

On the Training of Yangqin's Wheel Tone Technique

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Abstract: The dulcimer is one of China's national musical instruments, and with the development of the times, it is loved by many people. As a representative playing technique, dulcimer wheel sound has its own artistic characteristics and three particularities: linear beauty, tension and other characteristics. representative playing technique, dulcimer wheel sound has its own artistic characteristics and three particularities: linear beauty, tension beauty and emotional beauty. This paper aims to analyze the use of dulcimer wheel tone in music, the problems existing in practice and the corresponding solutions, hoping to provide useful help for the development of dulcimer wheel sound. This paper aims to analyze the use of dulcimer wheel tone in music, the problems existing in practice and the corresponding solutions, hoping to provide useful help for dulcimer beginners to master wheel tone skills.

Keywords: Yangqin, Dulcimer, Wheel tone, Training, Finger-wrist-arm.

1. Introduction

Wheel tone is the most basic and difficult skill to master in dulcimer playing, especially for beginners, if the speed of wheel tone is a little fast, it will lead to tense arm muscles, stiff wrist and weak fingers, which will lead to the imbalance of the strength and intensity of the tone. Therefore, how to correctly use the finger-wrist combination becomes very important in wheel-tone playing. The author believes that the combination of finger and wrist should be dominated by the wrist, and the fingers should be assisted by the wrist, and the two should be closely combined with each other, and there should be a distinction between the two, and only in the state of complete relaxation of the wrist can we cooperate with the fingers to ensure the accuracy of the string striking point, so that the wheel tone played will be profound and full of connotation. In conclusion, the training of wheel tone playing is a gradual process, with certain difficulties, but as long as we practice with confidence and persistently follow the correct method, we will achieve twice the result with half the effort.

2. Background

Yangqin was introduced to China from Persia at the end of the Ming Dynasty, and then combined with various local songs, and gradually formed a variety of Yangqin genres, "its tone is clear and bright, distinctive, strong and soft; when played slowly, the tone is like a clear spring in the mountains, and when played quickly, the tone is like fast flowing water, with extremely rich expressive power. Yangqin performance mode for solo, ensemble, accompaniment or accompaniment, in the national band and folk instrumental music occupies an important position".

The yangqin wheel sound, which can also be called wheel bamboo, refers to the musical presentation in which the player achieves granularity and denseness and other requirements by alternating his hands in a continuous point-like rush. Mastering the correct playing technique plays an important role in learning the yangqin. "A yangqin player's mastery of the wheel-tongue technique largely assesses his playing level."

The commonly used types of yangqin wheel tone are the

single-wheel technique, double-wheel technique and playing wheel technique, which can lead to a hierarchical change in the melody of the piece and further deepen the thematic connotation of the music, thus revealing the distinctive musical and cultural charm of the yangqin.

3. The Embodiment of The Special Characteristics of The Wheel Sound in Yangqin Technique--Taking "Poetry and Pictures of Tianshan" as an Example

3.1. Yangqin Solo Paintings of Heavenly Mountains

"Poetry and Painting of Tianshan Mountain" is a yangqin solo piece composed by Mr Huang He on the basis of the natural scenery of Tianshan Mountain in Xinjiang. The piece has a unique wheel tone style, with changes in rhythm and strong contrasts between fast and slow, giving people a strong auditory impact. In the process of playing, the music is combined with the environment, which can be used to stimulate people's emotions and give them a good association, "In this piece, we can feel the praise and exclamation of the landscape of Tianshan Mountain, and we can also combine the western piano playing skills with it, the rhythm of the piece is clear, with a strong sense of flow, reflecting a strong national character, with distinctive features".

