unify the musical concepts corresponding to the folk-dance movements such as "twist" and "crispness".

It is suggested that a special research project be set up and that key art colleges across the country be organized to collaborate on the research.

At the level of academic education, it is recommended to establish undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs specializing in dance accompaniment in professional music colleges and universities.

The curriculum should break away from the framework of traditional piano performance and include specialized courses such as dance anatomy, movement analysis, and ethnomusicology.

There is a common problem of insufficient number and single professional background among dance piano accompaniment teachers in colleges and universities.

Recommendations

It is suggested to develop an intelligent accompaniment teaching platform based on multi-modal interaction. This system should include three core modules: the motion capture and analysis module, which uses computer vision technology to identify the dancer's movement trajectory, intensity and rhythm features in real time; the intelligent music generation module, which automatically generates suitable accompaniment music based on dance movements, supporting various styles from traditional to modern innovation; and the teaching evaluation module, which provides immediate feedback and personalized training suggestions.

Collaborate with computer science to develop intelligent auxiliary tools; work with anthropology to study the cultural genes of ethnic music; and cooperate with psychology to explore the cognitive mechanism of music and movement.

At the creative level, support composers, choreographers and accompaniment teachers to form innovative teams to jointly develop new works with contemporary characteristics. Set up special funds to support cutting-edge explorations, such as experiments combining electronic music and ethnic dance. Promote in-depth exchanges and cooperation among different fields through academic symposiums, creative workshops and other forms. The unique value of accompaniment.

Research on Chinese dance piano accompaniment needs to broaden its international perspective. It is suggested to carry out systematic cross-cultural comparative studies.

Select representative dance accompaniment systems from different countries and regions (such as Russian ballet accompaniment, Indian classical dance accompaniment, African modern dance accompaniment, etc.) for in-depth analysis, and compare their similarities and differences in music processing, teaching methods, and artistic concepts. Taking the Russian school as an example, study how it uses the piano to express the "openness" feature of ballet movements; then compare the musical expression techniques of "roundness, curvature, and inclination" in Chinese classical dance accompaniment.

Organize international academic symposiums on dance accompaniment, invite foreign experts to share their experiences, and promote academic dialogue. Establish an exchange mechanism for accompaniment teachers between Chinese and foreign institutions, and support teachers to visit and study abroad. In terms of research methods, various means such as video analysis, score comparison, and expert interviews can be adopted, with a focus on exploring the unique wisdom of accompaniment art in different cultural backgrounds.

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