

Constructing a piano performance teaching guidebook for first-year piano major from the Junior High School affiliated to Sichuan Conservatory of Music

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Abstract

In today's rapid popularization and development of piano performance teaching, students of all ages are learning to play the piano, however, most of them are not clear about the difference between professional and non-professional piano performance, and don't know how to complete the transition from the interest-driven stage of non-professional piano learning to the stage of professional piano performance learning. The first-year piano majors at Sichuan Conservatory of Music Attached Middle School are in the first stage of the transition from amateur to professional. They are going through the process of learning music theory knowledge, mastering playing skills, and understanding the music of specific pieces from beginning to end. As students who have just transitioned from amateur to professional piano playing, they have certain theoretical knowledge and playing skills, but lack systematic professional training and have not established the theoretical system and framework for professional piano learning. When they pursue a higher standard of tone and musical performance, they lack relevant theoretical and technical guidance. The non-professional period focuses on cultivating interest, while the professional period requires more detailed advanced technical training. In the past, most students were not clear about the difference between amateur playing and professional playing in the process of learning the piano. At this stage, the transition from amateur to professional learning lacks appropriate theoretical and technical guidance. Therefore, it is particularly important to construct a new instruction manual.

Keywords: Piano performance; Piano performance teaching; Guidebook

Introduction

At present, the development of art curriculum is widely emphasized by the world, and the role of music education in cultivating students' comprehensive quality is becoming more and more important. Piano education, as an important part of art curriculum, has a very important role. Whether from the artistic attributes, or artistic form, the piano has rich artistic value, which provides a guarantee for the cultivation of students' musical literacy, makes students actively participate in music aesthetic practice, and shapes the aesthetic concept.

Nowadays, instrumental music learning is popularized at all ages, and piano playing is usually regarded as an important instrument. With the development of music education, the teaching of piano playing develops in all stages of education from elementary school to university. During the teaching process, teachers enhance the emotional teaching between the work and students through piano education, thus improving students' knowledge of music.

¹Received: June 1 2024; Revised: June 22 2024; Accepted: June 24 2024

The history of the development of piano art is in a sense a microcosm of the history of the development of world music. Through the study of piano education, it can lead to the understanding of the whole development of musical thinking. By gaining a deeper grasp of the history of the development of piano art, the compositional characteristics of various styles, and the way of thinking of each writer, people can understand the essence of music in the most direct way (Zhao, 2007).

The process of students learning the piano from an early age consists of the music theory knowledge of recognizing music, the technique of touching the keys, and the emotional expression of the music of a specific work. In the process of learning the works with deepening difficulties and depths, it can enhance their comprehensive knowledge of music and their comprehensive ability of music learning. When children are initially exposed to piano learning, they are often guided by their interest, and this guidance, over a long period of time, will promote their enthusiasm for music learning and take a more proactive approach to music-related learning.

As the difficulty and depth of the repertoire increases, students will realize that learning guided by interest alone can no longer support the musical understanding and emotional expression of works of higher artistic connotation, so that when students face works of higher technical difficulty and rich emotional changes, they will gradually lose their confidence in piano learning, which makes it impossible for many students to complete their performance learning in a short period of time, which is extremely unfavorable to their music learning. Some students who are more interested in piano may hesitate to play the piano pieces because of their difficulty (Dan, 2011).

Therefore, it is very important to establish a guide book for piano teaching from amateur to professional, which can not only improve students' knowledge of music theory and refine their playing skills, but also enable them to have a richer emotional expression of musical works, and at the same time can help them maintain their enthusiasm for music learning and build up their confidence in piano learning as well as their love for music learning (Li, 2010).

Research Objectives

- 1) To study a basic knowledge of professional training in piano performance from key informants.
- 2) To Construct a piano performance teaching guidebook for first-year piano majors.
- 3) To use guidebook for teach students.
- 4) To evaluate the effect of teaching by guidebook.

Research Methodology

This study used a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research: The literature was analyses using the literature research method and key informants were interviewed using the interview research method. Observing students' learning ability, performance and receptivity during and after the experiment. Quantitative research: Students were tested and their data were compiled and analysed.

