Multicultural Music Education: China’s Strategy

Jin-Shan HAN

Base of Training, Army Logistics University of PLA, Lecturer, Xiangbei, Xiangyang City, Hubei Province, China
rayyar456@163.com
*Corresponding author

Keywords: Multicultural, Multicultural music education, Strategy.

Abstract. As one of a prominent example of the multicultural, the multicultural music education is now the general trend of the music education in the world. It means a new music education model of teaching the students to understand the music in various music culture societies, national music and other culture as well. And it should take root in the national culture. In China, the development strategies of multicultural music education are the teachers’ establishment of music education concept of multicultural, to strengthen the national music education, to establish multi music course and to Strengthen the music teachers’ ability of the multicultural.

Introduction

The concept of the multicultural was first advanced by John Dewey, the famous philosopher and educationist of America in the early 20th century. And then, an ideological trend of the multicultural was set off in humanities in the west countries. Now, the ideological trend of the multicultural has permeated the domain of the culture, the music, the education and so on. As one of a prominent example, the multicultural music education is now the general trend of the music education in the world because of its containing a broad and magnanimous humanistic conception, embodying the democratic spirit of education as fully as possible, and being an open attitude to respect all the music culture in the world. It obviously provides the music education of China a precious theory of resources and strategy of development. Then, the questions of the connotation and the characteristic of it, the foothold of it, and the development strategy in China are discussed in this article.

Connotation and Characteristic of Multicultural Music Education

The music education, with its duplicity, is not only the education of skills and knowledge but also the direct culture behavior. But we look on it as the education of skills and knowledge for a long time and we lack the training of the cross-cultural consciousness in the music education. This way of education hinders the broad international mind and the wide field of vision owned by the modern people and also binds us the perceptivity and the creativity to the music. In the tendency of the modern times, the traditional world music education with the model of giving first place to the training of skills and knowledge will be replaced with the multicultural music education which is rich in the connotation.

The multicultural music education means a new music education model of teaching the students to understand the music in various music culture societies, national music and other culture as well. [1] Its traits are as the follows.

Firstly, the stand of the multicultural music education is to treat equally the different music culture. The theory of the multicultural music education considers all the music can be best understood and evaluated in the context of globalization. The origin of the multicultural is the national culture. The heterogeneity culture commonly and equally exists in the society at the same time and forms an interactive culture system—the multicultural.[2] There is no difference in different music cultures. All the music systems are valuable, worth being learnt, understood and appreciated because all the
national music in the world reflects the material culture under specified nature conditions. The value systems supporting different societies and lives of music culture are different and there is no difference of high or low level among them. Treating different music culture, the multicultural music education should not favor one and discriminate against another or look down upon any type of the music culture.

Secondly, the substance of the multicultural music education is to excavate and utilize the rich and varied music culture. The music comes from the language, pronunciation and intonation and the music among different cultures pursue continuously the novelty of the pitch, the tone color, the sound intensity and the duration (or length) of a sound. But the substance of the music is rich and varied. A. Sohar, the famous music educationist of the former Soviet Union, thought that the complicated system of social music included the society music value of being created and conserved, all kinds of activities of creating, conserving, reproducing, popularizing, sensing, and utilizing the value of the music, all the subjects of being engaged in such activities and the knowledge, the technique and other characters of assuring the success of such activities, all the organizations and social institutions of serving the activities.[3] In other words, the music tradition, the music activity, the music education, the music institution are the content of the music culture. The successful music education is to excavate and utilize the content aforementioned.

Thirdly, the substance of the multicultural music education is open-ended. The traditional music education with the model of giving first place to the training of skills and knowledge rigidly adheres to the class teaching and places restrictions on the personal freedom and choice. But in real social life, the human music evolves over in special life situation and culture background. The music in different cultures and ethnic groups has a direct bearing on their ethnic characteristics. [4] To realize the excavation and protection of the traditional music culture, the multicultural music education must improve the students’ music ability training of the cultural understanding, the cultural dialogue, the cultural introspection and the cultural criticism.

