

Exploring the rational use of Multi-Cultural Music in Music Education

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Abstract: *Background:* Transportation convenience has enabled the various ethnic groups in the "global village" to achieve large-scale cultural integration and development. In the 21st century, music education is facing increasingly new forms and development requirements. *Objective:* Starting from a multi-cultural background, this article analyzes the problems of single teaching content, insufficient aesthetic cultivation, and lack of teacher knowledge in music teaching practice in primary and secondary schools in China. It proposes plans to improve teachers' music literacy and the system. They are intended to improve the application of multi culturalism in primary and secondary school classrooms. *Methods:* This paper uses field research, comparative research, and literature review to analyze the implementation of classroom music in primary and secondary schools. It summarizes the significance and methods of multi-cultural music education in the classroom. *Results:* Compared with developed countries, the development of music education in China is relatively late with shortcomings in applying diversified music in the classroom. China has emphasized the importance of multi culturalism. More educators are researching diversified music and presenting their suggestions. However, better implementation is still needed. *Conclusion:* There are still many shortcomings in China's current multi-cultural music education. Better integrating multi culturalism into the music education curriculum is an important issue that China needs to consider.

Keywords: Multi Cultural, Music education, Folk Music, Classroom Application, Present Situation

1. Introduction

Due to globalization, various ethnic groups have been integrated and developed on a large scale worldwide. Cultural exchanges are increasing, and the interaction of multi-ethnic cultures has promoted the emergence and development of multi-ethnic music.

Music education courses are closely related to humanities, social sciences, and local ethnic customs. Incorporating them in the education system is important in students' humanistic education and ideological enlightenment (Yang, 1981). Music education in a multi-cultural environment is based on retaining national music, absorbing the characteristics of other countries, comprehensively developing students' music literacy, and cultivating students' ability to master a variety of music styles so that they can feel music diversity. Music in a cultural environment is a form of community, not just a single musical form. Music education in China started relatively late as compared to other countries. Music songs appeared in school auditoriums less than a hundred years ago. In China, many parents and schools follow popular "piano craze" or allow their students to learn only one musical instrument. The purpose is to allow students to acquire a skill. In this social situation, the popularity of classrooms has become very important. Nowadays, music courses in many schools often adopt a single teaching method. The teacher plays the piano or an instrument and asks the students to sing, allowing a student to join only one musical instrument club. Students cannot familiarize

themselves with different musical cultures. Many learn European musical instruments. Most students only play the works of Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart. It is difficult to innovate and add the national music of their country. Therefore, teachers should popularize China's national music and combine the music of different countries. Music brings students a different musical experience. Therefore, under the background of diversified music communication, seize the opportunity to let diversified music into the classroom and promote Chinese music education.



Figure 1: Multi-ethnic Instrument Performance

1.1 Research Background

The transport convenience made ethnic groups in the "global village" to achieve large-scale cultural integration and development, enabling/allowing frequent exchanges. The interaction of multi-ethnic cultures further promotes the renewal and development of multi-ethnic music. Music education in the twenty-first century faces increasingly new requirements and development forms. China has a long history, culture, and a variety of musical styles. These excellent traditional cultures have not been well popularised. Based on the current international situation and development trends, promoting/enhancing multiculturalism in large-scale education, integrating multiculturalism into it, and how to give full play to its unique advantages in music education requires consideration. China is also facing such a development trend and pattern.

1.2 Research Objective

Compared with developed countries, the development of music education in the Music of China started late, and school music started less than a century ago and gradually entered the right track. Limited teaching content, insufficient aesthetic cultivation, insufficient classroom inclusiveness, and a lack of music knowledge among teachers are some of the problems of current primary and secondary schools. Therefore, this article proposes solutions for returning to music education, innovating teaching practices, and improving teacher literacy. It intends to enrich the music experience of primary and secondary school students.

1.3 Research Methods

Using field and comparative research, we carefully recorded some substantive problems in the field of listening to music classes in primary and secondary schools. We sorted and summarized the significance and ways of applying/incorporating multicultural music education in the classroom. The after-class feedback of students was recorded. This research then proposes returning to music education, innovating teaching practice solutions such as improving institutional mechanisms and teachers' quality.

