

Constructing the Xintianyou Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs Teaching guidebook for vocal music students in Sichuan Arts Vocational College, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, China

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Abstract

Linxia Hua'er, as an important part of Chinese folk culture and art, have unique cultural value and historical significance. However, with the development of society and the diversification of culture, the inheritance of Linxia Hua'er faces many challenges. The traditional singing style of the Hua'er in summer has its unique rhythm and rhythm, which is an important part of the Hua'ers' culture. In order to protect and inherit these traditional singing methods, some folk artists and scholars have made long-term efforts. In order to ensure the inheritance and development of Linxia Hua'er, it is particularly important to train a new generation of Hua'er inheritors. Some schools and institutions have begun to incorporate Hua'er into their curriculum, carry out folk music education, and cultivate young people's interest and love for Hua'er culture. In this environment, it is urgent to write a "Linxia Hua'er Teaching Guide Book" as the basis of middle school music education. Through interviews with experts and local artists, this study aims to understand and master the musical characteristics and song styles of Linxia Hua'er, write a teaching guide for Linxia Hua'er in Linxia Huimin Middle School, promote the development of Linxia music education based on the inheritance of Linxia Hua'er, point out the direction of music lessons for teachers in the school, and provide a theoretical basis for students to better learn the singing of Linxia Hua'er. It also promotes the cultural development of Gansu and the dissemination and protection of human intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords: Constructing; Linxia Hua'er; Folk Song; Guidebook; Linxia Huimin High School; Gansu province

Introduction

The formation of Xintianyou is mainly determined by its special geographical location. Shanxi North is located in the northwestern plateau, with mountain valleys connected to mountain valleys. The people living here traveled through treacherous mountain passes and deep ravines. Once upon a time, the natural environment of northern Shanxi was poor, the place was large, and the population was sparse. Conditions, the place was large and sparsely populated, and people lived in great poverty. The saying "Men walk outside their mouths, women dig for bitter vegetables" was used to describe the poverty and anxiety of life. They use their songs to vent their frustration with their fate and life. The local long laborers who do menial work, the farmers who drive their animals, and poor people. They want to give vent to their loneliness and isolation; on the other hand, they miss their family members, lovers and friends, and they are touched by the scenery. They compose songs and express their emotions

with their long and high voice, and express their love and pursuit of a better life to the outside world. They express their love and pursuit of a better life to the outside world with their long and high pitched songs. There are many parts of the song that singing the colorful thoughts and feelings between lovers, so some parts of the song. Therefore, some parts of the song are called "sour songs". The rhythmic aspect of Xintianyou is free and easy, with a spirited. The rhythmic aspect of the song is free and easy, with a spirited melody that is open and captures the heartstrings of the people, which is closely related to the diffuse landscape of northern Shanxi Province. This is closely related to the diffuse landscape of northern Shanxi (Qi, 2023).

Xintianyou lyrics are mostly in two lines. One. The structure of the rhyming lines is the most remarkable feature of the song. Let's take a look at some of the lyrics of Xintianyou. Take a look. It is not difficult to find that most of them are seven-character lines, and some of them are extended to nine characters, ten characters or even more. However, regardless of the number of words in the lyrics, they are all in two lines, one line and one verse. One stanza. One stanza and one verse. The rhymes can be changed from stanza to stanza, and are generally symmetrical. It is generally symmetrical. A short Xintianyou song can have only One stanza. The short songs of Xintianyou can have only one stanza, while the long songs can have hundreds or thousands of stanzas in a row (Liu, 2018).

Xintianyou originated from the lives of working people, so the form is simple, the song structure is two phrases, consisting of two phrases, the upper and lower phrases, the upper phrase is mostly a high-pitched and bright cry, with a high-pitched tone and wide range, while the melody of the lower phrase has a more lyrical melody (Xie, 2022).

With the development of society and the influence of the diversification of communication channels, popular music and network music have been loved by the majority of students, while traditional music is in a relatively weak position. The Music Curriculum Standards for Full-time Compulsory Education state that "traditional Chinese music is an important part of national culture, and we should be good at using the region's ethnic and folk resources in music teaching, so that students are exposed to the culture of national music from an early age" (Yang, 2021).

At present, many institutions of higher learning focus on strengthening and improving the level of Western instrumental music for students, and pay little attention to the learning of traditional music knowledge. Many familiar ethnic music cultures have high historical value. Students in institutions of higher learning are the new force for China to continue to move forward. Diversification of traditional music and culture education is an inevitable trend in the development of school education (Hu et al., 2023).

Xintianyou Shanxi Northern Traditional songs is highly representative of traditional Chinese songs and has a very high status. It is also listed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage List and has its unique artistic value. In view of the fact that at present, the Xintianyou Shanxi Northern Traditional songs is not emphasized by college students (Wei, 2021).

