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An Analysis on Higher Music Education Models in China

Hong ZHU¹, Zixuan SU²

Abstract

This article focuses on discussion of ways to train music professionals and the development of music education models in Chinese universities. The article presents the history and development of higher music education in China, and argues that a diversified education system has been established with music education in traditional professional conservatories of music, normal universities and comprehensive universities exist side by side in higher music education in China. The article also illustrates the module systems, teaching schedule, problems and confusion encountered during the past decade in the development of music education in Chinese universities, including undergraduates' different music accomplishment before entering the university, learning outcomes, module systems, and evaluation systems of education. Finally, the article proposes some recommendations and ways in identifying objectives for the training of professionals and selectively use the teaching experience gained from universities outside China for reference. At the same time, it is hoped that this article can attract the attention from international scholars to attach great significance on the development of music education in universities, so that they can provide beneficial suggestions and instructions on the training of compound music professionals in Chinese universities.

Keywords: Chinese universities, the training of music professionals, higher music education, education models, module systems.

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Introduction

A brief history: the development of Chinese music education

The contemporary Chinese music education arose from the late 19th century. In 1898, Kang Youwei submitted a written proposal named "Please Open the School" to the Qing court, in which he put forward that "To widely open schools is the most important thing", and suggested to construct a new education system which should "Learn from afar as Germany, and nearby as Japan" (Kang, 1898). In addition, he proposed to set up the course "school songs" which is a new idea in Chinese music education history for the first time (Chen, 1993). The initial school songs course adopted a large number of western tunes, and applied the method of adding lyrics to old songs, and collectively singing in the course to teach the western music theories to students, through which, students simultaneously accepted the ideological education on patriotism (Xu, 2004). In 1907, the Qing government promulgated *the Constitution of Women's Normal Schools*, which stipulated the establishment of music courses in normal schools for the first time. The Constitution also provided a clear understanding and arrangement for the education purpose and teaching period of normal music education, and laid a preliminary foundation for the construction and development of modern normal music education system in China (Wu, 1999). From December, 1912 to February, 1913, the Ministry of Education of the Provisional Government of the Republic of China successively promulgated *Regulations of Normal Schools*, *Regulations of Normal Universities*, and *Curriculum Standards for Normal Universities* in which music class was stipulated as a compulsory course in ordinary normal universities (Zhang, 2009). The development of ordinary music education brought the unprecedented improvement in social music foundation and mass music foundation. People started to show expectations towards higher music education with their deepening understanding of the nature of music education. They also put forward objective requirements towards both normal music education and professional music education that the society needs a large number of music teachers and professionals in high levels. Therefore, the training of music teachers and professionals has become a problem to be solved since the rise of ordinary music education. Based upon the preliminary development of higher normal music education, the higher education institute for professional music education emerged at the historic moment with the purposes of training music professionals in all types. The Peking University Conservatory of Music, which was founded in October, 1922 on the basis of Peking University Music Research Association, is the earliest and most representative higher education institute for professional music. National Music College was established by educationist Yuanpei Cai and Doctor Youmei Xiao in Shanghai in 27 Nov 1927, It is known as the predecessor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Ways of training music professionals and teaching models in this area in China were specified after the founding of the nation,

its establishment marked the new historical stage that the Chinese professional music education had entered since then with characteristics as standardization, large-scale, and specialization. Due to the learning experience that Youmei Xiao had in Japan and Germany, the Music Department of Beijing Women's Normal University as well as The Peking University Conservatory of Music adopted the Japanese conservatory system, while Shanghai National Music University adopted the Germany conservatory system (Zhang, 2009). In February, 1931, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China promulgated *Regulations of Higher Normal Universities*, and then the higher normal education for professional music was formally established (Wei, 2003).

With the education reform in universities in 1952, adjustments were made in faculties' arrangement (Wang, 2012). Eventually, 31 normal universities were founded; meanwhile most of them established music major. During this period of music education, the Soviet model was applied in no matter teaching management and education system or teaching theory and syllabus (Li, 2013). After the resumption of university entrance examination in 1978, some normal universities added the music majors and the Ministry of Education reformed the training model for music education majors, and developed the professionals-training program with the aim of training music teachers for primary and secondary schools. There were more than 100 normal universities with music majors in China by 1988, and the music education in normal universities was in flourishing development (Xu, 2004).

From the late 20th century to the early 21st century, with the scale-expansion of higher education in China, many Chinese local universities broadened the categories of the profession due to the expansion of enrollment policies in the Ministry of Education. Many universities, therefore, started to set up music departments or schools. In this context, the rapid development of higher music education in China indicated a vigorous and prosperous situation. From then on, three types of education models were formed in higher music education in China: traditional professional music education (conservatories), normal music education (teacher music education), and music education in comprehensive universities (universities music education). So far there are eleven professional conservatories of music, 2 art colleges, 143 normal universities, and more than 700 universities with a music department (Zhou, 2006). Independent professional conservatories of music are: the Central Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Xi'an Conservatory of Music, Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Tianjin Conservatory of Music, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and Harbin Conservatory of Music. The professional teaching quality of conservatories in China enjoys a high reputation in the world, and the teaching facilities are also as good as those in the European and American conservatories. For example, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, which has two campuses with a new campus in Guangzhou University Town and an old one in its original site, possesses three concert halls with different scales as large, medium, and small,

twelve large rehearsal rooms, and more than 120 piano rooms with imported grand piano equipped to all teachers in the piano department. In addition, other teaching resources like books, and audio materials are also in a considerable amount (Zhou, 2006). By the end of 2013, according to the investigation, there are more than 1400 universities with music majors in China (Liu, 2013). Whilst developing at a high speed, music education in universities, as an important component of the diversified education forms of higher music education in China, has encountered some problems as following. The establishment of music education schemes and course structures is based on that of conservatories and normal universities. As there were many similarities on the university positioning and training of music professionals, the music proficiency and employment rate of graduates were less competitive compared to those students graduating from conservatories of music or normal universities.

