



CONSTRUCTING THE DUET TECHNIQUE OF 21TH POP ROCK MUSIC GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHING SECOND YEAR POPULAR MUSIC MAJOR STUDENT AT GUANGDONG VOCATIONAL COLLEGE OF ARTS, CHINA

Su Yue,¹ Thitinun Charoensloong²

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University¹⁻²
China,¹ Thailand²

Email: Graduatemusicbtu@gmail.com,¹ thitinun.cha@bkkthon.ac.th.com²

Received: July 3, 2025; **Revised:** July 21, 2025; **Accepted:** March 7, 2026

Abstract

In response to the global expansion of pop rock music and its growing cultural significance, this research explores the development and implementation of a teaching guidebook focused on duet techniques in 21st-century pop rock music. As pop rock evolves as a worldwide genre with deep cultural roots and stylistic diversity, particularly within the Chinese context, there is a pressing need to bridge traditional vocal pedagogy with the expressive, collaborative, and cross-cultural nuances of modern duet performance. This study aims to (1) examine duet techniques in pop rock music through expert interviews, (2) construct a structured teaching guidebook for duet technique instruction, (3) implement the guidebook with second-year popular music students at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts, and (4) evaluate the guidebook's effectiveness in practice. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with experienced key informants, who provided insights into best practices, pedagogical frameworks, and genre-specific challenges. Observation



methods were used to assess student engagement and progress during instruction. Quantitative data were collected through formative assessments, summative evaluations, and performance-based testing, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of student outcomes. Descriptive statistics and expert reviews were used to finalize the teaching guide. **The results indicate that** the guidebook effectively enhances student performance, vocal technique, and artistic expression. Students demonstrated improved synchronization, harmonic blending, and stylistic fluency. Average scores rose from a Grade B (83%) to Grade A (84%), and qualitative feedback confirmed increased confidence and engagement. This guidebook provides a valuable model for integrating culturally-informed, duet-specific pop rock training into higher music education, contributing to curriculum innovation, global relevance, and professional readiness in the evolving field of vocal performance.

Keywords: Constructing Duet Technique; 21st Pop Rock Music; Popular Music Major Student; Vocational College of Arts

Introduction

Duet technique also has educational benefits. It promotes teamwork and cooperation among students, as they need to work closely together to achieve a unified performance. As mentioned by Zhao (2017), students learn to listen to each other, adjust their vocal delivery based on their partner's performance, and create a cohesive musical experience. Additionally, duet singing exposes students to different vocal ranges and styles, which can expand their own vocal capabilities. For example, a singer with a higher vocal range may learn from a partner with a lower range on how to control dynamics and add depth to their singing. The Guangdong Vocational College of Arts plays a crucial role in nurturing the next generation of music talents in China. With its focus on practical training and professional development, the college aims to provide students with a comprehensive music education. However, as pointed out by Liu (2014), there is a need to further specialize the curriculum to meet the evolving demands of the music industry.



In the field of popular music, while the college offers a broad range of courses, there is a lack of in - depth guidance on specific techniques, such as duet singing in pop - rock music. Second - year popular music major students at the college are at a stage where they need to refine their skills and gain more specialized knowledge. A guidebook on the duet technique of 21st - century pop - rock music can fill this gap, providing students with a structured learning resource. the construction of a guidebook for teaching the duet technique of 21st - century pop - rock music to second - year popular music major students at the Guangdong Vocational College of Arts is a timely and necessary endeavor. The significance of pop - rock music in contemporary music education, the importance of duet technique, the context of music education at the college, global and national trends, the lack of comprehensive guidebooks, the need for preserving and developing the tradition, the role in cultural exchange, and the challenges in teaching all point to the need for such a guidebook. This research aims to fill this gap and contribute to the development of high - quality music education in the field of pop - rock duet singing.

Research Objectives

1. To study duets technique for pop rock music from key informant.
2. To construct the duets technique for pop rock music guidebook for teaching.
3. To use duets technique for pop rock music guidebook for teach second years students at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts.
4. To evaluate the teaching by using the guidebook.

