

Constructing Shanxi Folk Music Cello Ensemble Workbook for Teaching Students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, China

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Abstract

Shanxi folk music is a very old traditional folk art that mainly celebrates historical figures or legends. There are many different kinds of folk music in different regions, and the form of each song is more diverse. The purpose of this study is: 1) To study the Shanxi folk music cello ensemble workbook with experts; 2) To construct cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art; 3) To use cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art; 4) To evaluate the results of cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to the study, qualitative research: Interview research was adopted method to interview experts in order to observe students' learning ability, performance and acceptance before and after the experiment. Quantitative research: This study is the same as the sample overall. All of them were second-year students of cello major in Shanxi Vocational College of Art, and there were 8 of them in total.

The study found that in the 12th week of the semester, the eight students were given a summative test which consisted of asking them to play a piece of cello ensemble music they had learned during the semester which had to be formally performed in a performance format. The results of the test showed A3 (85), B4 (80-85) and C1 (70-79). The average score was 84. Comparing the results of the first two formative tests, it can be seen that after one semester of study, the students have made great progress in cello playing skills, ensemble experience, and mastery of Shanxi folk music styles.

Keywords: Constructing; Shanxi Folk Music; Cello Ensemble; Workbook; Shanxi Vocational College of Art; China

Introduction

As a cello teacher at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, the researcher believes it is necessary to construct a cello ensemble workbook of Shanxi folk music for the institution. Firstly, by analyzing the form, playing techniques, style, and structure of cello ensemble (Zhang, 2022), and combining the practical teaching experience at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, the researcher will provide data and suggestions for the curriculum of cello ensemble lessons for art vocational colleges (Bai, 2023). In addition, through the study of Shanxi folk music, we will construct a cello ensemble workbook with Shanxi music style, improve the cello ensemble and teaching level, provide a more solid support for creation and stage practice, promote the development of cello education in Shanxi, and make a modest contribution to the development of cello ensemble in cello art.

Research Objectives

1. To study the Shanxi folk music cello ensemble workbook with informants
2. To construct cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
3. To use cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
4. To evaluate the results of cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

Research Methodology

In this dissertation, a mixed research method between qualitative and quantitative research is used.