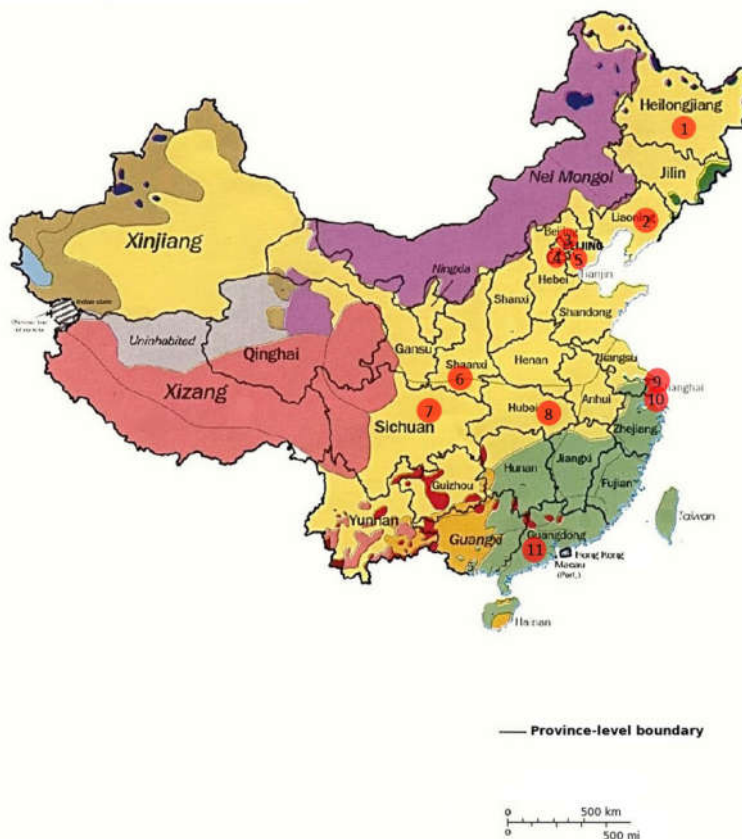


Figure 1. The location of Independent professional conservatories of music in China

The Independent professional conservatories of music in China: (1) Harbin Conservatory of Music, (2) Shenyang Conservatory of Music; (3) The Central Conservatory of Music; (4) China Conservatory of Music; (5) Tianjin Conservatory of Music; (6) Xi'an Conservatory of Music; (7) Sichuan Conservatory of Music; (8) Wuhan Conservatory of Music; (9) Shanghai Conservatory of Music; (10) Zhejiang Conservatory of Music; (11) Xinghai Conservatory of Music. In a number of countries, there has been a trend over the last decade to ponder over and research on this problem, but less so on higher music education, especially on the reform of module systems and curriculum process: In some studies, scholars macroscopically argued that the higher music education in China is in a transitional stage, which urgently needs to complete the reform from elite education to popular education. Additionally, it was pointed out that the current “elite” teaching model and curriculum arrangement is no longer suitable for the development of contemporary higher music education in China (Chun, 2011). Some scholars discussed a number of problems brought from the expansion of enrollment for higher music education, and pointed out the singleness of assessing standards for higher music education in China (e.g. Zhou, 2006; Cheng, 2006; Xu, 2008). Though the education has stepped into a “popular” stage, the elite model in professional universities is still applied to assess the music education in comprehensive universities. Therefore, to construct a diversified assessing standard is one part of the reform of higher music education (Zhou, 2006). While pondering upon the expansion of enrollment for higher music education in China, some scholars proposed to construct the multi-layer and all-round higher music education system, which means the traditional music education for professional skills develops along with the research and teaching music education in order to meet the diversified needs from social and economic development towards talents (Jin, 2004). It was indicated in some studies that the music professionals training model in comprehensive universities should be isolated to follow the assumption as Relying on the Discipline Backgrounds and Walking up the Road of Interdisciplinary, emphasizing the science and art backgrounds in comprehensive universities (Sun & Wang, 2010). In addition, some scholars held the idea that under the context of cultural relativistic music values, it is necessary to set up and practice following the concept of “multi-cultural music education”, basing on Chinese traditional music, absorbing the world’s outstanding music culture, and constructing the Chinese music education system with Chinese culture as the mother tongue to offer the guidance for the curriculum reform of higher music education in China (Zuo, 2011). Some scholars compared the music teaching and its associated cultural values in Shanghai and Taipei schools. Both owe their cultural ascendancy to traditional Chinese music and western musicology (Chung, 2004), this article aims to study the music education in primary and secondary schools, but it can help the international readers understand the ideologies in Chinese music education, because the higher music education in China shares with the same social cultural consciousness with that in them. These studies on higher music education discovered, raised problems, and also

put forward excellent ideas with certain realistic values. However, the solutions and suggestions offered regarding the status quo are not systematically, especially lacking international comparison. In the context of globalization, the higher music education in China, particularly the music major education in comprehensive universities, needs to receive more attention from international musicologists.

The research objectives and method

Music education in universities, professional music education in traditional conservatories of music, and normal music education are the three major forms of higher music education in China. As a new form of education whose development is less than two decades, music education in universities deserves more attention. It occurred with the development of the times and the emerging demands for talents from society. While making a lot of pretty good outcomes, various problems and confusions are becoming increasingly prominent owing to the over-quick developing. To deal with these problems and obtain more space for development, it is necessary for music education in universities to analyze their inner problems, to carry out reforming measures, and to establish a new and independent teaching model.

By employing literature review, data collection, case study and comparison, this article clarifies the present situation of higher music education in China, and the dilemma met in the development of music major education in universities, taking music major in South China Agriculture University (SCAU), which is of universal significance, as a typical case. Then, referring to the teaching model of music major in international universities, choosing Nottingham University (UON), which possesses a great achievement and a mature developing status, as a representative case, it also illustrates the teaching models and module systems, teaching characteristics and so on. With the implication from above, this article aims to expand the horizon of music education research in China, and provides suggestions for music major development in comprehensive universities in hope of opening up a path with sustainable development. Due to the vast territory of China and great cultural differences between north and south, regional differences and changes with each passing day generated in the development of universities brought some limitations while collecting cases, investigating subjects, studying the content, etc. Therefore, not all problems occurred in the development of higher music education in China can be elaborated in the article, and basing on this study, further study and discussion on higher music education in China are welcomed.