This study began in August 2023 and lasted for six months, firstly, collecting relevant literature and understanding the focuses of professional piano performance teaching and the requirements of the Guidebook through expert interviews; secondly, completing the "Piano Performance Teaching Guidebook for first-year piano major from the Junior High School affiliated to Sichuan Conservatory of Music" and submit it to the expert group for review; finally, use the guidebook for the experimental group and analyze the data results through experiments, and finally summarize it.

Conceptual Framework

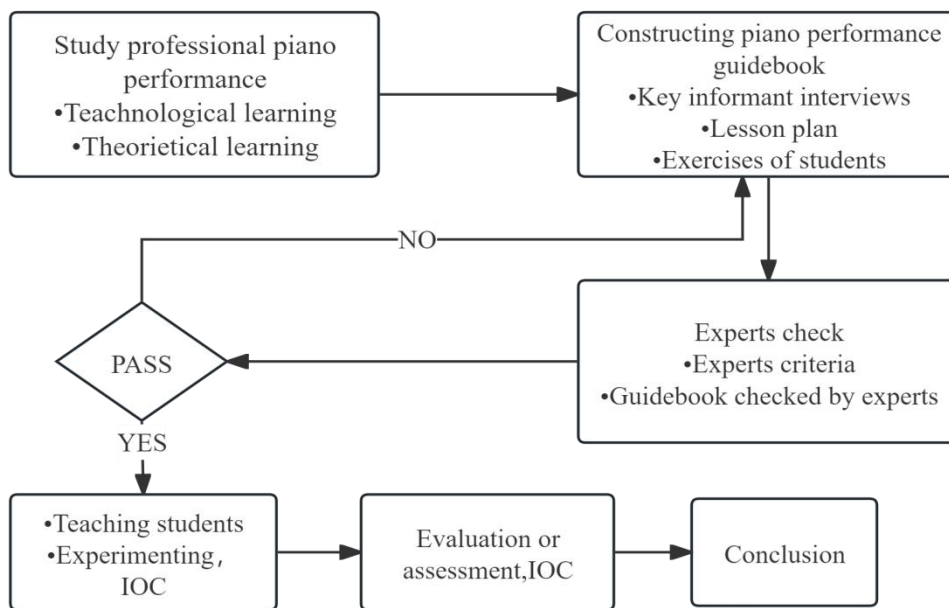


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

1. To study a basic knowledge of professional training in piano performance from key informants

The researchers collected a large number of books and literature, prepared a guide for teaching piano performance in the first year of the piano program at the junior high school affiliated with the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, and interviewed three key informants to obtain suggestions for the development of the teaching program. After the expert interviews, representative works from five styles of Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, and Chinese works were selected for teachers to use, and the learning cycle was reasonably arranged. Currently, there is a lack of systematic and theoretically rigorous justification for the transition from non-professional to professional piano teaching. The preparation of the Guide is necessary for the comprehensive coordination of the learning cycle, musical expression, and technical skills of piano education in research programs. The experts have put forward effective suggestions in terms of teaching content, teaching mode, teaching methods and

examination and assessment. During the teaching process, students should be guided to have an understanding of piano theory, playing techniques, musical expression and other aspects to improve their playing skills comprehensively. After the lesson, students are tested in stages to check the teaching effect.

To sum up, the first-year piano performance teaching guide for the piano majors of junior high schools affiliated to the Sichuan Conservatory of Music emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, and improves the students' overall performance ability through the study of piano art theory, key touching and playing techniques, musical emotion expression, and stylistic characteristics of different periods. The teaching process should pay attention to the arrangement of time and content. Teaching results are verified by tests. The ultimate goal is for students to be able to make a better transition from non-professional to professional piano playing, to be able to understand piano playing at a higher level, to improve the overall quality of their performance, and to present a richer musical expression.

2. To Construct a piano performance teaching guidebook for first-year piano majors

The guide consists of five sections, which are divided into five main sections based on the recommendations of the experts, according to the selected target eras: Baroque works, Classical works, Romantic works, Modern works and Chinese works. Each section is subdivided into three classes based on expert recommendations, each focusing on basic exercises and representative works in a contemporary style. According to the repertoire one learns the theory of the piano art, the technique of touching the keys and playing, the expression of musical emotion, the stylistic characteristics of different periods, and, according to the expert's advice, selects the corresponding basic exercises according to the technical focus of each period. At the beginning of each segment, basic exercises are used to prepare for the technical points of the section. The next lessons focus on the understanding and control of the stylistic characteristics of the period, analyzing the key touch and playing techniques, finger strength, and musical expression, ultimately giving the student a deeper understanding of the style and performance of the period. The three experts unanimously agreed that the content of the guide is theoretically linked to practice, the analysis of styles and techniques is specific and accurate, and the selected works are representative. Utilizing the guide to arrange the first-year piano performance course at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music can enable students to make a better transition from non-professional to professional piano performance, and is expected to promote the significant development of professional piano performance students' comprehensive performance ability and musical quality.