From the above arguments, it can be seen that Xintianyou, as an important part of Chinese traditional songs and a representative of human intangible cultural heritage, is irreplaceable and non-renewable. Therefore, it is imminent to enter the campus and carry out extensive singing. Therefore, the researcher needs to study this topic, create a teaching guidebook, and use the guide book to teach to solve the above problems.

Research Objectives

1. To study *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs from experts.
2. To construct *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook .
3. To experiment by using the *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook to teaching vocal music students in Sichuan Arts Vocational College.
4. To evaluate teaching by using *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook.

Research Methodology

This research is a mixed research method: qualitative research and quantitative research.

(1) Qualitative research interviews with 3 key information by using interview form.

(2) Quantitative research using guidebook, formative tests, summative tests, performance test and IOC.

Population

40 first-year students majoring in vocal music in the Music Department of Sichuan Arts Vocational College.

Sample

The top 10 students were selected for the study through exam rankings. (purposive sampling)

Research tools

- (1) Interview form
- (2) *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs Teaching guidebook
- (3) Formative test
- (4) Summative test
- (5) Performance test
- (6) IOC form

Conceptual Framework

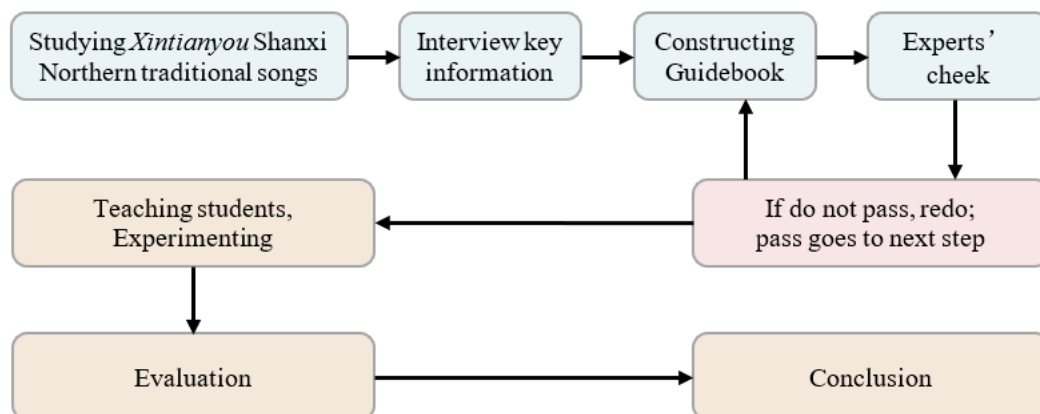


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

1. *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs from experts.

This study delves into the *Xintianyou* folk songs of northern Shanxi, renowned as the soul of the Loess Plateau, focusing on their music style, singing techniques, and the creation of a comprehensive guidebook for their preservation and teaching. The research involves interviews with three key informants, emphasizing three core areas: the musical characteristics of *Xintianyou*, its singing techniques, and strategies for constructing a teaching guidebook. *Xintianyou*, also called "Suan Qu," represents a vibrant facet of Chinese folk music, characterized by its improvisational lyrics, free-spirited rhythm, and emotionally rich melodies that reflect the joys, sorrows, and aspirations of the northern Shanxi people. The songs are categorized by genre (ditty, mountain song, trumpet) and subject matter (love, legends, landscapes, and social satire), showcasing the creativity and wisdom of the region's people. Distinct musical features include its high-pitched, bold vocal delivery, sincere lyrics, and dynamic improvisational style, making each performance unique and vibrant. However, *Xintianyou* faces challenges such as waning interest among younger generations and the absence of systematic documentation due to its oral tradition. The study highlights the need for targeted education and cultural programs to raise awareness, encourage youth participation, and secure the preservation and development of this invaluable cultural heritage for future generations.

2. Constructing *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook.

The *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs Teaching Guidebook aims to help students master the singing and performance skills of *Xintianyou*, understand its musical characteristics, and contribute to the preservation of Shanxi's traditional music culture. Designed as a comprehensive resource for university voice teachers, it provides teaching objectives, methods, evaluation strategies, and instructional resources. The guidebook is structured into four chapters: an introduction explaining its purpose and usage, a section on learning objectives and methods, basic vocal exercises to build foundational skills, and detailed studies of ten representative *Xintianyou* songs, covering their background, lyrics, scores, and singing techniques. Expert evaluations confirm the guidebook's effectiveness, highlighting its detailed theoretical content, practical singing guidance, and balanced repertoire suitable for students. The course spans 16 weekly 45-minute lessons in a one-on-one teaching model. A teaching evaluation system assesses student attitudes, comprehension, and performance, ensuring continuous feedback for refining instructional approaches and enhancing the guidebook's practical application.