3.2. Linear Beauty

As a plucked instrument, the yangqin, like the pipa and guzheng, has the characteristic of point-like articulation, which makes the yangqin's articulation lack of coherence. In order to make a single tone achieve a series of long tones similar to those of stringed instruments, the yangqin needs to make up for the deficiency by using the technique of wheel tone. The "dots" and "lines" of the yangqin's performance are two forms of musical expression. "The so-called 'point' refers to the granularity of the notes, reflecting the vertical change of the notes; while 'line' refers to the coherence of the notes, reflecting the horizontal change of the notes, focusing on the combination of different notes, so that the yangqin can play music with both granularity and coherence. The music played

by the yangqin has both granularity and longevity, feeling the fluency and lyricism of the music as it progresses. The linear beauty of the yangqin's wheel-tone technique makes it more widely applicable, and it can be used in both melodious and passionate music". In "Poetry and Pictures from the Heavenly Mountains", the techniques for the slow part of the theme are mainly divided into monophonic rounds and left- and right-hand supporting hand rounds.

The monotone wheel refers to the left and right hands using the zither bamboo to play quickly on a single note in a dense, even, and consistent manner. The overall rhythm of this section is more relaxed and soothing, and the tune incorporates a strong ethnic flavour. "The player should pay attention to the articulation between tones when playing, showing the coherence of the notes and the fluidity of the music." Presenting the listener with an overall intuitive impression of the range from low to high and high to low, so that one can truly feel the overall rich flavour of the Xinjiang region. When playing the single-tone wheel, one should pay attention to the coherence of the music, to be compact, not grabbing the beat, not dragging the beat, in line with the melody of the piece, the arm should remain naturally relaxed, with the big arm to drive the small arm, and the small arm to drive both hands, to carry out a continuous, rapid percussion, but also to the music score to study carefully, to ensure the accuracy of the change of tone.

The left and right hand supporting hand wheel means "the left and right hand take turns to play the main theme, the other hand auxiliary playing, this part of the playing method and the piano playing method is similar to the musical ups and downs combined with the soothing melody, so that people feel the majestic momentum of the Tianshan Mountain". In the process of practice, the two voices can be trained separately, and when both hands can remain stable, then the two hands can cooperate with each other, and the coherence between the tones can be achieved from the point to the line of the melodic relationship, so that the listener can feel the freedom and vastness of the Tianshan Mountain in the process of playing. Therefore, in the beginning of the first section, the strength of the dots should be strengthened, and the picture should be staggered through the intensive strength of the dots and the strengthening of the liner notes. In the second section, it is necessary to render the beautiful scenery of the Tianshan Mountains with two-handed wheel notes. In the second section, the consistency of the left hand in the melody is very important, while the right hand in this section to do a good job with, so as to better express the theme of this piece.

3.3. The beauty of tension

Yangqin wheel tone is an extremely tense playing technique. "The tension of the wheel tone refers to the contrast between the strength and weakness of the wheel tone, which is an important means of the yangqin's expression, controllable, with a very large space for change and rich expressive power, but it all needs to be backed up by excellent professional skills, a correct method of playing, a reasonable way of transporting the bamboo, and a moderate control to be able to express the texture change of the wheel tone's strength and weakness. ". Therefore, it is necessary to correctly use the playing method, accurately control the playing strength, and endeavour to improve one's playing level through continuous regulation practice, so as to make the artistic expression clearer. In order to show the beauty of the tension of the wheel tone in the performance, it is necessary to achieve the effect

of strong force but not noisy tone, and weak force but not false tone when using the wheel tone technique, so as to add colour to the whole piece.

The second part of the Allegro in "Poetry and Painting of Tianshan Mountain" demonstrates the role of strength in the wheel tone. This part is a dense melodic whorl, using the left hand to play an unequal number of single-note whorls as the main melody, and the right hand to play the accompanying limbs in the bass. The Allegro part is mostly an emotionally intense episode, and while the emotions are certainly strong in this piece, the gradations of the emotions also change significantly. Therefore, in the process of playing, the performer should have an overall grasp of the whole process, and he or she should have a clear understanding of the emotional changes on different levels, adjust the strength of the wheel tone appropriately, and then express it with skilful playing skills.

3.4. The beauty of rhythm

The rhythmic expression of the rotary tone is related to the tone control, the strength of the strings, the speed of the rotary tone and the magnitude of the movement, "beautiful, powerful and soft, these elements will present a unique style and rhythmic beauty with the performance". The wheel tone of the yangqin can be used to express the emotions of different styles and types of works, and it brings an emotional beauty to the yangqin works, which enables the audience to better feel the emotions of the works, as well as a mood created by the works.