2. Literature Review

In the 21st century, cross-cultural exchanges among countries in politics, economy, culture, education, and art are becoming frequent. Countries and nations have gradually accepted multiculturalism. It has entered culture, philosophy, economy, and education. Multicultural education has become inevitable for developing global education today (Zhang, 2007). It gradually evolved into an international wave, and its influence has also penetrated music culture. Music culture is an important embodiment of human civilization/culture. Music education is the carrier for inheritance and music culture development. Music education has played a positive role in the inheritance of ethnic music culture. Borrowing foreign music can better promote the inheritance and development of ethnic music (Wang, 2013). Multicultural music education has become a hot topic in music education in China. Related research emerged since 2000 (Liu & Lin, 2012). Scholars began studying multicultural education in the 1960s and 1970s. Since 2000, many Chinese scholars have published multiple articles on music education in secondary schools in China. They have made various refinements to the functions of music education, However, many drawbacks have emerged in China's middle school music education (Hu, 2014). Music education at Li High School is 100 years old. Scholars have emphasized/presented irreplaceable aesthetic functions of music. Overtime Western-based music education system is also facing many problems and drawbacks (Mao, 2009). Due to the comprehensive implementation of quality education, music teaching is receiving increasing attention. Middle school music teaching needs to keep up with time, innovate teaching strategies, and improve music level and cultural knowledge among middle school students. Music education keeps up with world's pace and requires attention to national music (Li, 2016). In the 21st century, Music of China's music education has two historical backgrounds: localization and globalization. Localization refers to inheriting national music culture. It needs to be systematized, advocating "taking Chinese culture as the mother tongue", and emphasize Folk music inheritance. Globalization is about looking at the world, implementing "diverse music culture education", and learning the music of various countries and ethnic groups worldwide through cultural equality (Liu, 2009).

In the 21st century, the research enthusiasm of foreign scholars has continued to this day, and foreign scholars have mentioned multiculturalism in many articles. Sangmi Kang mentioned examining American view of world music evolution based on the controversial discussion that "music is a universal language.". In the early days, scholars expressed their interest in other cultural music based on an Ethnocentrism perspective. Gradually, scholars began to pay attention to the cultural differences in music, leading to "music is not a universal language" discussion. Since 1986, the London Borough of Harrow, London, has been carrying out a special project. It aims to introduce music from different cultures into primary and secondary school classrooms (Frank,2010). Multicultural education aims to change dominant hegemony, policies, attitudes, curriculum, assessments, teaching language, learning, and teaching strategies.

2.1 Status of research by Chinese scholars

Searching the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) with the theme of "multiple music education", 5,221 related articles were retrieved. These articles include 136 dissertations, 368 featured periodicals, 1,033 academic journals, 27 conferences, and 2 newspapers. The inquiry time (China time) was 12:40 am on July 1st. Chinese scholars' research began with learning international scholars' academic viewpoints and theoretical achievements. Gui Le published the article "Multicultural Music Education in a Diverse Society - Exploration of Historical Background and Philosophical Basis" in the magazine "Chinese Music" in 1995. This solved the problem of Chinese music education. It was the prelude to Chinese scholars' research on multicultural education.

2.2 Research Status of Foreign Scholars

The foreign language database was searched by "Web of science" (Wos) with the subject term "Multicultural Education". A total of 11,143 relevant articles were retrieved, including 530 dissertations and 9,319 journals, 1450 conferences, 169 articles published online, and 430 articles in other categories. The inquiry time (China time) was 12:40 am on July 1st. A Study on influencing factors of the Multicultural Efficacy in Teachers', published by Jang Heum in The Journal of Korean Teacher Education in 2009, provides an in-depth study and analysis of the influence of teachers in multicultural education from the perspective of teachers' roles and educational attitudes. In this study, teachers' roles and attitudes toward education are examined and analyzed in depth. It suggests that the foundations behind multiculturalism have become the basis for identifying the negative views of multicultural families, which lie in a very meaningful positive influence relationship.