3. Experimenting by using the *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook to teaching vocal music students in Sichuan Arts Vocational College.

The teaching process for learning *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs incorporates exercises in humming, vowel articulation, and resonance building to develop vocal techniques and singing skills. The humming exercise trains students to use nasal passages and pharyngeal cavities for resonance, while the humming-to-vowel conversion exercise aids in achieving vocal consistency and head resonance. Vowel exercises focus on mastering the articulation of "a, e, i, o, u" to improve tone, intonation, and vocal smoothness. Teaching tools include a piano and vocal practice pieces, with homework emphasizing practice and lesson review. Classroom observations of 10 freshman vocal majors showed high punctuality, attentiveness, and interest, though some struggled with the unique style of *Xintianyou*. Most students successfully learned to identify and sing *Xintianyou* songs, with one needing

additional support to engage. The study concluded that targeted teaching approaches, attentive monitoring, and incorporation of relatable elements could enhance student learning and motivation. Expert evaluations validated the classroom observation form, with a high satisfaction score of 0.92.

4. Evaluating teaching by using *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook.

At the end of the 16th week of the course,, ten students were given a Summative test,each student independently sang one of the 10 basic vocal exercises in Chapter 3 and any two of the ten songs in Chapter 4(cannot be the same repertoire as the second formative test and third formative test).The results of the test were as follows:2 students with a grade of A (>85 points),6 students with a grade of B (80-85 points),2 students with a grade of C (70-79 points), the mean score reached 83.3. Comparing the scores of the first three Formative tests, it is clear that the students have made great progress after one semester of study, in terms of performance, singing skills, and their grasp of the traditional music styles of *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs.

Based on the results of the performance exams, we can conclude that the *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook is of high practical value and can be used for vocal teaching. It further proves the effectiveness of the material and the applicability of the teaching method. This is a very encouraging result, indicating that the *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern traditional songs guidebook manual prepared by the researchers can help students improve their skills and enhance their musical expression, and that the effectiveness of the instruction manual's use has been recognized by the experts. The researchers will continue to improve and refine it to meet the higher needs of students and teachers.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significance of the *Xintianyou* Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs Teaching Guidebook as an essential tool for preserving and teaching the unique cultural heritage of northern Shanxi's folk music. *Xintianyou*, with its free-spirited melodies and improvisational charm, embodies the creativity and soul of the Loess Plateau's people. However, the oral tradition's lack of systematic documentation and the waning interest among younger generations pose challenges to its preservation. The guidebook bridges this gap by offering a structured framework for teaching, with detailed theoretical content, practical exercises, and a repertoire that balances accessibility and challenge. Its multi-faceted approach, including vocal exercises, cultural context, and performance guidance, aligns with the needs of modern music education, enabling students to internalize and master the rich traditions of *Xintianyou* while also fostering its preservation and dissemination.

The implementation of the guidebook at Sichuan Arts Vocational College demonstrated its practical value and effectiveness in enhancing students' vocal skills and musical understanding. Classroom observations and summative evaluations revealed significant student progress in mastering *Xintianyou*'s singing techniques, with mean scores reflecting improved performance and stylistic grasp. Feedback from experts and students alike highlighted the guidebook's role in clarifying theoretical concepts and providing practical guidance. While most students engaged deeply with the material, some challenges in stylistic comprehension suggest the need for further refinements, such as incorporating relatable

musical elements to broaden its appeal (Liu, 2021). These results validate the guidebook's design and implementation as a replicable model for cultural preservation and music education, affirming its potential to inspire both students and educators in vocal pedagogy (Zhao, 2022).

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

To maximize the effectiveness of the *Xintianyou Shanxi Northern Traditional Songs Teaching Guidebook*, educators should integrate it into vocal curricula alongside other traditional music to provide students with a broader cultural perspective. Emphasis should be placed on progressive vocal exercises such as humming, vowel articulation, and resonance building, which are crucial for mastering Xintianyou's singing techniques. Teachers should adopt a flexible and student-centered approach, incorporating modern elements to engage learners with less exposure to traditional styles. Additionally, using diverse teaching tools like audiovisual aids and live demonstrations can help deepen students' understanding of Xintianyou's unique musical characteristics. Ongoing teacher training is also essential to ensure instructors are well-equipped to guide students in achieving both technical mastery and cultural appreciation.

2. Recommendation for future research

Future studies should explore the integration of Xintianyou with contemporary music forms to enhance its appeal among younger generations and expand its relevance in modern music education. Comparative research on teaching methods for other regional folk music styles could also provide valuable insights into best practices for cultural preservation through education. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking students' skill development and cultural attitudes over an extended period could offer a deeper understanding of the guidebook's long-term impact. Expanding research to include non-music majors or younger learners could further evaluate the guidebook's versatility and adaptability for promoting traditional music appreciation across diverse demographics.

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