Conceptual Framework

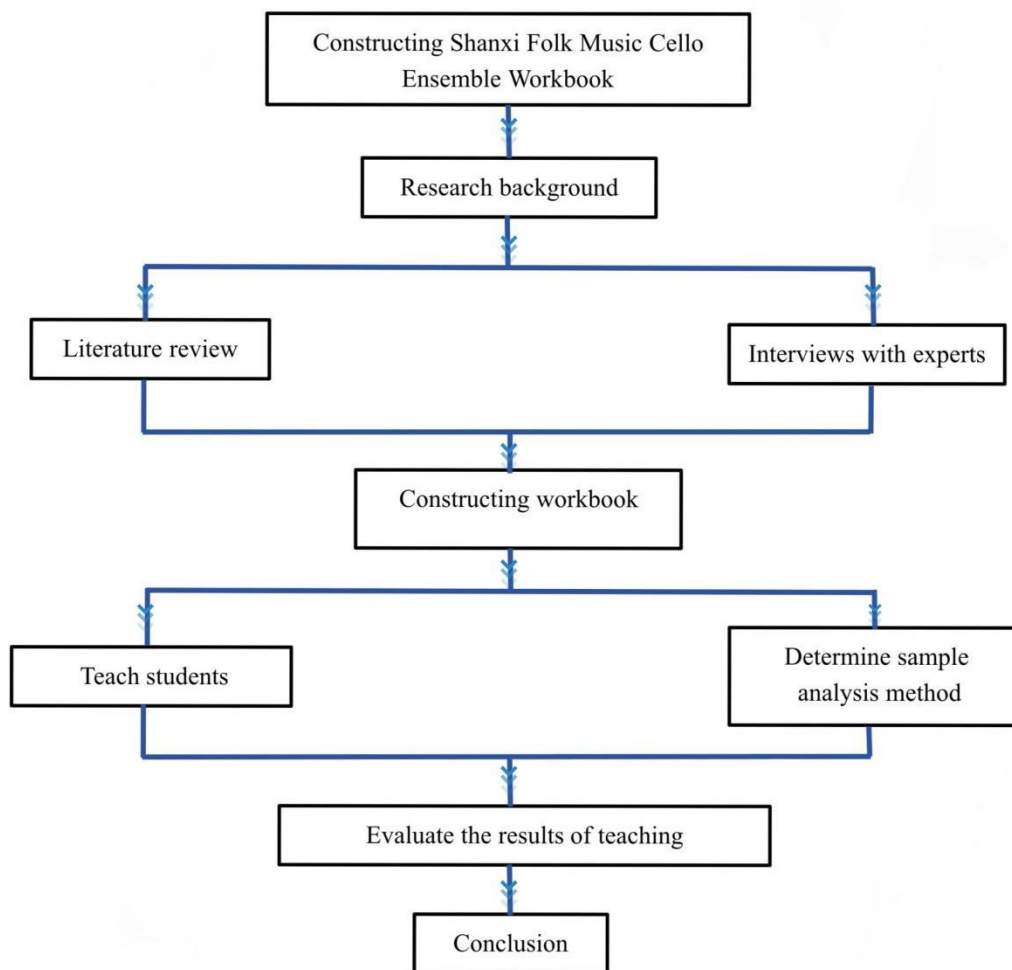


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

1. To study the Shanxi folk music Cello ensemble workbook performances with experts

After in-depth exchanges with three experts, we gained valuable advice on the creation of the Shanxi Folk Music Cello Ensemble Workbook. The following is a study and performance guide organised according to the experts' opinions:

Before playing the cello ensemble workbook, we need to make an in-depth study of the cultural background of Shanxi folk music. As one of the birthplaces of Chinese culture, Shanxi's folk music carries rich historical and cultural connotations. By understanding the geography, history and folk music of Shanxi, we can better understand the characteristics and styles of Shanxi folk songs so that we can better interpret these works.

Experts suggested that 2-3 representative Shanxi folk music be selected from the workbook, such as "Xiang Qin Qin", "Kan Yange", "Tao Hua Hong Xing Hua Bai" and so on. Through the performance of cello, we can show the rhythm and unique charm of these folk music. When selecting the repertoire, we should pay attention to the diversity and hierarchy of the repertoire, so that students can gradually improve their performance level in the learning process.

In the teaching process, we need to pay attention to the guidance of music processing. Guide students to express the flavour and emotion of Shanxi folk music through reasonable music processing. In order to let students better integrate into the atmosphere of Shanxi folk music, we can encourage them to listen to, watch and sing more related musical works and performances. This will not only help students accumulate more musical experience, but also enable them to feel the unique charm of Shanxi folk music more deeply.

In the teaching process, we need to use a variety of assessment methods to fully understand students' learning. These assessment methods can help us understand students' learning progress and needs more accurately, so as to provide them with more targeted guidance and assistance.

2. To construct Cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

The first chapter serves as an introduction, primarily outlining the purpose and significance of compiling the workbook, along with its content framework. It elucidates the objectives of compilation and usage methods, while offering users some suggestions, such as encouraging learners to listen to and sing relevant musical pieces.

The second chapter provides an introduction to Shanxi folk music. Based on the recommendations of the expert group, this part focuses on the historical origins, creative background, music genres, and styles of Shanxi folk music, aiming to help students understand the cultural aspects and stylistic characteristics of Shanxi folk music.

The third chapter covers technical aspects. Following the advice of experts, this part selects four high-level techniques for the Shanxi folk cello, namely finger positioning, slides, rapid bow changes, and musical phrases and bowing techniques. Each technique is analyzed in detail to facilitate better understanding and mastery by students.

The fourth chapter consists of musical pieces. According to expert recommendations, three ensemble pieces in the Shanxi folk music style are selected. Through the performance of these pieces, students can effectively integrate theory with practice, enhance their cello playing skills, and gain a deeper understanding of Shanxi folk music.

