

# Study on the Curriculum Reform in the Context of Applied Talent Training

## --A Case Study of Improvisatory Piano Accompaniment Course for Musicology Majors

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**Abstract:** The cultivation of applied talents is the main task of colleges and universities. As one of the major courses of musicology majors in colleges and universities, improvisatory piano accompaniment plays an extremely important role in the cultivation of applied talents. Taking the improvisatory piano accompaniment course of musicology majors as a case, this paper analyzes the common problems in teaching, probes into the complex psychology of students in the process of learning, and puts forward some suggestions for curriculum reform, so as to enable students to apply what they have learned and cultivate the applied talents in musicology that are suitable for the current society.

**Keywords:** Applied talents; Improvisatory piano accompaniment; Curriculum reform; Musicology

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, undergraduate colleges have accelerated the pace of transformation and development and the cultivation of applied talents, which is not only an objective reflection of social and economic development and the demand of the talent resources market, but also an inevitable trend of the development of higher education in the new situation. With the development and progress of society, new requirements have been put forward for the training of applied talents in musicology, especially for the teaching of basic piano courses. How to integrate the teaching contents with the employment demand of the current society closely becomes the starting point of this study.

### 2. Common Problems in the Teaching of Applied Music Courses

There are the following common problems in the teaching of applied music courses:

First of all, the teaching objectives deviate from the reality. Most of the training modes draw lessons from the existing mode, and inevitably deviate from the training objectives of applied talents, which easily lead to the deviation of teaching objectives from the actual application. Moreover, the design of contents is divorced from practical application.

Second, there is a single teaching method. In music teaching, collective lessons are often used for traditional teaching. That is to say, a single teaching method is that "I teach and you listen". In the process of teaching, students passively accept knowledge, while the cultivation

of the initiative in learning and innovative consciousness is neglected. In such a mode, students lack the initiative to explore knowledge, and they are only able to passively grasp knowledge, but unable to make flexible use of what they have learned. In addition, due to the single teaching mode, the integration of knowledge in other disciplines is neglected.

Third, the way of performance evaluation is single. Teaching evaluation is an indispensable part of the control over the quality of teaching. It is difficult to objectively reflect the true level of students' knowledge and ability through a single form of final examination, and it may also hinder students' enthusiasm for learning.

Finally, there are not enough class hours allocated for the course. Due to the limited class hours, students are unable to learn the improvisatory piano accompaniment course in a systematic way, resulting in the deficiencies of teachers' teaching and students' employment.

### 3. Analysis of the Psychological Process in the Improvisatory Piano Accompaniment

In the teaching process of the improvisatory piano accompaniment course, we may often encounter such a case that the teacher explains in a detailed and comprehensive manner and demonstrates in an accurate and abundant way. But from the perspective of the teaching effects fed back by students, many of the lessons are not so satisfactory. The reason may be that students pay less attention to the course or that the teacher fails to take good advantage of the psychological process of students and to integrate the knowledge, the skill and the ability well when they learn the improvisatory piano accompa-

niment course. They should accurately grasp the changes in the psychological state of students when they learn the improvisatory piano accompaniment so as to better grasp the psychological state of students in the process of learning. Moreover, they should adopt scientific and reasonable teaching methods to match the psychological state of students, which will be of great significance to the targeted cultivation of students majoring in piano and the cultivation of applied talents.

### **3.1. Perceptual process of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment**

Perception is the response of the brain to the individual and comprehensive attributes of things under the direct influence of things. It is the basis of the cognitive process and the source of all knowledge. Without a perceptual process, the piano improvisation can not be well understood. In the process of piano improvisation, the learning and mastery of all kinds of techniques and skills start from perception. The development of various perceptual abilities is an important psychological basis for the formation of piano improvisation skills. The acoustical perception of the learning of the improvisatory piano accompaniment is that learners adopt hearing as a medium to reflect the various feelings of music and sound, which is different from the general music appreciation, including the subjective initiative of a considerable number of learners. The perception process of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment usually consists of four aspects of perceptual process of visual learning, perceptual process of auditory learning, perceptual process of experience-based learning and perceptual process of hands-on operations.

