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# Research on the Construction of Ethnic Piano Music Culture in the Teaching of Local Colleges and Universities

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### **Abstract**

*Ethnic piano music, as a distinctive cultural form, embodies a rich tapestry of national sentiment and cultural significance. Local higher education institutions, serving as crucial bastions of cultural preservation, integrate ethnic music culture into their piano instruction. This integration not only enhances students' musical proficiency but also fosters the continuation and evolution of ethnic culture. However, local higher education institutions currently face challenges such as uniform curriculum design and outdated teaching methods, which hinder the effective dissemination of ethnic piano music culture. This study, through literature review, empirical investigation, and case analysis, explores strategies for constructing ethnic piano music culture within local higher education settings. The research identifies that optimizing teaching content and curriculum design, innovating teaching methods and approaches, enhancing teacher training and professional development, and improving student engagement and evaluation mechanisms can significantly advance the spread and application of ethnic piano music culture in local higher education institutions. It is hoped that this study will provide valuable insights and guidance for piano teaching in local higher education institutions, thereby promoting the further development and preservation of ethnic music culture.*

### **Keywords**

*Ethnic Piano, Music Culture, Local Colleges and Universities, Teaching Constructs*

### **1. Introduction**

Ethnic piano music, as a vital component of national culture, possesses a distinctive artistic allure and profound cultural heritage. It not only showcases the diversity and richness of ethnic music but also carries the historical and emotional memories of the nation. However, with the rapid pace of

globalization, the preservation of ethnic culture faces unprecedented challenges. In this context, local universities, as crucial bastions of cultural inheritance, bear the significant responsibility of cultivating high-quality talent with an appreciation for ethnic cultural values. Currently, there are numerous issues in the curriculum design, teaching methods, and educational outcomes of piano instruction at local universities, which hinder the dissemination of ethnic piano music culture. This study aims to explore strategies for constructing ethnic piano music culture within local university teaching through systematic theoretical analysis and empirical research, with the hope of providing valuable references for piano education at local institutions and promoting the inheritance and innovative development of ethnic culture.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation of Ethnic Piano Music Culture**

### *2.1 Definition and Characteristics of Ethnic Piano Music*

Ethnic piano music is an artistic form that intertwines piano performance with elements of folk music, showcasing the technical prowess of the piano while integrating the unique musical styles of various ethnic traditions (Shi, n.d.). This genre can be understood as the incorporation of folk melodies, rhythms, and harmonies into piano compositions, resulting in a distinctive musical expression. Ethnic piano music is characterized primarily by three aspects: firstly, its melodies often exhibit a pronounced ethnic character, reflecting the musical language and emotional expression of specific cultures. Secondly, in terms of rhythm, ethnic piano music frequently employs distinctive rhythmic patterns and movements unique to various ethnic traditions, enhancing the dynamism and emotive power of the music. In this musical form, the Western instrument of the piano is imbued with new vitality, serving as a crucial tool for conveying ethnic culture. This fusion and innovation not only demonstrate the diversity and inclusiveness of musical art but also offer new possibilities for piano education and performance (Haoa, 2023).

### *2.2 Cultural Value of Ethnic Piano Music*

Ethnic piano music, as a distinctive form of musical expression, embodies profound cultural significance that cannot be overlooked. In the teaching of local colleges, the construction of ethnic piano music culture is not merely about imparting musical skills but also about nurturing students' cultural literacy. Through its unique melodies, rhythms, and performance techniques, ethnic piano music conveys the spirit and emotions of its native culture. This musical form is imbued with rich national history, customs, and humanistic spirit, guiding students to deeply understand and identify with their own culture, thereby enhancing cultural confidence. The cultural value of ethnic piano music is reflected in its role in shaping national identity. It represents not only a presentation of musical art but also a symbol of national spirit. By learning and performing ethnic piano music, students can experience the wisdom and artistic creativity of their ancestors, fostering a love and respect for their own cultural heritage. Additionally, ethnic piano music possesses a high degree of artistic appeal; it can touch hearts and evoke emotional resonance in students, thereby enhancing their aesthetic capabilities