In "Poetry and Pictures of Tianshan Mountain", the final ending section reproduces the wheel tone of the slow tempo, with the purpose of integrating the people and scenery on Tianshan Mountain, perfectly, and interpreting the emotion of the piece to the fullest, and paying attention to the overall strength of the timbre in the treatment of the details, gradually diminishing from a weak tone until the end of the whole piece. Therefore, relatively speaking, this section has higher requirements for the player's wheeling technique. First of all, it is important to keep one's body in a state of complete relaxation so that one can better control one's power and let the music slowly express itself. Without realising it, the phrases are approaching the end, and yet one can have a feeling that one has not yet reached the end of the piece. The theme of this part emphasises the harmony between man and nature. Therefore, this part is mainly played in a continuous round tone, from strong to weak, sublimating the emotion of the piece with a soothing and tranquil performance, making people and the picture become one, and achieving the effect of the unity of heaven and mankind.

4. Problems in the Training of Yangqin Wheel Tone Technique

4.1. Finger-wrist-arm detachment

In the teaching of music, when the teacher is demonstrating, the coordination of finger and wrist is very flexible. When students are learning, they only see the changes of the teacher's fingers, but do not notice the role of the teacher's wrist. Therefore, they will blindly imitate the teacher, thinking that as long as their fingers are flexible enough and their movements are fast enough, they will be able to play excellent tunes. As a matter of fact, the wrist plays a role that should not be neglected in practice. However, when students practice, they often neglect the connection between the

fingers and the wrist, and this kind of practice fails to achieve the desired effect, which will result in playing uneven rounds and slow speed. In addition, there are some students who, despite the importance of the role of the wrist, do not have a flexible grasp of the wrist's movements, practice blindly, which results in stiff arm movements, body tension, and can not play the wheel tone due to the tone, tone quality, and so on. In a long time of playing, because of the stiffness of the movement, the students will feel tired and can't relax to play, and the result is obvious.

4.2. Lack of Tacit Understanding Between Left and Right Hands

In the yangqin's wheel-tone playing, the tacit co-operation between the left and right hands is very important, and to play the wheel-tone naturally, the height and flexibility of the left and right hands are needed. However, in the process of practicing, it can be found that there is often an imbalance of power between the right and left hands when performing the wheel tone, and the majority of people's "right hand is more flexible than the left hand. However, the demands on the left hand are also very high during the practice of wheeling. If you don't practice the flexibility of your left hand, then when you play the wheel notes, the phenomenon of 'left low, right high' will occur. This phenomenon leads to a lack of aesthetics in the played wheel notes, the music is not smooth, the left hand wrist is lower while the right hand wrist is higher, and the played wheel notes are left-light and right-heavy, and not even".

4.3. Striking Point Deviation

When playing, the tone can be very different due to the different positions of the struck strings. "In the yangqin, the string-striking points are divided into the high, middle and low registers, and each register produces a different tone, and there is a certain positioning of the high, middle and low registers, so it is difficult for students to master the positioning of the string-striking points when they are playing. In the "high register, 1 cm away from the music scale is the correct strike point; in the middle register, 1.5 cm away from the music scale is the correct position; in the low register, 2 cm away from the music scale is the best position; this position is the best position to use the vibration of the piano body to produce sound, and basically it can achieve the effect that the three scales of the high, middle and low tones should have; on the other hand, if the distance from the music scale is too far or too close, the sound quality will deteriorate. On the contrary, if it is too far or too close to the scale, the sound quality will be reduced." From this, we can know that different string striking points will produce relatively different tones, and only when we find its own accurate point, the rounded tones played can show their proper characteristics. However, in practice, students often fail to find the right position for the strings, resulting in noisy and harsh wheel tones, which creates a great obstacle to the expression of the emotion of the piece. Therefore, in teaching, if the teacher fails to explain these parts accurately, it will greatly affect the accuracy of the tone, and make this a great difficulty for the students when they practice.