### **3.2. Thinking process of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment**

Understanding and cognition in the learning process of improvisatory piano accompaniment refers to the practice that the accompanist adopts rational thinking to integrate the form and the content and deep meaning of the aesthetics and evaluation into the work. The works of improvisatory piano accompaniment can be described as an objective reflection of songwriters and composers paying attention to the soul in social life, and thus it requires the learners to have a rational understanding of the knowledge and to conduct an objective analysis, which can be said to really learn, understand and grasp the works.

Creative thinking is the core of the learning of piano accompaniment. In general, creative thinking means the process of adopting a unique method to process, process and innovate existing information on the basis of breaking through the limitations of traditional thinking, so as to create new thinking and new methods. Improvisatory piano accompaniment is the artistic improvisations of the players, while there is only the theme without the accom-

panying music. Such improvisation is a kind of short-term artistic behavior, but piano improvisation contains an extremely complex cognitive process and short-term thinking activities. Among all thinking activities, creative thinking runs through the key process of improvisatory piano accompaniment, which is the core of improvisatory piano accompaniment, but also the most prominent and important characteristic. Without creative thinking, there would be no excellent piano improvisation. Therefore, through the studies of improvisatory piano accompaniment, students can not only improve the accompanying skills, but also cultivate the abilities of creative thinking, playing an extremely important role in improvisatory piano accompaniment. The role of creative thinking in the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment is mainly reflected in the following aspects. First, it is able to assist the learners in improving the basis of piano accompaniment. Second, it is to help to improve the expressive force of improvisatory piano accompaniment. Third, it is conducive to the cultivation of strong interest in accompaniment.

### **3.3. Re-creation process of improvisatory piano accompaniment**

In the learning process of improvisatory piano accompaniment, learners should make full use of various conditions, and give full play to their subjective entertainment ability, that is, the ability of re-creation. At the time of accompaniment, they should give full play to their rich imagination make close connection with the real life. Only in this way, can they grasp more accurately what they have never felt or are able to feel, experience and interpret the true meaning of the art of improvisatory piano accompaniment, get aesthetic enjoyment and enlightenment, and enable their social functions to be more accurate. The re-creation process of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment is a process that attaches great importance to skills and emotional thinking, which requires the accompanist to meet certain requirements as follows. First of all, the accompanist must be equipped with complete skills, and connect the skills with emotions in the process of accompanying, so as to achieve a perfect re-creation. Second, the accompanist must have a strong understanding ability and be able to accurately grasp and understand the music scores. Third, improvisatory piano accompaniment is the re-creation of the accompanist to the original work, and thus it is necessary to study the text on the basis of comprehensive application of the accompaniment techniques and the reading and comprehension of the music. It is a good way of piano accompaniment to fully display the unique charm of the re-creation and truly reflect the soul and value of the piano accompaniment art.

### **3.4. Bad psychology and adjustment of improvisatory piano accompaniment**

The bad psychology of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment is a subjective psychological experience caused by very complicated reasons. In the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment, the accompanist tends not to have a good psychological state, which is the result of various reasons. Therefore, in the process of improvisatory accompaniment, we must attach great importance to it and adjust it in a timely manner. In the study of piano improvisation, we find that the mastery of a work not only depends on the accompaniment ability and level of the player itself, that is, the playing skills. There is also a power beyond such ability and level to determine the effect of accompaniment, which is usually known as psychology. The technology is different from the common accompaniment technology. From the perspective of the deep background, it does not directly affect the psychological quality of the accompanist, but it is orderly and regular. Similar to performance skills, it also has technical characteristics. Once the learners master it, they will become very stable in performance. As a significant habit of mental activity, it is more stable than accompaniment skills, and in general, it is not easily changed. In this sense, there seems to be a certain degree of innate characteristics in psychological skills, but it can be trained and improved. Good psychological skills are developed on the basis of continuous training, and are continuously trained and implemented in different stages of improvisational piano training, so that students' psychological habits will become stable abilities.