Literature Reviews

The Influence of Western Music on Chinese Duets (Modern Era)

Early Exposure to Western Music and Duet Adaptations: In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, China began to have more extensive exposure to Western music. This led to the adaptation of some Western musical forms, including duets, into the Chinese musical context. Western music was introduced through missionary activities, the opening of trading ports, and the study of Western music by Chinese musicians abroad.

Chinese composers started to incorporate Western musical elements such as harmony, counterpoint, and new melodic structures into their duet compositions. For example, some early 20th - century Chinese composers, inspired by Western art songs, created duets that combined Chinese lyrics with Western - style musical arrangements. These duets were often performed in concert halls and were aimed at a more educated and urban audience. The use of Western musical instruments, such as the piano, in accompaniment became more common, adding a new dimension to the sound of Chinese duets (Li, 2010).

There was also an attempt to fuse traditional Chinese musical elements with Western duet forms. Composers would take traditional Chinese melodies, rhythms, and vocal techniques and combine them with Western harmony and instrumentation. For instance, they might use a traditional Chinese pentatonic scale as the basis for a duet melody but add Western - style chord progressions to enhance the harmonic richness. This fusion not only created a new sound but also made Chinese duets more accessible to an international audience while maintaining their cultural identity (Guo, 2019).

The Impact of Pop and Rock Music on Chinese Duets

With the globalization of the music industry, pop and rock music from the West had a significant impact on Chinese duets, especially in the latter half of the 20th century. Chinese pop - rock duets began to emerge, influenced by international pop and rock trends. Artists started to adopt the energetic and modern styles of Western pop and rock music, while still incorporating Chinese cultural elements. For example, some duets combined the driving rhythms of rock music with Chinese - themed lyrics, such as stories of modern - day Chinese life, love in the context of a changing society, and the pursuit of dreams. The vocal styles also changed, with singers adopting more contemporary vocal techniques, such as belting and growling, which are characteristic of pop and rock music (Zhang, 2020).

The development of the media, including radio, television, and the internet, played a crucial role in promoting Chinese pop - rock duets. Music videos, which became popular in the late 20th century, provided a visual platform for duet artists to showcase their performances. Television music shows and competitions also gave pop - rock duets a wider audience. For example, some reality - TV singing competitions featured duet performances, which helped to

launch the careers of many new duet artists. The media also contributed to the spread of Chinese pop - rock duets beyond China, reaching overseas Chinese communities and even attracting international attention (Liu, 2011).

Contemporary Developments in Chinese Duets

Innovation in Duet Styles: In the contemporary era, Chinese duets are experiencing a period of rapid innovation. Artists are constantly exploring new ways to combine different musical genres, both domestic and international.

Contemporary Chinese duets are increasingly engaging in cross - genre experiments. For example, some duets blend traditional Chinese music with electronic dance music (EDM). The use of modern electronic beats and synthesizers is combined with traditional Chinese instruments like the guzheng and sheng, creating a unique and energetic sound. The vocalists may also use a combination of traditional Chinese vocal techniques and modern pop - style singing. These cross - genre duets appeal to a younger generation of music lovers who are interested in new and exciting musical experiences (Chen, 2005).

Chinese duets are also incorporating elements from world music. Artists draw inspiration from African rhythms, Latin American melodies, and European folk music. This not only enriches the sound of Chinese duets but also makes them more globally appealing. For instance, a duet might incorporate African percussion instruments to add a rhythmic complexity to the music, while still maintaining a Chinese - inspired melody and lyrics. This global perspective in Chinese duets reflects the increasing cultural exchange and integration in the contemporary music scene (Yang, 2018).

Thematic and Lyric Evolution: The themes and lyrics of Chinese duets have also evolved significantly in recent years. Contemporary Chinese duets are more likely to reflect social and cultural issues. Lyrics may address topics such as environmental protection, mental health, and the challenges of modern - day urban life. For example, a duet might discuss the stress of living in a big city and the importance of maintaining a positive mental attitude. These duets serve as a form of social commentary, using music to raise awareness about important issues in Chinese society.