The connotation of Chinese university music education

South China Agriculture University (SCAU) is one of the national key universities, and a multidisciplinary integrated university. The history of SCAU can be traced back to 1909 when Guangdong Agricultural Experimental Station affiliated with an Agricultural School was founded. The music major of SCAU has trained a great number of students who are excellent in music education and music performance, and enjoyed good social reputation; however, it also encountered some realistic problems since its establishment in 2004. SCAU, developed from a traditional agricultural university to a comprehensive university with multi-disciplines over the past 20 years, has become a typical representative for universities who set up music major. Therefore, this article selects the talents cultivation program, teaching process, and curriculum arrangement of SCAU which possesses a typical and universal significance as a case for analysis.

The objective of training music professionals

Music departments in Chinese universities establish music performance and music education in two traditional directions; however, few universities establish musicology. Owing to the adjustment towards the classification of disciplines made by the Ministry of Education of China, graduates from non-normal universities couldn't directly obtain the Teacher's Certificate, and comprehensive universities lost qualification of enrolling students in the music education major. In order to enhance universities' enrollment competitiveness, many universities conclude music performance, music education, music management, and even the learning and inaugural range of musicology into the talents training objectives of music performance major. Take South China Agriculture University for example: the training goal for music professionals is to master the basic knowledge and basic theory and basic skills of music subjects through professional learning and to have a good training in performance. The aim is to cultivate students into a level of musical so that they can not only work in fields such as cultural economies, news media, literature and art organizations and companies related to music performance, music directorships, cultural activities and management but also teaching in secondary schools and universities (SCAU, 2012a).

Teaching models and module systems

The Chinese universities' music course is four years long, using a credit system, with credit allocations based on test scores. Students can only graduate if they receive sufficient credits. Different universities have different credit requirements. The curriculum can be divided into garner education required courses (including *Chinese Language and Literature, English, Political* courses etc.), professional basic courses (including *Music Basic Theory, Solfeggio and Ear Training,*

Introduction to Art courses etc.), professional required courses (including skills courses such as *piano, vocal, chorus, performance* courses and some theory course such as *history of western music, music of china* etc.), professional optional courses and extracurricular classes. Basic cultural courses, professional basic courses and professional required courses are basically the same in all universities. However, professional optional courses, usually opened freely by each university, refer to other courses related to music, such as lines or theory, chorus conduction, and dancing. And extracurricular classes were arranged according to the teaching characteristics and regional culture of each university. Different universities have their own course schedule for extracurricular and professional optional courses to reflect their own education characteristics.

Taking the subject of music in South China Agriculture University as an example, the four-year undergraduate garner education required courses are: *Basic Principles of Marxism, An Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and An Introduction to Socialist Theory with Chinese Characteristics, Ideological and Moral Cultivation, Basics of Law, International Situations and Policy Education, English*, etc. The professional basic courses and professional required courses include: *Introduction to Art, Music Theory, Solfeggio and Ear training, History of Western Music, Music History of China, An Introduction to Chinese Folk Music, and Aural Analysis of Melodic Style, and works, piano, vocal, chorus and conducting, dance*, etc. Professional elective courses are different in different universities, and can include: *Piano Improvisation, Piano Accompaniment, Opera Appreciation, Choreography, Make-up, Show Hosting, Hakka Folk, Lingnan Musical Culture Appreciation, Mandarin pronunciation*, etc. Extracurricular expansive courses include: *Art Practice, Concerts, Social Practice and Engineering Skills Training, Practical Training, Management Science, Agricultural Training, Sports, and Innovative Business Practices* (SCAU, 2012b).

Teaching schedules

Taking the subject of the teaching process of music in South China Agricultural University for example, in order to comply with the training guidelines of “profound foundations, wide caliber, strong ability, practice-oriented and high quality” (South China Agriculture University 2012a), with the characteristics of the music profession, and with time and social needs as goals, interdisciplinary training and applied training is a definitive position for music major for curriculum and teaching activities. Due to the traditional political environment (Ho & Law, 2004), all the freshmen in Chinese universities must accept the ideological and political education courses (including *Basic Principles of Marxism, An Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and An Introduction to Socialist Theory with Chinese Characteristics,*

etc.) because of the provision made by the Ministry of Education. At the same time, students accept the professional basic courses (including *Introduction to Art, Music Theory, Solfeggio and Ear training*, etc.) in the first two years. While students in the late two years are going to learn more professional elective courses (including *Piano Improvisation, Piano Accompaniment, Opera Appreciation*, etc.). In order to strengthen the students' ability of professional performance, the department of music arranged the four-year-uninterrupted professional skill training for music performance. That is, to have the "one to one" courses for professional skills from the first semester to the eighth. The training of comprehensive performance ability and music teaching ability is especially highlighted for piano playing and vocal music professional skills. Emphasis is laid on the integration of traditional theoretical research-based teaching content in teaching professional basic courses and professional courses. From the second and third academic year, focus is applied to practical applications of music majors, for example strengthening of the training of *chorus, choral conducting* and *impromptu piano accompaniment*, etc. The training models are set up by combining innovation ability with personality development. Students are encouraged to engage in curricular and extracurricular music performances and teaching practice to strengthen their sense of innovation and innovative abilities.