3. To use guidebook for teach students

This introduction and lesson plan will be used by 10 students in a 16-week piano performance class in the first year of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. In this course, students study the theory and performance techniques of five different musical periods and styles, focusing on two representative pieces from each period and practicing the basic exercises corresponding to the technical difficulties of each period. Depending on the content of study, students are given four formative tests every three weeks, a summative test in the 15th week, and a performance test in the last week, and are observed in class in terms of their level of piano art theory, key touch and playing techniques, expression of musical emotion, and stylistic characteristics of different periods. Knowledge and stage performance are assessed through testing. The students performed well in class, were on time, had a positive attitude towards learning, developed a stronger interest in piano playing, a deeper understanding of music, improved their technical skills significantly, touched the keys more

sensitively, played more accurately, and performed the music more fluently. Their stage performances were highly infectious. After using the guidebook for teaching. At the same time, the students' love and understanding of piano music and their comprehensive playing ability and skills have improved significantly, making the transition from non-professional piano playing to professional piano playing studies a step further.

4. To evaluate the effect of teaching by guidebook

The experimental results show that the teaching guide for piano performance in the first year of the piano major of the junior high school affiliated to the Sichuan Conservatory of Music is feasible. After one semester of study and four formative tests, one summative test, and one performance test, the results show that the students' piano theory level has improved, their performance technique level has improved, their musical expression and their mastery of the characteristics of various styles have improved, and they have further achieved the goal of transitioning from non-professional to professional piano playing. Significant progress was made in all five different styles. Students also gained a deeper understanding of theoretical knowledge, and the overall performance level improved significantly, achieving the desired effect.

Summary: This guidebook summarizes more professional and scientific training methods and playing essentials for professional piano performance and provides detailed technical and theoretical support for students' transition from non-professionals to professionals. This study completed the design of the guidebook content, instructional program, lab cycle, and exam format, as suggested by key informant interviews of key informants interviews. The guidebook is organized into five chapters, each representing a different period style: the Baroque period, the Classical period, the Romantic period, the Modern period, and Chinese piano works. The teaching content will focus on the representative repertoire of each period, learning its corresponding knowledge of music theory, key touching skills, as well as musical expression, stylistic characteristics of the works, etc., and designing targeted training for the important and difficult points of the performance.

This guidebook will help students to improve their learning efficiency in the classroom. In this 16-week lab cycle, students study the theory and performance techniques of five different musical periods and styles, focusing on two representative pieces from each period, and conduct basic exercises to address the technical difficulties of each period. According to the content of study, a total of four formative tests were conducted every three weeks, a summative test was conducted in the fifteenth week, and a performance test was conducted in the last week, and the students were observed in the classroom to observe their level of piano theory, key touching and playing skills, expression of musical emotion, and mastery of stylistic characteristics of the different periods, which, according to the results of the tests, have been continuously improving. According to the data of the classroom observation form, students' motivation, participation and classroom efficiency in classroom learning have also increased significantly.

This guidebook prepares professionals to train future piano players. This guidebook contains comprehensive learning resources designed to guide and support the transition of non-professional piano students who aspire to become professionals. It provides a wealth of knowledge and techniques to help learners make breakthrough learning progress in the field of piano performance. With this guide, students will gain an in-depth understanding and overall improvement in their knowledge of music theory, keystroke skills, as well as musical expression and stylistic characteristics of works. In addition, it contains practical advice to help learners overcome the challenges of learning to play the piano, and to progressively improve their piano playing and musicianship. Through the systematic study and practice of this guidebook, students will gradually grow into professional-level piano players and make outstanding contributions to the future music world.