#### **4. Strategies for Curriculum Teaching Reform**

##### **4.1. To reconstruct the contents of the elementary piano courses**

In accordance with the differences in the piano foundation of students, it is necessary to compile several applied piano teaching modules at different levels, so that students can study independently to achieve the best teaching effect. On this basis, students are required to participate as much as possible in different styles of music, and strive to expand the scope of exposure to different types of music. With the expansion in the range of students' employment, many people have been engaged in the music-related work, such as piano accompaniment in the choir and vocal piano accompaniment, which requires the piano teachers of music majors in colleges not only to teach students to play the piano, but also to teach them how to train and improve the ability of improvisatory accompaniment. Only such teaching content is able to allow students to acquire real benefits and to be competent for the future work.

##### **4.2. Various teaching methods and means**

Teaching methods have a direct impact on the teaching effect, and the traditional single teaching mode has been unable to meet the needs of applied talent training, and thus people must adopt a variety of teaching methods and means. The mixed method of teaching is beneficial to the cultivation of applied talents. Mixed teaching is a combination of one-to-one teaching, electronic piano lessons (about 10 students) and group teaching (2-3 students), online (the Internet) and offline (face-to-face) teaching, forming a multi-dimensional mode of "mixed teaching". Now it is a new era of information, and the development of new media and network platforms promotes the people's expectation, admiration and reversal of the gradual and microscopic process. College teachers should seize the opportunity of this era, give full play to the rapid spread of new media, and pay attention to the construction and innovative development of the network instruction platforms. We should do everything possible to make mobile phones a real teaching tool for teachers and students.

##### **4.3. To increase the quantity and weight of practical teaching**

First of all, it is necessary to establish cooperative relations with enterprises, institutions and communities to create a practice bases for music majors and build a good platform for students to perform stage practice. Moreover, students should be encouraged to go out of campus and establish long-term cooperative relations with social music institutions, while starting at the grass-roots level as a training partner. At the same time, the actual match between piano skills and job requirements should be judged. Secondly, we should guide students to plan concerts or performances on their own. We can hold various concerts or literary and artistic performances in batches in universities to cultivate students' ability to organize and coordinate, enhance the sense of teamwork, and constantly enrich their stage experience.

##### **4.4. To enhance the organic integration between courses**

We must review the scheme for personnel training based on the demand of social employment, increase and decrease relevant courses in a timely manner, and strive to promote the integration between courses, mainly including the integration with vocal music, instrumental music, chorus, theory and extracurricular curriculum.

##### **4.5. To highlight the skill evaluation and process evaluation**

It is necessary to change the evaluation methods of students' academic performance, from knowledge test to ability test and from result test and process test. It may be assessed in the form of performance and report-back performance.

#### 4.6. To teach students in accordance with their aptitude

We should teach students in accordance with their aptitude, and customize the scientific "step-by-step" plan, but not neglect the actual situation of students blindly. In addition, each student should practice more. Each student shows interests in different things, and we should find more bright points on the students, conduct multiple evaluations to each student, create a good class atmosphere, increase some music games and interaction links in teaching, and stimulate students' interest in learning.

#### 5. Conclusion

Accompaniment technology plays an important role in the study of piano improvisation. By analyzing the problems existing in teaching, this paper pays attention to the psychological process of the learning of improvisatory piano accompaniment, and puts forward effective reform strategies. And it also tries to find a new way to reform piano accompaniment. Through curriculum reform, we hope to enable students to master real skills and cultivate applied talents, so that they can better serve the rapid development of economy and society.

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