The university set up a student's innovation training project. Students who applied for this project can freely select his own field with interest, and do research by individuals or groups under the guidance of professors with financial support from the university. For example, students who are interest in community music culture development can do their research on community music culture, while students interested in music inheritance can conduct investigation or study on traditional music. These projects are set up out of compulsory courses and optional courses so as to encourage students to explore their own interest and to develop their own creativity. (See the *Table 1*)

Year one	Year two	Year three	Year four
Garner education required courses: Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Basic Knowledge of Law; Summary of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History (1840-1949); College English; Chinese language and literature;	Garner education required courses: Mao Zedong Thought and Introduction to Socialist Theory with Chinese Characteristics; Basic Principles of Marxism College English; Database Application; International Situations and Policy Education;	Garner education required courses:	Garner education required courses:
professional basic courses: Introduction of Art; West Music History	professional basic courses: History of Chinese Music and Famous Production Appreciation;	professional basic courses:	professional basic courses:
professional required courses: Solfeggio and Ear training; Performance Technical; Piano; Shape Dance; Appreciation of Chorus; professional optional courses: Piano Music Appreciation; Italian Pronunciation;	professional required courses: Harmonics Performance Technical Piano; Chorus professional optional courses: Make-up Design; Deutsch Pronunciation; Dance and Scenarist;	professional required courses: Western Musical Works; Performance Technical Formenlehre; Extemporaneous Accompaniment of Piano professional optional courses: Introduction to Lingnan Music and Appreciation; French Pronunciation; Opera Appreciation; Western Symphonic Music Appreciation; Teaching Methods of Basic Piano; Composition of Songs; Program Hosting and Practice; Hakka Folk Songs	professional required courses: Performance Technical; Graduation Performance; professional optional courses: Music Thesis Writing; Choir Rehearsals; Concert Practice; extracurricular classes: Innovation and Undertaking Starting Internship Program; Knowledge Engineering Skills Through Training; Graduate Practice

Table 1. Teaching schedules of the South China Agriculture University

Discussion

Orientation of training goals

Compared with traditional professional music education and normal music education, music education in comprehensive universities designed its talents training objective to be pretty high and complete which is to cultivate talents with high-level performing abilities as well as capability of education and art management. The traditional professional conservatories of music mainly aim to train music elites, while normal universities also have its own specific objective with distinctive characteristics which is to develop music teachers for primary and secondary schools. Take the talents training objectives of two professional conservatories of music in China as examples. The talents training objective of Central Conservatory of Music is to cultivate international talents who are excellent in both performing skills and moral integrity, and to establish a music university which played a leading role in domestic, and enjoyed fame in the world. Meanwhile, the Chinese Conservatory of Music aims to cultivate high-level professionals for theoretical research on national music, creation, performing and education (Gao, 2016). Comparing with that of music majors in universities, professional conservatories of music have more specific purposes and distinctive characteristics.

There is no doubt that conservatory education has significant advantages in performance and music education. Normal universities are more experienced in pedagogy and educational psychology compared to universities. Therefore, there is no advantage for universities in setting the same training goals in the field of performance and music education as those of conservatory and normal colleges.

Universities nowadays are aware of this problem and continuously revise the models of cultivation for musical talents. Many of the universities put forward the concept of “interdisciplinary studies” and “creative talents”. Despite this effort, however, the author thinks that the curriculum arrangement and the teaching schedule are similar to those of conservatories of music and normal universities. In order to enhance the core competitiveness, cultivating students to be interdisciplinary professionals needs clear training goals and real reform of the education model at a fundamental level.

The different music accomplishments before entering universities

In China, most of the children who learn instrumental performance (including piano, stringed instrument and wind etc.) do so from a very early age. After several years of training, their skills would attain a professional level and then the conservatory would be their first choice for further study. Students there possess high-level professional skills as bases, as well as a good sense of music feeling and music hearing, which let them to be the best candidates for high-level professionals.

If some of them could not meet the admission requirements, they would turn to normal universities. The remaining students would choose universities for further study. Therefore the primary problem encountered by universities during the past decade has been that they failed to attract sufficient numbers of high-level students (Wang, 2008). In Guangdong Province, for example, 2000 students who were planned to get into the 13 universities or colleges with music majors in 2005. Among them, excellent students with high music professional scores take their priority to get into an independent conservatory which is definitely prior to those non-professional music universities in major settings, teaching staff, teaching facilities, and social reputation (Zhou, 2006). Without excellent students, it is hard for music majors in universities to cultivate high-level professionals for music performing.

The author chooses four different universities with music majors to conduct the investigation, two music majors in comprehensive universities: one of which being the key comprehensive university directly under the Ministry of Education, and the other being provincial comprehensive university; one independent professional conservatory, and the school of music in one normal university.

University A (Provincial University)

There were 150 students enrolled to the music department of the University from 2010 to 2014, and 32 of them majored in piano, 118 in vocal major. Furthermore, in the piano major, 20 (62%) students had more than ten years' learning experience in piano before entering the university and 12 (38%) students started to learn after middle school. In the vocal major, 18 students had more than 2 years learning experience in vocal and the other one hundred students only started to learn vocal a half year before the university entrance examination. Since they could not be able to study in the university due to their poor grades in other disciplines, they veered to learn vocal to help them get a university diploma and a degree (In China, the entrance requirement towards a music student is much lower than that to those in other majors in the same university.).

University B (Universities directly under the Ministry of Education)

162 students were enrolled to the music department of the university from 2010 to 2014, and 16 of them were in piano major, 146 were in vocal major. Furthermore, in the piano major, 14 (87.5%) students had more than ten years learning experience in piano before entering the university and 2 (12.5%) students started to learn after middle school. In the vocal major, 44 of them had learnt for more than two years and 102 of them learnt vocal just before the university entrance examination. In this university, only 15 students wanted to study in the conservatory, and 90% of the students regarded this university as their first choice (In this university, students

can choose to study two majors so that they can get two degrees in spite of their low grades in the university entrance examination).

An independent professional conservatory

In this conservatory, there were 101 new students in the piano department from 2010 to 2014. 99 (98%) students had more than ten years learning experience in piano and all of them regard the conservatory as their first choice. Besides, there were 170 students studying in vocal and opera department in the same conservatory, 150(88%) of which had about two-three years learning experience in vocal, while less than 20(12%) had a short-time learning, especially those students from ethnic minorities did have a talent for singing. The entire 170 (100%) student’s considered that entering this conservatory was their best choice.

