

# Research on the Compatibility Between Kabalevsky's Music Education Concept and Children's Piano Education

Na Jiang<sup>1,a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Humanities&Sciences of Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China

<sup>a</sup>markrubby@126.com

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**Abstract:** Kabalevsky was a great pianist and educator of the Soviet union. He created many excellent piano works for teenagers and put forward many piano education ideas. In this paper, based on the review of the concept of the basic education, the three big whale music concept, composing for children to body and composer, three kinds of identity, education scholars and teachers use music and emphasized the overall music teaching and learning, etc., puts forward the concept of education and children's piano education and the valuable reference for children's piano education models.

## 1. Introduction

Kabalevsky is a composer, pianist and music educator in Soviet Union. In his life, he has created a considerable number of piano works, covering different types and styles. Among them, some works are written for children or for children and teenagers. Kabalevsky's life is closely related to music education, and he is especially concerned about the development of Music for children and teenagers[1]. He once mentioned in his music in General School speech that children always play a part in my music life.

When Kabalevsky was growing up, there was no material for children to play in the Soviet union. Therefore, he hoped to help children solve the difficulties of skills through simple music works and inspire children's music experience. This idea makes his children's piano works play a great role in the performance of music and the development of playing ability. It is also one of the motivations for Kabalevski to create piano works for children.

Since Kabalevsky wrote relevant books and lectures on music education topics, and also created a large number of piano music works for children, which were widely used in the learning of piano playing in China, researchers were curious whether his education concept was presented in his music works. How? Therefore, it is hoped that all Kabalevsky's piano works written for children will be systematically analyzed to verify the practice of his music education concept and provide valuable reference for future piano education.

## 2. Kabalevsky's Music Educational Philosophy

This study was conducted through books published by Kabalevsky, such as "Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education and various journal notes, such as The Basic Principles and Methods of The Music Syllabus for The General School, Soviet Composer on Music Education[2]. The following are important music education ideas.

### 2.1. Three Big Whales Music Concept

(1) Three big whales in the world

According to an old Russian legend, three great whales carry the world on their shoulders. How did the three whales connect to music? According to Kabalevsky, the three big whales in the music world are dance, song and march.

He suggested that the three whales could be an acceptable example of a simple form of music when children were exposed to the music, because the whales were so closely integrated into

people's lives that some might not be able to read music or attend concerts, but few had not opened their mouths to sing, dance or step to the beat of drums[1]. Therefore, Kabalevsky regarded dance, song and march as the cornerstones for the development of music. Because of this, the idea of three great whales later became one of the important ideological bases for the new educational program of music in the Soviet union.

## (2) Guide children into the world of the three great whales

Kabalevsky points out that preschoolers can listen to certain songs repeatedly and sing along to them in kindergarten, at home and on the street. Children may also have the opportunity to hear dancing or to see people performing dances at different festivals. However, the concept of march comes from the march of the army and the march of the athletes. According to the points mentioned above, children do not force to remember, but naturally feel these existing experiences in life.

In the first stage of the music course, the teacher plays familiar songs, dances and marches, but does not need to include lyrics, because the students can do the work themselves, and they will be interested in these activities as if they were playing a game. And most importantly, by giving students the opportunity to express themselves, they will have confidence in their abilities and trust in their teachers[3]. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to master the key points, not only to make the music class lively, but also to cultivate students' creative atmosphere and stimulate individual interests.

The three great whales include dance, song and march. Through learning various music materials, students can expand their view of music and get in touch with the whole music instead of memorizing a music symbol or the name of a musician. Students learn dance, song and march extensively, which is different from the beginning of music teaching in music ability cultivation and can enrich their learning experience of music.

Two concepts of hybrid is the teaching of the three big whale can show the way, when teachers give students music for march wind song or dance type of march, students, after listening to the teacher asked the students such a tune is belong to which kinds of style, may be half of the students said march, the other half says, the teacher then convey a tune contains two big whale at the same time, the student union very surprised and very happy, and feel a new sense of music[4].

According to Kabalevsky, the most important thing in school education is to teach students to observe phenomena and use their senses to feel, but also to have the ability to think, that is, when students hear music, they can not only listen, but also think. When students can identify three whales by themselves and listen to a song from an oratorio, a march from a symphony, or a music from an opera, they feel as if they have met an old friend. Kabalevsky encourages teachers to use excerpts from some large-scale works in music class hours, without being afraid of this work, and without feeling that we deprive students of the right to appreciate and learn the whole music. Teachers use the excerpts to expand students' learning of different styles or composite styles. He believes that many adults fear exposure to large works, such as operas and symphonies, because of their lack of cultural and familiarity with them[5]. By using the above teaching method, students can connect the music works with the three whales and become more familiar with the music. When students spontaneously listen to music and make music, we can say they turn song into songness, dance into danceness, and march into marchness.

Based on the above, Kabalevsky believes that music learning is not just the study of symbols, but the combination of the experience to be felt by students with the actual life. If students are only required to memorize various music symbols, they will lose their original heart and keen observation. The three whales are also like a palette on music, starting from three primary colors, and then blending out different music styles to enrich students' learning.

## **2.2. Composing for Children Requires Three Identities: Composer, Educator and Teacher**

Kabalevsky notes that the composer believed that the music was good and vivid. Educators believe that music should be able to educate moral rationality. The teacher thinks, music cannot lose sincere nature. Through any kind of art, children can not only learn about the world, help them develop

artistic taste and create imagination, but also love life, love the countryside and experience the relationship between people.

