



Analysis on the Value of Inner Music Hearing for Cultivation of Piano Learning

SU Shu^{[a],*}

^[a]Academy of Music, China West Normal University, Nanchong, China.
 *Corresponding author.

Received 24 March 2016; accepted 17 May 2016
 Published online 26 June 2016

Abstract

Piano performance, which is an auditory art, delivers fantastic melody into one's brain through his ears. Then, the music appreciators can resonate emotionally and achieve a mutual correspondence with their aesthetic ideas. Therefore, one not only needs to absorb music with their external hearing but also needs to cultivate their inner music perception during piano learning. This paper gives a comprehensive elaboration and some suggestions on how to cultivate the inner music hearing during piano learning.

Key words: Music perception; Hearing; Piano Learning; Psychology

Su, S. (2016). Analysis on the Value of Inner Music Hearing for Cultivation of Piano Learning. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 12(6), 65-69. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/8652> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/8652>

INTRODUCTION

A piece of impersonal music is not a good piece of music and a piano performer without inner music hearing cannot be a good performer, so it is the priority among priorities to cultivate inner music hearing during piano learning; otherwise, one can only become a machine tapping the keyboard at last. At present, some ordinary teachers still neglect this point so their students can only know how to play piano without understanding the connotation implied in a piece of music played by them. Thus, it is extremely necessary to cultivate the inner music hearing.

1. DEFINITION OF INNER MUSIC HEARING

Workers engaged in music or musicians all have special born perception ability for music, i.e. inner music hearing. The application and exertion of this ability during music creation and performance have always been used as the symbolic basis to evaluate the level of music attainment. The specific performance characteristic is that one can correctly analyze music by using one's imagination without hearing the sound; it is frequently said that "silence is better than cry". The inner music hearing can accumulate the old music images under the ceaseless stimulation of external music for a long time; then, such old music images will be transformed and processed by the brain to form new sound images. Such a psychological process is the special ability to visualize sound. One will have some inner activities when facing a matter and this is the same when one faces the music. Apart from passively receiving the external sound, one also has a feeling in his heart and will make an expected judgment over the possibility of music. There are various factors, such as environment, character, learning and experience, influencing this psychological expectation ability, which is the psychological disposition showing the music creativity and is thus the so-called inner music hearing.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF INNER MUSIC HEARING

The several characteristics of inner music hearing are concluded through continuous learning, practices and conclusions.

2.1 Overall Guidance

Under normal circumstances, an audience or a piano performer always makes a judgment on music via

external hearing (namely, ears) so that he can correct a wrong melody and continuously perfect the performance. However, the inner music hearing is not the case. It seems that one predicts the music melody to be played in advance, makes sufficient preparations, and thus can reach the most ideal effect in his performance by controlling the overall rhythmic trend. Therefore, inner music hearing can guide a piano performer well.

2.2 Characteristic of Strengthening Memory

Usually, although time goes by slowly, some faraway music melody still exists in our inner heart and brain. As a matter of fact, this is also the effect of inner music hearing, because we memorize a piece of music by continuously listening to and repeatedly practicing it. This method has always been praised highly by learners and highlighted by experts, but more researches are needed to further analyze the phenomenon of this sophisticated mental activity.

2.3 Music Aesthetic Features

It seems that numerous beautiful music verses describe the ear-pleasing degree of music. However, more importantly, they describe that music can touch a string; namely, as the saying goes, music can “touch us”. Music received through hearing can arouse one’s inner activities and thus influence one’s emotion; in this way, one can experience the emotional satisfaction and form an emotional resonance. Thus, it is better to say that a real musician or a pianist makes an emotional description and depiction of beauty instead of playing a piano.

3. SEVERAL SPECIAL FORMS OF INNER MUSIC HEARING

A complete piece of music is composed of three basic factors including melody, rhythm and harmony. Meanwhile, there are a lot of types of music, so people will have different inner activities when appreciating different music. One’s inner music hearing will analyze the fast or slow rhythm, rising or falling of melody and perfection degree of harmony.

3.1 Sense of Rhythm of Inner Music Hearing

With a long-playing rhythm experience accumulation, people will develop a rhythmic inertia for melody and the brain will musically visualize the composition modes of rhythm memory and rhythmic induction of various rhythms. Meanwhile, under the stimulation of various types of music, the brain will show corresponding emotional reactions. For instance, when dancing with music, people will make movements corresponding to the rhythm and beat and this is the so-called visualization of inner emotion. In the mysterious nature, all creatures operate in accordance with their respective laws. For instance, the bicker, human breath and heart beat etc..

Perhaps, we can say that inner music hearing is an instinct of human being. For example, some music cultivates people’s sentiment and personality; the march and symphony inspire people; the dolorous music lingers in people’s heart and makes people lost in it. A perfect music art lies in that it can touch people so that the listener can integrate into it with his heart.

3.2 Melodic Sense of Inner Music Hearing

When learning piano or conducting various music activities, one will unconsciously have a psychological disposition to form a regular melodic line with the high and low notes, emerging time difference and degree of rhythm tightness. The waveform of a line represents the stability of music.