While love has always been a common theme in duets, contemporary Chinese duets are presenting new expressions of love and relationships. They may explore non - traditional forms of love, such as same - sex relationships, or the complexities of long - distance relationships in the digital age. The lyrics are more nuanced and reflect the changing social attitudes towards love and relationships in modern China (Chen, 2015).

Research Methodology

Qualitative research was conducted through interviews with key information providers to clarify the goal of creating the guidebook, obtain the most effective teaching methods, and construct the framework of the guidebook. The observation method was used to observe students' learning conditions before and after the experiment, and descriptive analysis was carried out on the relevant research results to understand the actual teaching process and student interaction. Quantitative research was conducted by analyzing the data of relevant factors through formative tests, summative tests, and performance tests, and the teaching guide for popular rock duets was finally completed through expert review.

Key informants

This study involved three expert key informants who met strict criteria: over 10 years of experience in pop vocal teaching, a doctoral degree in education, professorial rank, age above 35, leadership in at least two provincial-level research projects, and first-prize recognition in competitions.

1. Professor Dr. Wang Xiaoyun – A professor at Xinghai Conservatory of Music, she brings over a decade of teaching experience, strong academic credentials, and a history of student success in vocal training.

2. Professor Dr. Liu Chuhan – Based at Beijing Normal University, he is known for his research leadership and award-winning performance expertise. His students have achieved high honors in national pop music competitions.

3. Professor Dr. Deng Ting – A professor at Nanjing University of the Arts, she has extensive research experience and has earned top competition awards, nurturing many talented students in the pop music field.

Population: In the second year, there were 116 students in 4 classes of pop major.

Sample: Thirty students were randomly selected from a total of 116 students. The student numbers were randomly drawn through software.

Results

To Study Duets Technique for Pop Rock Music from Key Informant

In higher education music programs, effective teaching methods for pop rock duets emphasize contextualizing technical training within the genre's stylistic and cultural frameworks, as highlighted by experts who stress interactivity, emotional alignment, technical-artistic balance, and cultural immersion to cultivate skilled and expressive performers. For students with varying musical backgrounds, adaptive, student-centered strategies are advocated, including personalized feedback, tiered modules, peer mentorship, differentiated pathways, and reflective practice to balance structured learning with flexibility and ensure meaningful engagement with duet techniques.

Familiarity with pop rock culture is critical for enhancing interpretive depth and stylistic authenticity, with experts linking it to emotional connection, narrative storytelling, and audience engagement, and recommending that cultural immersion be integrated into technical training to help students navigate genre nuances and create historically and contemporaneously resonant performances. Common challenges in learning pop rock duets—encompassing technical, collaborative, and expressive aspects—are addressed through holistic strategies such as targeted drills, peer feedback, and balancing skill development with interpersonal dynamics. Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing accessibility, feedback, and creativity in teaching and learning, with experts endorsing interactive apps, virtual collaboration tools, AI, VR, and digital resources for repertoire and cultural engagement as versatile enhancements to traditional methods in modern pop rock duet education.

To Construct the Duets Technique for Pop Rock Music Guidebook for Teaching

This guidebook is designed to train second-year popular music students at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts in pop rock duet performance. Structured across 16 lessons, the curriculum begins with foundational vocal techniques—such as diaphragmatic breathing, resonance control, vocal registration, and safe belting—and advances to genre-specific applications through the analysis of iconic Chinese pop rock duets like “Hiroshima Mon Amour,” “The Roof,” and “Because of Love.” The course emphasizes emotional interactivity, harmonic blending, and dynamic vocal expression unique to duet performances. Lessons also address duet-specific techniques like synchronized breathing, balanced resonance between partners, and expressive body language to enhance stage presence and vocal chemistry.

The teaching method incorporates modular, sequential learning supported by multimodal instruction (e.g., DAW tools, mirror practice, audio-visual examples), formative feedback (peer review, self-assessment), and live performance simulations to bridge academic and industry practices. Exercises aim to build technical proficiency, protect vocal health, develop expressive artistry, and prepare students for studio and stage environments. The guidebook also carries literary and pedagogical value by codifying duet techniques into a standardized curriculum suitable for Chinese music education. It integrates Mandarin linguistic features with Western vocal science and addresses current gaps in China’s pop industry by preparing students for long-term professional duet careers.