and artistic cultivation. (Tuo, 2023) Moreover, the diversity and richness of ethnic piano music provide extensive opportunities for music education in local colleges. The varied musical styles from different regions and ethnicities offer unique aesthetic values and expressive techniques. This not only provides students with diverse learning materials but also encourages them to explore and innovate, developing independent artistic thinking. Through in-depth study and practice of ethnic piano music, students can better comprehend the plurality and inclusiveness of music, maintaining confidence and adherence to their own cultural identity within a globalized context. Furthermore, the cultural value of ethnic piano music also lies in its role in promoting social and cultural transmission. Local colleges, as crucial venues for cultural dissemination, can transmit excellent ethnic musical culture to a broader youth audience through teaching, sparking their interest and enthusiasm for traditional culture. This not only aids in the preservation and transmission of ethnic music culture but also infuses new vitality into the diversity and sustained development of social culture (Qi, 2021).

### **3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Piano Teaching in Local Colleges and Universities**

#### *3.1 Status Quo of Piano Teaching in Local Colleges and Universities*

The current state of piano instruction in regional universities presents a landscape of both diversity and challenge. While piano education has become widespread and achieved notable results in these institutions, numerous issues remain unresolved. The limited and uneven distribution of teaching resources has led to significant disparities in hardware facilities and faculty strength across different universities. Although some institutions have invested considerable funds in acquiring advanced teaching equipment, remote areas and resource-scarce schools still face shortages of pianos and inconsistency in quality, severely impacting teaching effectiveness. Regarding faculty, regional universities generally struggle with an imbalanced teacher structure (Li, 2016). The number of exceptional piano instructors is insufficient, with most being concentrated in a few prestigious institutions. This concentration makes it challenging for many regional universities to attract and retain high-caliber piano teachers, which adversely affects teaching quality and limits students' development opportunities. In terms of teaching content and curriculum design, regional universities commonly lack systematization and relevance, with their course structures remaining incomplete. Some institutions offer overly homogeneous piano courses, neglecting the individual development needs of students and the integration of local cultural elements. This results in insufficient understanding and practice of national piano music. Moreover, the teaching models tend to emphasize technical training at the expense of musical literacy and artistic cultivation, leading students to engage in mechanical practice and neglect the essence and depth of music. Nevertheless, regional universities' piano instruction has begun to show positive developments. Some institutions have started to recognize existing issues and are exploring new teaching models and methods. They are introducing diversified teaching resources and focusing on the comprehensive development of students. By hosting concerts, lectures, and competitions, they aim to stimulate students' enthusiasm, enhance their artistic expression, and

aesthetic abilities (Jun, 2023). Although these efforts are still in the early stages, they offer hope and potential for the future development of piano education in regional universities. While achievements have been made, challenges such as uneven resource distribution, inadequate faculty strength, and limited curriculum content remain.

### *3.2 Application of Ethnic Piano Music in Local Colleges and Universities*

The application of national piano music in local higher education institutions presents a complex and diverse panorama. In certain well-equipped institutions, national piano music has already become a significant component of the curriculum. Educators enhance students' learning experiences by incorporating piano pieces imbued with national characteristics, such as arrangements of traditional folk music. This pedagogical approach not only elevates students' interest in national music but also deepens their understanding of their own cultural heritage. However, challenges remain, particularly concerning resource allocation and teaching methodologies, which necessitate improvement. Some local institutions demonstrate notable enthusiasm and creativity in promoting national piano music. Through organizing concerts and competitions centered on national piano music, students have the opportunity to showcase and exchange their achievements. These events provide not only a platform for presentation but also foster a sense of identification and pride in national musical culture among students. Nonetheless, many institutions still face constraints due to economic and staffing factors, resulting in their national piano music courses remaining at a preliminary stage, with content and methods being somewhat simplistic and lacking in systematic and professional depth. In teaching practice, some educators have begun to experiment with integrating national piano music with local characteristics, creating regionally flavored musical works. These pieces have been positively incorporated into the classroom, enriching the curriculum and bolstering students' cultural confidence. However, it is important to note that overall, the prevalence of national piano music in local higher education remains relatively low, with many institutions lacking specialized teaching materials and resources, thus limiting students' exposure to and understanding of national piano music (Tuo, 2023).

