

On Piano Enlightenment Teaching for Children

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Abstract: At the end of 1970s, with the reform and opening up and economic development, people's living standards have been increasingly improved, so they have paid more attention to the spiritual and cultural demands. In the new century, the Chinese education field has begun the process of fully promoting quality education. At present, the national social education park with children as the subject has been formed; piano has become the top musical instrument for preschool education of children in many economically developed countries. The long-term research results of scientists indicate that learning piano is the most effective approach of developing the right hemisphere and child intelligence. More and more parents begin to attach great importance to cultivating children to learn piano. The enlightenment teaching of child piano has become the research subject of teachers and scholars.

Keywords: Enlightenment of child piano; Importance of fundamental teaching; Cultivation of children's interest in piano

1. Introduction

"The sound of piano was firstly brought by F.F. Chopin to us." The piano popularization education in our country has rapidly developed with the reform and opening up of the country. The number of children that learn piano is gradually increasing and preschool is also brought forward. On the one hand, it promotes the development of piano teaching. On the other hand, it also proposes higher requirements for the piano teachers. In *Training of Performance Skills in Piano Teaching*, Fan Hexin studies and explores how to master the disciplines of psychological activities in several different stages in the training process of performance skills from the perspective of athletic psychology. In *On Child Piano Teaching*, Li Wenlan mentions: strengthen the standard of piano enlightenment education methods of children, cultivate the music quality of children; the children are at the golden period of physical power and intelligence development and the important stage of learning the piano. In *Teaching Guidance of Simple Piano Course of John Thompson*, Yao Fang illustrates that the reason for the popular teaching materials of John Thompson in child piano enlightenment does not lie in the market effect nor the collection of some sensational materials. By summing up and learning from the researches of experts and scholars, this paper discusses about some problems in the piano enlightenment teaching for children.

2. Problems in Piano Enlightenment Teaching for Children

There are multiple problems in the piano enlightenment teaching for children. Some of the piano enlightenment teachers do not realize the value and significance of teachers' accompaniment to the teaching activity; they hold that it is enough to merely cultivate children's interest in music itself, and do not pay excessive attention to the necessary procedure of forming its interest.

2.1. Selection and use of enlightenment teaching materials

With the development of piano popularization education in our country, there are more and more enlightenment teaching materials that are introduced in and written. On the one hand, it provides the space of reference and selection for enlightenment teaching. On the other hand, it also increases the difficulty of material selection. The teaching material plays the important role in the success or failure of teaching. Therefore, before starting the child enlightenment teaching, teachers should firstly make preparations of the teaching materials. Among the popular child enlightenment teaching materials, they are roughly divided into three types of stave entry types, namely treble staff introduction method, Central C introduction method, and multitone introduction method. The traditional enlightenment teaching material *Basic Piano Course of Beyer* adopts the treble staff introduction method. Volume 1-5 of *Shallow Piano Course of Thomson* that is widely applied at home starts from Central C. Meanwhile, it teaches the bass and treble stave, which is gradually expanded to the high and low pitch. In addition, there is also the pitch interval introduction method and various integrated introduction methods. When we select

the child piano enlightenment teaching materials, we should consider about the characteristics and limitations of a certain entry method, and also comprehensively measures the scientificity, interest and practicality of the teaching materials.

2.2. The finger strength of children is low

The fingers cannot stand still. The common symptom is the sunken fingertips, which is the "folded fingers". The "folded fingers" cannot directly pass the strength of playing to the fingertip, so that the playing sound is not that clean. Some children think if they use the fingers in a large scale by raising the fingers, their fingers will be folded, so they do not dare to practice it by raising the fingers. However, to raise the fingers in a lower way and make it the strength of wrist will lead to the poor voice quality of the keyboard. The finger strength of children is insufficient. After all, they are still young, not fully developed and still in the stage of growth.

2.3. Failure of concentrating the attention

In the learning process, attention is the only door of opening our mind. The wider the door is opened, the more knowledge we learn. Once the attention is scattered or cannot be concentrated, the door of the mind will be opened. All the useful knowledge information cannot be input. Therefore, the French biologist Georges Cuvier says, "the first quality of talent is attention." Under normal conditions, attention enables our psychological activities towards a certain thing, so that we accept some information, inhibit other activities and other information, and concentrate all the psychological energy on the pointed things. Therefore, good attention will improve our working and learning efficiency. The attention obstacle is that people cannot point the psychological activities towards a certain concrete thing, or cannot focus all the energy to this thing, and meanwhile inhibit the attention of irrelevant things. The reasons that lead to this condition are complicated. Many severe psychological disorders may arouse the obstacle of attention. For students, they are highly nervous and anxious out of the heavy learning burdens and excessive psychological pressure, so that they cannot concentrate their attention. In addition, out of the insufficient sleep, their brain cannot be fully relaxed, which may also lead to the scattered attention.

2.4. Feeling bored at learning piano

When children are not interested in piano or the teachers teach the theoretical knowledge, children will feel bored, lack enthusiasm of piano, feel it boring and meaningless. They may firstly feel it interesting and funny, and play it carefully. However, as the difficulty is deepened, the skills get complicated and the teachers assign much homework, children have no time to practice playing the

piano, will gradually feel tired of it and even want to give it up.