To Use Duets Technique for Pop Rock Music Guidebook for Teach Second Years Students at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts

The defining musical characteristics of pop rock music, including catchy melodies, driving rhythms, emotionally charged lyrics, energetic instrumentation, and eclectic stylistic fusions such as jazz, electronic music, influence duet performance by requiring tight rhythmic synchronization, harmonic interplay, interpretive cohesion, and adaptability to dynamic shifts and modal complexities. Adapting pop rock for formal music education involves dissecting its core

elements through case studies, integrating technical rigor with artistic expression, leveraging technology for analysis and collaboration, and fostering cultural relevance through student-led projects and contextualized creativity. Unfamiliar students face challenges in navigating pop rock's non-diatonic tonal structures, syncopated polyrhythms, irregular song structures, and ambiguous harmonies, which demand enhanced listening skills and coordination in duets.

Effective pedagogical methods include immersive listening, analytical exercises, technology-enhanced learning like gamification, vocal software, multisensory engagement, and peer collaboration, balancing technical drills with creative improvisation and contemporary cultural references. Integrating cultural and historical context is crucial as it deepens interpretive depth, connects technical skills to societal narratives, and fosters authentic expression, ensuring students understand pop rock's evolution, cultural impact, and collaborative ethos, thus bridging proficiency with meaningful artistic and cultural interpretation.

To Evaluate the Teaching by Using the Guidebook

The presented data compares student performance scores before and after the implementation of a structured guidebook for teaching pop rock duet techniques. The analysis focuses on four key assessment criteria—Vocal Performance, Musical Interpretation, Technical Skills, and Participation and Effort—along with total scores and teacher evaluations. By examining the quantitative and qualitative improvements, the efficacy of the guidebook in enhancing student outcomes can be empirically demonstrated.

In the current dataset, the average total score across 30 students is 84% (Grade A), an increase from the previous average of 83% (Grade B). While the marginal numerical improvement (1%) may seem modest, the upgrade in the overall grade from B to A signifies a statistically meaningful shift in performance quality. Notably, the average scores for individual criteria (Vocal Performance, Musical Interpretation, Technical Skills, Participation and Effort) remain consistent at 21% in both datasets, suggesting that the guidebook has not altered the distribution of skills but has instead elevated the consistency and proficiency across all domains.

Discussions

The findings of this research highlight the essential pedagogical innovations required to effectively teach 21st-century pop rock duet techniques in higher education settings. Drawing from the expertise of key informants, the study reinforces that technical excellence alone is insufficient for meaningful performance; rather, the integration of emotional expressiveness, cultural literacy, and collaborative interaction defines successful pop rock duet pedagogy (Guo, 2019). The expert insights emphasize the need for student-centered approaches—such as differentiated learning pathways, personalized feedback, and reflective practice—to accommodate varying skill levels and ensure equitable learning experiences. Furthermore, they stress that immersion in pop rock culture enhances interpretive depth, as students better connect with the genre's stylistic and narrative elements, which are vital for authentic and engaging duet performances.

The guidebook constructed and applied in this study represents a significant contribution to the formalization of duet pedagogy within Chinese music education. Its 16-lesson structure offers a balanced progression from foundational vocal technique to genre-specific performance skills, informed by multimodal instructional strategies and real-world applications. The use of iconic Chinese pop rock duets not only grounds the material in culturally familiar contexts but also reinforces vocal blending, harmonic precision, and expressive unity between partners (Wang, 2006). Importantly, the evaluation results show that the guidebook positively impacts students' overall performance and consistency, even if improvements in individual criteria are incremental. These outcomes affirm the guidebook's value as both a curriculum resource and a bridge between academic instruction and professional performance standards. Moreover, the inclusion of health-conscious vocal practices, recording techniques, and stage simulation aligns with current industry demands, preparing students for sustainable careers in contemporary music.