3. To use Cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

Shanxi folk music cello ensemble workbook for teaching has been designed and compiled in such a way that its teaching system gradually unfolds from theory to practice, from easy to difficult, and from knowledge to comprehensive understanding. The book introduces the historical background of Shanxi folk music, music types and their unique styles in a systematic way, aiming to enable students to grasp the style of Shanxi folk songs through theoretical study. At the same time, through in-depth study and practice of Shanxi folk music ensemble repertoire, students will not only be able to improve their appreciation of Shanxi folk music, but also effectively enhance their cello playing skills, laying a solid foundation for future music study and performance.

4. To evaluate the results of Cello ensemble workbook for teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

The researchers conducted a 12-week experiment with eight students, one lesson per week for a total of 12 lessons. To further understand the results of the experiment, the students took two formative tests in weeks 6 and 8, a summative test in week 11, and a performance test in week 12.

The students have made significant progress in performance, cello technique, and Shanxi folk music style. From the initial formative test score of 71 to 78 in the second formative test, and further to 84 in the summative test, the proportion of A-level grades has increased from 0 to 37.5%. The results indicate an overall improvement in the students' average level. Their performance, playing skills, and mastery of reprise performances have all shown considerable advancement, with a particularly notable improvement in their understanding of Shanxi folk music styles.

Discussion

In this research experiment, the primary teaching method employed was group teaching, with each group consisting of 8 students. This teaching approach proved highly beneficial for nurturing and training the students. Through observation and analysis of the experimental results, it was found that the group teaching method could foster a conducive classroom atmosphere, allowing for extensive discussions and exchanges between students and teachers, thus creating a positive learning environment. The collaborative learning and mutual inspiration among students and teachers facilitated collective progress. Moreover, students were able to enhance their abilities in problem identification, analysis, and resolution (Wang, 2022). This perspective aligns with Zhao Na (2023) viewpoint, who suggests that group classes are effective in improving students' positive attitudes, musical responsiveness, memory, left-hand finger technique, right-hand bowing technique, sense of rhythm, and overall performance, thereby igniting students' desire for improvement and raising their technical standards.

In this study, the experimental group comprised students from Shanxi Arts Vocational College. Despite coming from different cities within Shanxi, they have all lived in Shanxi since childhood and possess deep emotional connections to the local music. Therefore, they exhibit great enthusiasm for learning in the classroom (Wu, 2006). Furthermore, they have a profound understanding of the significance of preserving local music and culture, resulting in a clear positive attitude and strong interest in learning Shanxi traditional music. This perspective corresponds with the views presented by Bai Hongli (2023) in the article

"Integration of Local Music Culture and University Sound Education". As discussed in this chapter, the dissemination of local folk music culture should begin with music education at local universities, which is emotionally and practically beneficial.

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

We should continue to deepen our comprehensive research on Shanxi folk music. Through in-depth exchanges with Shanxi folk musicians and cello experts, we should actively draw from their rich teaching experience and performance techniques. Additionally, systematic research and interviews should be conducted with cello learners in Shanxi to understand their learning needs, goals, and challenges, thereby providing important insights for the development of more practical exercise books.

Furthermore, we need to collect a wide range of Shanxi folk music materials suitable for cello performance. By integrating traditional and modern teaching concepts, we can develop an effective set of cello music teaching exercise books. Building upon this foundation, we will further develop and distribute ensemble handbooks to ensure widespread dissemination among cello teachers and learners in Shanxi and across the country.

2. Recommendation for future research

In order to better ensure the long-term sustainable development and inheritance of Shanxi folk music performance, we propose the establishment of a dedicated committee or organization specifically responsible for this field of work. By regularly assessing the effectiveness of the workbook in Shanxi music education practice, as well as its actual impact on the preservation and promotion of traditional music, adjustments and improvements to relevant strategies can be made in a timely manner.

Furthermore, it is imperative to actively attract more teachers, musicians, researchers, and cultural organizations to join this noble cause, collectively contributing our wisdom and strength to the effective protection and inheritance of Shanxi folk music.

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