Discussion

After expert interviews, selected representative works from five styles of Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary, and Chinese works for teachers to use and rationalize the learning cycle. When playing the piano, the changes of some objective factors will have a direct impact on the performance effect of the music, and the key touching method as the main influencing factor of the piano tone, the piano player must achieve high quality piano performance level by accurately grasping the key touching method, so the piano key touching method has always been the focus of attention of the piano players, and the professional performers have been constantly researching on it, so that the different key touching methods can be used in the performance of the piano. Professional performers have been conducting constant research on this, which has led to certain changes in different keystrokes at different times Li (2016).

To sum up, the first year piano performance teaching guidebook of the Affiliated Junior High School of Sichuan Conservatory of Music emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, and improves the students' all-around performance ability through the study of piano art theory, keystrokes and performance techniques, music emotion expression, and style characteristics of different periods.

Hou (2023) Piano playing is a highly comprehensive music performance art, which not only requires players to have a high level of musical literacy and performance skills, but also needs to shape the richness of the sound effect through the key touching skills. Keystroke technique is an important factor influencing the quality of piano performance, and it mainly plays a certain role in regulating the timbre changes during the performance. Through the control and application of each keystroke element, the timbre effect is changed, and the piano music is presented with melodies, rhythms and emotions that are in line with the characteristics and styles of the repertoire (Zhang, 2022). In piano performance, mastering good keystroke skills is conducive to realizing the effective control of timbre and showing the emotional connotation of the piece through the performer's high level of performance. Therefore, it is important for players to clarify the importance of keystroke technique in piano performance and to strengthen the practice of keystroke technique in order to improve the overall quality of piano performance by applying keystroke technique in a reasonable way (Cai, 2013).

Bach's most famous son, C.P.E. Bach, pointed out in his treatise *On the True Meaning of the Art of Keyboard Instrument Playing* that when the phrases are anguished and sorrowful, the performer must be anguished and sorrowful; and that when the music is lively and joyful, the performer must be unquestionably in the presence of those same emotions. Piano learners must have a keen sense of hearing and quick musical reaction. When hearing a piece of music, being able to identify pitch, rhythm and harmony is only one aspect, but the learner must also be able to perceive the artistic image and mood scene expressed by these musical elements, and connect the music with his/her own emotional experience to analyze the connotation of the piece in depth (Qian, 2022).

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

During the course of the program of study, which is based on the comments and suggestions made by the key informants for the transition from the non-professional to the professional level, the student receives systematic and professional instruction, corrects technical deficiencies in the performance, and is provided with a personalized training plan for each student's situation. Students study in-depth music theory, scales, tonality, harmony, etc., to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation of different repertoire. Students develop good practicing habits, focusing on finger technique, musical expression, and musical control. Consistent daily high-quality practice is the key to improving professionalism. During the transition from non-professional to professional level, students should study a wide variety of repertoire from different musical styles, periods and genres, so as to broaden their musical horizons and improve their ability to adapt quickly to different styles of repertoire. Participating in performances and competitions can be a good way to help professional players get used to the stage and ease their nerves. You can also record your own playing through audio or video, reflect and evaluate, timely feedback can improve your own playing, timely detection of problems and targeted solutions. At the same time, pay attention to technical details, study finger and wrist dexterity can better improve the accuracy of the performance, strengthen the deeper understanding of the music can be more profound interpretation of the work, continuous learning and updating of knowledge, pay attention to the development trend of modern music, you can maintain the sensitivity to the music. Through periodic professional training, it promotes the remarkable development of comprehensive performance ability and music literacy of professional piano playing students, and provides systematic teaching ideas and planning for professional music colleges to cultivate students from non-professional transition to professional level.

2. Recommendation for future research

In the transition from non-professional to professional piano teaching, we need a more systematic and theoretically rigorous justification of the importance of this phase. The preparation of the Guide is crucial to the comprehensive and coordinated study of the learning cycle, musical expression and technical competence in piano education. A group of experts has put forward practical suggestions from various perspectives, including teaching content, teaching mode, teaching methodology and examination and assessment.

In the process of teaching, teachers should guide students to deeply understand piano theory, performance technology and musical expression, and comprehensively improve their performance skills. At the same time, teaching results should be verified through a series of tests. The ultimate goal is for students to understand piano playing at a higher level, improve the overall quality of performance, and demonstrate richer musical expression.

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