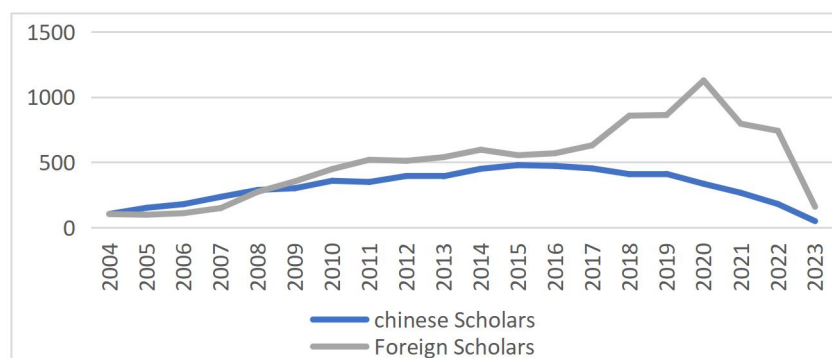


Figure 2: Line chart comparing research literature of Chinese scholars and foreign scholars over the years

In 2023, Wang Tianjun and Zhang Li published a comparative analysis of the research progress and hotspots of multicultural education at home and abroad since the new century in the journal Future and Development. They reported that after entering the new century, the attention to multicultural education in China increased rapidly. However, after reaching its peak in 2015, the research fervor decreased. Scholars worldwide maintain continuous enthusiasm for this field. However, there are differences in theoretical cognition, research perspectives, and educational practice. Research on applying multicultural music in the classroom is actionable from practice and suitability perspectives in the Chinese context. It provides a Chinese solution for China's true integration into the world's international education system.

3. Multicultural Music and Music Education



Figure 3 : Chinese Ethnic Musical Instrument (Suona) Entering Classroom
(Image obtained from https://www.sohu.com/a/454193392_267106?g=0)

Multiculturalism has gradually become an important form of national and world education. Music culture is the characteristic of a nation. It can reflect the cultural characteristics of this nation. We must objectively and profoundly understand the connotation and characteristics of multiculturalism.

3.1 The pluralistic character of ethnic music culture

"Pluralism" is understood from social science interpretation perspective. It refers to different races, ethnicities, religions, and societies coexisting in a common civilization body framework, developing their own culture or interests, respecting and tolerating each other, and coexisting harmoniously. Distinguished from popular music, ethnic music is deeply rooted in ethnic culture, and the two are closely related and advance together. They argue that ethnic music culture begins with ethnicity and is equally applied to ethnicity. Chinese folk music is distinguished by its geographical location and folk customs, which have given rise to distinctive folk music cultures, such as opera music. It is divided into northern and southern operas according to their geographical location. In contrast to the Chinese national pentatonic scale, European and American music developed twelve mean meter variations to form different periods of music culture, such as classical and romantic. In modern times, with the emergence of different styles like North American country and black music, the music of the United States and Europe is a fusion of social customs and regional cultures. The music cultures worldwide have evolved in response to the current development trends and through mutual exchange and integration. The music cultures have gradually developed their own unique national cultural identity. Globalization affects economic and political spheres, and music culture development. Different music cultures exchange and develop with each other, forming a pluralistic music culture. It is where the plurality of music culture is highlighted.

3.2 The nature of multicultural music and its connotations

The rapid developments in the information age and the use of 4G and 5G have brought people closer and made cultural exchange more convenient. As the saying goes, "the network is a high-speed connection", making cultural development more rapid, bringing more opportunities, and facing new challenges. The complex structure of modern society has led to a rapid increase in demand for various types of culture. It is a difficult situation for cultural development and has led to the development of a pluralistic musical culture. The revival and fusion of traditional folk music, the development of popular music, and the breakthrough in classical music reflect social culture's development and people's needs. Therefore, the essence of a pluralistic musical culture is a manifestation of the spirit of the society. It is closely related to overall social and cultural development trends and the social outlook of the whole era.



Figure 4: Buddhist street music in Thailand

3.3 The Significance of Multiculturalism in Music Education

Every music style is formed based on factors like local culture and politics. Multicultural music education can help students feel the multiple charms of music and allows students to feel the local life background and culture. In addition to learning the folk music of your country, one must understand the music forms of different regions worldwide. At the same time, learning unfamiliar music can broaden their horizons and make students feel the inheritance brought by traditional music.

Multicultural music learning can improve students' theoretical knowledge, history's understanding, and emotional expression brought by music. It promotes students' acceptance of unfamiliar music, improving innovation and imagination. The development of their music accomplishment, music appreciation and so on. Multicultural music education can enable different nationalities to improve, learn from, and integrate. Learning and understanding different music cultures is the most effective way of cultural communication. In the current diverse environment, it can reduce racial barriers between people, and misunderstandings about different religious beliefs, languages, and customs. Learning different music can enhance the feelings between nations, increase mutual respect, and reduce cultural conflicts.