Foothold of Multicultural Music Education

As one part of the culture, the music culture is the most active and most characteristic cultural phenomenon. And also, the music culture is the best form representing a nation’s innate character and cultural characteristics. The saying what belonging to a nation belongs to the whole world tells us the truth that so far and in future, the ethnic groups and the states in the world are divided into administrative areas. Every nation has their own brilliant music culture, and any culture including the music culture first belongs to each ethnic group. This objective truth will not divert with man's subjective desire. So, what is the emphasis of the multicultural music education?

The music education all around the world has one thing in common -- laying stress on their own nations’ central position and having a foothold their own music culture no matter how they express their concept of education, how they lay stress on the foreign cultures, and how they reform their music education. Kappa Levski, the famous music educationist of the former Soviet Union once pointed out profoundly that the central materials of the music education must be chosen from the national music, the classic music and the modern music. But they must first establish themselves in paying serious attention to their own national music. [5] The teaching methods of Kodaly, Orff, Suzuki and so on are established based on their own national music culture. The teaching method of Suzuki even called the mother-tongue teaching method can express its essence. It means every culture with its own “root” of the national culture is marked by the distinctive features of the nations. The disparity in different types of the culture is the condition of the different national cultures including the music culture to exist and develop. It is an inexorable choice of any wise nations to develop the national culture rooted in their own national cultures. Or they will ultimately lose their culture homeland of being depended on for existence and development. Just the same, the multicultural music education should also take root in the national culture.
Development Strategies of Multicultural Music Education in China

Facing the trend of the multicultural music education in the world, now China’s music education needs to own the multicultural field of vision, establish the music education concept of multicultural, take root in our own national music education, build a course system of the multicultural music education, strengthen the music teachers’ ability of the multicultural at the same time. That is the development strategy of the multicultural music education in China.

Establish Music Education Concept of Multicultural

From the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, ISME (The International Society for Music Education) repeatedly stressed in its every meeting that the music education in 21th century should be the music education of multicultural with the core of world music. Now the multicultural music education has become one of the important ways of the schools’ self-development of music education. The music education in China should adjust and break through the former concept of the music education—“European Culture Centralism”. The cultures of different times, styles, forms and music should be brought into the music classes. Based on the concept of the multicultural music education be built, the Chinese culture music education should be valued and to exchange and study the different national music culture in the world should be strengthened. The music education in China should develop in tune with those of the international music education.

Strengthen National Music Education

During implementing the multicultural music education, the national music education should be strengthened and forms its own characteristic. We should never be content with the status quo and refuse to make change to reject the excellent element of the foreign culture, or worship blindly the foreign culture. Facing the influence of he foreign culture, the mutual communication and fusion through the localization of the multicultural and our traditional culture should be completed. And the students should also start to learn the music from the native music and understand the multi of the national music. Based on inheriting and developing the national music culture, they should further study the world music culture and devote themselves to the development of it.

Establish Multi Music Course

The development of the multicultural music courses should resort to an overall reform plan. To carry out the multicultural music education, the recovery based on the former should not be adopted in the system of the music education theory and a new starting point and a new plan of the music course should be taken into account. The new plan should be based on the national culture and provide a kind of cultural awareness derive from the nation and have the worldliness. If the resources of social culture relied on by the music education is combined with the new courses, the students can have a good command of Chinese music culture through learning the courses, inherit the character of the national music, and also share the world music cultures.

Strengthen Music Teachers’ Ability of Multicultural

To implement the multicultural music education, the teachers should acquire a new conviction of admitting it so as to guide correctly the students fathoming and catching the different cultural music. Thus, the music teachers’ ability of the multicultural should be strengthened. The specific way the author suggested is to offer a course of the world music profiles or the world folk music in music appreciation for the teachers to learn, or add the content of the world music to the common music appreciation courses. And the government should offer the training of the multicultural music education for the teachers to strengthen their teaching abilities in their multicultural music class. Thus, when the teachers teach in the music class, they can integrate the music knowledge of different nations, different ethnic groups and different forms into the music class.
Conclusions

We are now in a multi world. Our society is formed of the multicultural as well as the music. So the music education should fundamentally be multi. It should be seen that as a new education concept, the multicultural music education is a system of the rich intension dealing with a wide range of the Philosophy, the Aesthetics, the Cultural anthropology, the Sociology, the Ethnology, the Ethics, the Musicology, the Education and so on. [6] The model of the multicultural music education is a new one which is developing and many topics are waiting for the people to research in theory and in practice.

References