5. The Solution to The Problems in The Yangqin Wheel Tone Technique

5.1. Finger-wrist linkage

In the teaching of wheel tone, emphasis is placed on the effective co-ordination of arm, wrist and finger, so that the arm and wrist can be fully relaxed and the playing is consistent and natural. Take the arm as the support point to ensure the accuracy of the playing posture, and then to maintain the appropriate distance between the arm and the yangqin, to make an appropriate wrist strength, and then coordinate with the fingers to complete the performance. The training of the wrist joint focuses on the flexibility and looseness of the wrist joint, and the students should pay attention to the training of the students' finger-wrist coordination.

When the students see the teacher's middle finger, ring finger and little finger rapidly fluttering during the learning time, they think that it is enough to co-ordinate the movements of these three fingers and neglect their wrists, which produces uneven whorls and fails to increase the speed. Some students simply notice the tremor of the teacher's wrist during the rapid wheeling of the notes, while their wrists are not yet flexible enough to relax, and they simply imitate it. Although they have a certain speed for the time being, in the process of playing, they will be heavy at times and soft at others, resulting in the feeling that the notes are "floating" and the wrong playing posture, which makes the rhythm, control and strength of the piece unstable and is not conducive to the effective consolidation of basic skills.

5.2. Arm unity

The performance of yangqin's wheel notes requires the right and left arms to be raised at the right height and in unison in order to play even wheel notes. In the teaching process, the teacher needs to prepare two small wooden sticks and a rope beforehand, pull the rope between the two small wooden sticks, let the students keep their arms relaxed and strike them, when practicing, the body should be relaxed as much as possible, the left and right hands should be at the same level, take the wrist as the axis, touch the rope with the zither bamboo, and the height of the rope rises gradually. Another way is the left bamboo method. Teachers can provide a variety of rhythmic forms for students to practice the left bamboo first, which can improve the autonomy, flexibility and strength of their left hand, and then carry out the practice of the unity of the left and right hands, which can exercise the balance of their left and right hands, and avoid the situation of "left light and right heavy". This will help them balance their left and right hands and avoid the situation of "left light and right heavy". By repeating this exercise, they will be able to exercise a high degree of co-ordination between their hands.

5.3. Same String Resonance

The training of the position of the striking point is a difficult point in yangqin playing. Teachers can start with the students' action of holding the zither bamboo, the correct practice is to let the bamboo heads face each other, the zither bamboo and the surface of the zither in the same direction, arms and wrists are relaxed, and strike at the same striking point, and carry out repetitive practice, so as to make it become a kind of inertia action, and to help them to find the correct position of striking point. Or, "you can also use the fixed 'point' training method, first of all, prepare a piece of

white paper, draw a circle on the white paper, coat the outside of the circle with a thick layer of wax, and let the students use the zither bamboo to strike the circle alternately from left to right, and the position of the strikes should not be beyond the circle, the purpose of coating the wax is that when the students strike the circle, they can know it. The purpose of applying wax is to let the students know when they have struck outside the circle. The purpose of this exercise is to let the students know when they have struck outside the circle. This exercise also helps the students to find out where to strike the strings. Teachers can choose the size of the circle according to the students' level of practice, gradually transitioning from a large circle to a small one, and then slowly to a point". Through this kind of continuous practice, students can become more accurate in mastering the position of the string striking point, which also plays an important role in the improvement of basic skills.

6. Conclusion

Yangqin music basically exists in the wheel tone, the player should adopt different wheel tone techniques to express the music according to different music styles, only by mastering the subtle changes in the wheel tone techniques, can the effect of wheel tone type techniques be fully brought out, and the better use of the wheel tone changes to express the author's inner feelings can help musicians to better play out the

characteristics of the different music styles, the use of different wheel tones and then with other techniques, can help musicians better play out the different musical style characteristics, using different wheel tones at the same time. The use of different whorls, in combination with other techniques, can produce a layered, tonally rich and varied artistic beauty.

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