He also pointed out that most composers fail to take into account the above three important elements when creating music for children, so when their works start from a technical point of view, they may lose their artistic interest. When art is the starting point, it may be beyond the psychological level of children, which often happens in many excellent works, that is, the lack of educational perspective. He believes that before composing music for children, composers should first understand the characteristics of children's singing and write instrumental music for children, just like writing and singing music for children. On creation mentality, want to give priority to in order to not just study, and the syncretism to children's own artistic experience, aesthetic experience, not only to cultivate children's ability to appreciate art, also let them fall in love with the music and understand music - whether ballad, classic or modern repertoire, and finally the expectations of the balanced development, is to let children become good and wise[6].

### **2.3. Use Music Essence to Carry on the Teaching**

Kabalevsky believes that it is very important to attract children with music and avoid boring in music learning. So that the children for a long time to maintain a high interest in music and love, in order to continue to increase the depth and breadth of learning. Therefore, the curriculum of basic music theory in the first grade was deleted from the new Soviet music education program, and repeated exercises were also avoided. The purpose was to let children listen to music, feel music, and master different types and years of music in a pleasant atmosphere. This is not to ignore the teaching of theory, but to hope that children can have some basis in music, and do not exclude music, and then gradually integrate theory into the classroom. Kabalevsky believes that "music" should play an important role in music lessons. Using the rules and characteristics of music to teach music is also emphasized by Kabalevsky in the new syllabus[7]. He believes that many teachers put too much emphasis on psychology, physiology and sociology and forget to use the essence of music to teach. The content and methods of teaching in the new syllabus are implemented with the characteristics and regulations of music itself, so as to expand students' thinking and vision. Music here has relevance with literature and history, and strengthens the connection between music and life.

### **2.4. Emphasize the Overall Learning of Music**

Kabalevsky believes that in the initial stage of music learning, students should not only emphasize symbol learning, or require students to memorize a lot of music symbols[8]. He suggests that teachers can take music style and musical features as the starting point to guide children to feel the music color of the music itself.

In the Soviet union new music education curriculum, the Kabalevsky's excellent music works in addition to the introduction of national and each period, also a large number of Russian folk and Russian composers, he thinks that the Russian music works can make children through music understanding of local culture, and by introducing the national excellent music works and each time, can develop children's field of vision, open and widely recognized the music history and culture and literature of different customs.

## **3. Application of Kabalevsky's Music Education Concept in Children Piano Education**

Kabalevsky puts all his life into the music education, in many education issues, he shows children and adolescents' music education special care, because as a composer and pianist, he also created music works for children and adolescents, according to the above induce kappa levski four music education idea, combined with the current primary and secondary school music education practice, this article will further analyze the Kabalevsky's music education philosophy is how to guide the primary and secondary school music education practice.

First, Kabalevsky incorporated the concept of three big whales in his music through the title, and guided students to learn piano playing through songs, dance music, march and related music types and styles. After analyzing children's piano works of Kabalevsky, this study found that every piece of

music in children's piano works has a title. Kabalevsky integrated the concept of three big whales of music through the title, and presented it through the title, suggesting that three kinds of music based on music accounted for 38.2% of children's piano works in three volumes. The music concept of three big whales can guide students to learn piano playing through songs, dance music, march and related music types and styles.

This article is based on the classification of three big whale, extensions, extension, and combine, 11 kinds of different types of music form to analyze its for children's piano works, found an extension of the three big whale concepts can cover all children's piano works of eighty-nine songs, according to Kabalevsky's thinking in music learning, three big whales is music of the three primary colors, the three primary colors as a starting point, by development of harmonic formed rich music type, do have to implement in the children's piano works[9].

Second, Kabalevsky's children's piano works accord with the characteristics of children's physical and mental development. Considering the systematic establishment of piano playing skills and the artistic changes of music's works, he further practices his educational concept that children's music composition should be composed as a composer, a teacher and an educator. After examining the analysis results of children's piano works, we find that Kabalevsky's works have good singing quality, diversified music types, full of humor and childlike fun, and the works are in line with the size of children's hands and body extension, and take into account the physical and mental development of children. Look again with actual teaching, consider piano to play skill to establish systematic, for example: change of different touch key, both hands cross, palm changes position to wait, can become the preparation that enters stage piano to learn in the future, also can be acquired diversity of skill by the artistic quality that music works changes meticulously. Above all, Kabalevsky put forward the educational idea that composing music for children should be a composer, a teacher and an educator.

Third, Kabalevsky's children's piano works make good use of the regularity of music itself and practice the proposition of teaching with the essence of music. Kabalevsky believes that the essence of music is the regularity and characteristics of music itself, and using music to teach music is the most natural way of learning[10]. Kabalevsky grasped the characteristics of simplicity and regularity of music, combined with the clear style of music, and practiced the proposition of teaching with the essence of music.

Fourth, Kabalevsky integrates various styles of dance music and domestic or foreign ballads into piano works for children, so as to expand students' horizon of music, which is in line with his educational concept of emphasizing the overall learning of music.

Kabalevsky in the Soviet union new music education curriculum, the emphasis is not in the early learning music, emphasis on teaching music symbols, and more contact with various types of music, so in addition to the introduction of national excellent music works, and the different periods of time is also a large number of Russian folk and Russian composers, Russian music works through music, can let children understand the local culture, and by introducing the national excellent music works and each time, can develop children's field of vision, open and widely recognized the music history and culture and literature of different customs. Kabalevsky's children's piano works contain various dance music of different styles, which are integrated into the national or foreign ballads as writing materials, so as to expand students' horizon of music and conform to his educational concept of emphasizing the overall learning of music.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Kabalevsky's concept of music education has an important influence on children's music education. In order to highlight the value of Kabalevsky's music education concept, music education should train and transmit music teachers over the years, further strengthen the music classroom's cognition and understanding of Kabalevsky's music education concept, enrich the teachers of children's music education, and strengthen the effectiveness of children's piano education.

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