

# Research on the change of piano playing style from the national perspective

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**ABSTRACT.** *Piano music performance is a music performance form originated from western countries. It was introduced into China at the end of the 19th century and has a history of 100 years. During the hundred years when it was introduced into China, China's extensive and profound national music culture had a great influence on the piano playing style, and gradually formed the unique national characteristics and national style of piano playing under this influence. This article will briefly discuss the reasons for the change of piano playing style from the national perspective, the influence of the change of piano playing style, the influence of national style on the piano playing style and some other aspects, and summarize the change of piano playing style from the national perspective.*

**KEYWORDS:** *National perspective; Piano; Perform; Style; Variation; Exploration*

## 1. Introduction

National style is a cultural feature and form evolved in the long history of a nation. Whether national style can be played in music performance and whether national characteristics can be expressed are the most important factors to improve the expressive force of music and the appeal of music. As a foreign musical instrument, the piano has gradually changed its playing style under the influence of the extensive and profound national characteristics of China. The following part will briefly discuss the change of piano playing style from the perspective of the nation[1].

## 2. Reasons for the change of piano playing style from the perspective of national view

From the perspective of national groups, the main reason for the change of piano performance style is the influence brought by ethnic groups[2]. China is a vast country with profound national culture and historical culture. In the long historical development process, various national groups have formed their own culture, style and characteristics. The national culture and style formed have their own uniqueness, which is different from other nationalities in style, culture and content. A nation's geographical environment, climatic conditions, aesthetic psychology, etc., will also have a certain impact on the formation of national style. For example, the people in the north of our country are relatively bold and unconstrained and enthusiastic, while the people in the south of our country will be more gentle and exquisite. The difference of national character will also have a certain impact on its spiritual culture and material culture. Spiritual culture and material culture are the embodiment of a national style, which will be reflected in these forms. For example, in music, dance and other creations, creators create works with national characteristics and styles according to their own national characteristics, hobbies and cultural connotations. Under this circumstance, piano playing style is also subject to changes in national style, culture and aesthetics. Players will form different piano playing styles in the process of performance according to their own understanding, aesthetics, cultural connotation and national hobbies.

### **3. The influence of the change of piano playing style**

The main object affected by the change of piano playing style is the piano playing technique. Different playing styles should correspond to different playing techniques[3]. For instance, players will need to be full of happy mood to play when piano playing style is relaxed and happy. To play such music, the fingertips need to touch the keys quickly to produce a full and lively timbre. There is also a certain stress on the fast touch of the keys. The forearm strength should be used to touch the keys quickly and vertically, so that the timbre can meet the required requirements and the timbre can be bright enough. When the piano playing style tends to be elegant and peaceful, the playing technique should also change accordingly. The performer should adjust his own state and play the piano music with a peaceful mood. Due to the different styles of piano music, there are many subtle emotional divisions in the process of piano performance. Players should adjust their playing

techniques according to the subtle changes. When playing in major, the player should touch the key vertically quickly; when playing in minor, the player need to touch the key horizontally to show the dull part of the tone. The change of piano playing style will bring some changes to the piano playing techniques, and at the same time, it will bring different feelings to the audience. For example, a piano concert with a light style makes the audience feel happy and joyful, while a piano concert with a heavy style makes the audience feel serious and reticent. In the piano performance, the most important thing for the player is to show his style and arouse the resonance of the listener.

#### **4. The influence of national style on piano playing style**

##### ***4.1 Piano playing modes***

The piano is an instrument introduced into China from the west, but there are great differences in playing modes between China and the west[4]. Western music mainly plays in major and minor keys. While under the influence of Chinese national style, Chinese piano playing mode is dominated by pentatonic mode. Therefore, the number of tone levels and the performance effect are different from that of western piano music. In terms of harmony, Mr. Chu Wanghua's "South China Sea Sentinel" breaks through the traditional three-degree superposition chord harmony in harmony. And it adds additional chord, chord decomposition and other techniques, showing a certain national style while performing piano music. From the perspective of polyphony, Mr. He Lvting's "shepherd boy's piccolo" perfectly integrates the unique five tones of China with the major and minor keys of the west, and its performance effect has both the polyphony of western countries and the five tones of China.

##### ***4.2 Piano repertoire***

The styles of Chinese ethnic groups are quite different, and the folk songs created in different ethnic styles have regional characteristics[5]. In the process of creation, some piano composers will select excellent folk songs to improve and modify and then make them an excellent music element in the piano music. In this

way, the piano performance songs will have certain national and regional characteristics. For example, the Yellow River piano concerto adapted by Mr. Yin Chengzong and Mr. Chu Wanghua is mainly based on Mr. Xian Xinghai's Yellow River cantata. However, in terms of melody, the work song tone which is rich in strong northwest ethnic style among ship workers is also selected. Therefore, the piano performance style is also of northwest ethnic style. The piano performance full of national style also shows the scene of the boatman fighting against the wind and waves on the boundless sea to the audience in the process of performance, and then reveals the brave and meaningless spirit of our nation, bringing the audience into the scene to better appreciate music and enjoy music.