A school of music in a normal university

There were 158 students majored in music performance from 2010 to 2014, 49 of which were in piano major, and 109 were in vocal major. In the piano students, 45 (92%) students had more than ten years learning experience in piano before and 4 (8%) students started to learn after middle school. In the vocal major, 33 (30%) students had more than two years learning experience in vocal and 76 (70%) students had learnt it for less than half a year before. Among these 158 students, 15 students preferred to study in a conservatory and the rest were happy to be admitted to this university. (Graph 1 & 2&3)

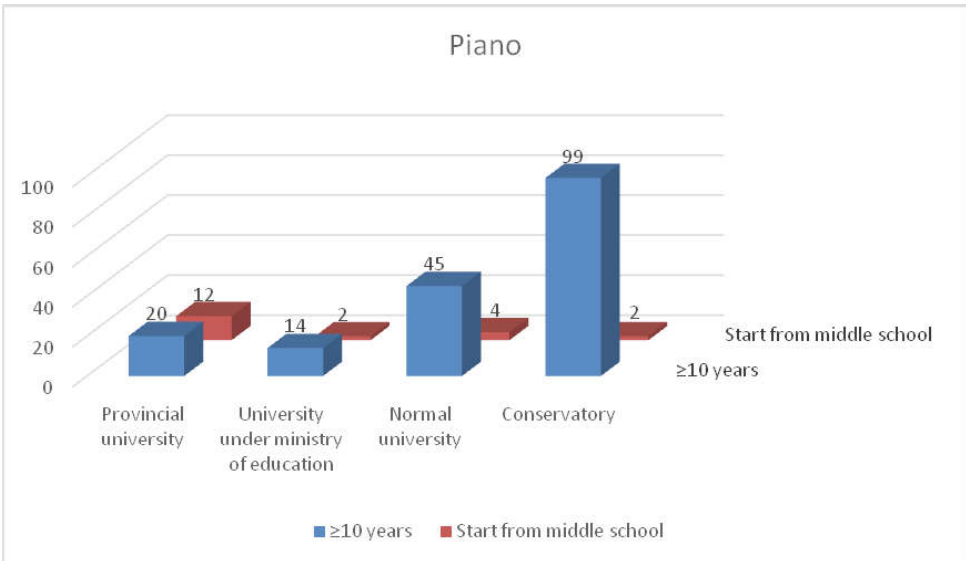


Figure 2. Piano learning experience before entering universities

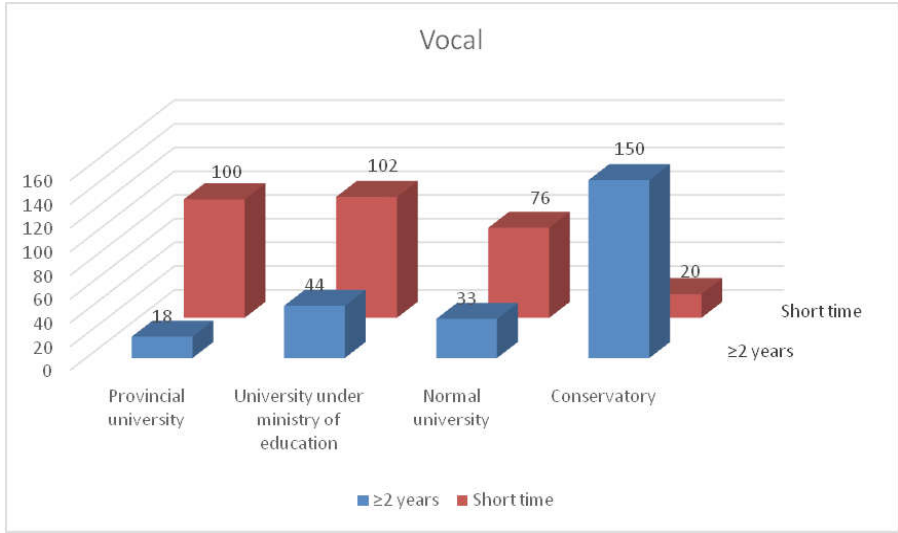


Figure 3. Vocal learning experience before entering universities

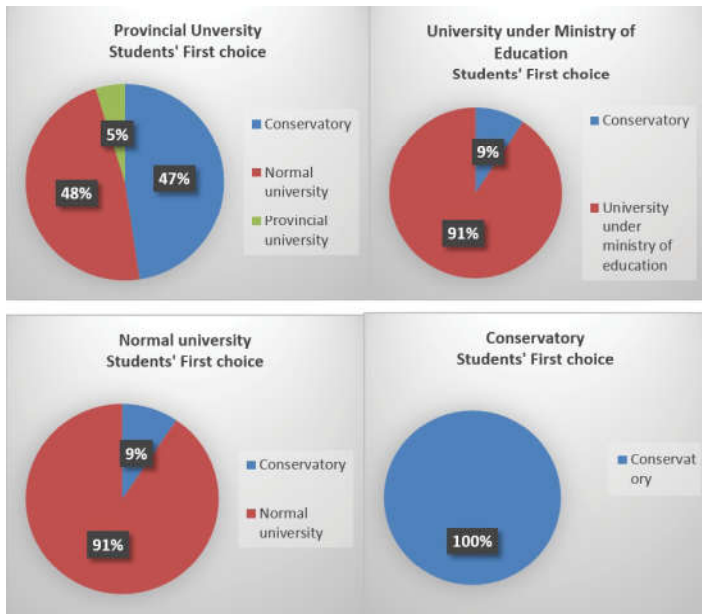


Figure 4. The first choice for music major students to attend university

From the comparison among the three types of universities, it can be concluded that music majors in universities have more students with poor professional basics, short learning experience, and low scores in academic courses. Compared with students in other majors, students who entered the universities with a poor score in the university entrance examination (commonly known as Gaokao) are weak in music abilities as well as academic studies. For example, in the university entrance examination of year 2015, the admission score line of business management major in a university directly under the Ministry of Education was 639, and that of business English major was 612, while the score line of music major was only 400. As for a key provincial university, the admission score line of economy major was 602, and that of business English major was 596, while the score line of music major was 350. In addition, for a provincial professional conservatory, the admission score line of music performance major was 260, and that of music theory major was 360. Comparing to students in other majors, students in music majors possess poorer cultural knowledge; they also lack good learning ability and learning consciousness which made it very difficult for them to complete their universities.