To establish the inner hearing rhythm, one needs to have the ability and perception to combine and debug high pitches and rhythm. On the premise of pitch and a large amount of rhythms, one gradually develops the ability to combine high, low, long and short pitches by perceiving rhythm based on one’s own experience. As the elasticity of music melody and the elasticity of rhythm supplement each other, the rhythmic jumping and grading change flexibly. Different sound values have corresponding ways of movement. A long pitch value and a short pitch value are suitable for jumping and grading respectively. That is to say, the factor forming inner music hearing is the long-playing combination of pitch and length. Thus, diversified melodic forms are generated. Inner music hearing is not to separately perceive the pitch of a sound but is completed in the Gestalt psychology, which means “one’s ‘structure’ in experience when perceiving an object and this structure is inseparable with one’s perceptual experience and is a perceptual whole with a complete structure”. A sound exists in certain melodies and rhythms, enters human’s hearing in the form of a whole, is accumulated in perceptual memory and finally is transformed and processed by the brain to thus form a new diversified “Gestalt”.

3.3 Harmonic Sense of Inner Music Hearing

Harmony, which is means to enrich the music melody, plays a role in connecting and coordinating tones. The harmonic sense of inner music hearing means that one makes a vertical analysis on the relationship between tons in music by using the perception ability. It is a thinking mode to analyze multi-tone music based on one’s mastery degree. Besides, one can mutually combines theories with practices through inner perception and accumulation of hearing experience.

Harmony is conventionally understood as multi-tone music. However, this is not the real connotation of harmony. To summarize it simply, harmony means the subsidiary music based on the main melody and will also influence the sound generated by other parts in concerted music. Besides, it aims to intensify the melody so as to

better show the constitutive property of music. Therefore, harmonic sense of inner music hearing, which is an important part of the inner music hearing and ability to identify harmony, theoretically analyzes and practically useful harmonic music through hearing experience and inner perception. It is very difficult to develop this ability. One must be trained strictly in one's harmonistic thinking for a long time so that one can listen to and analyze music from the professional perspective. In the beginning, harmony is the superposition or overlapping embodiment of fixed multi-tone sounds. The modern sounds break through the history and conventions, accumulate experience ceaselessly and combine various aesthetic ideas so as to maximally reach the resonance of music, inner heart and even soul.

4. IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING THE INNER MUSIC HEARING

Main functions of inner music hearing in piano learning:

(a) Help a Performer to Accumulate Experience

After application of inner music hearing for a long time, the brain will reserve abundant information resources, which can help for future performance and practice.

(b) Advance preparation for music in combination with new music scores

With the past experience, one can preset the music to be played in advance so that one can correctly visualize sound and play music better.

(c) Guide a performer's practice and playing

The inner music hearing will give directive guidance for a performer during the performance so that the performer can make correct judgments in both intonation and timbre and can attain the desired effect.

(d) Emotional expression of a performer

As the source of inner music hearing is "heart", the inner music hearing is corresponding to the emotion expressed by a performer. The most beautiful music is the transmission of emotion and the inner sound.

Ears are extremely important for a piano learner because they shoulder the responsibility to appreciate and identify music. However, inner music hearing is more important because it runs throughout the music when we learn music. It can also be said that inner music hearing is a music hearing ability, which can be formed after continuous exercise and practice, so inner music hearing determines the performer's performance, creation and reproduction ability in music. For instance, Beethoven developed a disease of hearing impairment when he was 27 years old; as a music creator, this was undoubtedly the biggest attack. However, to pursue his own artistic dream, he completed his symbolic *Eroica Symphony* when he was 33 years old and then he entered his peak period of creation. Almost all of his outstanding

works were created after he became deaf. Thus, it is enough to indicate the importance of inner music hearing. Of course, the spirit of pursuing art is also important.

5. WAYS AND METHODS TO CULTIVATE THE INNER MUSIC HEARING

5.1 Appreciate Music

Intensifying hearing memory is one of the most basic methods to train the inner music hearing. As stimulated by music for a long time, the brain will subconsciously record some audio information and the performance effect will become the basis for hearing memory finally. For this reason, usually, we appreciate a lot of music, repeatedly appreciate a piece of music, appreciate music of different countries and appreciate music of different types and styles to enlarge the memory space of our brain and enrich the music knowledge and materials. Besides, another method is to appreciate different music in various environments so that we can deepen our understanding of more music and understand the times of music creation and the creator's life experiences etc.. Only in this way, can the performer perform well and reach the expected effect during the second performance or second creation. Generally speaking, the quality of a piece of music work is completely determined by the performer or creator's inner activities at that time.

5.2 Enhance the Ability to Memorize Music Scores

When we learn piano, enhancing the ability to memorize music scores can also greatly help us to cultivate inner music hearing, because it is a music learner's basic ability and work to memorize music scores. To better embody works, a performer can simply memorise more music scores, play piano ceaselessly, do practice repeatedly and sing frequently.

It is required to pay attention to two aspects in specific practical processes:

Firstly, attain the goal of singing a music score well, clarify all kinds of beats, meanwhile, apply and organize all sorts of beats, as well as firmly and proficiently notice and deal with high pitches.