## **4. Strategies for Constructing Ethnic Piano Music Culture in Teaching in Local Colleges and Universities**

### *4.1 Teaching Content and Curriculum Design*

The construction of ethnic piano music culture in local higher education institutions hinges on the scientific and innovative nature of teaching content and curriculum design. The curriculum should seamlessly incorporate elements of ethnic music culture, balancing the preservation of tradition with modern educational principles to create a distinctive teaching system. Through thoughtful curriculum design, students should not only master piano techniques but also deeply appreciate the unique charm of ethnic music. The course content should encompass a rich array of ethnic piano works, including both adaptations of traditional folk music and contemporary compositions by modern composers with ethnic styles. The selection of works should be diverse, featuring both Han and minority ethnic music

to reflect the richness and variety of Chinese musical culture. By performing these works, students can gain a deeper understanding of the musical characteristics of different regions and ethnic groups, enhancing their sense of cultural identity (Campbell, 2002). The curriculum design should also emphasize the integration of theory and practice. Alongside teaching piano performance techniques, students should be guided to explore the historical background, cultural connotations, and artistic value of ethnic music. By explaining the development of ethnic music and its representative works, students can develop a cultural and historical perspective on music while mastering performance techniques. This approach not only enhances students' musical literacy but also fosters their cultural awareness and confidence. Furthermore, the curriculum design should consider the personalized development of students. Given the varying levels of musical proficiency and interests among students, the content should be adjusted to meet individual needs. Advanced students can delve into higher-level courses focusing on the composition techniques and performance styles of ethnic piano music, while beginners can start with simpler ethnic music pieces to gradually build their interest and skill level. Such a design caters to students at different levels and promotes their overall development. Another crucial aspect of curriculum design is the incorporation of diverse teaching methods. In addition to traditional classroom instruction, enriching the content through concerts, workshops, and lectures can enhance student engagement and interaction. For instance, inviting ethnic musicians and pianists for live performances and discussions, and organizing student participation in ethnic music competitions and exchange activities, can significantly boost students' enthusiasm and creativity (Cao, 2024).

#### *4.2 Teaching Methods and Means*

In constructing teaching methods and approaches for ethnic piano music culture within local higher education institutions, it is essential to adhere to principles of diversity and innovation, with the aim of fostering a profound understanding and practical ability in students regarding ethnic music. Traditional teaching methods have shown limitations in certain aspects, necessitating the exploration and application of new pedagogical strategies to enhance educational effectiveness. The introduction of multimedia technology offers a wealth of resources and methods for piano instruction. By harnessing modern technology, one can create multimedia courseware for ethnic piano music, including audio, video, and score analysis. Such courseware not only visually demonstrates the performance techniques of musical works but also aids students in understanding the cultural background and emotional expression of the pieces through visual and auditory materials. This approach allows students to fully experience and comprehend the artistic charm of ethnic piano music through an integrated sensory experience. Interactive teaching methods also play a crucial role in enhancing educational outcomes. Traditional teaching models often involve a unidirectional transmission from teacher to student, which can fail to fully engage students' initiative and creativity. By incorporating interactive teaching, teachers can design a series of interactive activities, such as classroom discussions, group performances, and improvisation, enabling students to actively think, participate, and practice (Cao, 2024). For instance, when studying an ethnic piano piece, students can be divided into groups to discuss the