Lack of practicality and consistency in the module system

Individual characteristics and local culture are currently reflected in the elective professional courses for higher professional music education; however the arrangement of the professional basic courses is basically the same. Only conservatories of music must follow the lead of the regional universities. Not all universities are allowed to offer professional basic courses that are offered by conservatories of music. Although courses like music theory, solfeggio and harmony, musical form analysis, Chinese music history and Western music history, etc., are essential basic subjects, must the learning and training of basic music theory as well as solfeggio and musical form analysis that should be done by music professional before entering university take up a lot of class hours and credits for students to learn during their time-stricken and valuable college period? Is it possible to integrate and adjust class hours and learning content for some professional courses, making it more suitable for the training of interdisciplinary music talents by universities. And can the courses be different from those of the conservatories of music?

Take South China Agricultural University for example, in its study of music, it has strengthened the learning of professional courses that are practical and have extensive market demand to improve the competitiveness in the employment for music professionals. For example *chorus*, *choral conducting* and *impromptu piano accompaniment*, etc. Moreover, elective courses like *Lingnan* (i.e. a geographic area referring to lands in the south of China's Qinling Mountains) *Music Appreciation* and *Hakka Folk*, etc., were offered in South China Agricultural University based on Guangdong local culture. Graduates' musical accomplishments and comprehensive

abilities have improved greatly in recent years with the revision and reform of these courses. Professional music training goals set by the university require said professional talents to be able to undertake music management in news agencies, enterprises and public institutions, and to be qualified to teach music in colleges and universities, middle schools and primary schools. The author believes it is necessary for the students to receive music management courses, music pedagogy and educational psychology instruction so that they could be more qualified to work in relative fields, however these courses are not included in the recent modules.

The establishment of an evaluation system for graduates

Education feedback is an important in an evaluation system. Over the past two years, universities have begun to identify the necessity of education evaluation, and that it is of increasing importance to do so. Feedback towards graduates is mainly collected from two aspects, employers and graduates themselves. The feedback from employers helps reflect graduates' practical working ability, capability for the current work, and what they are short of. With these reflections, universities can timely revise the talents training plans as well as courses arrangement. At the same time, graduates' self-feedback comes while working from their own consciousness of their lacking of professional skills and all-round abilities as well as the ability of applying what they've learnt into the work. Then, universities can revise the teaching process according to the feedback from graduates. Usually, educational feedback requires a third-party company to collect in order to provide an objective and authentic feedback. A third-party evaluation company was invited by some universities to track its graduates. These companies obtain their evaluation index through interviews and discussions, and then give the feedback to the universities. However, some third-party evaluation companies are unable to present convincing and comprehensive graduate evaluations because there are very few music professional students in most comprehensive universities. This is partly because many music professional students choose to start their own businesses, or work for other sectors and do not cooperate with the third-party evaluation companies for telephone interviews or employment tracking. In order to accomplish the requirement of evaluation made by higher education authorities, schools or departments usually only ask professional music teachers to test students, and then prepare feedback. In these cases, the data and results obtained by professional music teachers is not reliable. Generally, teaching quality evaluation not made by third party professional evaluation agencies is not scientific and accurate. How can a smooth evaluation and feedback system for communication with graduates and contacting employers be established? At present, we must thoroughly consider the implementation of education feedback for music education in Chinese universities.

The dilemma of the discipline development

With the decline from a high fertility rate, the low tide of universities' enrollment is definitely arriving after they went through the enrollment-expansion and discipline-broadening. The number of students enrolled in colleges and universities, especially in music majors, declines shapely, which finally led to the situation that some universities do not attach importance to the development of non-traditional-advantageous subject. As a result, teachers do not have classes to teach, and the music majors stopped the enrollment or even been shut down, which heavily hit the flourishing development of music education in universities. In 2016, the two-child policy promulgated is going to bring a new round of the demographic dividend, the appearance of which, however, cannot simply solve the problem. Only if students changed the ideas of preferring to enter the professional conservatories of music and normal universities with music majors, into making choices according to their directions of careers after learning music, to be a high-level performing professional or to be a music teacher or music practitioner with good comprehensive abilities, can this problem been solved.

Recommendations

Goal orientated and objective-based

Universities should first define training goals for cultivating music talents, and then determine their own educational advantages. Differences in training goals with conservatories of music and normal universities should also be identified to make sure graduates have their own market positioning and a demand for their skills in the employment market. By highlighting the advantages of the highly humanistic quality of education in universities, competition with traditional professional directions can be avoided.

Take advantage of multidisciplinary study in university

Music is a kind of culture, which is closely connected with other cultural components. The level of cultural quality has direct impact on the development of higher professional music education in China onto a higher level. Multidisciplinary platform advantages in universities are incomparable for professional music colleges since it makes full use of rich humanities knowledge and wide range of disciplines to develop music students who have extensive knowledge and broaden research vision. The main advantage is the students can learn more about what they are interested in through selecting some courses from other subjects. For example, mutual election can be implemented between music major and some similar major such as media for professional courses like broadcasting and program host, program directing and fashion show major for professional

courses like makeup and stage performance. Students are entitled to select courses from other departments such as management as well. Favorable channels were provided for music major students for multifaceted cultural background and practical abilities development through mutual optional course. Besides equipping them with music performance and teaching ability, this can provide students with knowledge and skills when engaging in jobs like music editing, arts and project management, and music management. Comprehensive universities, apart from their rich accumulation of humanities, can take advantage of scientific, engineering and agricultural edges to expand the space for discipline construction of music majors. For example, universities can run courses like music technology, music engineering, music business economy, and music production in order to develop multidisciplinary patterns. At present, there have been few attempts made by music major in Chinese universities in this field. Being positively engaged in launching multidisciplinary music curriculum even multidisciplinary music majors is the promising direction for the development of music in comprehensive universities.