All in all, music education plays an important role in promoting multicultural music. Music courses should focus on multicultural music. By learning multicultural music, students realize that they should also learn from other countries acquiring the strengths of other music culture. They can integrate traditional music with it to make music more diversified.

3.4. Problems of multicultural music in music education

There are still many deficiencies in the music education of my country's multi-music culture. China still adopts the traditional teaching mode. Single teaching content, lack of aesthetic experience training, lack of inclusiveness in the classroom, and teachers' lack of music knowledge are the problems. Music education and social music culture are inextricably linked. The two should develop and progress together. Music education can develop better by breaking the traditional music education model.

3.4.1 Single teaching content

A crucial issue in the current music education system is the homogeneity of teaching content. Teachers focus on a single type of music genre or style in the classroom, making the classroom content very thin, even boring. It is not conducive to students' learning and understanding. The popularization of multicultural music in music education only stays in some superficial forms. It does not touch the core content; the essence of multicultural music is the embodiment of social spirit. In the classroom, teachers do not actively let students participate. In addition to traditional playing and singing, cultural learning teaches some theoretical knowledge. There is no systematic understanding of multicultural music. Therefore, the diversity of music culture must be integrated into the classroom. By integrating it into classroom teaching and exposing students to multiculturalism can achieve good results in the long run. Otherwise, students cannot personally experience and understand the multicultural music. They will not be able to truly exert the multicultural music culture's strong focus and spiritual influence on students in music teaching.

3.4.2 Lack of cultivation of aesthetic experience

The concept of aesthetic education is based on the idea that the main purpose of music education is to inculcate and cultivate aesthetic experience in students through perception, and that the basic musical qualities of aesthetics and musicality are paramount in the teaching curriculum. According to Hegel, 'beauty is the sensual manifestation of an idea, and music as an art, an aesthetic experience of auditory perception, is not simply a combination of notes and sounds, but must have a spiritual connotation attached to the sound combination to exist'. In short, music is a form of art

that expresses emotion. The actual process of teaching music guides students to perceive, understand, and experience music. This requires students to have certain aesthetic and perceptual skills. In China's current teaching environment, the music education system lacks emphasis on this part of the curriculum. Much of the content is superficial. The teaching process is too schematic, and some music pieces are limited to appreciation only. These music pieces do not lead students to think without rising to the level of emotional and spiritual interpretation of the music, which is a problem worthy of deep consideration. In the teaching process, we should strengthen students' guidance in emotional inculcation and perception. We must cultivate students' aesthetic and perceptual abilities in an immersive and subtle way to enhance the comprehensive ability of aesthetic experience.

3.4.3 Inadequate inclusiveness in the classroom

The development of Chinese music has always been characterized by strong Eurocentrism. Many scholars have worked to eliminate this mindset. The development of multicultural music education is also facing the same problem. Balancing the relationship between multicultural and European music has always been confusing in the teaching process. Looking back on the development history of European music, from ancient Greek Dionysus music, to medieval church music to classicism, romanticism to expressionism, European music has formed a very developed music system (Giulio and Maurizio, 2018). The complete theoretical system of harmony, orchestration, and composition analysis has profoundly and extensively impacted world music. The beginning of Chinese music education was also influenced by European music. From the campus music songs in the last century, European music ideas, composition skills, and educational methods were introduced into China. It gradually opened the door to modern music in China. The first professional music school in China was also established following the Leipzig Conservatory of Music example in Germany. The music developed from it has a profound European music imprint. As a cello player, the author can easily tell that many students blindly pursue Western music, disregarding folk music. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that students are more interested in European classical music than traditional Chinese music and culture.

One thing that emerges from studying the development and dissemination of European classical music is that there is a good basis for the development and popularisation of classical music among students. Learning music and developing good musical literacy has a practical value. It does provide a good vehicle for this. However, the idea of a 'Eurocentric' approach is not desirable, as a holistic approach to development requires an inclusive and open attitude to diverse musical cultures. In summary, it is good to use European classical music as a cornerstone to develop students' basic musicianship. It is important to incorporate the best of our own traditional music culture and learn from each other. Since there is no contradiction between European classical music and diverse musical cultures, the relationship between the two should be dealt with reasonably in teaching practice. There should be no tendency to favor one over the other. The teacher should train and guide students to look at diverse musical cultures with an open and tolerant view, and to truly 'penetrate and integrate' each other.