#### ***4.3 Piano rhythm***

Due to the different national styles in different regions, the influences brought by them lead to the differences in the rhythm of piano music, and the music rhythm in some national regions is also easily applied to piano music by piano composers. Among them, the most commonly used rhythm in piano playing rhythm is the rhythm of gongs and drums. For example, in Mr. Tan dun's "watching the opera", there is a piece of fast rhythm of gongs and drums, playing a lively ancient singing and dancing scene. In addition, in other parts of "watching the opera", the rhythm of gongs and drums is also intersected, and the piano playing rhythm has certain national characteristics[6].

#### ***4.4 Piano works creation***

In addition, national style also brings a certain impact on the creation of piano works, and China has formed a certain aesthetic concept in the historical process of thousand years. On the basis of the national style appearing in the aesthetic concept, the author applies the national style with certain aesthetic concept in the creation process of piano works. It strictly controls the composition structure of the piano performance works with the aesthetic concept, and makes the piano works mixed with certain national style elements, so as to be more in line with the appreciation and taste of the audience.

## **5. The change of piano playing style from the national perspective**

### ***5.1 Strong national music temperament***

From the perspective of nationality, the most obvious one is that the piano playing style has strong national music temperament[7]. Although the piano performance has only been popular in China for a short period of time, with the unremitting efforts of Chinese composers, it has successfully integrated the traditional Chinese music interpretation and distinctive national style into the piano performance. Moreover, the abundant and colorful Chinese folk songs have become the main materials for piano composers. In the process of piano music creation, different national styles, melodies, rhythms and so on are added to make the piano music with strong national music temperament, and the addition of various national characteristic songs makes the piano music with national charm.

### ***5.2 Appeal-to-all piano playing style***

Chinese traditional music has long been divided into refined music and folk music. Refined music refers to the profound music with artistic conception, while folk music refers to the popular and catchy music[8]. In the creation process of Chinese piano music, the original traditional music will be selected to a certain extent. Both refined and vulgar music will be selected in the creation of piano performance music. Therefore, under the influence of Chinese national style, piano performance becomes both refined and popular.

### ***5.3 Full of sincere thoughts and feelings***

Chinese traditional music has a sincere and deep emotion, and it has a certain national emotion whether it is composed in national style or adapted by national music. For example, the Yellow River piano concerto, which is adapted from Mr. Xian Xinghai's Yellow River Cantata, has a magnificent playing style. It also expresses strong patriotic emotion and national pride in the process of playing. The sincere emotion makes the audience resonate in the appreciation process and stimulate their patriotic emotion and national pride.

#### ***5.4 Full-of-individuality piano playing style***

The traditional Chinese music is rich and colorful, and the Musical Instruments are also diversified. The piano will not only add traditional Chinese musical elements in the performance process, but also imitate the timbre of all kinds of ancient Chinese Musical Instruments, so the expression of the piano performance style is very individual. Take *The Sound Of Sunset* for example, in the process of piano performance, it imitates the “wiping” and “whisking” of the descending scale of the Guzheng, and divides the virtual and real parts of the piano music according to the imitation of Chinese ancient instruments, so as to create different feelings and different artistic conceptions for the audience.

#### ***5.5 The mode music structure is mainly pentatonic***

Western piano playing mode is mainly in major and minor keys, while Chinese piano playing mode music structure is mainly in pentatonic because of the influence of national style, national characteristics and unique national music rhythm. Among them, the pentatonic modes are mainly Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zhi, and Yu. Among them, the pentatonic modes are mainly palace, business, horn, emblem and feather, and there are also six and seven tone modes derived from the pentatonic mode, but its application in piano music is not as much as pentatonic mode. Pentatonic piano music structure is unique to Chinese piano performance, which makes Chinese piano performance have certain national characteristics and styles.

#### ***5.6 Linear piano playing thinking***

In addition, the piano playing thinking is also affected by the national style. The traditional ethnic group music basically plays with the flow and transmission of melody lines as the main part. Chinese piano performance absorbs the traditional ethnic group music as well as its linear piano playing thinking. Playing the piano with the linear melody as the main part, the piano music is intended to express the feelings and describe the content slowly. It will deepen the audience's understanding and feelings. In the piano music “trilogy of plum blossom”, the thinking of piano performance is mainly based on the linear pattern. Through the changes and development of different melodies, the performance trend of the piano music is

presented, and the content of the piano music and the story of plum blossoms are described.

### ***5.7 Symmetrical piano playing structure and rhythm***

The expression form, structure and rhythm of traditional Chinese music are symmetrical, so under the influence of traditional Chinese music, the structure and rhythm of piano performance also tend to be symmetrical. Both the piano composer and performer will draw lessons from the traditional music expression in the process of creation and performance. For example, Parting In Yangguang, the tunes are gradually changing from slow to fast, with strong characteristics of traditional Chinese music. The piano playing structure and rhythm are also very symmetrical.

## **6. Conclusion**

Chinese piano performance is mainly based on the traditional Chinese music culture, while the traditional Chinese music culture is of great national characteristics and styles. Under the change of national characteristics and styles, Chinese piano performance style has the style of Chinese characteristics and strong national cultural atmosphere. Therefore, in order to perform the piano music well, players need to grasp the characteristics of Chinese traditional music culture and the characteristics of each national style.

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