Further highlight local cultural characteristics

Inheriting local culture characteristics is an important task for universities' music majors to take on. Taking the South China Agricultural University for example, Guangdong Province is an important base of Lingnan culture, and Lingnan music is an important part of Lingnan culture. Throughout its extensive development, Lingnan music was impacted strongly by various cultures, forming the unique but compatible cultural characteristics of Guangfu, Hakka, Chaoshan and multicultural minorities. It is a regional musical culture that has characteristics of openness, innovation and compatibility. As an important national folk music culture, Lingnan music has the characteristics of an intangible culture. As elderly folk artists grow old and pass away one after another, this intangible culture is in a serious situation in terms of survival, protection and development. More specifically, the inheritance of Lingnan music is faced with dire difficulties. Therefore, a choice can be made to solve the problems of local music culture heritage. Development of Lingnan music by a new inheritance carrier made up by professional music talents who have received university training is a viable way forward. Two Lingnan culture courses are currently offered by the university, namely *Lingnan Music Culture Appreciation* and *Hakka folk songs*. But this remains far from enough to preserve our Lingnan music culture inheritance and to further innovation. The following performance courses and Lingnan choral music work courses can be arranged to enrich and expand local music culture courses, and broaden students' knowledge of local musical culture: Chaoshan Fisherman's Song, Cantonese opera singing, Chaozhou Drums, Lingnan Zither, Guangdong Gaohu and piano playing of musical works from Lingnan, and so on. Some traditional conservatories of music have made attempts to deepen local culture characteristics. Xi'an Conservatory of Music set up major named folk songs of northern Shanxi, and Xinghai Conservatory of

Music established the research center of Lingnan traditional music. All of those deeds have set examples for comprehensive universities to work at inheriting and researching local culture.

The establishment of applied courses and applied professional

Practical applied professional courses such as program coordination, music management, community music, music education and education psychology courses are to be offered. To ensure that students can truly use what they have learned in university after they enter into society. Invite professional managers from art centers or theatres to the university to offer feature courses or lectures, and set up targeted practical courses in different formats. University teachers possess profound and systematic theoretical knowledge but lack experience in terms of practical management. After having received theoretical knowledge in universities, students go to art centers and theaters to work as an internship. Under the guidance of experienced professional managers, students can promptly learn what they need and how to deal with problems so as to acquire practical experience. The implementation of Double Tutors System, which means students are cooperatively guided by both university teachers and vocational managers, will do more good to students' internship.

It is of great necessity to establish more application-oriented majors that are geared to the needs of social development. Nowadays, a lot of conservatories of music have made adjustments to bring in new majors on the basis of traditional majors. For example, Chinese Conservatory of Music has newly set up Music Acoustics (recording) and E-Music Creation majors. Majors like Musical Therapy, Musical Instrument Repairs have been launched in Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Musical Therapy and Musical Arts Management in Central Conservatory of Music, Piano Temperament in Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Musical Criticism in Tianjin Conservatory of Music, and Musical Instrument Repair in Xinghai Conservatory of Music. Educations in terms of musical majors in comprehensive universities are facing greater needs to expand major dimensions. There are great demands for musical industrialization development in present society. However, there are hardly any educations to train professionals with respect to musical industrialization. Whether universities have the ability to combine music and market economy or market management is an important issue to be considered by music educators in universities.

Absorbing teaching experience from international universities

The Russian music education system has been adopted in higher music education in China for many years (Li, 2003). Since the 1990s with the reform in the market economic system, higher music education has shifted from "cultivating elite talents" to "cultivating general talents" (Chen, 2011). Music professional education

in universities is different from the music education offered in conservatories of music and normal universities. This is mainly due to the different training goals and different development directions. Different training goals may have different teaching processes and different course offerings. Teaching process plays an important role in implementing training goals and choosing teaching models. British higher music education (not music education through conservatories of music) has a unique advantage in terms of its teaching process, curriculum, etc. It would be advantageous for us to comparatively study, learn and apply its advanced teaching methods.

The author went to the Department of Music in the University of Nottingham as a visiting scholar, to observe and to follow the professional music curriculum and teaching process. The University of Nottingham, a multidisciplinary university, as well as a comprehensive university, shares great similarities with Chinese comprehensive universities in terms of school-running orientation, education approach, and enrollment scale, and teaching patterns, which are worthy to be referred to by Chinese comprehensive universities. Therefore, it is typical and significant to choose the teaching patterns of music major in Nottingham University to conduct a case study. The music department in University of Nottingham is one of the top ranking in the UK. Graduates of the University of Nottingham are widely praised by many employers due to their superb quality and comprehensive abilities. Music major in Nottingham University is not only characterized by integrate advantages of music education in British universities but also possesses individual features of local universities. Its professional music training program and its experience in nurturing musical talent is a rich source that can be learned from.

Music specialty of the University of Nottingham

The Bachelor of Arts at the University of Nottingham is divided into “Music BA” and “Music and Philosophy BA”. Therefore, students can choose their direction of learning and development according to their interests and by studying different courses of music performance, music research and music education (UON, 2015a); the Bachelor of Arts offered in Chinese colleges and universities can be divided into music performance, music education and musicology in accordance with their respective professional directions. Chinese music specializations classification applies to conservatory of music and normal universities. The author believes that it could be more suitable for universities in China to draw experience from British universities in the structure of bachelor degrees. Selective discrimination can be done through different courses of music performance, music research and music education, etc. This can help students to develop their potential abilities for the development of music performance, music academic research or music education through study, and allowing students to nurture interdisciplinary talents.

Music majors are not required to sit professional audiovisual tests before entering the University of Nottingham. Freshmen must study ensemble performance course other than professional basic courses and professional required courses. Students from Year 1 to Year 3 can also select performance (recital). In the second year of studying, students can choose music performance, compositional techniques and academic research courses, etc., according to their interest. Such kind of talents training model is helpful for interdisciplinary music talents training and applied music talents training. Even though over the past two decades, music conservatories and university music departments in the UK became much more comparable in terms of their balancing of performance practical and academic research modules. What's more, it can broaden students' knowledge so that they have strong employment adaptability, which is suitable for university music education in China.