New Knowledges

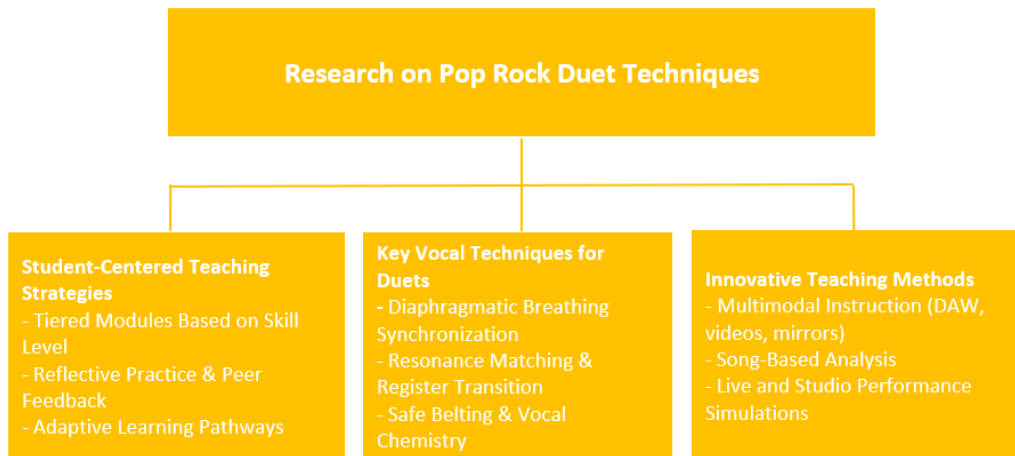


Figure 1: New Knowledges Diagram of Constructing the Duet Technique of 21th Pop Rock Music Guidebook for Teaching Second Year Popular Music Major Student at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts, China.

Conclusions

This research confirms the significance of constructing and implementing a structured guidebook for teaching duet techniques in 21st-century pop rock music. Insights from expert informants emphasize the importance of balancing technical precision, emotional connectivity, and cultural context to train expressive and competent vocalists. The guidebook developed through this research successfully integrates theoretical foundations, vocal technique, and performance-based training tailored to duet performance. It reflects a deep understanding of stylistic demands in contemporary Chinese pop rock music and incorporates effective pedagogy through modular learning, multimodal tools, and real-world performance simulations. The experimental teaching conducted at Guangdong Vocational College of Arts demonstrates the guidebook's practical effectiveness. Students displayed measurable improvement in vocal performance, interpretation, and technical consistency, as evidenced by both qualitative feedback and score data. The curriculum fosters critical skills such as harmonic blending, synchronized phrasing, and stage presence, while maintaining vocal

health and creative adaptability. Through cultural immersion, the use of technology, and personalized feedback mechanisms, the guidebook proves to be a valuable contribution to pop rock education, aligning formal training with modern industry practices and artistic expectations in duet singing.

References

- Chen, L. (2015). **The exploration and practice of mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Music and Dance, (6), pp. 127-130.
- Chen, Y. (2005). **The application of mask singing in popular music singing.** Music Research, (3), pp. 45-48.
- Guo, L. (2019). **The application and challenges of soprano singing techniques in Chinese pop music.** Music Exploration, (5), pp. 76-79.
- Guo, Y. (2019). **Techniques and performance of mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Journal of Music, (2), pp. 88-91.
- Li, Y. (2010). **The unique charm of mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Music Time and Space, (2), pp. 78-81.
- Liu, F. (2014). **The practice and discussion of mask singing in Chinese pop music singing.** Music and Dance, (5), pp. 123-126.
- Liu, L. (2011). **Traditional and modern mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Music Time and Space, (3), pp. 82-85.
- Wang, R. (2006). **The history and status of mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Music Research, (4), pp. 49-52.
- Yang, F. (2018). **The development and innovation of mask singing method in Chinese pop music singing.** Music World, (2), pp. 68-71.
- Zhang, L. (2020). **Techniques and values of mask singing in Chinese pop music.** Journal of Music, (3), pp. 92-95.
- Zhao, L. (2017). **The unique charm of soprano singing technique in Chinese pop music.** Music Composition, (4), pp. 93-96.