3.4.4 Lack of teachers' musical knowledge

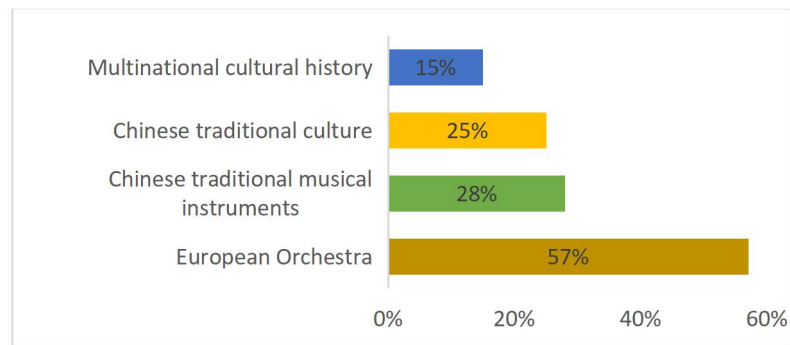


Figure 5: Proportion table of skills Mastered by Chinese teachers

Few Chinese music teachers have received comprehensive and systematic ethnomusicological theory and practical research and theories on combining Western music with their national music. This leads to bias and misunderstanding of multicultural music. This intellectual bias can lead to inappropriate lesson planning. In the long run, it can mislead approaches to student education. Therefore, education authorities must train music teachers.

4. How to use multi-cultural music in the classroom in a rational way

Promoting multicultural music is necessary to realize multicultural music training. It will let students understand and respect different regions' national cultures, enabling them to establish correct multicultural values. Multiculturalism is receiving more attention. In response to these concerns, we should actively take measures to integrate multiculturalism into music education. The most important content in the development of music education. Music culture is becoming increasingly important with the advancement of science and the close connection of countries worldwide. We must consider how to apply multicultural music to the classroom reasonably.

4.1 Return to music education

Music education aims to create a diversified music atmosphere, allowing students to experience different music, cultivate literacy, and understand different folk customs. This increases their interest in music learning and enriches their perceptual thinking. Teachers should guide students to participate actively and stimulate their curiosity, observation, and imagination. During teaching and singing, teachers must cultivate students' interest in this song, so that students can better understand and be familiar with the meaning of this song. Due to Internet, many small videos have occupied the mainstream media/platforms/channels. Teachers can listen to these familiar melodies that are currently popular, adapt them, innovate through folk music or European music melodies, and deeply dig out the social connotations and noble ideas contained in music. This will help music teaching classroom present an open and inclusive atmosphere. This will, in turn, achieve the purpose of entertaining and entertaining.

Music education is not a metaphysical rhetoric, but a real return to reality, starting from the music itself, in line with music creation, music style, and aesthetic experience. In the teaching process, multicultural music, should be viewed from an international perspective as a supplement and expansion of classroom inclusive and open development. Music classes must be based on promoting the traditional Chinese culture and absorbing all other excellent cultures to improve their own music appreciation level and aesthetic experience.

4.2 Innovative teaching practicals

Music teachers can integrate theory and practice by implementing theoretical knowledge into analyzing the inner knowledge of the whole piece. Teachers can adopt targeted approaches and methods to guide students through their studies. For example, using high-speed Internet, students can pre-study using videos. They can learn in groups before and after class. This is a clear and scientific way of teaching and learning with a multiplier effect on musical understanding. Secondly, teachers can choose distinctive and related music works for students to listen to, imitate and sing, and integrate them into the multi-music classroom. The students can experience the charm of different music, distinguish different music styles and understand their features. For middle school students, we can take "Jasmine Flower" in traditional Chinese music as an example, let students compare and sing "Jasmine Flower in Hebei" and "Jasmine Flower in Jiangnan", and combine the historical context of the development of traditional Chinese music. This is a good way to understand different singing and music styles in the same historical background, combining perceptual cognition with rational cognition. For younger primary school students, teachers should encourage them to listen to different music styles, and let them better understand by adapting nursery rhymes. Teachers can compare music from different nationalities and countries at a higher level, allowing students to learn holistically. For example, Japanese minor music is based on the Chinese pentatonic scale. Compare the Chinese pentatonic scale with the Japanese minor scale, and let students sing in class to experience their musical and cultural differences. This teaching method can enable students to better experience the differences and richness of different music cultures, discover the fun, innovate learning methods, and activate the classroom atmosphere.