The arrangement and characteristics of the music curriculum at the University of Nottingham

Through interviews conducted with students at the University of Nottingham, the author learned that music majors complete skill examinations in music theory, solfeggio and ear training before entering the University of Nottingham. Consequently, music theory, solfeggio and ear training courses are not offered in the university, but instead integrated into other theoretical courses. The author observed and audited theoretical classes such as *Critical Thinking about Music*, *Understanding 18th Century Music*, *Repertoire Studies: 19th and 20th Century Music*, *Film Music* and *The Age of Beethoven and Schubert*. As for the curriculum for the two class periods in the aforementioned classes, teachers mainly explained the content of the class in the first period, and then made musical analysis by means of video appreciation and distributing scores to each student in the second period. By guiding student discussion, teachers allowed students to more intuitively acquire knowledge through actual analysis while learning music theory.

In addition to a principal instructor, musicians from all over the world who have rich experience in performance are often invited by the University of Nottingham to teach music performance classes. Therefore, all the students majoring in various instrumental music and vocal performance have the opportunity to get professional guidance from many different musicians. According to the investigation by the author of this paper indicate that over the period of one semester, up to 16 musicians who were not employed at the University of Nottingham had given instruction during the group performance course, and nearly 60 students who attended the class were able to receive these musicians' professional guidance and instruction. Different performers have different performance skills, so music performance has highly personalized and stylized characteristics, with personal feelings and experiences relating to the music. Different guidance acquired by

students through contact with many musicians can help students to acquire rich music styles and facilitate their ability for musical expression.

Many modules which broaden students' artistic vision were also offered in the University of Nottingham. For example *Opera and politics*, *Can Classical Music Change Lives?*, *Jazz: Origins and Styles*, *Music and Health*, and *Music Careers*, etc. (UON, 2015a). Undergraduates' ability for critical thinking and independent thinking has been greatly improved with these courses.

The University of Nottingham lays great emphasis on cultivating students' academic research ability. The university offers extensive courses where students are not only required to pass the course exams on various music theories, but they are also required to write course papers. Moreover, there are a considerable number of seminar hours every week (UON 2015b), where under instructors' guidance, students learn the ability to identify and solve problems according to their own thought process. It has been observed by the author that students are required to write papers for almost all the courses (except for performance), which accounts for 50% of the total score. Teachers will teach and explain for paper requirements and content, along with the important and difficult points during class hours of the course (UON, 2015c). Music education in Chinese universities puts more emphasis on students' performance skills. Most of the courses give priority to examinations, with only a few courses that require the submission of papers. The quality required for students' papers is not high and the scores awarded for papers account for a low proportion of the total score. As for special seminars, they are almost nonexistent for music majors in universities in China. Teachers usually leave 5 to 10 minutes for students to ask questions within the class hour. This is not sufficient for students to improve their ability to think independently and to inspire critical thinking.

Artistic practice among music students in the University of Nottingham

A considerable number of artistic practice opportunities are provided by the University of Nottingham. Two lunchtime concerts for public performance are held by the student union every week, where aside from teachers from the department of music and specially-invited guest musicians, the majority of performers are students. Music performance forms are: solo instrumental, vocal solo, ensemble and chorus, etc. All students taking the module in music performance have a lot of opportunities to perform on stage for artistic practice. Many local residents of Nottingham are music lovers and have become loyal and regular attendees to these performances. In addition, opportunities such as fundraising charity concerts and church concerts have provided a broad stage for students' artistic practice. A lot of performance experience on the stage is required for the growth of a musician's art. Opening the existing campus music performance venues not only gives a performance platform for students' artistic growth, but also enriches citizens' cultural life. This is a useful measure to enhance the local music culture.

Conclusion

Implications of the research

Higher music education in China has taken on a diverse state and it is of urgency to build a tri-dimensional teaching system of various kinds. Music education in professional conservatories of music and normal music education together with music education in comprehensive universities have formed the three leading driving forces of Chinese music education. To build a diversified education system, schools of various types need to have clear-cut labor division and to form their own specialties, and they also need to forge skill-oriented, research-oriented and teaching-oriented music education etc. If traditional independent conservatories of music are training students to be professionals for music performing in high levels, and normal universities are training music teachers of all levels, then, what comprehensive universities aim to train should be compound music professionals. The concept of compound music professional is in accordance with practical market demand of artistic talents from all works of life in society, which is relatively large. The present article first holistically introduces the development of higher music education in China and current situations of music education in comprehensive universities, meanwhile, advantages of international comprehensive universities are compared and uncovered. At last, it comes to the suggestions on development of music education in Chinese universities. It is hoped that this article can arouse the attention of international scholars to attach great significance on the development of music major education in comprehensive universities, so that they can provide beneficial suggestions and instructions on the training of compound music professionals for music majors in Chinese comprehensive universities.

Thoughts of the research

British college music education lays emphasis on the development of students' interests, the educational concept of comprehensive ability for performance, academic research and arts management as well as implementation methods for music majors, this provides a new perspective for college music education in China. Therefore, we can adapt music educational concepts and teaching model in British universities to form a music education development road that has Chinese characteristics and can meet the needs of the current social situation. It is worthy for Chinese colleges and universities to learn from them for music education. Both the UK and China have long and magnificent history, but different educational concepts and educational viewpoints were reproduced under different cultural background. Chinese music culture is rooted in Confucianism, however, modern music education is based on the German music education system, the Russian music education system and American music educational concepts; Therefore, it has comprehensive characteristics. Western music culture originated from religious

backgrounds. British music experienced a glorious history during the Renaissance and Baroque periods before declining in the subsequent hundred years. A revival in the late 19th century and the thriving British music in the 20th century presented a flourishing integration of traditional folk music, classical music and diverse modern music. Differences in cultural foundations and expression in the UK and China have been reflected in different cultural backgrounds in their respective music professions. In the context of globalization and Chinese education reform, collision of thought between different cultures and to reference the relatively mature British higher music education development methods, this inspires Chinese comprehensive universities to find new ways ahead for music education.

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