2.5. Lazy in practicing piano

Learning the piano is also a tough and everlasting job. When children firstly contact piano, there will be a period of excitement, but they will gradually turn lazy, find excuse to avoid practicing the piano, purposefully delay time so as not to practice it. The assignment they finish is of poor quality and they cannot concentrate their thoughts in class nor get active. At this time, children enter the "difficulty period". Reasons that lead to the difficult period of children include: children in this period will contradict against new knowledge and feel bored at piano practice. It requires the quantitative accumulation process so as to realize the qualitative leap. Their progress is obviously slowed down; the repeated work is increased; they fail to pass it again and again, so they are obviously bored and want to give it up. Out of the excessive requirements of parents or teachers, they have the idea that however they work hard, they cannot meet their requirements. Children will feel it tough to practice the piano, so that they cannot ensure the time of practicing the piano or they fail to practice it well for they are not fully immersed into it. The education method is improper. Excessive strictness may lead excessive psychological burdens to students and the sense of fright. Excessive indulgence may make students feel indolent and fail to make progress, so that they lose the interest of continuing to learn it. Check whether the other aspects (school education or other interest education) are proper. When students obviously feel the increased learning pressure, they urgently need a process of adjustment and adaptation.

3. Solutions to Problems in Piano Enlightenment Teaching for Children

Targeting at the existing problems in child piano enlightenment teaching, we have to find the according solutions and the according measures so as to give the proper enlightenment education.

3.1. Cultivate the interest of students

In playing the piano, fingering does matter. But what matters the most is that they will like playing it all their life. At present, some parents compulsorily ask their children to learn the piano, which will make the children disgusted. Therefore, the key to the entry level is not to make fingering kill interest.

What is the correct behavior from landing to practice? The first step is to rapidly learn accompaniment, play and sing rather than excessively correct the fingering. At the beginning, do not follow the suggestions of the academism and focus on fingering; instead, we should enable children to randomly play the songs after understanding the basic fingering requirement, especially the child

songs and pop songs. The reason why children like the child songs and pop songs is that they are simple and pleasant. After they feel it interesting, turn to the academism for advice for fingering. They should slowly accept the boring fingering training when they have the interest of performing interest. Second, set up a performance stage in the circle of relatives and friends. Children will soon be engaged in the practice of family party after mastering the accompaniment and rhythm. This is the simplest secret of improving children's interest of learning piano. For example, we may learn to sing some touching child songs and healthy pop songs with children and then sing to the relatives and friends. In this way will children be increasingly interested in it.

3.2. Form the good habit

Slowly practice it at the beginning. For the new songs, children must slowly practice it at the beginning for they lack the visual play ability. The role of slow practice is that the brain has sufficient time of dealing with and allocating the attention in face of various information such as finger and keyboard, so as to avoid the rate of error and avoid the wrong tones at the beginning.

Practice it in different stages. The performance of long songs is very tiring and it is inconvenient for memorizing. Divide the song to practice it better.

Mainly practice the difficult points. This really matters. When there is the technical difficulty in the song, if they do not focus on practicing it, it will lead to the problem of the overall rhythm. And it will be increasingly difficult if they do not practice it.

Practice it with different hands. To practice it with different hands may simplify the song.

Avoid mistake. In the first several times of practicing the new song, we must avoid the wrong tone. This is because it easily leads to the disorder once the most fresh memory is wrong and it is difficult to correct it once it leads to the chronic mistakes.

3.3. Emphasize the fundamental teaching

The piano enlightenment teaching is just like building skyscrapers. We should firstly make the foundation solid and straight. If we make it weak, the building will also collapse. The enlightenment stage in piano teaching directly influences the development prospect of students. If it is made sound, students will love the art of piano, lay a solid foundation and develop towards a higher level. The irresponsible enlightenment teaching will mislead parents and students, so as to form many non-standard and even wrong habits and methods. It is difficult to be corrected even if they meet good teachers.

3.4. Cooperation and guidance of parents

The failure of the child piano enlightenment teaching depends on three aspects. The first one is the talent and

diligence of children. The second is the level and attitude of teachers. The third is the guidance and cooperation of parents. The three mutually influence one another. Teachers should not only teach the students, but also guide parents to give proper guidance. The proper guidance of parents firstly comes from parents' correct understanding of children's learning the piano. For most of the children, to learn the piano is merely to improve quality, develop intelligence and cultivate ability. Even the children with great talent will not set up the objective of becoming a pianist when they just accept the enlightenment teaching. To propose the unrealistic requirements tends to the contrary effect. The cooperation between parents and teachers is shown in the guidance of all the practices after class. When the young children firstly begin to learn the piano, parents should firstly help children form the good habit of practicing the piano. For example, they should clean their hands before practicing the piano, trim the fingernail, check the height and position between the bench and the foot pad, arrange the proper light, make various preparation works of practicing the piano, and avoid the condition of drinking water and going to the toilet. Once they realize it, they may focus their attention and meet the requirement of practicing. Out of the intelligence and ability of children, parents may help them record the class requirements proposed by teachers, keep emphasizing it in practice and cultivate their ability of independently practicing the piano step by step. Parents should encourage children for their learning attitude and performance, and propose the defects, so as to make them perform better.

4. Summary

"Enlightenment" means the basic and elementary knowledge for beginners. Therefore, "enlightenment" is called "entry". In terms of the division problem of the piano learning stage, some people attribute enlightenment teaching to "primary stage"; some list enlightenment teaching a stage. The latter aims to highlight the importance of enlightenment teaching, so as to arouse the enough attention of people.

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