Every nation's music has its unique style. Teachers must create a good atmosphere for students, encourage them to learn different music styles in the classroom, and adopt the most popular music melody to and sing. This will encourage students to appreciate foreign music. The teacher must subtly encourage students to accept the diversity of songs and take them seriously objectively. The teacher must cultivate students' knowledge and understanding of relevant music theory, music style, composition characteristics, and musical language expression. Also, the teacher must guide students to create different styles of music, hold more related performances and competitions, actively participate in practice, and truly feel the unique charm of diverse music culture.

4.3 Improving institutional mechanisms

Through research, it is found that many music teachers cannot teach multicultural music. This problem exists not only in primary and secondary schools but in the open classes of many university classrooms. Therefore, there are few popular courses of folk music. European music was limited to folk or impressionist music in the late 19th century. and Western modern music. Very little, let alone Western folk music. Their knowledge is limited to European music and traditional Chinese music. They know little about world folk music and Chinese folk music. In this case, improving teachers' knowledge base is particularly important. Based on Chinese national music, the teachers should learn more about national music, cultivate love for national culture, organize training, organize lectures and open classes, and encourage other teachers to participate in learning. This is conducive to the better development of diversity. Local government departments should also work together to establish a more systematic and scientific teacher training mechanism, improve the level of teachers, bridge the gap, and cooperate. In the multicultural music curriculum setting, schools can integrate multicultural music in the form of themes, improve students' participation and enthusiasm, make a good choice of music materials, and organize various concerts to visit the world's music culture. They should guide teachers to understand different music cultures, broaden their knowledge from a more open international perspective, and establish a correct multicultural music view.

4.4 Improve teacher quality

To improve literacy, music teachers should continuously consolidate music knowledge in various fields, such as music harmony, melody, tonality, musical instruments, and history. In today's elementary and middle school classrooms, the teacher plays the piano and the students sing along. Many students learn only one song per/in a semester. Most students choose to major in piano. However, the students do not have time or opportunity to get in touch with other instruments or music styles. Teachers can add different teaching styles and expose students to different music. They can expose students' to different national cultures. The students can choose their favorite music style based on their personalities. The teachers' expertise determines the success or failure of teaching. At the same time, in the actual teaching preparation process, music teachers should combine students' interests, choose more representative music, start from the essence of music, create a good learning atmosphere, let students participate with interest, and acquire rich and diverse knowledge.

5. Conclusion

Today's society is globalized and integrated. It also ushers in multiculturalism. The emergence of multicultural music conforms to the trend of the times. With the increasing frequency of international exchanges, multiculturalism has already been deeply rooted in the people's hearts. Most people realize the importance of inheriting national culture. It can show the excellent traditional music culture, embody the spirit of the times, contain strong national characteristics, and has become an innovation point of music teaching. Integrating various music cultures into the current music teaching system is a new opportunity and challenge. Multiculturalism is the future development direction of music education. The reasonable integration of multiculturalism in music education is of great significance to the development of music education. China is a multicultural country with national integration. The environment we live in contains various cultures, beliefs, and music. Music that breaks the tradition is the only way to go. Music class is not just an art class. Its role is to provide an innovative and active learning atmosphere and environment. It is a medium for spreading emotions and a course for improving art appreciation. Based on the analysis of music classrooms in primary and middle schools, problems such as single content, lack of aesthetic experience, lack of inclusiveness in the classroom, and lack of music knowledge of teachers indicate that music teaching still has much room for development. To achieve multicultural music teaching, it is necessary to actively promote and popularize multicultural music, enhance teachers' and students' tolerance and acceptance of different music cultures, encourage appreciation of different styles of music, and be good at appreciating music of different styles of music. Music needs to face different music cultures, seek common ground while reserving differences, and be open and inclusive. We must keep learning and accepting the excellent multicultural music and music teaching concepts of other countries, let students understand the traditional music of their own country, and continuously learn from other national cultures. In China, 56 ethnic groups have their own characteristics, and so do other countries. Other countries also have their own national cultures. Only by understanding one's own national culture can one integrate with the culture of other countries.

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