musical characteristics and cultural connotations of the work, followed by performance and exchange in class, thereby enhancing their understanding and expressive capabilities. Practical teaching is also an indispensable component. By organizing student participation in ethnic music competitions, concerts, and cultural exchange events, more opportunities for actual performance and presentation are provided. Such practice not only hones students' playing skills but also cultivates their stage presence and self-confidence. Furthermore, practical teaching is a crucial means of translating theoretical knowledge into practical ability, helping students to test and improve their level in real-life situations. To better guide students in learning ethnic piano music, the "master-apprentice" teaching model can also be adopted. Inviting experts and renowned teachers from the field of ethnic music to provide guidance through one-on-one or small group lessons imparts deep musical skills and cultural essence. This approach not only offers students high-quality teaching resources but also inspires their enthusiasm and passion for ethnic music through the exemplary conduct of distinguished mentors (Zhang & Wu, 2023). Additionally, innovation in teaching methods should consider interdisciplinary integration. Combining ethnic piano music with literature, history, and dance, among other disciplines, can broaden students' artistic perspectives and overall quality through a multidisciplinary approach. For example, studying the evolution of ethnic music across different historical periods to understand its cultural background and social significance can deepen students' interpretation and appreciation of musical works (Zhang, Tepika, & Surasak, 2023).

#### *4.3 Teacher Training and Professional Development*

Teacher training and professional development are crucial components in the establishment of regional higher education institutions' national piano music culture. As the core of education, teachers must possess profound knowledge of national music and exceptional piano skills. An effective teacher training program should not only enhance the teachers' professional competence but also promote their in-depth research into national music culture. By regularly organizing high-level training sessions, workshops, and lectures, and inviting renowned national and international music scholars and pianists to share their latest research findings and teaching experiences, the professional qualities of teachers can be significantly elevated. Such training not only imparts skills but also updates thinking and teaching philosophies, enabling teachers to incorporate the latest educational concepts and practices into their classroom instruction. Furthermore, encouraging teachers to engage in academic exchanges and research activities is also a crucial avenue for their professional development. By participating in national and international academic conferences and publishing high-quality research papers, teachers can continuously update their knowledge base and stay abreast of cutting-edge developments in national music research (Li, 2023). Additionally, schools should provide necessary research support and encourage teachers to apply for various research projects to advance the study and practice of national piano music at regional higher education institutions. Schools should also establish a long-term mechanism for teachers' professional development, offering continuous learning and growth opportunities. For example, implementing a "mentorship system" where experienced teachers guide

new instructors through mentorship, thereby enhancing their teaching abilities and research capabilities. Such mechanisms not only ensure the overall quality of the teaching staff but also foster a conducive environment for academic inheritance and innovation.

#### *4.4 Student Participation and Evaluation Mechanism*

In the process of developing a national piano music culture within local higher education institutions, the active engagement of students and a scientific evaluation mechanism are pivotal factors. Students are not only beneficiaries of teaching activities but also vital contributors to cultural inheritance and innovation (Zhou, Liu, & Liu, 2022). To ignite students' enthusiasm for participation, teaching activities should be designed to be engaging, stimulating, and challenging. For instance, organizing piano competitions, concerts, and workshops centered around national music themes can offer platforms for showcasing talent, thereby deepening students' understanding of national music through practical performance and interaction. This hands-on learning approach not only enhances students' performance skills but also fosters their passion and confidence in national music. The scientific nature of the evaluation mechanism lies in its diversity and fairness. A singular examination format cannot fully reflect students' achievements; a comprehensive evaluation should encompass various aspects such as classroom performance, practical involvement, and creative abilities. By establishing a diversified evaluation system, a more objective assessment of students' progress and overall capabilities can be achieved. For example, integrating regular grades with final exams and combining teacher assessments with peer evaluations can ensure thoroughness and impartiality in the evaluation process. Additionally, the refinement of the feedback mechanism is crucial. Timely and specific feedback helps students recognize their strengths and areas for improvement, allowing for targeted enhancements. Teachers should focus on motivational and constructive feedback, providing encouragement and guidance to promote continuous progress in students' study of national piano music (Bai, 2023).

### **5. Conclusion**

The cultivation of ethnic piano music culture within regional higher education institutions is not merely an educational task but a profound cultural mission. By optimizing curriculum content, innovating pedagogical approaches, enhancing faculty training, and increasing student engagement, the dissemination and development of ethnic piano music culture can be significantly advanced. As crucial bases for cultural heritage, regional higher education institutions should leverage their strengths to integrate ethnic piano music culture into their teaching frameworks, thereby nurturing students' appreciation of ethnic culture and musical proficiency.

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