Secondly, analyze various beats and rhythms when singing a music score, make them corresponding to various musical forms and structures, find out the law of music to deepen the understanding of music so as to reach a good score-memorizing effect.

Expanding the scope of musical practice can also effectively enhance one's ability to memorize music scores. Since varied musical works have different features and characteristics, we can analyze them before performance, study them after the performance

and simulate them during performance. When you continuously practice, analysis, re-practice, get familiar with and perfect the works of different styles of your own understandings, you will find that your score-memorizing ability has been significantly enhanced.

This is also another most primitive method, which is also a very effective way. As the saying goes, good memory is inferior to sodden ability to write. It is true that writing more is also an effective way. It is said that the hand and foot nerves are connected to the brain, but actually this sentence is not comprehensive enough. We should say that all nerves are connected to the brain so brain is the foundation of all human powers and also the foundation of music creation.

For this reason, it is very necessary to cultivate our inner music hearing during piano learning. Methods to cultivate inner music hearing are mentioned above. The beauty of music lies in its infectivity. Music with infectivity is just like music for life. To accomplish it, one needs to continuously learn and enhance his ability by using the most basic and effective method.

6. PHASED CULTIVATION OF INNER MUSIC HEARING IN PIANO LEARNING

During piano learning, the cultivation of inner music hearing can be mainly divided into three phases:

6.1 Initial Phase

At the initial phase of cultivation, one should not be in a hurry and learn too much to avoid getting the opposite to what one wishes and must follow the steps. Firstly, stimulate the enthusiasm in inner hearing; then, train according to the high and low scales. One must pay attention to the method here and raise or lower the scale one by one. That is to say, one needs to orderly conduct training little by little from the beginning. Besides, one needs to try to sing the scale and listen to the sound of piano when practicing the piano so as to achieve a better intonation and effect.

6.2 Mid-Term Phase

We can say this phase serves as a connecting link between the preceding and the following, and is also the promotion phase or active phase. After being aroused at the initial phase, one's imagination, hearing ability and inner ability to memorize music are all inspired and also reached a certain level. Then, when practicing new music, one can try to feel the melody and rhythm of music with heart, meanwhile, sing the music silently in one's heart, plays the music with emotion, and practice it after habitually indicating the key points. All of these aim to promote the formation of inner music hearing.

6.3 Later Phase

At this phase, the inner music hearing has been basically formed and gradually becomes mature, so one's artistic level shown in one's playing of musical works is also enhanced. Each practice and each performance are the transformation from playing with a music score to play without music scores and from imagination entering music to bear the emotion of music in mind. At this time, at very proficient inner music hearing, one can integrate his own emotion into any music piece played so as to bring audiences to a wonderful music conception and no longer play piano mechanically.

As the saying goes, Rome is not built-in one day. To please and touch people with music, one cannot achieve it in a day but needs to continuously study industriously.

7. PRACTICE TIPS CONCLUDED BY THE AUTHOR

(a) Develop the Habit to Memorize and Sing Rhythm. That is to say, one needs to form the habit of singing a new music score and practice signing a music score repeatedly. After bearing it in mind, one needs to memorize the singing, the music score and rhythm etc..

(b) After proficient memorizing and singing, one can beat time during singing so as to master the speed of music and play it easily. This method can help to improve our inner ability to memorize, notice and analyze music. Of course, this process can also be divided into phased trainings so that one can do in practice gradually according to the size and difficulty degree of music. Put this process throughout one's piano playing. As time goes on, accumulated practices over a long time can naturally help one to play piano proficiently and successfully form the inner music hearing.

CONCLUSION

Music can be called art, because it is a kind of emotional expression. The creator will inject their own inner feelings into them, the different players expressed the emotion has changed, the mood swings after the reception is not the same. This is enough to see the importance of inner music hearing to the piano player, and cultivate the great value of inner music hearing to the piano.

REFERENCES

- Chen, X. Y. (2001). The cultivation of musical memory is an important task in piano teaching. *Journal of Guizhou University (Art Edition)*, (01), 169-171.
- Liu, R. D. (2004). On the cultivation of the ability of listening to the piano. *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University (PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)*, (S1), 66-69.

- Shen, P. Y. (2004). On the cultivation of inner hearing in the Piano Teaching. *Music Discovery (Journal of Sichuan Conservatory of Music)*, (02), 13-15.
- Shi, Y. (2003). An analysis of the characteristics of inner music hearing. *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute (Music and Performance)*, (03), 44-46.
- Xu, H. Q. (2001). On the cultivation and development of inner hearing in piano playing. *Journal of Anhui Agriculture University (SOCIAL SCIENCE EDITION)*, (02), 111-112.
- Ye, X. X. (2006). On the inner sense of hearing in music performance art—a case study of piano performance. *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute (MUSIC & PERFORMANCE)*, (01), 77-78.
- Zhang, H. Y. (2002). Three important links of cultivating inner musical sense of hearing. *Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (EDUCATION SCIENCE EDITION)*, (06), 99-100.
- Zhang, Y. X. (2010). On the role of inner sense of hearing in piano playing. *Journal of Changsha Railway University (Social Science Edition)*, (03), 100-101.